

ALISON MARGARET ORAM

WOMEN TEACHERS IN STATE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1900-1939:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST ALLEGIANCE AND POLITICAL STRATEGIES

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

London School of Economics and Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Women teachers working in local authority elementary and secondary schools from the turn of the century to the Second World War were heavily engaged in political activity concerning their own position as women in teaching. This thesis investigates the reasons for women teachers' strong feminist allegiance and the strategies which they used to pursue their aims.

Women teachers were politicised as feminists by experiencing tensions within the structures and meanings of their working and personal lives. In particular, the stresses and tensions between two identities, that of the professional teacher and that of the feminine woman, coupled with their experiences within the teachers' professional associations and the influence of the suffrage movement, meant that both elementary and secondary school teachers became increasingly receptive to feminist ideas in the years before the First World War.

It is further argued that the particular process of politicisation had effects on the type of feminist politics and strategies that women teachers espoused. The dual elements of professionalism and femininity are analogous to the major philosophical strands within feminism of 'equality' and 'difference'. Feminist women teachers preferred to emphasise the former, and developed a political rhetoric of equal gender-free professionalism rather than one which highlighted their 'difference' as women. The teachers offer an important case study in assessing the utility of either feminist approach in the interwar period of gender antagonism and crisis of masculinity.

Women teachers' position as both women and professionals was particularly difficult in relation to their marital status. They were predominantly single in a period in which marriage and motherhood signified full adult femininity. In this area, feminist politics fed back into teachers' personal lives, providing a defence of their position as spinsters and offering new forms of women's community adapted to the twentieth century.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Association of Assistant Mistresses
AHM	Association of Head Mistresses
ALMWT	Association of London Married Women Teachers
AMA	Assistant Masters Association
LCC	London County Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
LTA	London Teachers Association
NAS	National Association of Schoolmasters
NFWT	National Federation of Women Teachers (Later NUWT)
NUSEC	National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
NUWT	National Union of Women Teachers
NUWW	National Union of Women Workers
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TSSC	Teaching Staff Sub-Committee
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WLGS	Women's Local Government Society
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WTFU	Women Teachers Franchise Union

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 1911, women teachers succeeded in getting a motion expressing sympathy with the principle of women's suffrage onto the agenda of the annual conference of the National Union of Teachers. With Miss Cleghorn, the first ever woman NUT president, in the chair, a male supporter attempted to introduce the motion.

Then broke out the wildest scenes of disorder. ... Hundreds of men, massed at the back of the hall, prevented Mr Croft from obtaining a hearing. They stamped, howled, hurled insults at the speaker and at suffragists, and utterly refused to allow Mr Croft's speech to proceed. This continued without intermission for thirty minutes ... During the whole time the women suffragists had sat, calm and dignified, in the seats at the front of the hall; they were subsequently congratulated by Miss Cleghorn on their restraint. [1]

This account by a suffragette teacher, albeit a partisan view, indicates the extent to which questions of sex equality divided and disrupted the otherwise apparently respectable and moderate teaching profession in the years before the First World War.

Women teachers working in local authority elementary and secondary schools in England and Wales from the turn of the century to the Second World War were politically engaged with their own position as women in teaching to a remarkable degree. In the 1900s many of them rapidly developed feminist campaigns on equal pay and women's suffrage, to which they later added struggles over promotion prospects and the marriage bar, and their activism was strongly sustained into the interwar period. Despite quite considerable interest in the gender clash among school teachers there has been relatively little work done to attempt to explain the high level of feminist commitment among women teachers and the political strategies they deployed in their campaigning. Why was it that a large proportion of women in this particular occupational group, were able to develop such a strong political consciousness as feminists, and sustain it throughout the period? This thesis investigates the reasons for their substantial

political commitment and analyses the strategies which feminist teachers used to pursue their aims.

The term 'feminism' may be used to describe a wide variety of ideas and political aims, but the common features linking individuals in women's movements past and present are the recognition that women are a socially disadvantaged group compared to men, and an intention to change that situation. [2] Women teachers varied in the extent of their allegiance to the feminist cause. Some were very active as suffragists and suffragettes before the First World War, and in organising pressure groups for equality in pay and conditions for women teachers. Many attended equal pay rallies and feminist teachers' conferences and bought feminist literature. Some engaged in no active political behaviour, yet agreed with the feminist principles of women's suffrage, equal pay and promotion, and the abolition of the marriage bar (the regulation in some local authorities compelling resignation of women teachers upon marriage). The agreement of so many women teachers with these goals is shown by their votes at teachers' conferences, letters to educational journals, and oral history interviews. However the depth of teachers' feminist allegiance varied over time, as the discussion below will illustrate. Interest in the equality issues increased rapidly in the early 1900s and reached a peak at the end of the First World War. After this, economic pressures on the education system and splits in the National Union of Teachers, the elementary teachers' union, altered the context, but the evidence shows that a significant number of women teachers remained loyal to feminist ideas and actively worked for them, and that the issues of teachers' equality continued to be debated in the interwar years.

Women teachers' allegiance to feminism is interesting for two contrasting reasons; they were women who were both ordinary and out of the ordinary. They were ordinary in the sense that they constituted part of the mass following of the suffrage movement and subsequently of interwar feminism. With the exception of a few leaders of their organisations, most of the names of the women who attended the rallies and branch meetings, and wrote indignant letters to the press were not well known to their contemporaries, nor now to historians. Teacher feminists were also ordinary in the sense that they came from predominately lower middle-class backgrounds, although some were of

working-class and prosperous middle-class origins. Their everyday lives of demanding work, relationships with their families, and cultural activities had much in common with other women of similar class and educational background. But in other respects - in their position as women workers, and in the extent of their allegiance to the feminist movement - teachers were women who were out of the ordinary, as I shall now go on to describe.

Women teachers held a significant position among women workers. As the tertiary sector grew from the late nineteenth century, the number and proportion of women 'white blouse' workers in shops, offices, hospitals and schools increased rapidly, indeed at a faster rate than men in these areas of employment. [3] Teaching in elementary schools, which provided a basic education to working-class and lower middle-class children, grew quite rapidly as an occupation after the 1870 Education Act, especially for women. The total number of female and male teachers continued to increase until 1914, and thereafter remained at a fairly constant level. The proportion of women fluctuated somewhat, and from a high point of 78% during the First World War, fell to 71% by 1938. (See Tables 1 and 2). The establishment and continued expansion of grant-aided secondary schools following the 1902 Education Act, providing education largely for middle-class children, meant that the number of secondary school teachers in the state sector rapidly expanded in the twentieth century. The number of teachers increased from around 5,000 each of men and women in 1910 to over 12,000 of each in 1938. [4] (See Tables 3 and 4).

Teaching shared some general features with other tertiary sector work for women. It was respectable and clean, required a specific level of education or training, and employed women from both working-class and middle-class backgrounds at different levels of the occupation. But teaching stood out from clerical work, retailing or nursing, in demanding (for qualified teachers) additional years of education and in offering relatively good pay and conditions. [5] Teachers in both elementary and secondary schools enjoyed improving conditions of employment during the period 1900-1939. They were increasingly likely to be trained and certificated if elementary school teachers, or trained graduates if secondary school teachers,

and their salary and pension arrangements were placed on a more secure footing.

Teaching also offered social mobility to women. They could attain, or at least maintain middle-class status, while pursuing a career. Elementary school teaching had long been regarded as an avenue of social mobility for intelligent working-class girls and boys, and there was extensive state subsidy of the training and education of intending teachers. Female entrants were on average from a superior social background than males. From the late nineteenth century a rising proportion came from the lower middle class, they were offered improved access to training in the early 1900s, and both parents and daughters appreciated the economic and social attractions that a teaching career offered. [6] It was considered respectable work by the lower middle class, even, in some areas, for married women who were able to build up a strong professional presence where their employment was permitted, especially in London. [7] Secondary school teachers were generally drawn from the children of more solid middle-class and professional families who had received a secondary and usually a university education. However, these class origins were not rigidly distinct. A rising proportion of elementary teachers came from middle-class backgrounds in the twentieth century, while it was possible (though difficult) for working-class and lower middle-class children to obtain grants for a university education. There was also some movement of teachers between the two sectors.

One of the most interesting features of teaching was the complex way in which it was gendered. It was connected on the one hand with the feminine tasks of caring for and socialising children, and on the other hand with the masculine world of academic learning and knowledge. It was the only profession which both women and men entered in large numbers, unlike the civil service, nursing, or medicine. Although there was some sex segregation in the occupation, women teachers were not necessarily at the bottom of a hierarchy, or under male authority (like nurses, for example), but could attain promotion to headships themselves. They had status and authority in the classroom and in the towns and villages in which they lived. Because of their powerful position as women workers - their relatively good conditions and pay, their position of respect in local communities and influence over young people - women teachers' active

campaigning and strong feminist demands were particularly significant in voicing and furthering ideas of women's equality in employment and society in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Women teachers' political activism was considerable, though only fairly recently has it been taken seriously. Because of their respectability, early histories of women teachers suggested they were not in the forefront of suffrage activity or the women's movement. [8] Some of these older accounts were simply uninterested in women teachers as a group. Asher Tropp's standard history of the NUT noted that the greatest division among teachers until the 1930s was the split between men and women teachers, but felt it unnecessary to explore this conflict in detail, and also rather contradictorily claimed that women teachers were passive and non-militant in the union. [9] Historians and sociologists at this time were more concerned with the process of teacher professionalisation and the social mobility of teachers, implicitly if not explicitly of the male teacher. (However P. H. J. H. Gosden's study of the teachers' associations' fight for professional status did take full account of the importance of the equal pay issue. [10]) Feminist historical work from the 1980s, especially that of Helen Corr and Hilda Kean, has shown that it is completely inaccurate to depict women teachers as politically apathetic and has illustrated the depth and extent of their feminist commitment and campaigning in the teachers' associations. [11]

Women teachers joined teachers' associations in large numbers compared to the unionisation rates of other women workers, and many came to use them as vehicles for their feminist aims. The main elementary teachers' union, the mixed-sex National Union of Teachers (NUT), recruited women in increasing numbers from the beginning of the century. (See Table 5 and Figure 1.) Membership density among certificated women teachers rose from 60% in 1910 to 75% in 1914 and 84% in 1929. Women teachers in secondary schools had a separate professional body, the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM). Although a comparatively small group at first, it grew rapidly in size and influence during this period, achieving a membership density of 54% in 1921, rising to 88% in 1938. [12]

Women teachers developed and sustained feminist political activity throughout the period 1900-1939. If we examine the main

events in teacher feminism, the changing allegiance and depth of loyalty among teachers to the women's movement is demonstrated. There is much evidence that a large number of women teachers were concerned about their professional status early in the period. Helen Corr has argued that the issues of equal pay, the marriage bar, and promotion prospects were of concern to some women teachers from the 1880s, causing intermittent gender tensions in the teachers' associations.

[13] Feminist teachers and a few male supporters set up an Equal Pay League as a pressure group within the NUT in 1904. These activities predated the mass suffrage movement but also gained impetus from it. Women teachers quickly got involved in the whole range of suffrage organisations, contributing personnel not only to the constitutional National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) but also, as Hilda Kean has shown, to the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and the less well known but politically significant Women's Freedom League (WFL). [14] They also set up the Women Teachers' Franchise Union (WTFU) in London in 1912. Elementary teachers tried to gain the support of the NUT for both equal pay and the suffrage by raising these issues for discussion at annual conferences, but in the years before the war this generated great hostility from men teachers, leading to unprecedented uproar, abuse and expulsions from the conference floor, as exemplified above.

These issues were less fraught for the all-women AAM, which agreed to support the principle of women's suffrage in 1906. Although there is a rich historiography on nineteenth-century secondary schoolmistresses and the feminist context of the reform of girls' secondary schools, much less is known about secondary schoolmistresses in the early twentieth century when the number of such teachers in the state sector was expanding rapidly. [15] Investigation of secondary schoolmistresses' political activities is also hampered by the lack of primary sources; detailed AAM records were destroyed in the Second World War. [16]

The suffrage movement is important since it was in this context that women teachers developed their political ideology of equal professional opportunities, which a significant number continued to press throughout the First World War and into the 1920s and 1930s. Equal pay became an issue of wider national debate during the First World War as more women entered previously masculine occupations and

women's union membership grew rapidly. In teaching, feminist militancy also gained impetus from the falling value of salaries, and reached a peak at the end of the war. By 1917 the National Federation of Women Teachers (NFWT), a pressure group developed from the Equal Pay League, claimed the allegiance of 50% of women NUT members, indicating widespread support for feminist aims. In 1918 the NUT agreed to endorse the principle of equal pay for teachers, but it was not pressed on the Burnham Committee, set up in 1919 to agree nationally negotiated salary scales, although women did make some gains from the new scales. [17]

Women teachers' concern about their status was greeted both before and after the First World War by defensiveness and antagonism from many men teachers, though others supported the women's claims. Masculine anxiety, during this high point of feminist strength, was also animated by the wartime reduction of men teachers in both elementary and secondary schools, and the presence of women teachers in boys' schools.

The depth of feeling among women and men teachers about gender issues was illustrated by the devastating splits it caused in the previously large and strong elementary teachers' union, the NUT, at the end of the war. In 1920 a core group of feminist women teachers, who had previously campaigned in the NFWT and the Women Teachers Franchise Union inside the NUT broke away to form the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT). At the height of its strength in the mid 1920s the NUWT had about 8,500 members, more than one-tenth of female NUT membership. This made it an average-sized trade union in this period, and it continued to campaign with a strongly committed membership through to the 1950s. [18] At the same time a group of anti-feminist men teachers seceded from the NUT in opposition to its equal pay policy to form the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS), an organisation which gradually grew in strength through the interwar period, and expressed constant antagonism to women teachers generally and feminist teachers in particular. This masculine hostility has been seen as part of a wider backlash against women's employment and organised feminism. [19] Both new unions attacked the NUT and each other. This institutional polarisation, albeit of a minority, set the tone for gender battles in the elementary sector throughout the interwar period.

The interwar economic depressions only partly dampened women teachers' feminism. All teachers were on the defensive as public spending cuts were made in education in the early 1920s and again in the early 1930s. Although there was continued expansion in the secondary sector, falling school rolls and school reorganisation caused disruption among elementary teachers. The influential Hadow Report of 1926 encouraged a wider curriculum in elementary schools, and added to the impetus for reorganisation by recommending a break at age 11 between 'primary' and 'senior' departments. Despite the unfavourable economic climate, equal pay remained an important aim, but in the early to mid 1920s it was the widely introduced marriage bar which compelled the attention of feminist teachers in elementary schools. For the remainder of the period the concern with promotion opportunities was the chief gender issue for both elementary and secondary school teachers, women and men. Unlike pay, policy on marriage bars and headships varied since it was determined at the local level by LEAs. Although the NUT came to support sex equality on paper in the interwar years, it was reluctant to push hard for women teachers' professional rights if this seemed likely to arouse the wrath of the men. Nor did the AAM or NUWT have much measurable success against sex discriminatory policies, though a few gains were made. [20]

The period 1918-1920 was a high point of feminist involvement for women teachers, but the continued engagement of both elementary and secondary teachers with equality issues over the period 1900-1939 is impressive and unmatched by other women workers. Their demand for equal rights in the workplace was sustained throughout the interwar years despite a shift within the contemporary women's movement towards emphasising issues of gender difference such as the endowment of motherhood. At the same time, women teachers, especially those in the NFWT/ NUWT, were always committed to wider feminist issues than simply their own position, from the prewar suffrage struggle to interwar concerns with the gendered curriculum and the peace movement. [21]

Feminist historical work has illuminated many aspects of women teachers' politics and the gender clash in teaching in this period. But it has only just begun to examine the reasons for this extensive political commitment and the types of feminist politics and philosophy teachers espoused. Hilda Kean has investigated the political identity

of women teachers most closely, though the initial focus of her work was on the relationship of teachers to socialism and the state between 1900 and 1930. She has suggested that women teachers' mobilisation as feminists can be traced to their uneasy relationship to the state; they were employed by the state but were without access to political power before 1918 to influence the conditions of their employment.

[22] While not in disagreement with this explanation, I consider it to be just one of several factors which needs to be contextualised in the broader framework of women teachers' working experience and family lives, which I shall now go on to discuss.

The Factors in Women's Politicisation

There is a diverse body of work on women's political activity in the historical and political science literature, but most of it tends to examine women's philosophies, campaigns and strategies only after those women have begun to exercise political agency. Political activity can be conceptualised as 'individual and collective patterns of action to change existing structures of political authority,' referring in particular to the formal public sphere of politics, including trade unions and organised feminism. [23] We might also incorporate a broader notion of politics as the 'articulation of social power relations' occurring in private as well as public arenas; this would include all aspects of gender politics. [24]

One of the main aims of this thesis is to account for the development among teachers of an allegiance to feminism; that is to say, a critical awareness of gender relations which was expressed politically. Comparatively little research has been undertaken on the process by which some women (and not others) at certain times (often in the context of particular currents of intellectual thought) observe their own lives and society and develop a consciousness of women's inequality. What makes possible that moment of cognition? In Sally Alexander's words, the question for the historian of feminism is: '... why at some moments does sexual difference and division take on a political significance?' [25] Political consciousness is not a straightforward or inevitable outcome of a person's material or social position. [26] The experience of inequality alone is not sufficient to create feminist understanding and political action. Some women might represent their coming to political understanding as a sudden

realisation connected with a particular event, but it may usefully be seen as a process or series of steps. For women teachers, a heterogeneous group, there were multiple factors affecting their politicisation. These include both their material circumstances - the conditions under which they worked as teachers and lived as women - and also questions of subjectivity - the way they understood the different facets of their lives.

I shall go on to suggest the following as significant elements in women teachers' politicisation: the extent of their education, the comparatively low level of sex segregation in teaching, the relationship between teachers' work and their family lives, the importance of contradictory elements in women's lives, and finally, women teachers' identities and the meanings attached to teaching and to femininity. These factors are separated out here to some extent for ease of discussion, but should be understood as being interconnected. The economic or structural positioning of women in teaching, for example, was relatively straightforward and is not difficult to describe. But inseparable from this is the way in which women teachers understood themselves and their position, and the range of meanings which became attached to women as teachers (or as women with family lives). It is the complex ways in which these structures and meanings worked together which produced women teachers' allegiance to feminism.

Women's political participation (in all types of politics and at all levels) has been shown to increase with their level of education. [27] Since women teachers were, as a group, the most highly educated women in the country, they were likely to engage in political activity, according to this model. Half or more secondary school mistresses were graduates, while elementary school teachers also experienced several years of further and higher education beyond the norm. Education and feminism were mutually important, and attention has been drawn to 'the attractions of feminism to the girl who had been to college.' [28] The combination of education with employment is another significant factor and professional women have frequently been highly politicised. [29]

An unusual structural aspect of teaching which may be a key contributory factor in explaining women's politicisation was the relative lack of sex segregation. Jane Mark-Lawson has recently

argued that the degree of sex segregation in an industry or occupation is a significant factor in women's political activity. In her investigation of two interwar towns, low levels of sex segregation among cotton workers in Nelson, Lancashire (the permanent establishment of women alongside men in the same industrial processes and the associated high levels of skill and wages) appear to be strongly correlated with very high levels of women's trade union membership, political activity and influence in the locality. [30] The position of women cotton workers in the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century was superior to any other large group of women industrial workers. In the Lancashire weaving industry, women saw their work as a source of pride and respectability and in some towns a high proportion of married women worked in the mills. Although the work was segregated in many respects, and status differences were maintained between women and men, women were employed on some of the same weaving processes as men in some towns, alongside men, and enjoyed rates of pay which were nearly as high as men's. The high density of union membership, high wages and self-esteem among women cotton workers was associated towards the end of the nineteenth century with the renewed socialist and feminist movements. The enfranchisement of a growing proportion of working-class men meant that textile unions had increasing political muscle which their growing number of women members were unable to share in. This fostered women workers' interest in women's suffrage from the 1890s when large numbers of them participated in collecting signatures for the national women's suffrage petition. [31]

Despite the national decline of the cotton industry in the twentieth century, Mark-Lawson found that women weavers in interwar Nelson continued to enjoy a particularly egalitarian form of workplace organisation. Weaving was seen as being men's and women's work rather than the prerogative of one sex, women were highly paid on the same basis as men, and there was less patriarchal control in the industry than in most occupations. Women, like men, were obliged to join the union closed shop and the strong presence of women in the workplace allowed them to take an unusually active and influential part in Labour Party, town hall, and feminist politics in the locality. [32] These patterns of employment on the same or similar work processes to men, relatively high pay, and high levels of union membership paralleled those of women teachers; indeed in these respects teachers

were more similar to women weavers than to women white-collar workers. Clerical work was gradually feminised during the first half of the twentieth century, but women were largely confined to specific grades and departments and the lower status jobs. Even as the physical segregation of male and female clerks gradually broke down, the different job classifications of each sex (and thus different pay and prospects) still persisted. [33]

But in teaching, women did the same work as their male colleagues, sometimes in the same schools, and were paid at 75-80% of the male rate. Both women and men went through the same systems of training, held degrees or teaching certificates, were described by the same job titles, and taught at all levels. Some horizontal segregation was evident in both elementary and secondary schools, not in respect of the type of work done by men and women teachers, but in the type of pupil taught. Large numbers of both women and men were employed to staff elementary schools; the proportion of women varying between 71% and 78% during this period, as Table 1 shows. In these schools women predominately taught infant, junior and girls' classes and men were concentrated in the boys' classes, particularly the older boys. The reorganisation of the elementary school system after the First World War and the creation of the break at 11 years, as described above, created a growing proportion of mixed rather than single-sex schools and classes. [34] This meant that a growing percentage of both women and men teachers taught mixed classes rather than single sex ones, though the pattern of men teaching older pupils and women the younger ones remained. During the interwar period men teachers' experience changed substantially. In 1921 only 22.9% of certificated men taught mixed classes; by 1938 this figure had grown to 40.9%, as Table 6 indicates. [35] Almost all these men teachers in mixed schools would have been working as part of a mixed staff, alongside women teachers. The number of women teaching mixed classes rose from 55.8% in 1921 to 69.1% in 1938, mainly in mixed junior schools. (Table 7.) The data indicates that sex segregation among elementary teachers was becoming less marked during the interwar period, and it is suggested that this caused many to feel that their professional world was changing rapidly. The proportion of mixed secondary schools, employing both men and women teachers, was about 30% throughout the period, while 35% catered for girls and 35% for boys. (Tables 3 and 4.) Girls' and boys' schools largely had same-sex

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staffs, while approximately one-third of men and women teachers worked alongside each other in mixed secondary schools.

Nor was vertical segregation - the over-representation of men in senior posts - particularly pronounced in teaching. In the elementary schools, women made up 63-68% of all certificated teachers throughout the period, and 56-57% of certificated head teachers, indicating that their promotion prospects, though poorer than men's, were not grossly disproportionate. (See Tables 2 and 8.) The pattern of women's and men's headships followed their distribution as class teachers, but the headships of mixed schools increasingly became an area of gender anxiety and contestation. Greater segregation occurred among secondary school heads. Although women made up about 50% of the teaching staff, they comprised only about 35% of the heads since only the headships of girls' schools were effectively open to them. The 30% of mixed secondary schools were almost invariably headed by men, and it was in these schools that women teachers agitated over the official status of the senior mistress. Thus men's promotion opportunities were twice as good as the women's in secondary schools. [36]

Teachers would appear to exhibit the link between a relative lack of sex segregation and political activity among women workers. There may be a number of factors producing this connection, among them the higher status enjoyed by such women workers, and the ease with which they can compare their position with that of their male co-workers, and these will be explored in the following chapters. Changes in patterns of sex segregation, especially when shifting boundaries enable women to enter 'men's' jobs, is also commonly associated with struggle and conflict between the sexes. [37] For teachers, the expansion of mixed schools, especially in the elementary sector, was associated with anxieties around gender demarcation.

Much research has stressed that it is not possible to analyse women's political activity generally, still less feminist activity, without addressing the relationship between employment and public life on the one hand, and family and personal circumstances on the other. [38] Although this study analyses teachers' politics in relation to specific workplace issues, their feminism can only be understood in the context of their domestic lives and contemporary ideas about gender. Existing accounts of women's politicisation as feminists have assumed the importance of childhood socialisation and familial

expectations of daughters, but have run into problems when trying to assess the significance of these personal biographical factors. [39] In particular, Olive Banks' approach, in attempting to apply quantitative methods to inevitably patchy qualitative evidence is inadequate as a means of interpreting material about personal relationships. [40] Conclusions about the politicisation of groups of women cannot be drawn from individual biographical sources in this way. In any case, the biographical method is only feasible when studying women who were prominent feminist leaders; it is not possible to gather detailed personal material for the large groups of women who were the rank-and-file of the women's movement. And as Philippa Levine has pointed out, attempts to explain politicisation by ascribing people's actions to particular external influences carry the risk of being overly deterministic, leaving no room for individual agency. [41]

One valuable suggestion made by Levine and others is that contradictions in ideas about gender and in women's lived lives have a role in producing political awareness. This has been used to explain the politicisation of both groups and individuals as feminists. In the nineteenth century, for example, a contradiction between the ideology that middle-class women should not work and the existence of many unmarried women without financial resources or family support stimulated feminist activism. [42] It has also been argued that women have come to feminism through experiencing tensions between different political ideals, and especially through the discovery that the political ideals for which they were working applied only to men and not to themselves. Philippa Levine suggests that while some nineteenth century feminists grew up in politically radical families with libertarian attitudes, there was a limit to which the female family members were permitted freedom or equality with the males. She writes: 'it is the tension and confusion created by these conflicting messages that perhaps fuelled the distinctive practices of a feminist politics at this time, rather than a simple equation of like-minded familial radicalism and emergent gender awareness.' [43]

This clash between different sets of ideas can be conceptualised as a gap between the idea of 'woman' and the reality of women, when women fail to recognise themselves in the official definitions of woman and begin to blame the social structure rather than their own

individual failings. [44] Women teachers experienced a number of tensions and frictions in their professional lives as teachers and in their personal family lives, albeit in different ways as elementary or secondary teachers, married women or single. Friction existed within both their structural positioning and in the meanings attached to being a woman teacher. These tensions helped to generate an awareness of their position as women as being socially determined and as such, politically transformable, and in this sense, the personal became the political.

As a way of unravelling the connections between personal experience and political understanding, I have chosen to use the concept of subjectivity. This emphasises the ways in which women teachers saw themselves, how they understood their lives within the wider culture of the twentieth century. The idea of subjectivity suggests a continuous and historically produced process, not a fixed state of being. Self-definitions and identities may shift as women move through the life cycle and take up different positions, for example in relation to family life and employment. It also acknowledges instability and conflict within people's identities. [45] The particular tensions produced by women teachers' changing experiences within the structures of the teaching profession and family life help to explain why they became receptive to feminist ideas. Furthermore, the experience of some women teachers led to specific forms of subjectivity necessary for political activism, a strong sense of self-hood, personal autonomy and agency. [46] It is not possible to 'prove' a link between teachers' subjectivities and their politicisation - historical investigation has its limits - but it will be suggested that these pressures were crucial to the process of becoming a feminist.

This use of the notion of subjectivity springs from recent debates in feminist history about the importance of meaning and language as well as material causes in understanding women's position and gender relations in the past. [47] While categories of meaning delineate the range of cultural understandings and practices and the limits of individual agency, they shift over time and can be used and changed by subordinate as well as dominant groups in society. Here I shall be using these ideas alongside more conventional means of assessing external influences, political agency and the wider context

of feminist and trade union activity. This will illuminate women teachers' 'lived lives' and how they understood them, developed a political consciousness and created political strategies within the wider framework of government policy, family life, ideas about women and femininity, and ideas about teacher professionalism.

Outline of Thesis

My central argument is that being at the same time a 'woman' and a 'teacher' created dissonance in both the structures and meanings of their lives, which politicised women teachers as feminists, and which shaped the form and articulation of their political strategies. Being a woman and being a teacher meant understanding oneself in relation to constructs of gender - femininity - and to the ideas surrounding the occupation - professionalism. An occupation undertaken by both women and men, teaching was ambiguously gendered. It was partly associated with the feminine maternal sphere of the nurturing and upbringing of children. In its claim to full professionalism it could also be seen as masculine, offering a lifelong career after a specific training, intellectual work, public service and some approximation to professional material rewards. But the notion of a profession also involved a range of ideals which could be read as gender-free, involving meritocratic status based on intellectual ability and specialised training rather than on ascribed factors such as gender.

[48]

These ambiguities enabled women to enter teaching, but also set up important stresses in their view of themselves as both feminine and professional. Ideas about women and teaching partly drew on notions of women's traditional responsibility for the care and development of children. In this respect there was a complementarity between ideas of femininity and ideas of professionalism. Young women entering teaching were offered a masculine profession with its associated salary and status, but within the feminine domain of work with children. The process of teacher education gave them pride in their intellectual abilities, a sense of professionalism, and identified them as worth investing in by their families and the state. Chapter Two will explore the ways in which this enabled easy access into

teaching, but at the same time created unfulfilled aspirations and expectations.

Once established as teachers, women had a number of professional identities open to them: professional woman, graduate, infant, elementary or secondary school teacher, subject specialist, class teacher, deputy head, or head teacher. But at the same time as being professional teachers, women teachers were also 'ordinary women', living their lives in different ways in the context of the same social norms of femininity as other women in the first decades of the twentieth century. They were members of families, daughters, aunts, sisters, older or younger women and, less easily, wives and mothers. Whilst women's subjectivity might encompass a range of identities, frictions could be set up between them, especially if these fell outside conventional constructions of femininity. Chapter Three examines women teachers' relationship to three prescriptive models of gendered behaviour: that women should seek marriage, that the family should be organised around a male breadwinner and home-centred wife, and that authority should be the prerogative of men rather than women. The particular employment and domestic circumstances of most women teachers did not fit these models, setting up tensions in how to be both a 'woman' and a 'teacher', between femininity and professionalism. Although these pressures did not have the same effect on all women teachers, they created a receptivity to feminist ideas and an awareness for many women teachers of the possibility of their individual and collective political agency.

The friction between the meanings of woman and teacher, between femininity and professionalism, also helps to explain the type of feminist politics and strategies which women teachers adopted. The historiography of feminism has recently centred on debates about 'equality' and 'difference', as both a major philosophical division within Western feminism, and as rhetorical tools in political campaigning. 'Equality' feminism refers to the assertion of women's right to be treated as equal citizens in exactly the same way as men. This approach stresses the similarities between women and men and downplays gender difference. The approach of 'difference' feminism is to argue that women can only achieve 'true' equality if their gender-specific roles and attributes (especially motherhood) are recognised and given greater social status. [49] In examining women teachers'

activism, I suggest that the distinction between feminine/ woman and professional/ teacher is analogous to the philosophical divisions within feminism between 'difference' and 'equality'. Women teachers could identify with both femininity and professionalism in their work as teachers; they could also utilise ideas about both difference and equality in their feminism.

Chapters Four and Five examine the collective process of politicisation and political activism which took place largely within the teachers' associations. Chapter Four discusses how from the beginning of the century women were actively encouraged to join the teachers' associations as fellow professionals. At the same time, the uneasiness felt by some of them about their unequal position in the profession, particularly their lower salaries, was given a tremendous focus and inspiration by the development of the militant suffrage movement. In the first half of the period to 1920, as women teachers developed their demands for equal pay and suffrage within the NUT and AAM, they preferred to develop their feminist strategies around ideas of equality and argued for a gender-free professionalism in teaching, in which there would be no distinction of salary, promotion prospects or job security based on sex. That is, they turned the gender-free meanings of professionalism into a political rhetoric for equality. In doing so they drew hostility from men teachers which can be understood not only as a straightforward contest for power between the sexes but also as a clash over the conflicting gendered meanings of the concept of 'professionalism'.

The experience of the First World War years crystallised the anxieties of many men teachers, while stimulating the aspirations of the women. However, in the period after the First World War, discussed in Chapter Five, feminism lost the expansive power to move and mobilise large numbers of women. In the interwar years the mainstream women's movement turned more towards arguments based on 'difference'. Women secondary school teachers remained largely impervious to these, but feminists in the elementary school sector did begin to use arguments around difference in some of their campaigning, though all showed a preference for the rhetoric of equal professionalism. The utility of these approaches for women teachers will be assessed in this chapter. The interwar years were not a favourable time to argue for equality when the whole profession was on

the defensive against education cuts. This was also a period in which anti-feminist men teachers organised separately to defend their superior professional position as men, and were able to undermine and subvert 'difference' arguments to their own ends.

Women teachers were a very diverse group. This study draws out some differences between elementary and secondary teachers in their political experiences as feminists, but cannot consider some other distinctions: for example between teachers of different religious denominations, or between rural and urban teachers. The discussion largely concentrates on the best qualified teachers, the certificated trained elementary school teacher and the graduate secondary schoolmistress. They represented the majority of politically active teachers. [50] One often neglected but crucially important distinction between women, that of marital status, is explored at length. Feminist historians have until recently assumed that women in the past moved through a life-cycle of youth, marriage and motherhood and the history of spinsterhood has been relatively neglected. It is demonstrated throughout this thesis that marriage was an important signifier of femininity, but one which most teachers were unable to attain at the same time as practising their profession, especially in the interwar years.

In terms of dominant constructions of femininity, being a woman and being a teacher was antithetical for many women teachers, since they were not allowed to marry and remain in the profession. This inability to achieve full adult womanhood in terms of the dominant culture had important repercussions for the majority of teachers who were single, the negative effects of which became more pronounced during the first decades of the twentieth century. Increased interwar emphasis on the psychological problems of the 'unfulfilled spinster', and women teachers' own use of 'difference' arguments against the marriage bar to suggest that married women had particular gifts as teachers (which spinsters therefore lacked) added to the pressures facing women teachers. Chapter Six examines the various ways in which women teachers could negotiate this impasse politically; by utilising feminist reworkings of the negative psychological meanings associated with spinsterhood, and also by creating practical structures - new forms of women's community adapted to the twentieth century - through their women teachers' associations.

Women teachers' battles over gender, status and authority in the schools took place in a period which historians have seen as one of crisis of masculinity and backlash against women. During the suffrage campaign, traditional ideas about gender relations were fundamentally challenged. The First World War brought a further test of masculinity, while at the same time apparently increasing women's social and political power. [51] A subsequent 'definite postwar backlash' has been identified, evidenced by overt male hostility expressed towards women workers (especially those in new areas of employment) and against feminism. [52] But this shift was not simply about reinstalling femininity by emphasising women's true vocation in domesticity and motherhood. It was also about rescuing masculinity from the effeminacy of peacetime. The 1920s were permeated with anxiety about reconciling the sexes and re-establishing complementary gender roles, an important aspect of which was reconstructing the social and cultural authority of masculinity. [53] In its high levels of feminist consciousness and commitment, in the fights over equality issues, and in the profoundly felt opposition between groups of men and women, the teaching profession is an interesting case study of gender politics played out in a complexly gendered profession, in the context of the prewar suffrage fight, and the 1920s backlash following the disruption of war. The political battles which preoccupied many women teachers challenged and reshaped ideas about masculinity and femininity, feminism and teacher professionalism.

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CHAPTER TWO

'THE GREATEST PROFESSION OPEN TO WOMEN EXCEPT MOTHERHOOD ITSELF':

THE ATTRACTIONS OF TEACHING AS A CAREER: 1900-1939

Young women choosing to enter teaching were in the relatively unusual position of considering an occupation which employed both men and women and which could be seen in different ways as both masculine and feminine. The gendering of work is normally allied with the process of sex segregation - certain types of employment are seen as appropriate for women because they are already done by women, and because they are associated with the cultural attributes of femininity. Though they are very powerful ideas, these gender stereotypes are not fixed; what is regarded as a female or a male job has changed over time. However, generally domestic tasks and caring work are seen as feminine areas of employment, while masculinity is associated with technological, intellectual and managerial work. This gendering of jobs also helps to construct the work identities of the people who do them, and how they see themselves as men and women in the world. [1]

Teaching was gendered in a particularly complex way, with both masculine and feminine elements emphasised in often contradictory forms. Partly because both men and women worked in it in large numbers, not necessarily in separate schools or in clearly differentiated types of work, teaching came to have a specific set of gendered meanings attached to it. It was, first of all, a masculine profession, which involved notions of training, intellectual work, public service and some approximation to professional material rewards. At the same time, teaching was associated with the feminine sphere of working with children and involvement in their nurturing and upbringing. Women teachers were public employees, but in a maternal role. Thus the woman teacher was in the unusual and contradictory position of being both a woman and a professional.

This combination was attractive to young women choosing their future careers - indeed both the professional and feminine aspects of teaching were deliberately emphasised in careers literature and by their advisors. Teaching offered the masculine privileges of

professionalism; public service, scope for the intellect, relatively good pay, security of tenure, the possibility of promotion and a subsidised training. These benefits were unobtainable to large numbers of women in most other white-collar work, and they weighed favourably with young women and their advisors. Typically, intending teachers were young women who enjoyed academic study and who also wanted to work with children. Women could choose to gain the masculine benefits of professionalism because, at the same time, teaching was seen as eminently respectable and feminine work for women. The process of teacher education also gave young women a pride in their intellectual abilities. They knew themselves to be high achievers and worth investing in by their families and by the state. During teacher training they also increasingly identified themselves with the idea of teacher professionalism.

Choosing and entering teaching was not in itself a direct step towards politicisation. But young women had particular expectations of teaching, which were further developed by their experiences of education and training. These expectations contributed to tensions which constantly recurred throughout their professional careers, between their lives as women and their work as teachers. For many women teachers these tensions were resolved and explained by their later contact with feminist ideas. Their education also gave them the tools for effective political activity should they later choose to engage in it: confidence in their judgement, self-esteem and financial security.

These formative influences were broadly similar for both elementary and secondary women teachers, though their routes into the teaching profession were different. Secondary school teachers normally had a university education, while elementary school teachers passed through a training college. In some cases secondary school teaching was not such a positive career choice for graduates in a limited female labour market; nevertheless these women still developed a sense of their own intellectual value and experienced the same tensions inherent in being a woman professional. The gendered nature of teaching shifted slightly over the period. Some elements became strengthened, for instance the importance of maternal instincts for women teachers. At the same time, teaching became a more ordinary

occupation, rather than one for a specially selected academic elite of young women.

Images of Teaching: Professionalism and Maternalism

Young women entered teacher training and the schools already armed with cultural understandings of what it meant to be a woman teacher. Some of these ideas about teaching were deliberately promoted; for example, by careers advisors, by educationalists, and by their own teachers encouraging them to enter the profession. Other ideas were more indirectly acquired as a result of general knowledge about teaching as an occupation for women, and of course by their own experience as pupils within the education system.

The sets of ideas discussed here could be found in several places - in careers books addressed to girls and their parents, and in speeches made to girls, to teachers, or to education conferences. These discussions of teaching as a career were reported in educational journals such as the Times Educational Supplement (hereafter TES) and The Journal of Education and thus circulated further among teachers and educators. The TES had a central role, not simply in reflecting mainstream educational opinion and reporting major events and new ideas, but also, as a liberal establishment paper, in reproducing dominant ideas about education and teaching.

One of the more powerful and attractive aspects of teaching for women was the idea of it as a profession. The idea of teaching as a profession was usually presented to young women in an apparently ungendered way, but this disguised its masculine meanings. Teaching as a profession involved the notion of a career, a life's work after a specific training, open only to those of a sufficient academic capacity. Each of these ideas in itself was normally attached only to men's work, but the words 'profession' and 'training' occurred repeatedly in careers manuals and in the presentation of both elementary and secondary teaching as a occupation for women. The idea of a profession and career also included the promise of material benefits generally only available to men, of good pay and reasonable prospects for advancement. [2]

Nevertheless, teaching was presented as appropriate for the academically gifted girl. It was work of the brain, demanding and

satisfying to the intellect, providing cerebral rewards normally typified as masculine. In the words of an Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM) pamphlet it was 'at once an intellectual problem and a service to humanity, not a mere livelihood.' [3] Similarly, the following extract from a 1914 survey of women's professions addressed the potential teacher as a woman, but offered her the male satisfactions of intellectual work - seeking after truth - and leadership.

The woman [teacher] among girls has the privilege of handing on to them the keys to the intellectual treasures where she has enriched herself, of setting their feet in the paths which have led her to fruitful fields ... to watch over the birth and growth of the reasoning powers of her pupils and guide them to intellectual victories, initiating them into the great fellowship of workers for truth. [4]

Opportunities to exercise leadership, taken together with the intellectual aspects of teaching, were more often mentioned in relation to secondary school teaching, where a university degree was normally required, although these were also offered as attractions of elementary teaching. [5] Thus teaching as a career both required and validated the desire of women to extend and use their education and intellectual powers.

A central feature of masculine professionalism was acquiring a recognised place in the public world. For teachers this meant serving the state. Teaching was described in 1910 as 'one of the most important public duties conceivable', [6] and in 1917 as 'a profession which, while it promises a career, also offers an unequalled opportunity for National Service.' [7] This latter description was offered to women by a TES editorial, and at a time of war may have carried connotations of serving their country in a parallel way to men. Such descriptions spoke specifically to women, but offered them the possibility of acknowledged citizenship through important service to the state, in the way that Anne Summers has argued was attractive to military nurses. [8] Women, of course, were denied the parliamentary vote until halfway through the period. In the links between teaching, public service and citizenship, they were offered the chance to become quasi-citizens.

These gender confusions were well illustrated in a speech made at the opening of Gipsy Hill Training College in 1917 by the new Principal, who said:

For education must be elevated to a religion, and those who deal with it are priests. Women must enter the religion of education prepared to work for the same purification of spirit, the same consecration of self as does the priest. Then shall they enter their schools with powers untold, to take their place with priests and scientists as guardians of humanity. [9]

Students were being addressed here as women, but were offered specifically male models of the priesthood and science, major embodiments of power and authority. It is significant that the speaker identified women teachers with the male vocation of the priesthood, instead of the gender-appropriate, but passive and less powerful, image of the nun.

The idea of teaching as a vocation had been used in the nineteenth century by women educational reformers to justify middle-class women's work as teachers in the new girls' secondary schools and colleges. Martha Vicinus suggests that there was a shift from the idea of teaching as a semi-religious vocation to its definition in modern, male terms as an occupation and profession in the early twentieth century. [10] This would have been accelerated by the rapid expansion of state financed secondary schools after 1902. There is, then, an apparent break in this period between the definition of vocation as religious self-sacrifice and more simply as personal suitability. It is significant that the representation of teaching as a vocation was most frequently found before and during the First World War, at a time when pay and conditions in teaching were relatively unattractive. [11] A particular vocation for teaching was deemed appropriate for the demands made of secondary school teachers, [12] but it was seen as equally necessary to face the conditions in elementary schools.

Many ...[new teachers] must be women, and women, moreover, with a high sense of vocation, prepared to face the trials of large classes and the difficult task of giving instruction in very elementary subjects. [13]

At the opposite pole to the representation of the masculine attractions of the teaching profession was its comparison to the mothering work carried out in the home. Teaching appeared to be an essentially feminine occupation: 'Home-making and teaching, [are] two of the most womanly of women's occupations...' [14] Similarly, the 1925 Board of Education Report on the Training of Teachers suggested that 'It is probably true that work connected with children appeals strongly to many women.' [15] There are two contexts within which the connection of women teachers with maternalism in this period can be discussed: the idea of social maternalism embodied in women's role in some parts of the public sphere from the mid-nineteenth century, and the state's interest in motherhood from the 1900s. These contexts are to some extent separable, though they also overlap.

The idea that women - implicitly middle-class women - had particular skills, spiritual qualities and knowledge by virtue of their sex, class position and experience as wives and mothers, had been used to justify their entry into the public spheres of voluntary and philanthropic work in the mid nineteenth century, into certain spheres of local government as Poor Law Guardians and members of local School Boards in the later nineteenth century and also into paid work as nurses, health visitors and factory inspectors. All of these were considered acceptable extensions of women's particular strengths and virtues into the public and political worlds; later labelled social housekeeping or social maternalism. [16] This notion of social maternalism and feminine social service was similarly used to sell a teaching career to young women and linked to the idea of vocation. It was suggested that women might be particularly likely to possess the personal attributes needed for teaching. 'Great patience, high ideals, the sense of service are of the essence of teaching, and these qualities are the gift of many, if not most, women.' [17] Women could use their particular qualities and gifts in a feminine ideal of service.

The idea of social maternalism was invoked particularly in attempts to recruit middle-class girls 'who are interested in social questions and anxious to do their part' into elementary teaching, described as 'social service of a kind which should specially appeal to the type of girl desired.' [18] In a comparable manner to nineteenth century poor-visiting and other voluntary work, the trained

teacher was to present a cultural role model to working-class pupils. 'Despite those visits from wrathful mothers, of which the mistress of an elementary school has painful experience, her lot is often the happy one of representing some approach to an ideal in modes of thought and manner of expression.' [19] In fact very few girls from the established middle class entered elementary schools as teachers in this period, though we might speculate that some girls from the lower middle class or secure working class may have responded to the idea of 'doing good' among slum children, in the same way that their more affluent sisters entered settlement houses.

As the school system took on aspects of social work previously carried out by religious institutions or charities, for example school meals for needy children and Care Committees during the 1900s, so the additional role of the teacher as social worker became more obvious. [20] After the First World War, teaching young children was said to be:

one of the best forms of reconstruction work. The care of the children brings the teacher into closer touch with their mothers, who often come to her for advice in any and every subject: thus she may be a means of futhering the social betterment of the homes of the country. [21]

Reconstruction work was also service to the state, but in this instance it took a particularly feminine rather than masculine form, again in imparting superior knowledge to poor families. This notion was also used to describe and justify women's work as health visitors and social workers in this period; a form of philanthropy increasingly carried out on a more professional basis by female state employees. [22]

Social service and social maternalism could, at this time, co-exist with the idea of teachers as trained professionals. In 1914, the TES called for more 'keen-minded, high-souled, and thoroughly well-equipped teachers'. [23] But the social service appeal of teaching was clearly gendered as feminine, and thus sat uneasily with the masculine elements of professionalism. School teaching was not simply an extension of the late nineteenth-century ideas of social maternalism and women's opportunities in the public sphere. It was paid rather than voluntary work, and involved professional training and a body of knowledge and expertise as well as natural feminine

attributes. [24] The woman teacher adopted a concept of professionalism, saw herself in many respects as equivalent to the man teacher and thus utilised notions of professional masculine equality alongside her superior knowledge as a woman. Teaching as social service, therefore, was caught somewhere between professionalism and social maternalism and there was always some tension existing between the two.

Teaching as a form of women's social service was articulated more clearly in the first half of the period. As with the idea of vocationalism, this may have been connected to intermittent teacher shortages and low salaries, as compared with the post First World War period when the situation was often one of teacher surplus. This particular connection with nineteenth-century female voluntarism and escape from the private sphere may also have had less resonance as the twentieth century advanced, especially after the great hiatus of the First World War. Public elementary schools came to be seen less as mass education to civilise the working class and the slum child and more as the normal form of primary schooling for most children. But the decreasing emphasis on teaching as social service was also linked to the different approaches to motherhood and the public sphere which came into play from the turn of the century.

By the end of the nineteenth century the state became concerned with promoting particular concepts of correct motherhood and childrearing, and also with encouraging women to become mothers. This was partly the result of high infant mortality rates among the working class and of the falling birth rate, at first most obvious among middle-class women. This concern was expressed particularly through education policies: the feeding of poor schoolchildren from 1906; medical inspection from 1907; and in more intense teaching of domestic subjects to girls in both elementary and secondary schools. [25] At the same time, new pedagogic forms invoking the individual maternal qualities of teachers were developed. The individual woman teacher was increasingly represented as someone who used her maternal instincts in her professional work, who might actually teach homecraft and mothercraft to girls (though this was normally done by specialist teachers), and who would herself be suitable material for future motherhood.

Maternal instincts were seen as no less relevant for women secondary school teachers than for elementary teachers. The President of the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM) in 1919 asked: 'Can women, who are not wives and mothers, possibly find any greater work than that of teaching, involving as it does the care of the child's physique, the developing of the mind, the training of the character?' [26]

And careers advice of this period set out to appeal to women on the grounds of their biological femininity, their maternal instincts, and physical attributes:

Girls of good Secondary School education, good carriage and address, pleasant-voiced and mannered, with a love for young children, should find in the Nursery School a healthy outlet for emotions which are pent up, and often atrophied, under the stress of office or business life. I have noticed how a girl's natural attractiveness develops as she gets into closer relations with little ones, and in America the work of the Kindergartner seems to be regarded as one of the best preparations for motherhood. [27]

'A genuine interest in and love of children' was normally indicated as a requirement of elementary school teaching, and the equation of teaching and motherhood was made most frequently in relation to the teachers of younger children. [28] One government Inspector commented:

Indeed, this very mother-love is the characteristic feature of the born teacher of "babies" - the hall-mark of her high calling. For true mother-love, often more discerning and more discriminating than that of the actual mother, is abundantly found in the heart of many a young unmarried woman, and although as a teacher she has to distribute it over many units it is often more judiciously and more intelligently bestowed than if she had but one or two children to look after. [29]

The appeal to intelligent maternalism is part of what Carolyn Steedman has called the pedagogy of 'the mother made conscious'. This was a formal development of the idea of teaching as a form of mothering, using on the one hand the female teacher's natural maternal feelings, but uniting these with an informed, intellectual knowledge

of child development. This notion of the necessarily feminine task of teaching young children was derived from Froebelian educational ideas of the nineteenth century and was adopted into state education policy from the 1900s. The cultural and social role of educating the young was conflated with the biological relationship of nurturance and mothering. [30] The Inspector's comment above unites the idea that mother-love is instinctive to women with the notion that the woman teacher can make intelligent use of such mother-love. Indeed, the woman teacher here is elevated above the biological mother who acts as a foil to the former's professionalism. Similarly, the 1925 Board of Education Report on the Training of Teachers used both ideas in its description of elementary teaching as a suitable 'field of effort for the girl of average intellectual capacity and normal maternal instincts', though it is significant here that 'masculine' academic ability needed to be no more than average when combined with essential femininity. [31]

The over-emphasis on 'maternal instincts' in the later part of the period could undermine women teachers' professional status, when these two ideas were brought together in uneasy relationship. Motherly instincts could be considered on occasion to have more importance than training in relation to infant teaching especially. Unqualified and uncertificated women teachers continued to be used for teaching the youngest children, especially in rural schools, and these women were seen as 'motherly girls', their qualifications residing in their gender. [32] Despite increased emphasis on the need for training for teachers, there was 'always room for [unqualified] women who have a real gift for teaching'. [33] Infant teachers were sometimes characterised as overpaid baby minders since any woman was considered capable of doing their work: 'the man in the street... thinks that to give a teacher two or three hundred a year to mind a few babies is absurdly extravagant.' [34]

The idea of teaching as a maternal and feminine sphere of work was present throughout this period. In the interwar period, however, the influence of new ideas about the political and social importance of motherhood to the nation, combined with an increased emphasis on the individual woman's capacity and duty to be a mother had an effect on the image of the women teacher, whose individual maternal instincts were increasingly cited as a requirement for her work. In 1931, in a

speech to a meeting of secondary school girls about careers, Professor Dover Wilson - a well-known literary scholar - voiced the opinion that: 'Teaching was the greatest profession open to women, except motherhood itself.' [35] Teaching as social maternalism, then, was gradually qualified by the idea of teaching as the actual and individual exercise of maternal instincts. In the notion of the woman teacher as professional mother, professionalism was still important, but the balance within this set of ideas had shifted. Rather than being an argument used by women themselves to justify a place in the public sphere, maternalism was now a quality required of women if they were to do certain kinds of professional work. The idea that feminine qualities were relevant for work in the public sphere remained, but the power to define these qualities had shifted to some degree away from women themselves, to their employers and the state.

The combination of these varied images of teaching was attractive to young women. As teachers women were offered masculine privilege - scope for the intellect, material rewards, service to the state and access to citizenship - but without having to reject their femininity, their identity as women. On the contrary, teaching increasingly required this of them. Prospective teachers, after all, had received the same basic education and socialisation as other girls of their class, and had learnt to value femininity and see it as part of their personal identity. The package of ideas offered by the teaching profession - masculine rewards, but with no loss of femininity - brought together a concept of professionalism that was rarely offered to young women in this period. But the disparate elements of this package did not have equal value. Greater status was attached to the professional strand than the maternal, yet as a set of ideas normally appropriated as masculine, professionalism carried potentially greater taboos for women. The femininity and maternalism of women teachers served to counter that taboo. Women teachers internalised a contradictory cluster of ideas in choosing the profession, but their working lives would reveal that these elements were incompatible and riven with tensions.

The Appeal of Teaching: Academic Work with Children

These images of professionalism and femininity meshed with ideas that young women already had about themselves, both as women and as

academic achievers. Certainly, evidence from oral interviews shows that young women responded to these contrasting ideas and adopted them. In the first place, teaching as a career was only seen to be a possibility for the more academically able girls. 'Bright' working-class and lower middle-class girls who could do well in secondary school were offered elementary school teaching as a goal; girls who could achieve a place at university had the option of teaching in a secondary school. At the turn of the century, able elementary school children would be picked out to become pupil teachers, continuing their own education at pupil teacher centres and secondary schools. Mrs Dan from Colchester and her friend were the only children from her elementary school to win this opportunity 'for years and years'.

If you were a bit gifted and clever at school you didn't get a chance to get a scholarship at the grammar school like there were for boys in those days, but they dragged you into the teaching profession, you see. Well anyhow, we went up [to the pupil-teacher centre], my friend and I and I suppose we were good, you know, at our work, and after we'd been there two years it became a high school... [36]

During the 1900s, pupil-teachership was gradually discouraged in favour of a longer full-time secondary education for intending teachers. Almost all of my interviewees had won scholarships to their secondary schools and were well aware of their achievement in doing so. Mrs Nan McMillan recalled,

I won a scholarship in 1917 and in Bermondsey in that year two in a thousand of the school population at the age of 11, two in a thousand won a scholarship. ...then your name went up on an Honours Board [at the elementary school] and I was taken along to the nearest grammar school ... [37]

So, girls who were considering teaching were already high achievers, set for 'masculine' academic success. They were above the average and differentiated from the ordinary girls. Many expressed a desire to continue their education: 'I so enjoyed school I didn't want to leave at 16, I wanted to hang on.' [38] Going through to the sixth forms of secondary schools, which were often small in the interwar years and where most were encouraged to proceed to higher education,

further confirmed them as girls 'with brains'. Several described themselves as intellectually bright and well educated.

Matric and Higher School Certificate was a very thorough and deep education and the standard of entry to training colleges was very high. As far as I was concerned - this sounds a bit conceited - I was very adequately qualified to go to training college and learn to teach. [39]

Some elementary school teachers said they could - or should - have gone to university. They had the necessary entry requirements, but not the financial backing. These young women had a sense of themselves as academically successful and often saw teaching as a way to pursue intellectual goals, as the means of obtaining a subsidised higher education, and, of course, to exercise their academic interests in the profession itself: 'you began to think of what you could do with your academic subject if you had a free rein.' [40] One secondary school mistress emphasised this strongly:

I thoroughly enjoyed teaching it [general science and biology], and I enjoyed the intellectual challenge of something that was always new, ... you were always learning something and I used to go to courses and things... I started liking learning when I was a prep school child and I always have. [41]

The same respondent rejected the civil service as there was little scope at that time for women to achieve management positions, and 'never thought' of nursing, explaining that she wanted to have control and responsibility in her work.

The other basic, and clearly gendered, attraction of teaching was as work with children. Women often cited either experience of or interest in children as a key factor which led them into teaching. Mrs Mary Barrett, a primary school teacher from London, was typical:

I was the only girl in my family and had three brothers younger than me, and I always wanted to be a teacher because, I was a Sunday school teacher and always dealing with kids, you know... [42]

Secondary school teachers were less likely to identify an interest in children, but this was still important for some.

I think my interest was more in children than in teaching as such and I think it was probably Brownies and Guides and living in a large family and knowing lots of people... I liked being with children and I knew perfectly well that I could manage them. [43]

Some teachers were very clear that they had no interest in little children and therefore trained to teach older ones, because the work promised to be more intellectually stimulating.

The notion of teaching as social service was also expressed by elementary and secondary school teachers. Mrs Mary Hatch, born in 1886 in Yorkshire, came from a politically active Liberal family, and said her parents brought their children up to be interested in public work. [44] Some secondary school heads seemed to view elementary teaching as social work, and encouraged their scholarship girls into it, perhaps with the idea that as educated working-class young women they could now pass on civilised values to the rest. Miss Ruth Drysdale, who described herself as from a poor family, won a scholarship to a very middle class and academic girls' high school, and was encouraged to enter teaching:

I always remember my head, ... she was a very nice woman, she said to me, go into elementary school teaching, do something for it, and I always remember that and I thought, 'I don't think I can do much'.

She did, however, take on this approach herself. 'I know that one had some kind of vision, of course, and if you went to a good teacher training college they extended that vision.' [45] For young women from families which were not much better off than those of the children they taught, their position as educated role models in elementary schools might also serve to confirm them as upwardly socially mobile.

Elementary school teachers working in inner city areas did endorse the ideals of social service, but sometimes in a more radical manner than the careers literature prescribed. Describing a different incident, Miss Ruth Drysdale said: 'They [wealthy people] really hadn't a clue of what poor people had to put up with. I always felt that having been poor myself I did understand poor families.' [46] Miss Vera Reid, having found it financially impossible to continue an

academic career, also chose secondary school teaching as a form of social work:

I was a bit starry-eyed and thought, you know, that I ought to help the community, and no way could I get grants for anything else I might have done, like social work. They just weren't available. ... I thought that in some way I could influence the community by teaching, but I wasn't a born teacher, that's for sure. ... [but] I was a lot better than some teachers were, in opening children's eyes to what went on in society... [47]

These teachers identified both the maternal, social work side of teaching and the intellectual aspects as important to them. They were bright scholarship girls who also liked children.

The Appeal of Teaching: A Well Paid, Secure Career

The material rewards of teaching - the masculine fruits of professional status - were also important to young women and to their advisors. Young women were often guided into teaching by their parents, especially their mothers, or by teachers and headmistresses who identified the attractions of teaching as a secure career with status. [48] During the period 1900-1939 there was a fairly limited range of occupations open to secondary school girls of any class. Sisters and school friends of my interviewees had typically become nurses, telephonists and clerical workers 'in business' or in the civil service. Daughters of more solidly middle-class families had no wider choice of occupations, though they may have had a wider range of opportunities within these. The range of jobs even for well-educated women remained fairly limited, especially before the First World War. [49] The only one of these occupations which significantly expanded for women in this period was office work, although opportunities in secondary school teaching also increased on a smaller scale.

Those advising young women recognised that the teaching profession continued to offer certain advantages throughout most of the period compared to the civil service, clerical work and nursing. One of the main attractions of a teaching career for women was the reasonable and steadily increasing salary it offered, at least after 1920. Even before the First World War, teachers' salaries did not compare badly with those of equivalent occupations. Clara Collet

wrote at the turn of the century that secondary school teaching was the best paid employment for graduate women, although salaries were not high. [50] Frances Widdowson has shown that mothers identified women teachers' salary levels and their resulting economic independence as important factors in encouraging their daughters to enter elementary teaching in this period. [51] A 1914 survey of women's employment commented: 'Nor must it be forgotten that, inadequate as is her salary, it contrasts not unfavourably with that of other occupations for women, e.g. clerkships and the Civil Service...' [52]

The executive grade of the civil service offered women salaries which were comparable to teaching, but by 1934 it still only employed 744 women. Although these posts offered a salary of £100 p.a. between the wars, rising to £300 p.a., they were highly competitive, and almost all young women entering the civil service worked in the clerical and typing grades. The lower clerical grade offered salaries of £60-180 p.a. during the 1920s and 1930s, with the possibility of promotion to the higher clerical grade, where salaries ranged from £230-300 p.a. Shorthand typists earned approximately £75-115 p.a. plus cost of living bonuses. [53] The average salaries for women in the civil service in 1935 were £190 p.a. for clerical officers, £130 p.a. for clerical assistants and typists, and £162 for shorthand typists. [54]

The wages of women clerical workers in the private sector varied according to the type of work and type of firm. Before the First World War, the majority earned only 10-15s per week; only the best educated shorthand typists could command more than £100 per annum. [55] Clerks and secretaries working in banks, insurance companies and commercial firms, the better paid end of the office work hierarchy, could earn between £100 and £150 p.a. between the wars at quite a young age but there were few opportunities to progress to a higher level. [56] Routh gives the average salaries of women clerks at £45 p.a. in 1911-13, £106 in 1924 and £99 in 1935, but a young woman with a secondary education could probably command more than this. [57] In 1930 the chief inspector of the London County Council 'pointed out that [a woman teacher's] ... salary under the Burnham scale compared very favourably with that of typists and shop girls, and they had a pension to come...' [58]

Hospital nurses enjoyed an equivalent status to teaching as a profession, but their salaries were much lower. In 1928 the feminist writer Vera Brittain observed that

the nursing profession, which consists of women who have passed through a long course of technical training, is relatively worse off as regards pay, hours and general conditions of labour than any similar class of worker. [59]

Hospital nurses received between £60 p.a. (staff nurse) and £80 p.a. (ward sister) in 1930 plus free board and lodging. [60] Routh estimates the average salary of nurses (including these benefits) as £55 p.a. in 1913, £106 in 1924 and £133 in 1936. [61]

In contrast to these occupations, pay levels for women teachers were comparatively good for most, if not all, of the period. Just before and during the First World War, women elementary teachers' pay was perceived as only 'more or less adequate'. [62] The average salary of a certificated assistant woman teacher was £96 in 1914, rising to £145 in 1919 and £238 p.a. in 1921 after the Burnham increases restored the damage done to teachers' salaries by wartime inflation. [63]

After 1902, when local education authorities (LEAs) began to set up public secondary schools, secondary school teachers were normally better paid than elementary teachers. However before the war they were less likely to benefit from salary scales than elementary teachers, and before and during the First World War, average salaries remained at around £130 p.a. [64] The Burnham salary increases at the end of the First World War (and improved pension provision) considerably encouraged the recruitment of women to both sectors of the profession. [65] Secondary school teachers maintained their financial advantage over elementary teachers with the Burnham pay settlement and by 1923 the average salary of a graduate mistress was £359 p.a. and of a non-graduate £289 p.a. [66]

In 1938 Margaret Cole commented:

... anyone who has at any time given serious advice on careers to girls from secondary schools who want to earn their own livings, and for that purpose has studied the various kindly handbooks issued by well-meaning organisations, cannot, I think, fail to be rather depressed by the low general level of financial reward

that is promised ... generally speaking, the educated working woman who is making £300 a year is doing very well indeed. [67]

Despite cuts in salaries in 1923 and 1931, women teachers were well within striking distance of that £300 a year, and many earned more. As they moved up the salary scale, women teachers enjoyed a comfortable income by the time they were in their thirties, unlike office workers or nurses. Only women in the upper reaches of the civil service or in the established professions earned more, but these women were numerically insignificant. [68]

Women teachers' salaries also appeared attractive because they approximated more closely to the rates paid to their male colleagues than was the case in most women's occupations. The average wage for all women workers in 1913-14, including both white-collar and manual workers, was 54% of the male average, and by 1922-24, the proportion had risen to only 57% [69] In the white collar occupations and semi-professions, women achieved a higher proportion of the male rate. [70] In local government this was 60-68% of men's salaries when doing the same class of work; qualified women nurses received 70% of male nurses' pay at the end of the period; and in the civil service the ratio was roughly 80% in the same grades. [71] In teaching, women's salaries were approximately 75% of those of men with the same qualifications and status before 1920. The Burnham Committees established the relationship of women to men teachers' pay at a ratio of 4:5 for both elementary and secondary teachers, and in the interwar years women teachers' average salaries rose to approximately 80% of their male colleagues'. [72] This relatively small differential gave the impression of a broadly equivalent status between women and men teachers.

Along with salary levels, pensions and security of tenure were also important factors to young women entering teaching and to their parents. There was no guarantee of a pension or continued employment for office workers in commercial firms, and in local government the conditions varied widely. [73] In nursing, it could be difficult to find work after middle age, and provision for old age before 1914 was precarious. By the late 1930s most, but not all, hospitals had pension schemes. [74] Before the First World War pensions were not generally provided for secondary teachers, who had to make their own arrangements, but elementary teachers did have a government scheme.

[75] Pension provision for both sectors was considerably improved by the 1918 Teachers Superannuation Act and clearly added to the appeal of the profession. [76] Similarly, security in employment was a positive inducement to women entering teaching. [77] The only occupation which offered parallel security of employment and pension provision was the civil service.

One important aspect of security of employment for women was the existence of a marriage bar. Until the marriage bar was widely enforced in teaching in the early 1920s it was often possible for elementary teachers to continue after marriage if they desired. Most other women's occupations of similar status had rigid marriage bars. Women civil servants were subject to a strict marriage bar and a bar was also enforced in most commercial offices. [78] Married women were not normally employed as hospital nurses, as they were required to live in, but could work as midwives or private nurses. Nurses working for public authorities were subject to a marriage bar, however, and the number of married nurses fell dramatically during the period. [79]

Across England and Wales a significant minority of women elementary school teachers were married - 10-12% - and the proportion was much higher in London and in some rural areas, despite between one third and one half of LEAs operating a marriage bar for elementary teachers before the First World War. [80] During and just after the First World War married women were encouraged to return to teaching, so that by 1921 as many as 18.9% of women teachers were married. [81] The possibility of work after marriage was emphasised in some of the recruiting literature at this time. [82]

However between the years 1921 and 1923 the vast majority of education committees (with the tacit agreement of the Board of Education) decided to dispense with the employment of married women as 'the most obvious and natural way' of mitigating teacher unemployment and the effects of education cuts. [83] By 1926 about three-quarters of all local authorities operated some sort of marriage bar. [84] By the 1930s, the proportion of women elementary teachers who were married had dropped to about 10%, although this figure conceals great local variations. [85] In most areas married women continued to be employed as supply or temporary teachers when needed, without having the security or benefits of a permanent post. Some LEAs employed widows and married women whose husbands were unemployed due to injury

or chronic illness. In the mid and late 1930s the situation eased slightly when the London County Council and a few other LEAs reviewed and raised their marriage bars. [86] Women secondary school teachers were similarly subject to LEA marriage bars in the period, and had no tradition of employment after marriage in any case. [87]

It seems that the mothers of young women were well aware of the possible insurance value of a teaching certificate against an unsatisfactory marriage. One mother wrote to the National Union of Women Teachers in 1935 requesting a list of LEAs which retained married women, as her daughter was about to begin a teaching career. [88] Since in most other occupations there was also a marriage bar, elementary school teaching offered the best guarantee for independence throughout life, as the marriage bar was never complete, although it did become considerably more difficult for married women to continue in the profession in the interwar years.

For the ambitious young woman, teaching also offered promotion prospects which were better than in most similar occupations, although without massive financial rewards. Nurses had reasonable prospects of advancement to ward sister, nurse-tutor, or matrons' posts, though these offered unattractive salaries. [89] Clerical work in private companies was 'a blind alley employment' even for educated young women. [90] There was virtually no chance of promotion for women clerks and typists, although a promotion ladder was available to male clerks. [91] Promotion in the civil service was possible in theory, though very limited for women, especially in the 1920s, when the claims of ex-servicemen to the administrative and executive grades took priority. [92]

In contrast, women teachers' chances of promotion were not perceived as being particularly good, but they did exist in both elementary and secondary schools throughout the period. [93] Women had opportunities for headships in infant and girls' schools (both junior and senior) in the elementary system, and in girls' secondary schools. They might also compete for headships of mixed junior schools, sometimes against men. Promotion prospects diminished during the period for all teachers, but were always rather less for secondary school mistresses than for their primary school counterparts. While 1 in about every 5 or 6 certificated women elementary teachers was a head in the 1930s, a secondary school headship was available for only

1 in every 25 mistresses. [94] However posts of special responsibility, for example as subject heads, were also available in secondary schools, which had extra pay attached to them. [95]

Perhaps the most immediate consideration for young women choosing a career was the expense of training and the necessity of earning a living quickly. In this respect office work was the only choice open to many girls who had to support themselves, or at least contribute to their keep, immediately upon leaving school. If they could not afford any sort of further or professional training, women could enter the executive grade of the civil service (by competition) straight from school at 18, and lower grades at a younger age. Commercial offices could be entered at school leaving age, though varying amounts of money might be spent on training in shorthand and typing first. [96] Although nurses were paid a small salary while they received their three year training, the age of entry was very late at 20-21 years after the First World War, dropping to 18 or 19 in the 1930s. [97]

Although the long period of teacher training was a disadvantage for young women who could not afford to wait until they were 20 or older before earning their own living, against this must be set the positive attraction of the subsidised education and training which was offered to both elementary and secondary teachers. [98] In the 1900s most intending elementary teachers made use of the various government financed schemes to support their education after the age of 16, as bursars, student teachers, or, less often, pupil-teachers. [99] The bursar system was introduced in 1907 with the aim of encouraging the secondary education of intending teachers in preference to pupil-teachership. Maintenance grants were awarded to free place pupils over 16 to enable them to stay at school for another year. (Indeed this policy change by the Board of Education itself helped to expand the number of municipal secondary schools, some of which were upgraded former pupil-teacher centres.) Generally, these pupils then continued for a further year as student teachers before going to training college or (increasingly less common) becoming uncertificated teachers. Student teachers attended secondary school for one day a week and undertook elementary school teaching under supervision for the rest of the week, for which they were paid a small salary. [100]

These schemes were supplemented before the age of 16 by local authority provision of some free places in secondary schools

specifically for intending teachers, and where necessary, maintenance grants up to the age of 16 or 17. It was estimated in the mid 1920s that the majority of intending teachers had benefitted by these means in some way before being 'recognised' by the Board of Education as entrants to the profession. By the 1920s, however, it had become more common for intending teachers to stay at school until the age of 18, and this trend was aided by a gradual extension of maintenance allowances which were given without regard to a pupil's intention. Many LEA schemes for student teachers were discontinued and the number of student teachers fell considerably in the late 1920s. [101]

From the 1900s prospective elementary school teachers shared their secondary education with young women who were destined to become teachers in secondary schools. The normal route for the latter was to take a degree and usually a teacher training course, although a significant proportion of secondary school teachers throughout the period were not graduates. In 1911 the Board of Education endorsed the four-year course, consisting of a three-year degree course plus a postgraduate year of teacher training, and supported it with student grants parallel to those for training college students. [102] The majority of students who undertook this course went on to teach in secondary schools, though after the First World War increasing numbers entered the elementary sector, normally serving in senior schools for pupils over 11. [103]

On most counts, then, teaching compared very favourably as a career with parallel occupations. Only the civil service offered equivalent security, pensions and pay, but relatively few women were employed at the executive or administrative levels during this period, compared to the thousands who had the opportunity to enter teaching. The expense of teacher training may have been a deterrent, but the possibility of working after marriage or widowhood (not entirely extinguished during this period) may have weighed with entrants or their parents. Teaching offered women better pay than most other occupations save the higher professions such as medicine, a subsidised training, a pension, promotion opportunities, financial independence and status. These material advantages weighed strongly with young women and their advisors. Some mothers were very keen to ensure the financial independence of their daughters. Mrs Alice Bradshaw, who became an elementary school teacher said:

I didn't understand it at the time but [my mother] was determined that both of us [sisters] would have some form of either work or career so that we weren't dependent upon men or anything and we could make our own way if we wanted to. [104]

Several teachers felt they had been steered towards teaching because of its recognised advantages. Asked about which alternative occupations they would have ideally liked to enter, they mentioned medicine, art, academic research or archive work, journalism or law. These professions were out of the question because of the expensive training or because they were not secure. Mrs Mary Barrett made this point clear when she said: 'I'm very very fond of art and I went to the Camberwell School of Arts, and I did want to be an artist, especially fashion art. But my mother said, it's not safe, you stick to teaching!' [105] One woman thought of following her father into the law, but before 1918 it was not possible for a woman to become a solicitor. [106] All these women had professional aspirations which were channelled into teaching, in which they also had an interest, and which all said they found fulfilling. They themselves generally claimed that the pay and the pension were less important to them, as young women, than to their parents, but they recognised that they had to earn their own living, and believed this was the way that would suit them best. 'If you were a woman at that time, it was one of the best professions, except medicine or the law.' [107]

For young women who had had a good secondary education, teaching was reasonably easy to enter. It was also seen as very suitable, since it was respected and respectable. These ideas, often repeated by teachers, are interesting since again they suggest both masculine status and feminine suitability. Teaching was held in high esteem because it denoted academic ability, status in the community or class status, and adequate pay and security. 'Well, of course, teachers were very respected in those days and I think you started at £180 a year, £3 a week, which was a very good salary you see, and you were very respected, and if you were able to get into a training college,... it was good.' [108] At the same time teaching was respectable because it signified that class status had either been maintained for the middle-class woman or achieved by the upwardly mobile lower middle-class or working-class woman, and without any loss of femininity. One secondary school teacher pointed out, 'there was

no opposition to women going into teaching. It was seen as a nice occupation, you didn't have to fight to be teachers.' [109] Margaret Miles, who became a leading secondary school head and educationalist, commented:

Teaching had always been thought of as an honourable profession in my family. It was approved because it was a safer and more suitable profession for girls than others were then thought to be; and also in the Welsh and Nonconformist milieu from which I came it was respected for what it was. [110]

Conditions in teaching were not only superior to those of other occupations for women for most of this period, but, superficially at any rate, appeared to roughly parallel the rewards of men teachers. This sense of entering a properly structured profession is likely to have fostered potential women teachers' sense of professional equality and aspiration. Teaching was the easiest way to achieve professional status for women, because of its subsidised training, the constant large numbers required, and, not least important, because of its feminine image. A career as a woman teacher, as a professional mother, was a way of satisfactorily neutralising the unfeminine aspects of a young woman's academic achievements and professional ambition. Teaching was feminine, safe and respectable.

But while maternal feeling in connection with their chosen career was genuinely felt by many aspiring teachers, it was at the same time an enabling device, which validated and facilitated their entry into a profession chosen at least partly for intellectual and material reasons. That these 'masculine' attractions often weighed more strongly is shown by the fact that the most 'feminine' sector of school teaching, infant teaching, was the least favoured in practice in this period. Among elementary training college students there was a distinct pattern of preference for certain types of posts. From the mid 1920s onwards, at least, there was an over-supply of new teachers seeking posts teaching older girls, paralleled by a relative dearth of infant teachers. [111] This was the case even during periods of teacher unemployment and despite two advantages of infant teaching: the same salaries as for teachers of older children, and the chance of a headship at a younger age. Women teachers preferred to teach older girls if they could, often because they had specialised in one particular subject during training and desired to teach that subject.

[112] This indicates that women went into teaching on the whole less to utilise their 'maternal instincts' but for its material rewards or because they had an academic interest in a particular subject which they wanted to teach. As Vera Brittain pointed out: 'Teaching is very often the first career that occurs to a girl with intellectual inclinations.' [113]

Teacher Education and Training: Pride in Professional Achievements

It might be suggested that the 'masculine' elements of teaching appealed to some ambitious and independent minded young women who were already intellectually disposed towards feminism. But even those women who chose teaching simply as a sensible career found that teacher training confirmed the professional nature of teaching and built up their own sense of professional identity. They received the same type of training as men (indeed in the case of secondary schoolmistresses, often better training) and were armed with the same qualifications, which gave them a similar set of expectations about the work they were entering. The process of teacher education was also likely to give entrants a heightened sense of confidence and self-esteem. As a result of the financial investment made in them, and the experience of higher education itself, women aspiring to be teachers came to see themselves as valuable individuals with expectations that they had a place in the public world. The attractions of teaching were less straightforward for some university graduates who found that it was the only career easily open to them, but nevertheless their educational experiences still meant they identified as able and intellectual young women.

Financial investment in women's training as teachers came in two forms, state and familial. Both were normally taken up by elementary and secondary teachers in their respective training routes. Some teachers had already received scholarships and bursaries during their secondary education, a decreasing proportion of which were specifically dedicated to intending teachers during this period. [114] Almost all elementary teachers made use of the statutory grants for fees and maintenance at training colleges. Board of Education grants to training college students were comparatively large, on the assumption that most students would need them. Before the First World War the tuition grant paid on behalf of the student was £13 p.a. which

covered about half the fee. Sometimes the remainder of the fee was paid by the student's local authority. The maintenance grant for women students was £20 p.a., covering about half the cost for residential students. Men received higher maintenance grants. [115] Grants for the four-year courses introduced in 1911, which consisted of a three-year degree course and a year of professional training, were paid on a different basis, but these students were by and large no worse off than two-year students. [116] Grants were still awarded on the same basis until the Second World War, and women still received less than men, though the amounts had increased. Students who accepted the Board's money during the period were required to sign a declaration undertaking to teach for five years, known as 'The Pledge'. [117]

It was officially recognised that elementary school teachers at any rate, 'have almost entirely been recruited from the less well-to-do classes', but the various grants did not normally cover the whole cost of maintenance. [118] The statutory grants for fees and maintenance at training college needed to be supplemented by parental assistance or by local authority loans, which were widely used. [119] Only if the intending teacher was particularly poor and particularly able was everything paid for. Mrs Julia Maynard, who had been adopted by her aunt, an uncertificated teacher, went to Bristol University in the late 1920s.

To go to university I got all my tuition, all my living expenses, and because my aunt was particularly badly off, she was earning less than £10 a month I also got a council grant of £4 a term (or about £12-15 a year) that I got to help with my clothes ... sounds ridiculous, doesn't it! [120]

The vast majority of teachers received some help from their families, however. It is estimated that the wages of a skilled workman were about the minimum which would allow a family to send a girl to training college, depending upon the number of other siblings. [121] Girls from poorer families who became teachers often benefitted from being an only child or from being the youngest, and thus reaching young adulthood at a favourable point in the family's financial life-cycle. Others were helped not only by parents but by other family members, with both pocket money and basic expenses. Mrs Mary Barrett, whose father had become an invalid, mentioned that:

I depended on my grandma, and two aunties and an uncle and they gave me money all the time, which was very good. And I had to go to a day college because we couldn't afford to do otherwise. ... Yes and I was 21 before I earned anything. That's quite a thing isn't it, when you haven't got too much money. [122]

Parental and family sacrifice, very apparent in many teacher's histories, helped to create or reinforce their own ambition as young women. They came from families which had aspirations and a belief that their children could do well for themselves. Mrs Jenny Inchbold, who went to university during the Second World War, described how her father, of working-class origin, valued education:

...my father believed so much in education, that it was the only thing that mattered, nothing else was of any value at all, that he gave me an enormous - he gave me £2 a week pocket money, before [I left school], which was a lot of money as he earned £7 a week. And I saved that, which made up my grant for the first year. The grant covered half my fee; the rest I'd got in the bank. [123]

Familial investment was a direct spur to success. Miss May Griffith's father, a railway clerk, paid for her to go to training college:

I've no doubt that if I'd not been the only one I wouldn't have had that much money spent on me. But I think it was no bad thing, because you just had to pass, you had to get through, get exams. At least, I felt that, you can't just waste your time and risk not getting through first time. Your parents have paid for this very dearly and you've jolly well got to do it, which is a very good spur, I think. [124]

The financial sacrifices made by families could be at the expense of other siblings. Not all children from a large family could be sent to secondary school, even if they had passed the scholarship, because of the extra expenses. Girls were even sometimes favoured above their brothers for investment in professional training, either because they were brighter or because the opportunity came at a time when the family was better off. Teachers whom I interviewed had been left in no doubt at all that their families had made financial sacrifices for them, though they came from different levels of class and affluence.

Both elementary and secondary teachers, then, were likely to have had significant sums of money sunk into their education and training. This cannot but have given them a strong sense of themselves as worthwhile individuals. Carolyn Steedman has suggested that state investment in working-class children in the 1950s helped to promote a certain sense of having a worthwhile existence: 'I think I would be a very different person now if orange juice and milk and dinners at school hadn't told me, in a covert way, that I had a right to exist, was worth something.' [125] The impact of the considerable financial sums supporting the education of women teachers had a similar, and perhaps much greater, impact on the psyche. From the state they had won funding on the grounds of intellectual and personal merit, by passing exams and obtaining good references from teachers. Subsidised training fostered a particular view of themselves as valuable citizens. Their abilities had been publicly recognised and good future prospects were promised.

From their families they had also been given financial backing, in a similar way to that which was normally only given for boys' professional training or industrial apprenticeship. This home environment that placed importance on educational success and the winning of public awards may also have contributed to women teachers' sense of gender-free professionalism. These 'masculine' achievements of aspiring women teachers signalled that they were valuable commodities in the education labour market. The faith and confidence placed in them by both their parents gave women teachers a positive self-image by validating their academic success and professional aspirations.

Many prospective teachers had already had the experience of winning a series of scholarships throughout their school careers, of being picked out as achievers. This was confirmed by their experience of higher education and professional training. Teacher education gave all women teachers a sense that they were part of an elite, a pride in their achievements and a sense of their potential agency in the world. These qualities were acquired by students in both mixed and single-sex colleges and universities.

Most elementary trained women teachers had very little contact with their male counterparts. The majority were trained in women's colleges, which made up most of the 70-odd teacher training colleges

in the interwar period. Even in the mixed colleges, where men were greatly outnumbered, the sexes were educated separately and only met on social occasions if at all. The history of Sheffield City Training College notes, for example, that: 'Though the institution was mixed, co-education was out of the question for it was in reality a two-sex college.' [126] Only in the 1930s did some of the mixed colleges break down this division and introduce more mixed classes and joint students' associations. [127] The separation was due to some extent to different curricula: some women might be trained for infant work and men did more sports. [128] Despite this segregation, men and women took the same Certificate Examination which gave them the same professional status, and entitled them to compete in the same field of work.

The elements of higher education and professional training were more closely combined for training college students, than for graduate teachers. The two-year course was more vocational, with greater stress on the outcome as a teacher than on learning for its own sake. Training colleges aimed to socialise their students into successful primary school teachers - to become effective teachers and put into practice current pedagogic theories. There was also quite a strong emphasis on discipline for the residential students, and my respondents recalled that they were treated more as sixth formers than as adults. But despite the vocational stress of their course, many women did succumb to the attractions of learning and thinking. They were also presented with role models of professional and intellectual women in the shape of their college tutors and principals. Like their grammar school teachers, the principals of many women's colleges and some of the staff, were mainly middle-class graduates who had themselves been educated in the new schools and colleges for women of the late nineteenth century, and were, according to the history of their association, concerned with consolidating the improved position of women in society. [129]

Future secondary school teachers normally went to a university, to one of the Oxbridge women's colleges or to a mixed provincial university. Here they focussed on their degree subject rather than on teaching. [130] In the fourth year most women undertook a professional teacher training course in a university training department. From the late nineteenth century women educational

leaders were ahead of men in developing professional training for graduates, and a higher proportion of women than men secondary school teachers were trained. [131]

University students were more likely to study alongside men in both degree and training courses, and were treated as responsible adults. Women undergraduates between the wars knew they were part of a female elite. It was twice as hard for women as it was for men to obtain a place at a university. [132] They were likely to see themselves as the intellectual equals of men, to compare themselves directly to male undergraduates, and to compete and succeed on male ground. They had been given a slice of the masculine world of academic learning which was powerful and attractive to many of them. It could be argued that secondary school graduates were more seduced by the intellectual aspects of teaching than elementary teachers were, even though both aimed for a teaching career because of its academic element. Those at university women's colleges may also have been taught by some of the late nineteenth century feminist pioneers of women's higher education who believed that a professional career was a positive way of securing economic and personal independence for women. [133]

At either type of institution, women finished with identical qualifications to teach as men; a degree or a teaching certificate, which gave them apparent equality and set up the expectation that they were serving on equal terms in the same profession. Indeed secondary-trained women graduates could have considered themselves better professionally qualified than many of their male counterparts. Many women were intensely proud of their achievements and continued to study subsequently:

So of course, we all came out [of university], thinking we'd worked hard, how clever we were, and wasn't it nice, we were taking a step up, we weren't going to have to serve behind the counter at Woolworths, we were going to be grand ... I got an upper second so we were well qualified ... [134]

Nan Macmillan, at a teacher training college, similarly did well:

...the LCC was the highest paid authority then and I was on their list of first appointments; they took two of us from all those girls only, to teach older ones. ... it was a tremendous thing to

get on to the London first appointments. It was like getting a degree, I remember I sent a telegram home and I got a job ...

[135]

Trained women teachers were confident in their achievements. They were academic, respectable, womanly and equal to men. But the tensions between these different identities would be more sharply pointed up once they entered the schools.

Not all intending teachers were positively attracted to a teaching career by the opportunities it offered, mediated by its feminine respectability. Some, especially graduate women, were forced into teaching because it was the only option open to them, as a result of the lack of other employment for graduates, or because it had been the only way they could obtain a university education. For daughters of professional middle-class families, the opportunities were limited, especially before the First World War. Miss Mary Clarke, a Girton graduate who became head of Manchester High School for Girls in the 1930s remembered that:

It had always been tacitly assumed rather than definitely decided that I should become a teacher. It was essential that I should become self-supporting and that as soon as possible. I was not obviously fitted to study medicine or take up nursing and, at that time, the choice of respectable professions for young women with no financial prospects was not large.... I was prepared to do my best but did not look forward to a teaching career with enthusiasm or with any sense of vocation, as I knew I should have done. [136]

A correspondent to the Journal of Education wrote:

At a summer meeting of our Old Girls' Association I was talking to a former pupil, home from Oxford, and, after hearing of the delights of river picnics and unlimited reading, I asked, "What will you do when you leave college?" Her enthusiasm flickered out as she replied vaguely, "Oh, teach, I suppose." Evidently the prospect did not appeal to her Many girls drift into teaching as the easiest opening for university women [137]

Graduate women were severely restricted in their choice of profession; the majority went into teaching while some from wealthier families continued to return home 'to arrange the flowers', though this became

less common between the wars. [138] Even by the time of the Second World War, Mrs Jenny Inchbold described how none of her personal friends at Lady Margaret Hall took jobs other than in teaching or the civil service, though one or two other women did enter law. [139] Miss Vera Reid wished to finish her Masters thesis, but was forced to enter teaching to pay off the debts incurred by her university education thus far:

I did get the chance to have a part-time lectureship and do part-time research, but it didn't pay me enough. I'd got to earn enough to pay back the debts. But if I'd had more money behind me, that would have been my first choice. [140]

Committing oneself to a teaching career was one of the few certain ways of obtaining an extended secondary education and subsidised professional training for a working-class or lower middle-class girl. In the case of elementary teachers this obligation does not seem to have detracted from the appeal of the profession, perhaps because teaching carried a high status for these entrants. Likewise, accepting a four-year grant was the only secure way young women could obtain finance for a university education, in the absence of many scholarships or general state support. But secondary trained teachers seem to have accepted their commitment to teach with a greater degree of reluctance. There is plenty of evidence to show that teaching was seen as a last resort or as a means of obtaining a higher education. [141] Margaret Miles, who later became a successful headmistress, wrote in her autobiography:

I set myself against teaching and resisted my headmistress's advice that I should apply for the four-year grant. In the end I gave in, with bad grace I'm afraid, secretly hoping that I would not stay in teaching very long... Though I hated the idea of tying myself to teaching through the pledge, this is what I had to do. [142]

Government reports and general surveys also highlighted this problem. [143] The Association of Assistant Mistresses was likewise concerned about the situation and its implications.

We would point out here some objections to the system of earmarked grants. They tempt girls anxious to continue their education to pledge themselves to a career, irrespective of

vocation, as the only way in which they can afford to go to the University: many girls of quite the wrong type are thus led to take up teaching. Again it sometimes happens that a student finds in her fourth year that she is definitely unsuited for teaching, but cannot withdraw because she has accepted public money.... [144]

Women graduates had seen their male counterparts do the same degree courses as themselves, but enter a wider range of professional jobs, in government, politics and the arts, while they only had teaching. The world opened up by education subsequently closed down, leading to bitterness and resignation for some, and successful adaptation on the part of many others. It is possible only to speculate on the consequences this had for the self-image of this particular group of women teachers. Like the young women who had chosen teaching in a more positive way they also had passed through the structures of education and training and were offered the apparently gender-free professional status of teaching. They clearly had intellectual aspirations, but conformed less to the requirement to be maternal and like children, perhaps making the contradictions of teaching more acute for them. This group of women was less enthusiastic about teaching, but certainly saw themselves as intellectual women. They might have been more likely to notice the gender inequalities in the profession than women who had positively and enthusiastically chosen teaching as their vocation. But as other employment opportunities for women gradually increased, there may have been fewer women forced into teaching in this way later in the period. Writing in 1932, Vyrnwy Biscoe maintained that the proportion of students entering teaching from one women's university college fell from 75% in 1900 to 50% in 1906, 30% in 1913, and 22% by 1932. [145]

During and after the First World War, women's work was believed to be expanding. 'It is no longer the case that teaching offers the best opportunity of employment to certain classes of girls. The war has altered all that. Girls can now choose between a dozen vocations hitherto thought to be employment for boys and men only...' [146] This was rather over-optimistic, though employment opportunities for educated women in office work, the civil service and local government, and nursing did expand to some extent. Although elementary teaching was the largest single employment for girls leaving secondary school

in 1909, its importance was soon eclipsed by the growing opportunities in clerical work. The actual numbers of girls taking up teaching did not drastically decline, but since the number of secondary school places increased considerably, the 4,830 girls who left to enter teaching in 1909 made up 24.8% of leavers while the 3,730 who entered teaching in 1938 made up just 9.9%. [147] During the same period the number of girls entering office work increased five-fold, and as a proportion of secondary school leavers rose from 13.7% to 41.7%. [148] For the bright lower middle-class or even working-class girl, secondary schooling itself became more accessible without the necessity to tie herself to a teaching career.

As secondary education for girls and women's employment opportunities both opened up somewhat during this period, a teaching career came to be seen as less of a special achievement and more of an ordinary choice to make. It became one of several possibilities for the secondary school girl, who was no longer picked out and privileged to the same extent. As it turned into a more ordinary and less ambitious choice by the 1930s, so perhaps the achievement and process of teacher education marked the young woman teacher out from her peers less strongly than at the turn of the century. Coupled with the greater stress on maternal instincts discussed above, this lessened sense that aspiring teachers were a picked intellectual elite may have meant that the gender ambiguities taken on in the choice of teaching as a career became less pronounced by the 1930s.

Conclusion

For much of this period, the process of choosing and entering teaching set up potential tensions for women teachers which for large numbers of them would come to be interpreted and answered by political activity as feminists. Intending teachers were faced with contrasting images of teaching. Their choice of profession enabled them to understand themselves as public achievers with masculine privileges, while remaining feminine; creating the contradiction of being a professional woman. This combination made teaching attractive and was reinforced by the structures of training - along the same lines as men's - and by state and familial investment through which women teachers came to see themselves as professionals with valuable skills.

But teaching did not deliver the full rewards of masculine professionalism to women teachers that it promised. Despite having equivalent professional qualifications and skills to men, women teachers received lower pay, had poorer prospects of promotion and in many areas were subject to a marriage bar. Because the profession was not highly sex segregated, women could easily compare themselves with men teachers and find that their position was less favourable. 'Up to then I'd hardly recognised that I wasn't going to get equal pay,' said one teacher. [149] A truly ungendered professionalism was not to be had. But as a result of their education and training, women teachers had a strong sense of professional identity and the self-esteem necessary to engage in political activity. [150] Furthermore, women teachers had the capacity to translate their concerns into political action as a direct result of their 'unwomanly' position. Unlike most women workers, they had the material resources - money, time and education - to articulate their grievances and pursue their aims. Rather than abandoning their 'masculine' aspirations and identifying instead with the feminine maternalist elements of teaching, some chose to question the fairly narrow gap between their rewards and those of male colleagues. They enjoyed pay and conditions which were nearly as good as men's; why were these not identical? They were certificated or had degrees, they knew they were professionally the same as men, if indeed not better. Moreover, the confused gendering of teaching allowed them to demand masculine equality without jeopardising their identity as women.

It was quite common to find the view expressed among women teachers that their male colleagues were of poorer quality than themselves. This may have reflected their knowledge that, with a wider choice of occupations, men teachers, unlike women, were not drawn from the academic elite of their sex. It could also have reflected a perception that men teachers tended to come from a lower class background than women on the whole. But it also carried a sense of women teacher's broader and deeper professionalism. Miss Drysdale, for example, said:

I suppose it is wrong to say so but I do think that on the whole the men weren't the same calibre as the women. They really weren't. [151]

It rankled with women teachers that women's skills weren't recognised to the same extent.

A lot of the NUWT women were deputy heads and they were clearly really running their schools though they weren't actual heads. The men were the titular heads of the schools, but it was these women, very able women... C. J. at Barnet, she was the kingpin in her [mixed secondary] school - did the timetables - she got on with the head, but he simply wasn't as well qualified. [152]

The complex gendering of the profession raised the question for women teachers of whether they were similar, and indeed equal to men or different from them. The uneasy relationship between equality and difference was structured into the occupation itself and constantly recurred in women teachers' political activity. Ideas about feminine maternalism were sometimes used by feminist teachers (for example in debates around the marriage bar), but the notion of equal professionalism was central to their identity as women teachers and paramount in their political campaigning. This contrast between femininity and professionalism was also made very clear to many women teachers in their day-to-day lives as women and in their work as teachers.

References to Chapter Two

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12. Journal of Education, December 1920, p.799. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.34-6, 50-2, 95.

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14. TES, 7 July 1914, p.113. Also see AAM, Annual Report (1914), p.66.
15. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee on the Training of Teachers for Public Elementary Schools (1925), Cmd.2409, p.39.
16. J. Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change (Sussex, Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), pp.91-7. C. Steedman, Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret Macmillan 1860-1931 (London, Virago, 1990), p.134. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up, pp.75-6. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.41-6, 50-2.
17. TES, 15 March 1917, p.93. (Leading article.)
18. TES, 12 April 1917, p.124; 7 July 1914, p.113. For a discussion of the attempts to recruit middle-class girls to teaching between 1870 and 1914 see F. Widdowson, Going Up Into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training, 1840-1914 (London, Women's Research and Resources Centre, 1980), Section III.
19. TES, 12 April 1917, p.124. Morley, Women Workers, pp.5, 13. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', p.154.
20. Morley, Women Workers, pp.38-9, 47. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, p.34.
21. Students Careers Association, Careers, p.15. Also see Board of Education, Training of Teachers, p.40.
22. See, for example, C. Davies, 'The Health Visitor as Mother's Friend: A woman's place in public health, 1900-1914', Social History of Medicine 1:1 (1988), pp.39-59.
23. TES, 1 December, 1914, p.196.
24. Also see Steedman, Margaret Macmillan, p.135.
25. A. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', History Workshop Journal 5 (1978), pp.9-65. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up, chapter 3.
26. AAM, Annual Report (1919), p.48. Also see AAM, Annual Report (1914), p.66.
27. Students Careers Association, Careers, pp.14-15. The question of what single women teachers were supposed to do with their unused maternal instincts will be explored in Chapter 6.
28. Students Careers Association, Careers, p.6. Also see Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.209. C. Steedman, '"The Mother Made Conscious": The Historical Development of a Primary School Pedagogy', History Workshop Journal 20 (1985), p.150.
29. P. B. Ballard, The Changing School (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), p.314.
30. Steedman, 'The Mother Made Conscious', pp.149-63.
31. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, p.34.
32. TES, 1 February 1916, pp.17, 23. Journal of Education, April 1908, p.239. The Board of Education also referred to unqualified infant teachers as 'the "motherly person" type of teacher'. Schoolmaster, 9 May 1924, p.791.
33. TES, 21 January 1928, p.33.

34. TES, 14 October 1922, p.452; also see 11 June 1932, p.224.
35. TES, 23 March 1931, p.113.
36. University of Essex Oral History Archives, 'Family life and work before 1918 collection' by Paul and Thea Thompson. Mrs Dan, no.21, pp.59-60. (Born 1891, elementary school teacher.) Issues around oral history and how it can be used to explore subjectivity are discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3.
37. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 29 July 1989. (Her real name. Born 1905, entered elementary teaching 1925.)
38. Interview with Miss May Griffiths, 23 March 1989. (Born 1919, entered primary school teaching 1940.) Several of my respondents expressed this view. I have used pseudonyms for all my interviewees except Mrs Nan McMillan. See Bibliography, section 2, for full list of women teachers interviewed.
39. Interview with Miss May Griffiths, 23 March 1989. For teachers' encouragement of girls into higher education see P. Summerfield, 'Cultural Reproduction in the Education of Girls: a Study of Girls' Secondary Schooling in Two Lancashire Towns, 1900-50' in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.158.
40. Interview with Mrs Jenny Inchbold, 9 August 1989. (Born 1925, entered secondary school teaching 1946.)
41. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989. (Born 1914, entered secondary school teaching 1937.)
42. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905, entered elementary teaching 1928.)
43. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989.
44. Essex Oral History Archive. Mrs Hatch, no.143, pp.11, 29, 39. (Born 1886, elementary school teacher.)
45. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989. (Born 1904, entered elementary teaching 1925.)
46. *Ibid.*
47. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989. (Born 1910, entered secondary school teaching 1934.)
48. Several of my respondents mentioned the influence of their mothers or of the school. Also see F. Widdowson, '"Educating Teacher": Women and Elementary Teaching in London, 1900-1914' in L. Davidoff and B. Westover (eds.), Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work (London, Macmillan, 1986). M. Clarke, A Short Life of Ninety Years (Edinburgh, Huggins, 1973), p.25. M. Miles, And Gladly Teach: The adventure of teaching (Reading, Educational Explorers, 1966), pp.13, 15, 18-19.
49. C. Collet, Educated Working Women (London, P. S. King and son, 1902), p.53. TES, 2 July 1912, p.80; 24 May 1930, p.234; 30 January 1937, p.35. Also see Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', pp.110, 114, 116, 118. C. Dyhouse, Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.55.
50. Collet, Educated Working Women, pp.13, 57-8.

51. Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', pp.109, 111. For attitude of lower middle-class parents to their daughters' employment as teachers see D. Copelman, '"A New Comradeship between Men and Women": Family, Marriage and London's Women Teachers, 1870-1914' in J. Lewis (ed.), Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp.176-80.
52. Morley, Women Workers, p.5.
53. V. Brittain, Women's Work in Modern England (London, Noel Douglas, 1928), p.122. Biscoe, 300 Careers, pp.57-9. For pre-war salaries see H. Martindale, Women Servants of the State (London, Allen and Unwin, 1938), pp.158-64. Morley, Women Workers, pp.261-5.
54. G. Routh, Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-1979 (London, Macmillan, 1980), p.90.
55. J. Lewis, 'Women clerical workers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' in G. Anderson (ed.), The White-blouse Revolution: female office workers since 1870 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988), p.35.
56. M. Cole, Marriage: Past and Present (London, Dent and Sons, 1938), pp.151-2. Brittain, Women's Work, p.51. Biscoe, 300 Careers, pp.137, 172, 197. Morley, Women Workers, p.280.
57. Routh, Occupation and Pay, p.90.
58. TES, 24 May 1930, p.234.
59. Brittain, Women's Work, p.82.
60. B. Abel-Smith, A History of the Nursing Profession (London, Heinemann, 1960), pp.55, 121-2. Morley, Women Workers, p.182. Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.167. TES, 22 August 1931, p.328.
61. Routh, Occupation and Pay, p.70.
62. Morley, Women Workers, p.38 also pp.2, 5. TES, 7 July 1914, p.113; 9 October 1919, p.513.
63. Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education, Financial Statistics (1920-21). For qualified women teachers in general (that is, including heads as well as assistants) salaries rose from an average of £104.10s in 1913 to £272 in 1924. Routh, Occupation and Pay, p.70. For teachers' actual salaries also see TES, 15 May 1919, p.233. B. Drake (ed.), Staffing in Public Elementary Schools (London, TUC and Labour Party, 1924), p.21. V. Greenhalgh, 'The Movement of Teachers' Salaries 1920-68', Journal of Educational Administration and History 1:1 (1968), pp.23-32.
64. Morley, Women Workers, pp.32-3. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee for Enquiring into the principles which should determine the fixing of salaries for teachers in Secondary and Technical Schools...[etc] (1918), Volume 1. Cd.9140, especially pp.17, 31, 36. This was no improvement on Clara Collet's estimate of average salaries in the 1890s. Collet, Educated Working Women, pp.7, 57-8.
65. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, pp.35, 38-9. TES, 5 June 1926, p.230. Students Careers Association, Careers, pp.6, 9.

66. P. H. J. H. Gosden, The Evolution of a Profession (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972), p.54. These salary scales of the 1920s remained broadly in place during the 1920s and 1930s, though cuts were made in 1923 and 1931, and only gradually restored.
67. Cole, Marriage, p.153.
68. D. Beddoe, Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939 (London, Pandora, 1989), pp.75-9. P. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market 1900-1950: The Case of the Secondary Schoolmistress' in History of Education Society, Occasional Publication no. 8, Women, Education and the Professions (Leicester, History of Education Society, 1987), p.38.
69. H. Smith, 'The Issue of "equal pay for equal work" in Great Britain 1914-19', Societas, 8:1 (1978), pp.39, 49.
70. However women clerical workers in all sectors taken together earned only 42% of men's pay in 1913-14, rising to 46% by 1935-36. R. Crompton and G. Jones, White Collar Proletariat (London, Macmillan, 1984), p.27.
71. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report (1946), Cmd.6937, pp. 12-13, 35, 42.
72. *Ibid*, p.28. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, pp.108-9.
73. Brittain, Women's Work, pp.122, 126. Biscoe, 300 Careers, pp.58, 137.
74. Morley, Women Workers, p.179. Abel-Smith, Nursing Profession, p.137. TES, 4 February 1939, p.45.
75. Morley, Women Workers, pp.34, 38, 49-50.
76. TES, 5 September 1918, p.375; 24 September 1918, p.462. AAM, Annual Report (1919), p.52. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, pp.39, 45.
77. Widdowson, Going Up Into the Next Class, pp.65-8. Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', p.109.
78. Morley, Women Workers, p.273. Martindale, Women Servants, pp.146-8. M. Zimmeck, 'Jobs for the Girls: the Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914' in A. John (ed.), Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp.162-3. Lewis, 'Women clerical workers', p.33.
79. Abel-Smith, Nursing Profession, pp.58, 119, 258. Morley, Women Workers, p.181.
80. PRO. Ed 24/418. Confidential Memo on the Employment of Married Women as Teachers in Public Elementary Schools, 30 November 1909.
81. TES, 29 December 1927, p.569. (Questions and Answers in Parliament.)
82. London County Council, The Teaching Profession: How to become a teacher in a London School (London, LCC, 1920).
83. PRO. Ed 24/1744. Administrative Provisions Bill, minute to the President of the Board of Education from the Permanent Secretary to the Board, 31 January 1923. For further discussion of the marriage bar see Chapter 3 and A. Oram, 'Serving two masters? The introduction of a marriage bar in teaching in the 1920s' in

London Feminist History Group (eds.), The Sexual Dynamics of History (London, Pluto Press, 1983).

84. PRO Ed 24/1744. Returns for 1926. LCC. EO/STA/2.12, letters from various LEAs to Education Officer with details of regulations. The regulations which were introduced differed slightly from one area to another, but they generally combined a ban on appointing married women to teaching posts with a rule requiring the resignation of women teachers on marriage.
85. TES, 16 November 1929, p.504; 24 February 1934, p.59. (Questions in Parliament.)
86. These included Surrey, Middlesex, Tottenham and Brentford. TES, 20 July 1935, pp.257-8; 7 December 1935, p.248. Woman Teacher, 2 September 1938. North Mail & Newcastle Chronicle, 4 May 1939. NUWT Records. Box 176, Report, 31 May 1938. Cole, Marriage, p.144.
87. There are no official figures for the number and proportion of married women in secondary schools. There was no tradition of married women's work in secondary schools as there was in elementary schools in some areas, and women secondary school teachers were likely to leave on marriage even when there was no formal requirement to do so. One London secondary school headmistress, herself married, wrote in 1914 that secondary school mistresses were not as a rule aware that under most agreements they could claim to continue their work after marriage. M. O'Brien, 'Secondary School Teaching', in Morley, Women Workers, pp.36-7.
88. NUWT Records. Box 177, Married Women Teachers. Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', pp.109, 111, 116. And see Copelman, 'London's Women Teachers', pp.178-80.
89. Brittain, Women's Work, p.80.
90. *Ibid*, p.51. Morley, Women Workers, p.296. Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.171.
91. Lewis, 'Women clerical workers', p.36.
92. M. Zimneck, 'Strategies and Stratagems for the Employment of Women in the British Civil Service, 1919-1939', The Historical Journal 27:4 (1984), pp.901-924. Martindale, Women Servants, pp.44, 67. Brittain, Women's Work, pp.118, 121.
93. TES, 6 May 1913, p.79; 1 February 1930, p.48. Morley, Women's Work, p.5, 36. Brittain, Women's Work, p.65.
94. Figures calculated from Tables 2, 4 and 8. Also see Table 9. And see Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market', p.48.
95. No details of the number and distribution of these are given in Board of Education Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education. The Board provided fewer statistics for secondary school teachers than for elementary school teachers.
96. TES, 13 August 1932, p.312; 30 January 1937, p.35. Morley, Women Workers, pp.288-9.
97. TES, 22 August 1931, p.328; 6 July 1935, p.239; 4 February 1939, p.45. Abel-Smith, Nursing Profession, p.123. Morley, Women Workers, pp.178-9. Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', p.118.

98. See survey of women elementary school teachers reported in TES, 7 July 1914, p.113. Also see TES, 19 February 1938, p.61.
99. By the First World War, or earlier, pupil-teachership was confined mainly to rural areas, as governments tried to encourage a longer period of secondary education for teachers.
100. Ministry of Education, Education 1900-1950 (1950), Cmd.8244, p.80. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, pp.12-16, 63-4, 71.
101. Ministry of Education, Education 1900-1950, p.81. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, pp.10-11.
102. Board of Education, Annual Report (1910-11), Cd.6116, p.67. Also see Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, pp.229-32.
103. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, pp.111-13. In the 1930s as many as 60% of teacher-trained graduates went on to teach in elementary schools, partly as a result of periods of teacher unemployment at that time. Board of Education, Report of the Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to consider the Supply, Recruitment and Training of Teachers and Youth Leaders (1944), p.12. (The McNair Report.)
104. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987. (Born 1905, entered elementary teaching 1926.)
105. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905, entered elementary teaching 1928.)
106. Essex Oral History Archive. Mrs Rosser, no. 371, p.107. (Born 1890, elementary school teacher.)
107. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989. (Born 1914, entered secondary school teaching 1937.)
108. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987.
109. Interview with Mrs Nora Platt, 14 July 1989. (Born 1912, entered secondary school teaching 1934.)
110. Miles, And Gladly Teach, p.37.
111. TES, 23 June 1928, p.280; 28 July 1928, p.338; 3 September 1932, p.336; 23 May 1936, p.189.
112. TES, 3 September 1932, p.336; 23 May 1936, p.189.
113. Brittain, Women's Work, p.60.
114. In the years 1912-14, only about 10% of newly certificated women teachers (5% of men) had not previously been bursars, student or pupil-teachers, or uncertificated teachers, but by 1927 just under half of all students admitted to training college had not previously been 'recognised' as teachers. By 1938, this figure was 85% of women and 80% of men. Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education (1913-14) and Annual Reports (1927; 1938).
115. Morley, Women Workers, p.67.
116. Board of Education, Annual Report (1910-11), Cd.6116, p.67.
117. For men, this was 7 years. Journal of Education, January 1908, p.36. Board of Education, Teachers and Youth Leaders, p.15. Political and Economic Planning, Report on the British Social Services (London, PEP, 1937), p.64. Morley, Women Workers, p.41.

118. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, p.33, also p.37. Board of Education, Annual Report (1911-12), Cd.6707, p.71.
119. Morley, Women Workers, p.42. TES, 12 April 1917, p.124; 5 December 1936, p.433.
120. Interview with Mrs Julia Maynard, 28 July 1989. (Born 1909, entered elementary teaching in 1931.)
121. Widdowson, 'Educating Teacher', p.103. However my interviews also revealed women from poorer families than this.
122. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905, entered elementary teaching 1928.)
123. Interview with Mrs Jenny Inchbold, 9 August 1989. (Born 1925, entered secondary school teaching 1946.)
124. Interview with Miss May Griffiths, 23 March 1989. (Born 1919, entered elementary school teaching 1940.)
125. C. Steedman, Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives (London, Virago, 1986), p.122.
126. R. Millington, A History of the City of Sheffield Training College (Sheffield, City of Sheffield Training College, 1955), p.48. Also see L. Grier, The Life of Winifred Mercier (London, Oxford University Press, 1937), p.134. D. Dymond (ed.), The Forge: The History of Goldsmith's College, 1905-1955 (London, Methuen, 1955), p.30. F. Potter, Educational Journey: Memories of Fifty Years in Public Education (London, Pitman, 1949), p.62. H. C. Dent, The Training of Teachers in England and Wales 1800-1975 (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p.108.
127. Dymond, The Forge, pp.30-1. Millington, Sheffield Training College, p.73.
128. Board of Education, Training of Teachers, p.102.
129. J. Browne, Teachers of Teachers. A History of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), pp.9, 28. Indeed the college lecturers and principals had their own gender battles to fight over equal pay, and the position of women staff in mixed training colleges, which paralleled those of the teachers. In 1916 Winifred Mercier, the Vice-Principal of Leeds Training College, the largest mixed college in the country, resigned after 3 years in post and was followed by the resignation of half the women tutors, in a dispute over the extent of their authority over the women students. She later became principal of Whitelands College (for women) between 1918 and 1934 and was one of the most influential training college reformers in the interwar period. Grier, Life of Winifred Mercier, pp.92-3, 101-4, 108, 110-11, 121-2. Journal of Education, August 1916, pp.451-2; September 1916, p.504; January 1917, p.11 and subsequent issues. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.269. For the influence of feminist secondary school teachers on their pupils see Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up, p.174. Summerfield, 'Cultural Reproduction in the Education of Girls'. D. Thompson, Outsiders: Class, Gender and Nation (London, Verso, 1993), pp.3-4.
130. This caused problems for some in their transition to teaching. AAM, Professional Training of Teachers, pp.2, 18.

131. B. Webb, 'English Teachers and their Professional Organisation', Special Supplement to The New Statesman V:129 (25 September 1915), p.15. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, chapter 10. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', chapter 7.
132. Calculated from figures for the destinations of school leavers, from the Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education in England and Wales for various years during this period.
133. Dyhouse, Feminism and the Family, p.55.
134. Interview with Mrs Julia Maynard, 28 July 1989. (Born 1909, entered elementary teaching in 1931. She went on to describe how they came out of training in the 1930s to find no work.)
135. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 29 July 1987. (Born 1905, entered elementary teaching in 1925.)
136. Clarke, A Short Life, p.25.
137. Journal of Education, December 1920, p.798. Also see Collet, Educated Working Women, pp.13-14.
138. Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.7.
139. Interview with Mrs Jenny Inchbold, 9 August 1989. (Born 1925, entered secondary teaching in 1946.)
140. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989. (Born 1910, entered secondary teaching 1934.)
141. Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.7. Students Careers Association, Careers, pp.3-4. Morley, Women Workers, p.11.
142. Miles, And Gladly Teach, pp.33, 20.
143. TES, 15 December 1934, p.422; 21 August 1937, p.296. Board of Education, Teachers and Youth Leaders, p.90.
144. AAM, Professional Training of Teachers, p.6.
145. Biscoe, 300 Careers, p.7.
146. TES, 22 February 1917, p.71. Also see TES, 19 April 1917, p.136; 2 May 1918, p.185. Board of Education, Report re salaries of Teachers in Secondary Schools, p.9.
147. These figures do not include girls who went on to university and subsequently into teaching and are calculated from Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education and Annual Reports for each year. The numbers fluctuated between different areas and schools. In 1909, for example, half of the girls leaving secondary schools under the Kent Education Committee were intending to become teachers. Journal of Education, August 1910, p.517.
148. Calculated from Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education and Annual Reports for various years, as above. Also see O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), pp.172, 195.
149. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 25 July 1986.
150. V. Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective (London, Macmillan, 1987), pp.88-9, 123-4.
151. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989.
152. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989.

CHAPTER THREE

BEING A WOMAN AND A TEACHER:

WORK, FAMILY LIFE AND MOVING TOWARDS FEMINISM

The family lives of women teachers and their uneasy relationship to contemporary ideals of femininity must be considered alongside their position in the workplace to explain why they were receptive to feminist ideas. Feminist historians have consistently emphasised the interconnections between employment, the family, and women's political activity, drawing attention to the fluidity of the boundaries between the public and the private. [1] Sandra Holton has recently stressed the need for historians to investigate the mesh between the gender politics of women's ordinary everyday lives and the formal politics of their suffrage campaigns, rather than treating these as separate activities. [2] With a similar emphasis this chapter traces the connections and tensions between family and workplace structures, and particularly between the broad socially accepted meanings of gender and the more specific demands of being a professional woman teacher, to suggest some reasons why large numbers of individual women teachers became politically active.

In order to make sense of their lives, women teachers were obliged to negotiate contrasting concepts of gender which had purchase across both the workplace and family life; to negotiate between the dominant social meanings of womanhood, and alternative ideas of femininity and of being a professional woman teacher. It is suggested that one potential consequence of this tension and instability was that some women teachers were likely to develop awareness of these conflicts, articulate them, and become politically conscious.

Dominant meanings of gender - those categories of masculinity and femininity which have most influence and are widely accepted - have a prescriptive power, affecting all men and women. In relation to teachers they were articulated from a variety of sources. Commonsense understandings - of the male breadwinner wage, or that married women shouldn't work, for example - were reproduced and reinforced in different ways in political debate, government policy, Royal Commissions, newspaper debates on teachers' position, public opinion,

and in teachers' associations, as well as being structured in salary levels, employment opportunities and the gendered patterns of family life.

The rationalisations of policy and the debates over women teachers' position drew on a range of ideas about gender, but three powerful models of feminine and masculine behaviour were referred to most frequently. The first was that women should marry. This signalled a major stage of adult femininity and established its relationship to masculinity. The second was that the family should be organised around a male breadwinner and a housewife, framing understandings of both femininity and masculinity. Thirdly, authority was associated with masculinity; it should be the prerogative of men rather than women in both family and public life, including employment. Some of these ideas remained fairly stable over the period 1900-1939. The expectation of marriage for women, and of the male breadwinner norm didn't change significantly, though these gained new inflexions in the 1920s; however conceptions of masculinity did shift to a greater extent in the context of the First World War. These three ideals applied to all women, teachers or not, and were ways in which femininity was culturally recognised. But for women teachers these assumptions were especially visible and problematic.

These ideas were used to justify and defend inequalities between men and women teachers in the continuing debates about equal pay, the marriage bar and promotion prospects. But women teachers also came into conflict with these powerful ideas about gender merely as a consequence of their employment as teachers. [3] In carrying out their professional duties as teachers, women teachers were in some instances acting in accordance with, and in other cases in opposition to accepted ideas and practices of femininity.

Despite being represented as natural and fixed, dominant meanings of gender were unstable, internally incoherent and always contested by other ideas about femininity and masculinity and by the existence of contrasting family patterns. Alternative notions of femininity which sometimes conflicted with dominant assumptions included women's financial commitments to family members, their caring roles and the idea of a female professionalism already discussed in Chapter Two. Women's moral responsibility for aged parents contrasted with the notion of men's financial responsibility for wife and children

embedded in the male breadwinner wage ideal, for example. A major contradictory dynamic existed between the ideas of femininity on the one hand and teacher professionalism on the other, but this was expressed in numerous complex forms. Clashes and tensions around gender occurred in the debates over women teachers' position, in the structures of the schools, and in the organisation of family life. It is the purpose of this chapter to illustrate these and indicate their role in the politicisation of women teachers.

The three prescriptive models of gendered behaviour will be examined separately. The background to a particular construction of gender will be outlined at the beginning of each section and its influence on the debates about women teachers demonstrated. Evidence from government and local authority records and statistical information will also be used to indicate the structure of women teachers' employment position and domestic lives, and to describe how particular tensions were set up for women teachers. The ways in which these gender tensions were subjectively experienced and negotiated by women teachers will be examined in the second part of each section.

Archetypal concepts of gender informed women teachers' understandings of their lives and their employment position. In Mary Poovey's words: 'Because gender roles are part of familial, political, social and economic relationships, the terms in which femininity is publicly formulated dictates, in large measure, the way femaleness is subjectively experienced.' [4] Women's subjectivity - how they understand their lives - is not fixed but continuously created from currently available ideas, and shifts through the life-cycle as different roles are adopted in the family and at work. [5] Women teachers' identities included all those commonly available to women, being a daughter, wife, and so on, as well as those linked with teaching, type of school, position of authority or professional expertise. Gender identities may also shift in relation to wider historical changes of war, depression, unemployment and so on. Being a 'woman worker' may feel qualitatively different in wartime than in a period of economic depression. Although the subjectivity of individual women might encompass a range of identities, conflicts could be set up if these fell outside conventional understandings of femininity.

To examine how tensions in the gendered structures of teaching and family life were negotiated by individual women teachers, I have used autobiographical accounts and oral interviews with women teachers. The latter consisted of twelve interviews with retired women teachers, transcripts from the University of Essex Oral History Archive, and accounts written for Mass-Observation. [6] These sources can show how the mismatches between the different ideals of femininity and teacher professionalism were dealt with by individuals. Oral history has been seen as providing direct evidence of people's life experiences in the past, especially for marginalised groups (such as women) otherwise missing from the historical record. [7] Some historians have attempted to develop a scientific oral history method, in order to create 'authentic' historical evidence and overcome what they see as the problems of being subjective and unrepresentative. [8] An alternative approach (and the one taken in this chapter), has been to extend these questions around memory and representation in oral and autobiographical evidence, not as problems, but as leading to further discussion of how knowledge and meaning is produced. [9] Joan Scott has argued that 'experience' is not simply a direct apprehension of the world; individual experience can only be understood as being structured by systems of meaning: 'without meaning there is no experience'. [10] While it is possible to contest Scott's claim that historians have generally used autobiographical evidence in a literal way, her work is a reminder of how identities are constructed from a range of available meanings. [11] The oral history method can provide direct access to individual subjectivity: 'it tells us less about events as such than about their meaning ... [oral sources] tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did.' [12]

Representations of femininity could sometimes be understood by women teachers as advantageous and validating, as when the notion of maternal femininity allowed them to enter a masculine domain, professionalism. In other circumstances, the same ideas of femininity were at odds with those of self-determining professionalism. In using these gendered ideas to make sense of their experiences, women teachers exposed their underlying tensions.

The question then becomes one of what people can do with the tensions which inform their understandings. Although the idea that

lived contradictions contribute to political consciousness is a useful one, no automatic mechanism is at work here; a range of responses was possible. [13] Individual women teachers might adhere to one set of understandings and deny another. They might try to suppress the tensions and to live around them, attempting to contain them. Indeed, in some cases, this effort might militate against political activity. Alternatively, they might become indignant about the consequence of these gendered meanings for their own lives, and try to resolve them through political action. [14] The instability of ideas about gender gave teachers the opportunity to politically exploit conflicting representations. If dominant meanings inadequately represented the individual experience of women teachers this might lead either to a personal sense of being a misfit, or to a critical appraisal of dominant ideas. One individual might adopt both responses. The need to support parents on a single woman's wage could lead to a critique of the family wage ideal, while the powerful privileging of marriage against spinsterhood might create personal doubts and unease for the same woman. This continuing (though changing) configuration of the tensions between different concepts of gender can help to explain the intensity of women teachers' concern with equality issues and their sustaining of political activity at a high level over a very long period of time.

This chapter then, puts forward a broad framework to explain why women teachers were likely to be politically active as feminists. But it also raises the question of how they could act and why they preferred certain kinds of political arguments and rhetoric. There was a range of available ideas, some more powerful than others, concerning being a woman or being a teacher. Women teachers did not simply choose one or the other, but within this complex mesh of understandings were able to contest dominant constructions of femininity with other meanings of professionalism and familial femininity. The general conflicts discussed in this chapter led to the range of political strategies developed by women teachers within the teachers' associations and the women's movement.

SECTION ONE: FEMININITY AND SEEKING MARRIAGE

Perhaps the central element in the social construction of femininity was the injunction to marry, powerfully represented as women's natural destiny. Indeed, marriage provided the context for other fundamental feminine roles such as motherhood and homemaking. Marriage, an essential part of female adulthood, brought women firmly into relationship with men; into heterosexuality, financial dependence, and a caring role. The converse, to be unmarried, to be without a husband, was therefore represented as lacking an important validating relationship. It was harder to be a spinster than a bachelor; to marry was a heavily gendered imperative. Men had more of a choice in the matter, though it was believed they probably should marry, but women must marry, or be judged to have failed in a crucial aspect of their life course and gender identity. [15]

The assumption that women should marry was an important gendering element in a range of social structures and activities such as the organisation of the labour market, National Insurance legislation, the education system, and popular culture. It was also used as a justification for policies of inequality towards women teachers.

Yet women teachers were mostly single in the period 1900-1939, as a consequence of the marriage bar, and, it was believed, because there were too few men, especially in the years following the First World War. [16] The censuses of 1921 and 1931 show that around 85% of all women teachers (in all types of school) were unmarried. Separate figures for elementary schools confirm this pattern, while for secondary schools the figure was much higher since secondary schoolmistresses had no tradition of continuing after marriage, even in LEA areas where there was no bar. [17] Marital status was not a static condition, however. Many younger women teachers in the schools, those in their twenties and early thirties, would eventually marry. Yet out of all single women teachers at any one time, only a minority were actively engaged in the feminine behaviour of seeking or anticipating marriage.

The ideal of marriage as a proof of femininity contained a number of elements, each of which featured in the debates about women teachers' status and employment rights. Most importantly, marriage enabled, indeed socially obliged, a woman to have children; motherhood and marriage were key strands of femininity. Associated with this,

marriage was the only permitted place for the expression of female sexuality. The wider context of the falling birthrate, eugenic fears and the increasing popularisation of 'new psychology' meant that the importance of motherhood and sexual fulfilment for feminine identity became strengthened during this period, increasing the pressure to marry and the aberrant connotations of spinsterhood.

Anna Davin has argued that: 'A powerful ideology of motherhood emerged in ... the early twentieth century.' She shows that, 'women's domestic function remained supreme, but gradually it was her function as mother that was being most stressed, rather than her function as wife.' [18] In the years before the First World War, poor mothering was held to be responsible for the 'physical deterioration' highlighted by the Boer War and high infant mortality rates. [19] In the context of concerns with imperial and economic competition, the popularisation of eugenic ideas from the turn of the century drew attention to the falling fertility of the middle class, seen eugenically as the most 'fit' for parenthood, and eugenicists criticised what they perceived to be the tendency of educated young women to seek careers and 'shirk' motherhood. [20]

The coupling of femininity to motherhood was given new prominence by the losses of the First World War and increased state responsibility for selected elements of maternal and child welfare. But the concern with differential fertility was overtaken in the 1930s by alarm that the birthrate had fallen to below replacement levels; in the 'twilight of parenthood' quantity rather than quality became paramount. [21] Teachers continued to be seen as one of a number of key groups in the less affluent middle class among whom marriage should be encouraged. A leading article in the Times Educational Supplement (TES) in 1931 discussed the:

dangerously low birth-rate of the professional classes. ... From the eugenic point of view this tendency is specially to be deplored in a profession whose members are not only specially fitted for the tasks of parenthood, but are likely to pass on a mental inheritance which would enrich the race. [22]

Fears of national degeneration and the stress on women's responsibility as mothers led to renewed emphasis on girls' education, and the addition of hygiene and childcare to the already extensive domestic subjects curriculum. [23] These classes were taught,

however, by women who by and large were prohibited from being wives and mothers themselves. This anomaly contributed to the subtle denigration of single women teachers. Although they were necessarily using their maternal instincts in their work, they were at the same time wasting their eugenic qualities as 'the cream of British womanhood'. [24]

In addition to contributing to national well-being, women who married were believed to be more fulfilled as individuals - emotionally and sexually, as well as maternally - than single women. The new 'sciences' of sexology and psychology, increasingly influential in the first decades of the twentieth century, placed a premium upon marriage, motherhood and heterosexual pleasure as necessary for women's psychological happiness. According to this model, if sexual and parental instincts could not be expressed, their consequent repression might lead to anxiety, neuroses and even mental illness. [25]

The effects of these ideas upon single women, including teachers, who were not married or in a heterosexual relationship (eg engaged to be married), was to make them vulnerable to being labelled as repressed and frustrated, particularly if they were 'confirmed' older spinsters. One marriage manual (quoted against feminist spinster teachers), said that the permanently unmarried were:

living abnormal lives. Nature has designed that they should be fathers and mothers, and if they do not fulfil the laws of nature they must suffer. ... they are living unnatural lives and are biologically in an unstable condition. [26]

The professional capacity of unmarried women teachers began to be questioned on these psychological grounds. The suggestion that spinster teachers were an unhealthy influence in the schools was increasingly voiced in the interwar period, especially by anti-feminist men, sometimes in very derogatory language. The ambiguous femininity of single women teachers was cited in the antagonistic debates over whether women should be heads of mixed schools, and in relation to their ability to teach boys. Different qualities of femininity attributed to married and single women teachers also became an issue in the marriage bar controversy. [27]

Feminine maternal feeling was an important element of gendered professionalism, as shown in Chapter Two. But the idea that women's maternal qualities were a central part of psychologically well-balanced femininity was increasingly associated with actual motherhood in this period. By the 1930s, the argument that the experience of marriage and motherhood made women specially fitted for teaching was often articulated in the marriage bar debates. The increasing emphasis on teaching mothercraft and domestic subjects in schools in the 1920s and 1930s led to calls for the employment of married women teachers to undertake this task in particular. The Education Committee of the LCC recommended the raising of the marriage bar in 1935 on the grounds that a teacher's duties called for 'certain personal qualities which may be thought to be enriched by marriage', and the feeling was expressed that married women were particularly fitted to teach senior girls and to care for little children. [28] However if actual marriage and motherhood were represented as contributing to a teacher's professional skills as well as to her femininity, then single women teachers, who had not 'lived the full and complete woman's life', could be seen as narrow, less psychologically well balanced and a potentially bad influence in the schools. [29] Their professional value could be undermined, along with their femininity. But while women teachers were increasingly criticised for not being wives and mothers themselves, they continued to be subject to a marriage bar in most areas. This acute and glaring contradiction posed a major tension for women teachers to negotiate. [30]

Economics were entwined with the social pressure to marry. For most women, marriage after a few years of employment, was essential to achieve financial security. As Cicely Hamilton observed in Marriage As A Trade in 1909, romantic love was the gloss on the economic necessity of marriage for women. [31] Women's low wages meant that many were compelled to marry to survive, or at least to gain a standard of living higher than that which they could earn for themselves. [32] As workers, single women were tolerated in the labour market so long as they remained in segregated female occupations, accepted lower wages and saw themselves in the main as temporary workers en route to marriage. The power of these assumptions is reflected in the anxiety caused when women workers

appeared to be challenging men's dominance in the labour market or showing less enthusiasm for marriage.

This became particularly apparent in the years of depression and unemployment which marked the second half of the period. In the postwar slump of 1920-21, when levels of unemployment reached 15%, the needs of returning servicemen and a re-emphasis on feminine domesticity contributed to attacks on women in new employment sectors such as clerical work and the civil service, who were represented as stealing men's jobs. [33] In 1920 The Woman Teacher listed a number of attacks which had been made since the end of the war on single women workers and teachers: '... so many papers, reacting from the fulsome flattery of war days, are denouncing women workers as "limpets" or "flappers"...' [34] These attacks also reflected fears of women's increased political and economic independence. While it never really ceased, the criticism of both married and single women workers was again a feature of the 1930s depression, which led to official unemployment totals of nearly 3 million, or 23%, at its peak in 1932. [35]

Justifications for unequal pay and promotion prospects for women teachers were made in this context. In the arguments against equal pay women teachers were invariably depicted as spinsters and counterposed to the married man teacher in need of a family wage. It was also argued that since women would marry and leave teaching, their shorter service meant they should be paid less and need not be offered opportunities for promotion. The 1918 Departmental Committee on Elementary Teachers' Salary Scales raised this point.

It is also represented that a woman is, in fact, a less useful teacher than a man because she is likely to leave the service on marriage at a time when her work in the schools is still increasing in value ... [36]

Women's low wages were apparently designed to compel them to choose the approved social role of marriage and motherhood. In 1907, Sidney Webb expressed the fear that 'women of fine type' would refuse motherhood, preferring school teaching and the civil service. [37] There was quite widespread anxiety throughout the period, and particularly after the First World War, that wider opportunities and higher wages for women would mean they could avoid marriage. [38] Still in the 1940s, the Royal Commission on Equal Pay accepted the

view that one of the social reasons for unequal pay was to make motherhood as financially attractive as work in the professions, industry or trade. [39]

Certainly it was believed by many that women teachers were paid too highly and that marriage avoidance would be the result. A speaker at the annual meeting of the Association of Education Committees in 1923 said they were paying:

too much money to bachelor women.... It must be obvious to anyone that in starting a young man at £172 10s, scale 2, and a girl of the same age and same scale with £160 was grossly unfair in the social system of the country. It was productive of late marriages instead of early marriages, and was inclined to elevate the bachelor girl to a position in this country that she should not attain. [40]

An article in the Times Educational Supplement in 1932 commented, '...they can usually earn a steady wage, higher than their fathers' or brothers'; and if the teacher happens to be a slip of a girl this is not pleasant.' [41] It was seen as anomalous if women's pay levels allowed them to live comfortably and independently outside marriage. Carole Pateman has characterised marriage as a sexual contract which appears to resemble other social contracts, but in practice secures women's subordination without the possibility of retrieval. [42] Financial security - and as previously argued teaching was the only occupation to offer reasonably high pay to large numbers of women - allowed women to more easily recognise and avoid the dependency of marriage.

Single women teachers were in an ambiguous position. Since the mid-nineteenth century, teaching had been seen as a suitable substitute for marriage as a lifelong occupation for women; it involved work with children in an environment modelled on the family, working with other women, and sometimes supervised by men. However, during the interwar years this offered an increasingly less adequate means of constructing a feminine identity for single women. The tension between mothering instincts, and actual marriage and childbearing became increasingly weighted towards the latter, and was one which women teachers had to address in their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, although they were generally obliged to leave teaching on marriage, women teachers were economically able

to exercise a choice about whether to marry or not, a situation which both challenged the contemporary gender order, and also posed questions for their own lives.

Negotiating Spinsterhood and Femininity

Women teachers had to negotiate their life choices and identities in relation to the social norm that women should marry. Many of the tensions between being a teacher and being a woman were revealed in the problems which courtship posed for teachers. A major difficulty for women teachers was that of meeting suitable potential husbands in the first place. [43] As an adolescent, the future teacher was to some extent segregated from her peers, whatever her social class, by the necessity of studying. A 1936 survey of secondary schoolmistresses (on job satisfaction) commented:

As a girl, the teacher has often had fewer opportunities of contact with members of the opposite sex than those, for example, who leave school at fourteen, and who are probably walking out with their boy friends whilst she is sitting at home preparing her lessons. If, after her school days are ended, she goes to a women's college, she is normally hedged in by rules governing her association and conduct with men. [44]

Even the minority of teachers who went to mixed colleges and universities may have had little time or inclination for courtship. One of my respondents, Miss Wainwright, described socialising with men students on her postgraduate course at Cambridge, but on terms of friendship rather than romance. It was seen as unusual to be keen on having boyfriends. [45] But once established in a girls' school, the secondary schoolmistress could find herself very cut off from the companionship of men, or indeed of women other than her colleagues. [46] Elementary school teachers were more likely to live with their families in their area of origin and to be less estranged from the social life of their community, including family, friends and church. They also had the chance to meet men at the political and social events of the main elementary teachers' union, the mixed NUT. They were certainly perceived as more marriageable than secondary school teachers.

Elementary school teachers are, I believe, much in request as wives, but they have opportunities of meeting men of their own social position and profession ... [47]

Even in social circumstances where they might meet men, teachers were hindered by the negative image of women teachers as unattractive, unmarried spinsters. This was partly because the marriage bar led to an equation of teaching with spinsterhood, and partly because they were seen as clever and therefore unfeminine. One teacher reflected:

Actually, once you were a teacher, you didn't think you would get married ... Teachers used to go to great lengths to say they were anything but teachers - if they went on holiday or anything like that, they'd never admit to being teachers, because that would put off every man in sight. So young teachers ... said they were secretaries or something like that. ... I think people were afraid of teachers then ... there were more people who were afraid of the bluestocking. ... There was definitely a feeling in society generally that you wouldn't want to be too clever if you were going to be married. [48]

This seems to have particularly affected secondary school teachers. I have found no evidence of elementary school teachers disguising their occupation. Teachers who denied their professional identity in this way recognised that marriageable femininity in this period was symbolically constructed as inferior in status to masculinity; women had to be younger, shorter and less intellectually competent than their husbands. But the same teachers who denied their occupation in pursuit of husbands were proud of their professional achievements in other contexts. The tensions involved in this denial of one major part of themselves in order to project a more feminine image were irresolvable and perhaps psychically damaging.

Women teachers tried to find a resolution to these issues by drawing upon three different aspects of selfhood: the conventional role of seeking marriage; the ideal of professional femininity; and feminine family identities other than wife, especially that of loyal daughter. Women teachers could put together a combination of these elements (not always a completely satisfying one) as a counterweight to their failure to achieve marriage.

An important, though unquantifiable, group of women teachers were not especially committed to their profession, and were content to give up teaching for marriage and conventional femininity. Margaret Cole pointed out in 1938 that eager women's rights propagandists:

desiring for themselves nothing better than a paid job and the form of self-respect which the unquestionable earning of one's own living brings, are apt to forget the large numbers of women who do not desire it at all, but to be a) economically safe and b) desired - either or both if possible - and who find in marriage, if not the ideally best, at any rate a tolerable way of securing them. [49]

One single teacher, planning to marry soon, who answered a Mass Observation question on marriage expressed a degree of complacency and satisfaction at having fitted into the norm so successfully.

Even though I know now whom I am going to marry, eventually, I can clearly remember that before meeting my future husband, it was my considered opinion (as well as a conviction based on instinct) that for me a career, however successful, would be unsatisfactory compared with happy marriage and family life, with children. [50]

This teacher represented her experience in terms of dominant ideas about natural instincts and the normal woman's route to happiness. The views of such women are less easily available to the historian, because they ceased to work or identify as teachers, were no longer members of professional associations, and normally adopted instead the identity of housewife and mother.

Assertions of a strong professional identity are somewhat easier to find. Indeed, those young women who only intended to teach for a few years before marriage were sometimes rather looked down upon by older women teachers. One speaker at the Association of Assistant Mistresses conference in 1939 said of young women entering teaching:

very often they have at the back of their minds the whole time the thought, if I cannot make a success of teaching, at any rate I can marry, because it is much easier to marry than to make a success of teaching. [51]

Such denigration may have served to justify the position of those teachers who remained single by emphasising their professionalism, which was assumed here to be a shared norm among most teachers.

There was a complex relationship between femininity and professionalism. To marry in her twenties after only a few years of teaching was a difficult choice for the woman teacher quite apart from the marriage bar, since it would entail wasting the investment made in her education and training. Teachers who had accepted public money in grants for training - the majority - were obliged to sign 'the pledge' whereby they promised to teach for five years after training. [52] This acted as a direct disincentive to early marriage, at least. But indirectly it also signalled that the teacher had a wider value as a woman than that conventionally measured by the ability to find a husband. State and familial investment in their education both enabled and required women teachers to think carefully about marriage as a personal goal and also strengthened the pride in their professional identity which could be set against conventional feminine goals. As a result of her qualifications and professional position, the young teacher may have regarded herself as set apart from the ordinary run of young women whose route led them from a dead-end job straight into marriage. For example, women teachers were different from the civil service clerks studied by Kay Sanderson who did not develop a professional identity, and positively chose marriage as a way of consolidating and improving their status. [53]

An important component of professional identity was personal independence, which some teachers directly contrasted with what marriage could offer. One teacher wrote to Mass Observation at the point of having to make a decision about whether to marry.

[I]t seems more pleasing to me to be facing a day where I shall be away from home earning my own living than if circumstances were such that I should have to be attending to the breakfasts of a husband and family. No, I do not want my mother's life, or the life of any one of the women in our avenue, to cook dinners with love in them. [54]

Being a teacher enabled this woman to weigh up her true inclinations and reject a life of domesticity. Indeed, remaining single could provide complete freedom from domesticity for some teachers. Many single women teachers lived with their families, but secondary school

teachers often lived in 'digs', at least in term-time, where they enjoyed the masculine privileges of complete personal service. One teacher: 'had never made a meal for herself, cleaned her own shoes or made her own bed throughout her life.' [55]

The power of a professional identity as protection against the connotations of failed spinsterhood was complicated further by class differences in attitudes towards single women. Although it would be unwise to make any firm correlation, it may be suggested that there was a more widely recognised social niche for the middle-class spinster. The idea of the single professional woman was fairly well established from the late nineteenth century, and acceptable because the types of profession available, teaching and nursing, were using traditional feminine qualities, as discussed in Chapter Two. As Carol Dyhouse points out, this identity of the professional woman was constructed as incompatible with marriage, indeed for some women as preferable to marriage. It meant that all women teachers could associate themselves with a specific identity, a 'permission' to be single, albeit one which was becoming increasingly undermined by the factors discussed above. [56] This could counter the 'shame' and unwomanliness of the failure to marry, though often to a very limited extent. One secondary schoolmistress quoted a colleague to make this point:

she said, 'Well I come from a class, as you know, Miss Burke, when not being married, you're a failure. ... Although I've done, as you know, very well [in her career], I'm the failure because my sister's gone off and got married and I haven't.' [This] was very much the attitude in what you call the working class [but] the middle-class people said if you wanted to have a career you had a career, and if you wanted to marry, you married, but I don't think there was the same slur, you hadn't the same disgrace if you didn't marry. [57]

For the teacher described here, being a successful professional did not compensate for being a failed woman in the eyes of her family. She was split between two different understandings of her position, the conventional ideal of femininity endorsed by her family and the notion of feminine professional achievement developed by women teachers themselves. But these were not two equal understandings: not being

married detracted from her professional achievements. This attitude was echoed in a story told by another teacher:

Married women had more status. ... I went to teach in South Wales, where single women were more denigrated than they were in London. I was very struck by that. It was hard to put your finger on it, but one of the staff said to me, one day, that one of the miner's wives had said to her - this is a miner's wife speaking to a teacher - 'You know, you must enjoy life mustn't you, when you've got over the shame of being single.' And the teacher was amused at this, not having thought of herself like that. But it was a very general attitude. [58]

The view expressed by the miner's wife can also be read as a complex recognition that remaining single brought benefits as well as social disapprobation. The teacher had not equated femininity with marriage, for herself, and so could afford to be amused by the misunderstanding in the remark. Nevertheless the powerful social stigma of spinsterhood is also clear here.

For some teachers - or indeed for many teachers some of the time - a strong professional identity was not enough to set against the whole weight of negativity attached to spinsterhood and the slur of unfemininity. One secondary schoolmistress felt this pressure very keenly and described how: '... later on I very nearly got married because of the status. Because, really, you got the stereotype of being almost inhuman if you were not married.' [59] This admission illustrates the very great tensions on women teachers around the question of marriage. Most were not in a position either to seek marriage and leave teaching without a qualm, or to assert their professional identity as a form of femininity in itself.

Another way of resolving femininity with spinsterhood was to draw upon other aspects of socially recognised femininity, especially those based on the family. One teacher in her thirties wrote of the alternative role of aunt for herself.

I still want to get married, and I still want a family of my own. I think they are two of the best things in life. But I have stopped expecting either and will just have to become a gracious spinster and a devoted aunt. [60]

As models of femininity, however, these forms of identity carried a great deal less weight than the dominant ideal of the married woman, and became less socially meaningful during this period.

A more powerful familial identity was that of daughter, especially if this involved close integration into the family, caring for elderly parents or contributing financial support, as many teachers did. This meant that some women teachers could not seriously consider marriage. Miss Drysdale described the structural constraints of the 'pledge' and the marriage bar, but it was clear that these formal constraints were less important than the need to support her elderly mother. '... I always felt that I couldn't get married because I must hang on to the job. ... The job was more important because it was a case of bringing money into the home.' [61] This teacher did not see herself as having a real choice; she did not anticipate marriage since her duty lay with her family. She was expected to be a central family breadwinner, and was comfortable with this role.

Diana Gittins and Anthea Duquemin have shown that for some lower middle-class and working-class families in this period the parental need for a daughter to support the household conflicted with the social pressure to marry. Indeed, they suggest that in some families one daughter, usually the youngest, may have been manipulated into staying single in order to provide financial, domestic or caring support for the family. [62] There is no specific evidence to suggest that teachers' families generally were so instrumental. Nevertheless, the financial sacrifice made by families for their training may have had a similar effect, enhancing the woman teacher's sense of responsibility towards parents and siblings and causing marriage to be renounced or deferred. An article in a popular newspaper in 1935 cited the case of a marriage which had been postponed for twenty years because the woman teacher had had to support her mother. [63] Very many women teachers had financial obligations to support family members, and more examples are discussed in the next section of this chapter. The significant point here is that such responsibilities provided a socially validated family role for women teachers. For some individual teachers this provided a model of femininity which satisfactorily outweighed the prescription of marriage; for others it presented a major conflict with their desire to marry.

The desire for marriage and the recognition of its costs for a professional identity were in constant balance for many women teachers, and were particularly manifested for younger women. A (politically active) woman teacher reported:

I remember talking with a girl recently down from her training college. She told me that she agreed wholeheartedly with the ban on married women teachers. She talked glibly of 'unemployment' and a woman's duty to rear her family. But her tune changed when she fell in love with a young master in the boys' department of her school. His salary was not sufficient to keep them both and provide for the contingency of babies. 'I shall be miserable if I have to give up my work or my man,' she said. [64]

If a marriage bar was in force, the only means of enjoying a heterosexual relationship while keeping a teaching post was either to marry secretly or cohabit secretly with a male partner. Either option carried many risks in this period. 'Living together' was morally unacceptable and would bring instant dismissal if revealed, as would concealment of marriage. Indeed, this prospect was used as an argument against the marriage bar. [65] While it is unlikely that there were more than a few cases of cohabitation among teachers in the interwar years, it is not difficult to find evidence of both solutions. One teacher married secretly and moved from Liverpool to Oldham to hide the fact, wearing her wedding ring round her neck. Her 'fiance' visited her every weekend with the connivance of her landlady. [66] There were also dismissals and legal cases involving teachers who had secretly married. [67]

These solutions were only possible in large towns and cities and even then were risky and anxiety provoking. Some teachers did consider having sexual relationships outside marriage in the interwar years. [68] These young women teachers valued their work, but did also want to form relationships with men and eventually marry. We might speculate that the increased attention drawn to women's sexual needs in the interwar period gave them greater strength to negotiate socially unacceptable solutions to their dilemma.

One London teacher described the circumstances which enabled her to live with her partner for several years before they were able to

marry, and the tensions which accompanied such a transgression of social mores.

I was living with David, and that had to be kept very quiet. It was only the fact that [my headmistress] was such a good friend and let me use the school for addresses and all that and helped me out in every way It would have been really serious if they had found out. The phrase 'living in sin', it really meant that, and as you were sinful you weren't the right sort to have anything to do with children, so you both would have lost [teaching] Certificates, so we had to be awfully careful. We lived in a state of constant terror .. because if you were ill staff might call on you ... I remember one was coming one day, I remember saying to David, 'come along, remove all traces of male habitation', so he pulled his dressing gown down from the bedroom door, but it was a tension [69]

She stressed that such women teachers were not making political points about Bloomsbury-style free love; they would certainly have married if they could: 'as soon as the bar was lifted a whole lot got married'. [70] Cohabitation enabled women teachers to assert one aspect of femininity in an individual, personal way, but without any social recognition; of necessity it had to be secret.

To achieve true femininity - a 'home of one's own', sexual fulfilment and motherhood - women teachers had to marry. However, marriage in most LEAs, especially after the First World War, involved giving up a secure post. Economic independence, sexual expression, and motherhood could not be achieved together, either within marriage or outside it, without forfeiting respectability or femininity. These experiences of women teachers show how they became aware of these conflicts at an individual level and how they dealt with them. While teachers prized their economic and professional independence they were confronted in different ways with impossible choices concerning marriage and professionalism which they could only partially deflect by developing alternative feminine identities. But spinsterhood and sexuality were such personal issues that they could not be lightly ignored or easily negotiated. The unease and discontent generated may itself have been a spur to political activity to defend their professional position as teachers, if not their weaker and more problematic position as single women. The raised awareness of the

structural constraints outlined above might easily shift into a political analysis for women teachers when an interpretation was offered by feminism. Retaining a teaching post after marriage may have offered one way out to a few women teachers, but this raised its own problems in this period.

SECTION TWO: THE MALE BREADWINNER AND THE HOUSEWIFE

Though a vital stage, achieving marriage was not the end point of adult femininity, and the ways in which ideal womanhood was to be attained after marriage also had considerable effects on women teachers. Within marriage complementary gender roles had to be actively maintained by both husband and wife. For the husband, masculine respectability was secured through the status of breadwinner, earning a family wage sufficient to support his wife and children. A wife was not expected to be employed outside the home; once married she was to become a housewife looking after home and husband, and a mother caring for her children. This expectation of marriage was both historically and class-specific, but was well established by the early decades of the twentieth century. The ideal of the male breadwinner had a very powerful influence on both the introduction of the marriage bar in teaching and the continuing differentiation of salaries, as this section will show. But it was an ideal which clashed with the reality of many women teachers' lives, setting up tensions between conventional femininity and the structures of teacher employment.

The male breadwinner/ female housewife ideal had become established in the affluent middle class in the early nineteenth century, and slowly became a general norm of masculinity during the second half of the century, taken on first by the skilled working class as a mark of respectability and gender identity for both men and women. [71] Levels of pay for both men and women, and the exclusion of married women from the workplace, were influenced by this gendered construction of the family and the family wage was adopted by the trade union movement as a lever for wage bargaining. [72] By the 1890s middle-class policymakers and social investigators aimed to foster this family form among the working class in the belief that it would create strong families and a stable society by preserving male work incentives. Concern about the high infant mortality rate also strengthened the antipathy towards married women's work, and during the 1900s the proportion of married women working outside the home was lower than it had been in the mid-nineteenth century. [73] By the period 1900-1940 the family wage argument was used throughout industry and commerce to obtain and justify higher rates of pay for men, while the national insurance and income tax systems were similarly based on

the concept of the male breadwinner with dependent wife and children.
[74]

The family wage gave men particular benefits not enjoyed by women workers: bargaining power against employers, higher earnings and status, and greater authority and comfort within the family. Male family wage earners were patriarchal in the classic sense of that term, as fathers and husbands, heads of family and household. For women workers, marriage became the sensible and usual solution to women's low pay. But the male breadwinner wage was a causal factor, not only of women's lower pay and status at work, but also their subordinate position in the home. [75] As this gendered model of the family and salary structure became dominant, it was represented as the bedrock of social stability.

Once establish the principle that men and women engaged in similar work are to be treated as identical economically, and away goes the whole structure of ordered relativity on which all family and state life so absolutely depend. [76]

During the debates over equal pay and the marriage bar, the male breadwinner and housewife ideal was used with differing degrees of emphasis by the LEAs and the Board of Education to justify their policies, and more aggressively by the anti-feminist National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) to press further for men's privileges. These debates took place in a changing context. The labour needs of the First World War permitted a relaxation of the full-time housewife ideal, but this was followed by a concern with unemployment and cuts in public spending during the interwar recessions, together with an increasing emphasis on the importance of motherhood. The influence of this gendered construction of the family on teachers' employment was perhaps greatest in the early 1920s.

In the years before the First World War, sex differentiation in teachers' salaries was not an issue of public debate, and so the influence of the male breadwinner ideal on teachers' pay is difficult to quantify. The question of equal pay was raised within the NUT, however, and was opposed by some men teachers on the grounds of their family responsibilities. [77] While the majority of women teachers did apparently follow the middle-class norm and cease employment on marriage, and certainly this was the case for secondary school teachers, a marriage bar was only partially enforced for elementary

teachers before 1914. A Board of Education survey in 1904 suggested that one-third or more local authorities did restrict the employment of married women as teachers in this period. [78] The acceptance of married women teachers in many areas was probably rooted in the shortage of teachers during the expansion of elementary education in the late nineteenth century, and the particular difficulty of attracting teachers to rural schools. [79] But teacher over-supply and unemployment during 1908-12 highlighted the view that married women teachers had less right to work than newly qualified teachers. Between January 1908 and April 1909 at least a dozen local authorities brought in marriage bar regulations, and the Board of Education investigated the employment of married women. [80] By 1912, however, there was a general shortage of teachers, making the idea of marriage bars redundant. [81]

The general disapproval of married women's work was temporarily suspended during the First World War, because of the need for their labour in the war effort. Most LEAs relaxed marriage regulations and encouraged the return of married women as well as retired teachers to cover a serious shortfall of staff, as up to a half of all men teachers, and some women, left to join the Forces or auxiliary services. [82] The increased number of married women teaching, and the employment of women on 'men's work' in boys schools, and as head teachers in larger numbers than before the war, created a tension with the ideal of the male breadwinner and dependent wife and, as in many other occupations, intensified the demands for equal pay. [83]

However, the family wage principle continued to be used to justify the differentiation in teachers' pay. During the First World War, war bonuses were often paid in the first place to men with families, and then to unmarried teachers with dependants, sometimes specifically excluding married women teachers. [84] When the issue of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' was publicly debated during the war, various government committees were forced to assess the significance of the family wage. The Report of the Women's Employment Committee in 1918 upheld the idea that a fair wage for a man was a family wage, and The Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry (1919) supported equal pay for teachers, while suggesting that it might be necessary to pay children's allowances. [85] Similarly, the Departmental Committee on Teachers' Salary Scales in 1918 recommended

a differentiation in teachers' salaries on the basis of men's greater family responsibilities, and H. A. L. Fisher, then President of the Board of Education, upheld the principle in the House of Commons. [86] The 4:5 ratio of women's pay to men's arrived at by the Burnham Committee was taken to imply a recognition of dependency, although this was not explicitly discussed during negotiations. [87] Neither the Board of Education nor the LEAs favoured equal pay for teachers and the family wage principle allowed them to deflect calls for equal pay, even when pressure was at its height in 1918-20. Later Cabinet papers referring to teacher's pay indicate that the family wage continued to be of importance in the 1920s: 'it must be borne in mind that rates of remuneration for men are related to the normal needs of married persons.' [88] Although the experience of war challenged the family wage principle, this was treated as an anomalous situation and it became more explicitly entrenched in salary and employment policy after the war. [89]

The strains placed on the postwar economy led to the ideal of the male breadwinner and housewife being forcefully used to justify lower salaries and a marriage bar for women teachers, as well as for other women workers. The 1919-20 depression which followed the war brought high unemployment, the Geddes cuts in public spending, and a period of economic stringency. The debate over equal pay quickly faded. Cuts in government education spending, which led to the unemployment of newly trained young teachers and a search for further savings, affected the discussion of salary levels and were a direct trigger for the marriage bar. The National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) persistently used the idea of the family wage to argue for higher salaries for men teachers. Their slogan calling for 'Separate Consideration' for men teachers' salaries was taken from the 1918 Report on Salary Scales for Teachers in Elementary Schools. [90] The woman teacher was characterised by the NAS and other opponents of equal pay as having only herself to support, as compared with the supposedly typical man teacher: 'What was an adequate wage for the spinster teacher was entirely inadequate for the family man.' [91] Concern and hostility were expressed about their relative standard of living. It was alleged, for example, that even with unequal salaries women teachers could afford to take holidays abroad, while men had to take on additional work such as teaching evening classes, in order to fulfil their family responsibilities. [92] However, in arguing for

'separate consideration' the NAS focussed on their policy of 'men teachers for boys' as well as on the family wage idea. [93] Concern over rates of pay for men and the protection of the breadwinner norm was widely shared in the interwar period and the family wage argument was also used to oppose equal pay in the civil service. [94]

The assumption that married women would be full-time housewives was part of a wider set of constraints on married women's employment between the wars. The extension of the 'genuinely seeking work' test in 1921 was directed at married women in particular to deny their claim to unemployment benefit. During this period trade unions, too, were calling for the displacement of married women from the labour force in order to preserve men's jobs. [95]

The male breadwinner principle was used to rationalise and facilitate the dismissal of women teachers on marriage in the early 1920s. During 1922 and 1923 many LEAs either reintroduced regulations against married women teachers or passed them for the first time. By 1926 about three-quarters of all local authorities operated some sort of marriage bar, providing for the resignation of women teachers on marriage and in many cases involving the dismissal of married women already serving as teachers. [96] In some areas large groups of women were actually sacked; in 1924 it was found that 105 out of 330 LEAs had dismissed married women teachers. [97] It is difficult to gauge the number of women nationally who lost their jobs during this period, but a conservative estimate made by the Board of Education in August 1922 suggested that at least 2,500 married women had already been dismissed. [98]

The marriage bar particularly affected elementary teachers and meant that the employment of married women in teaching very broadly followed the more general pattern of an increase in married women's work in the First World War and a decline afterwards. Before the First World War, between 10% and 12% of women teachers in elementary schools were married. [99] This rose as high as 18.9% by 1921, or 18,676 in total. The introduction of marriage bars in the early 1920s meant that by 1927 the number of married women teachers had fallen to 14,430 or 13.9%. [100] Although a considerable reduction, this by no means constituted the elimination of married women teachers, since the majority retained their posts. However, by the late 1920s very few education committees appointed married women as teachers, except where

single women were not available, such as in rural districts. [101] Later the number of married women appeared to reach an equilibrium, with 11,963 in 1929 and 11,913 in 1933, representing about 10% in each year. [102] But this hides great local variations in the proportion of married women teachers due to the varying regional application of marriage bars. [103] Those very few authorities who had no marriage bar at all had proportions of married women teachers as high as 35-50%, suggesting that the housewife ideal was not wholeheartedly taken on by women teachers. [104]

In bringing in a marriage bar, local education authorities were concerned about the unemployment of newly trained teachers and about making financial savings. But the decision of very many of them that the reintroduction of a marriage bar would address these problems was also pressed on them by a public debate which made constant reference to the family model of a male breadwinner with dependent wife, and indeed came to be justified by both LEAs and the Board of Education in these terms.

Attacks on married women teachers, framed by this construction of marriage, were made during periods of unemployment of newly trained young teachers leaving college, in 1922-24 and the early 1930s, as they had been in 1909-10. Letters and articles in the national press, particularly in the early 1920s, complained this was a disgraceful situation. '[I]t is time that all married women teachers whose husbands have employment should be forced to resign.' [105] The London County Council (LCC) files (and those of other LEAs) contain many letters and press cuttings sent in during 1922-23, mostly calling for the dismissal of married women teachers. These argued as a self-evident truth that married women should not work outside the home. [106] For women teachers, this set up a tension between the social norm of the full-time housewife, and the wasted investment in teachers' professional training and accumulation of expertise. But widespread unemployment in many occupations strengthened the belief that men as breadwinners should have priority for jobs, single women workers were simply tolerated, while working married women were represented as greedy and immoral. [107] The scenario of women taking men's jobs did not in fact apply to teachers - most unemployed teachers in the 1920s were young women fresh from training college - but the context of mass unemployment strengthened the general

presumption that posts should go to those who were perceived to need work. A married woman's domestic responsibilities were seen as her primary responsibility, her real work. Marriage itself was represented as a woman's profession; she should not have another job outside the home. If she did, this compromised and demeaned her husband's masculinity, his ability to provide a family wage. [108]

The only justification for married women's work was poverty, which did not normally apply to teachers' families. When bringing in regulations against married women teachers, LEAs almost without exception included a rider to the effect that in future married women would not be considered for posts unless they were widowed or their husbands incapacitated. While these rules recognised a potential mismatch between the male breadwinner ideal and the real lives of some women teachers, they were often interpreted very strictly. Some LEAs required teachers to give personal details of their husbands' income or of exceptional home circumstances before deciding who to dismiss. Those allowed to remain might have their cases reviewed annually. [109]

If wives were employed by 'two masters', it was argued there would be costs both to the employer and to normal family life. Public criticism of the cost of employing married women centred on absenteeism caused by pregnancy and looking after sick children and husbands. [110] Yet a report on London teachers made in 1920 showed that married women were only marginally more likely to take leave than single women, and the number of maternity cases per year was not particularly high. [111] Married women were also charged with being less efficient teachers since the first call on their energies was supposed to be the home, husband and children. A 1923 report of the LCC Education Committee asserted that:

Educational objections to the employment of married women teachers are ... that whereas the care of their children must always be a duty pressing directly upon a mother she is not capable of devoting as much attention to the condition of the school and the development of her own teaching as is possible for an unmarried woman. [112]

There was a growing emphasis on the woman teacher's potential function as a mother and it was argued that her training and experience would

not be wasted if she left work to marry and fulfil her eugenic duty, since it would undoubtedly make her a better mother. [113]

The marriage bar was introduced as an answer to the specific difficulties of teacher unemployment and education cuts which faced LEAs in the early 1920s. Public endorsement of the male breadwinner ideal created considerable pressure and meant that married women teachers rapidly became targetted as the most vulnerable group. The debate over married women teachers quickly developed a momentum and most LEAs introduced a bar. Although the LEAs passed marriage bar regulations individually, they did not act independently. Education Officers corresponded with each other in order to inform themselves of the situation in other areas, and a broad consensus became established. [114] Although the Board of Education tried to publicly disassociate itself from any responsibility for the marriage bar, which was a local policy prerogative, there is evidence to show that in the interwar years it, too, was guided by the idea of the family wage in its assessment of the situation. Early in 1922, as marriage bars were beginning to be introduced, the President of the Board privately expressed satisfaction with the policy and considered that:

married women teachers, as a class, could be dismissed with the least hardship and should certainly not occupy places which could be filled by teachers coming out of Training Colleges... [115]

By summer 1922 the policy was publicly endorsed by the Board of Education. [116]

This prescriptive view of the gendered family also cut across political affiliations. There was no correlation between the political party in control of an LEA and the introduction of regulations against married women teachers. The educational press also swung behind the marriage bar, reflecting public opinion rather than leading it. Both the Times Educational Supplement and the Journal of Education moved in the early 1920s from a position of supporting a married woman teacher's right to work to one where they tacitly agreed with the reasons put forward by local authorities for a marriage bar. [117]

The depression of 1929-32 provoked renewed attacks on married women's work generally. Already seen as a class apart for national insurance purposes, legislation further restricted married women

workers' access to benefits, on the grounds that the family should be supported by a male breadwinner, not the wife. [118] The problem of unemployed young teachers, and education cuts, also returned in the early 1930s and led to renewed calls for a marriage bar in those areas still without one, but there was little overall change in the number of married women teachers employed between 1929 and 1933. [119] A handful of LEAs raised their marriage bars in the mid to late 1930s, but by 1939 between 80% and 90% still operated a marriage bar. [120]

The marriage bar exemplified the assumption that families should be composed of a male breadwinner with dependent wife and children. But despite the continued reiteration of the male breadwinner principle in these debates, it did not fit the actual structure of teachers' families (or indeed families generally), creating a number of tensions for women teachers. Many single women had their own family dependants to support, while not all men had wives and children, despite their family wage. The burden of family responsibilities varied greatly between individual men teachers. Not all were married, and only some married men had dependent children. The 1921 Census showed that over 60% of men teachers had no responsibility for dependent children (including those who were not married), and this proportion may have grown as the birth rate fell. [121] Men also received income tax relief for wives and children (if liable for tax), as well as higher salaries. The family wage was an imperfect and inefficient way of dealing with the problem of child support at any social level. As the Family Endowment Society pointed out: 'While providing for millions of imaginary children, [it] would leave a large proportion of the real children with insufficient maintenance.' [122]

In particular, the family wage left many single women teachers in an anomalous position. They didn't fit its assumption of the self-supporting spinster: they had dependants themselves, but lower salaries on which to keep them. Contemporary surveys and statistics showed that many women workers had dependants, commonly elderly or ailing parents, sometimes siblings, or invalid relatives. There were also some married women teachers and widows with dependent children. [123] But women's dependants were not recognised in the same way as men's familial responsibilities. They were seen as exceptional, and as a moral duty rather than a legal responsibility. [124]

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of women teachers with dependants. A few surveys were carried out into dependency among women workers during the period, but the results varied enormously. A survey by the Fabian Women's Group published in 1915 found that out of 5,000 women workers, of whom a high proportion were professional or white-collar workers, some 51% partially or wholly supported others. Of the 1,300 women teachers, 46% were contributing to the support of others. [125] Rowntree's survey in 1921, however, found that only 12% of women workers had partial or total dependants, though as Susan Pedersen has shown, Rowntree only managed to come to this conclusion by using a grossly inadequate method of measuring women's support of dependants. Another enquiry in 1921, also of working-class women, suggested that 35% of women had family responsibilities. [126] Samples were taken by different organisations to show evidence of women's dependants to the Royal Commission on Equal Pay in 1945. The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs reported that 36% of their sample group had some responsibility for dependants, while the Association of Assistant Mistresses found that 31% of their members had one or more fully dependent relatives. [127] There were problems with the size and selection of all these samples, but they indicate the rough extent of women's family responsibilities. It can be suggested, on the basis of these figures, that around one third of women teachers had dependants. [128]

Women's responsibility for dependants was not entirely ignored in public debates and policy making, but it was treated with great ambivalence. An article in the TES in 1919 grudgingly recognised that:

An intolerably large number of women turn up who have dependents, and it is not really easy to explain exactly why a man would have his dependents taken into account and a woman not. [129]

We have already seen that LEAs, when introducing a marriage bar exempted married women teachers whose husbands were incapacitated, tacitly acknowledging that some married women were themselves breadwinners. Some policy anomalies were apparent at the national level. Women could claim tax relief for dependent relatives, as married men could for wives and children. [130] Under the means test, women teachers could be legally obliged to support their dependent relatives. [131] But despite these contradictions in policy, women

with family members to support were generally seen as exceptions to the general rule of the male breadwinner.

Negotiating The Male Breadwinner Ideal

The male breadwinner ideal did not fit the varied structures of women teachers' actual family lives, and they constantly transgressed it in two particular ways. First, by having dependants of their own to support, but on unequal salaries. Secondly, by desiring (and sometimes actually managing) to work after marriage, violating the housewife norm and challenging the difficulties posed by the marriage bar. The problems faced by women teachers in negotiating the tensions between their feminine sense of self and their professional identity in this context will be examined in the next part of this chapter.

Women Teachers' Dependants

Almost all the women teachers I interviewed had either had financial responsibility for relatives themselves, or knew of a number of teachers who did. It may have been the case that a woman teacher was more likely to have dependants than other women workers because she would be the highest earning daughter in the family. As middle-class and then working-class family size declined from the late nineteenth century, there would also be fewer children to share this responsibility. [132] Miss Griffiths commented:

teachers of my generation and a bit older than I am, would probably be the unmarried one of the family. As they'd gone into teaching they couldn't get married, well if they got married they couldn't teach, whereas perhaps the brother and sister had gone off and got married, so they, the unmarried one, had to look after Mum. This happened quite a lot. [133]

The marriage bar, then, meant that women teachers were more likely than their siblings to look after elderly parents, and this in turn might also restrict their own chances of marriage. [134]

The nature of teachers' family responsibilities changed during this period. Increasing national insurance provision after World War One, covering most of the working population for pensions and some health insurance, probably relieved some of the financial burden of elderly parents and sick family members. But the war itself created

new types of dependency as Miss Burke, a secondary schoolmistress, stressed:

you must remember too, when we were teaching from 1919 onwards a great many women had to help the parents because their brothers had died, and they had to help the brother's wife and children because their brothers had died. There was a tremendous burden on the unmarried woman, teacher or not, but I knew quite a few who helped and I don't know how they managed. [135]

The war meant that some women teachers had to take on the responsibilities which their brothers might have borne. Mrs Barrett, a London elementary teacher, worked in play centres in the evening as well as school during the day to help her family with money in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Yes, my father, he was in the war, in Passchendaele and all that and came out an absolute wreck, went into the Maudsley Hospital with shell shock so he didn't work very much. [136]

The periods of depression and unemployment in the early 1920s and again in the early 1930s also created new burdens for some women teachers. 'Fathers of families, brothers and other male relatives have lost their employment, and many women teachers, married and single, have been the sole earning member of the family.' [137] Generally speaking, however, the woman teacher who did have dependants would usually be supporting an elderly mother.

For individual women teachers, the pressure of supporting dependants on an unequal salary could mean financial hardship. The National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT), for example, had many applications to its Mutual Aid Fund from women teachers in distressed circumstances. 'Miss A has an aged father and delicate sister dependent on her. She is the sole support of the home with heavy expenses, both medical and domestic,' it was reported in 1935. [138]

The support of dependants had different meanings and consequences for women than for men. While men's dependants were acknowledged in the ~~the~~ family wage, women's family responsibilities were only partially recognised, and rather than enhancing their status and efficiency at work, might actually hinder their professional advancement. The relationship of a dependant to a male breadwinner did not simply involve financial support; services given in return

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must be taken into consideration. A housewife provided cooking, housework and laundry services for her husband's benefit which he would otherwise have had to do for himself or pay others to do for him. As the NUWT put it: 'A man who marries obtains an unsalaried housekeeper for life.' [139] The single woman, on the other hand, could not usually afford to employ a housekeeper. The Royal Commission on Equal Pay (1944-46) pointed out that the cost of housekeeping services for single women should be taken into account when comparing the standard of living as between single women and married men:

a man who is married but without dependent children may enjoy a definite financial advantage over the spinster earning 20% less than himself; and this advantage would probably in many cases not be altogether lost under equal pay. [140]

Rather than a dependant, a wife was a financial asset to the man teacher. Children, on the other hand, were more obviously dependants while still at school, but in the long term could be seen as an investment, potentially providing support and care to their parents in old age. Indeed, many spinster teachers found themselves doing just this, often to their cost.

While some of the woman teacher's obligations could prove to be short-lived - assistance to brothers and sisters, for example - the support of elderly parents might turn out to be a much longer term commitment than children, and of a very different nature. [141] If they lived under the same roof, a mother might well provide the single woman teacher with housekeeping services, but as she became elderly and possibly infirm the situation would be reversed, placing the teacher under financial and emotional stress. Miss Wainwright commented:

there were quite a number of [secondary schoolmistresses] who were caring for their parents, particularly mothers, and finding that quite hard because of the pull between school and looking after mother ... when mothers got elderly and were helpless, the problem then was whether you could carry on with your job or whether you'd have to leave it to look after mother and that was an awful decision. [142]

Having a parent to care for might compel a teacher to remain in the same school or area, preventing promotion, and it might also have a restricting effect on her day-to-day professional work. Miss Burke observed that 'far too many, far too many' secondary school teachers had to look after their elderly parents. 'You can't have elderly parents coming and living with you in a strange place when you're busy working.' [143] There was a tension between the need to support family members and the individualism implied in professional work and a career path. In some instances, being a caring daughter could bring the rewards of a happy home life, and it was certainly accepted as an unquestioned feminine duty in most cases. But it was perceived by some women teachers as leading to real conflict with the demands of their work and the development of their professional identity. [144]

There was a strong social expectation that it was a daughter's role to care for her elderly parents: 'the usual thing was that if you had your children, well they kept you.' [145] Miss Dart, an elementary school teacher, lived and worked all her life in Portland, Dorset. Her mother became an invalid when Miss Dart was in her thirties:

I stayed there - well you see mother was such an invalid I couldn't go away and leave her so I just stayed there. ... I knew I couldn't go away and leave or - you didn't do it in those days. Children didn't leave their parents to somebody else to look after. [146]

But these dependants were not recognised in women teachers' salaries.

This ambiguity might have contributed to the contradictory views held by women teachers themselves. It was common for women teachers to support the idea of equal professional salaries, to recognise that many women had family dependants to support, but at the same time to continue to adhere to a notion of the male breadwinner and his financial obligations. Mrs Barrett, a London elementary school teacher, said she had thought it wasn't right that single women should be very well off, while married men had family responsibilities. However, she believed that men and women teachers did the same job and, in fact, that women teachers generally worked harder than men. She thus believed in potentially conflicting ideas - the ideal of the family wage but also the recognition of equal work done. Her belief that men's family responsibilities should be recognised conflicted

with her own experience of having to help support her mother and her aunt: her own dependants were discounted. [147] Miss Burke recognised much more clearly that women teachers also had very real dependants, as shown above, but still found it hard to resist dominant ideas: '[the men] were better off than we were. They said, of course, we have a family to keep. I suppose that was an argument but it wasn't an argument.' [148]

Miss Drysdale described how her unmarried sister had to give up her job to look after their elderly mother, so that she had to support the whole household.

She gave up her job so we were quite poor again with three people to keep. I was the only one earning and the argument then always put forward was they had a family to keep, but then they had a wife's allowance and for children, didn't they? I thought at the time it was unfair but I can't say I worried about it terribly. I was just very pleased when my salary went up... [149]

Miss Drysdale recognised the direct conflict between the idea of the male breadwinner wage and her own family arrangements, but displaced her feeling of injustice onto appreciating what she had. Teachers were ambivalent about the relevance of the family wage, though all were obliged to consider and analyse such a powerful idea. But at the same time they had a strong sense of doing equal work with men which they felt should be rewarded at an equivalent professional rate.

Teaching After Marriage

While they were equivocal about rewarding men's family responsibilities, women teachers - especially those in elementary schools - were less prepared to accept the idea that a married woman's place should be in the home. Although many women teachers would have permanently left the profession on marriage, it has already been shown that a high proportion did continue if they had the opportunity. London County Council statistics indicated that while the number of women teachers who married annually was approximately 300, the number who resigned on marriage in the years preceding the marriage bar was only around 90. [150] When the marriage bar was lifted again in 1935 the number of resignations on marriage immediately dropped from about 140-170 to between 60 and 70 per annum. [151] In the approximately 50

LEAs which had no marriage bar before the Second World War, up to 50% of women teachers were married women in permanent service. [152]

In wishing in large numbers to continue working after marriage, teachers differed from most middle-class women. [153] The reasons given to account for teachers' desire to work after marriage can begin to indicate some of the conflicting tensions which the marriage bar posed for their sense of feminine identity. In a letter to the TES in 1914, the General Secretary of the London Teachers Association identified three classes of married women teachers:

- 1) Those for whom teaching is an absorbing profession and who feel that their best work... is to be done in the school.
- 2) Those who feel that they are happier and more congenially employed in teaching than in domestic work...
- 3) Those who, marrying the man of their choice... realise that the home they prefer and the surroundings and education they desire for their children cannot be obtained on their husband's earnings. [154]

Married as well as single women teachers found that their responsibilities for dependent relatives were ignored and marginalised. Some married women teachers were also obliged to be family breadwinners, because their husbands earned low wages. In 1923 a married woman who had been an uncertificated infant teacher for 33 years in Ashford, Kent, was given notice on the grounds of marriage. She wrote to the NUWT for assistance, saying that her husband did not earn enough to keep himself in food:

I am the householder and the breadwinner. I have an invalid daughter to keep and my mother (85 years) is living with me and wants some support. My son has just finished his apprenticeship and his wages are only just enough to pay for his board and lodgings, so that he still requires keep and clothes. [155]

For a variety of reasons less acute than these, many women elementary teachers aimed to continue working after marriage, despite the apparent conflict with the ideal of the home-centred wife. Dina Copelman has argued that many married women teachers in turn-of-the-century London worked in order to achieve and maintain a comfortable standard of living for their families. [156] Financial need is also illustrated by the large number of married women who applied for supply work after a marriage bar was enforced. LEAs kept many married

women on their supply staffs even when they were not allowed to hold permanent posts. However, this was intermittent work, without security or prospects, less well-paid and not pensionable until after 1929. [157]

There is also plenty of evidence to show that many married women wished to carry on teaching because of commitment to their profession. Women like Leah Manning, later to become the first married woman president of the NUT, were pleased to be able to continue in the profession after marriage, in her case due to the outbreak of war in 1914. 'A married woman teacher! Such a phenomenon was unheard of in 1914. But I was as pleased as surprised. I had hated the idea of giving up my work.' [158] This example also indicates the regional differences in expectations of teaching after marriage. Leah Manning was working in an elementary school in Cambridge, where there was an accepted marriage bar. Attitudes to work after marriage depended very much on whether a tradition of married women teachers was established, as it was in London. In rural areas, too, where it was often difficult to staff remote schools, women may have regarded their teaching posts as theirs for life. One country teacher who planned to combine marriage and work had her post confirmed at the same time as she got engaged around 1910.

... she would have a permanent assistant teacher's place, and they could look forward to a busy, useful married life... What could be a better wedding present? [159]

However, even in rural schools, married women teachers who were permitted to remain in employment were not immune to abuse and denigration at the height of antagonism to married women's employment in the 1920s. [160] Even secondary school teachers who had no tradition of continuing after marriage felt the stress between marriage and their profession. One married secondary school teacher said in 1939, 'I did wish to teach and I do wish to teach and I think it exceedingly hard lines on anybody at all who wishes at the same time to marry.' [161]

Married women teachers who valued their professional work were quite prepared to relinquish the domestic duties of conventional wifehood. Some married women left the profession when they began to have children but it was often possible to combine teaching with motherhood. Women teachers had small families, domestic assistance

was cheap, at least at the beginning of the period, and the hours of work were convenient for women with children. It may also have been an advantage that elementary teachers frequently married other teachers. [162] One teacher, describing her own London education before the First World War said:

I remember when I was a child we had married teachers, but ... they all had somebody at home to look after their children. That was still in the days when you could get a tweeny for £8 a year, so there was no suggestion that children were neglected or anything. [163]

LCC figures for the 1920s showed that most married women teachers did not have children, while those mothers who did carry on teaching had very small families. [164] However, during the interwar period the cost of servants rose and their availability became less certain. At the same time, middle-class mothers were expected to more closely monitor their children's emotional and physical health, as well as creating a new-style companionate marriage. These new expectations made paid employment more difficult for married women; nevertheless they should not be over-emphasised. [165]

The tensions between marital femininity and professionalism were experienced in a number of different ways by married women teachers who did continue to work. When Mrs Bradshaw, a London elementary teacher, married in 1931, she had to leave under the marriage bar regulations. But after a year or two, the couple were under financial strain: '[a]t one time I had a house with both my mother and mother-in-law living in,' and Mrs Bradshaw returned to teaching. [166] She obtained a post at a Church school, exploiting the loophole whereby non-provided schools had power over their own staffing and did not have to follow the marriage bar regulations of the LEA. [167] But although she worked at the school for some time, she was not employed on the permanent staff but as a supply teacher, with fewer employment rights. The clash of duties involved in being wife, daughter and professional teacher were resolved to her own satisfaction by returning to teaching, though this conflicted with her husband's sense of what was right and proper behaviour for a married woman:

I remember saying to my husband - of course we were very hard up at that time - and I said to him, oh well, I'm going back to [teaching] ... He wasn't keen on me going. He believed as a

married woman I should be at home. And I said to him, well, we haven't any children, and I said, teaching is always changing - supposing there's a time when I want to go back full time, so I did quite a lot of supply work. [168]

Mrs Bradshaw used a range of understandings to justify her transgression of the housewife role. First, their financial position; she was helping the marital household by going back to work and supporting their mothers. With no children her domestic responsibilities were limited. And she also cited professional expertise as a reason to return, showing the strength of her identity as a teacher. Later in the 1930s Mrs Bradshaw was angered by the assumption that as a married woman she was financially dependent, when she applied to do a diploma in nursery teaching. Normally the LCC paid for teachers' further training in such circumstances, but she had to fill in a form declaring her husband's income, and was asked to pay a certain amount of the expenses.

So I rang up County Hall and I said, 'Why have I got to pay, I understood if the LCC agreed, I could go.' ... and they said, 'But you see, you're married, you've got a husband, an income' so I said, 'Oh, now supposing a man had applied for a diploma course and his wife was working ... how much would he have to pay?' Oh no, he wouldn't have to pay and that started me off, yes, that's what started me off. [169]

The experience of Yorkshire teacher Mrs Hatch shows two further shortcomings of the male breadwinner model: the unreliable passage of the family wage from husband to wife, and the possibility of the husband's inability to work. Mrs Hatch was an elementary school teacher in West Yorkshire until she married in 1913 and left. She returned during the war because her husband managed money very badly.

When Dorothy was - she wasn't two - my husband couldn't manage money at all and wouldn't make me an allowance, you know, he'd give me a little bit and I'd to manage with it as long as I could and then ask for more and that didn't go down with somebody who'd been earning their own living. So I told him - and in telling these things I'm always afraid that it looks as if life wasn't - it wasn't easy but it wasn't unhappy. I think I'm a pretty decided person and I told him, I said, either I have an allowance or I'm going out to earn one. And he said well, he would make

one. He'd make me a regular allowance but it didn't last a fortnight, I got it one week and I didn't get it again, so I - without saying anything to him I applied for a post ... and got one and advertised for a housekeeper and got one. [170]

She carried on teaching between the wars, despite the marriage bar, because her husband, who was twenty years older than she was, became incapacitated by illness. By this time she had three children of her own and two step-sons.

My husband became an invalid and I brought the family up, I had to provide for the family. ... Well I had to fill up a form and have it signed by a doctor that my husband was unable to work and that I had to work to provide for the family. And back came the reply to this that I was appointed for another year, and I was on a yearly basis until his death. [171]

The freedom to be a breadwinner as a married woman was very tightly controlled by this humiliating ritual. Mrs Hatch was clearly unwilling to remain in the position of dependent wife when she had her own professional resources to fall back on. She kept control of her own salary when she went back to teaching. 'Oh well, once I got [back] to school - I never handed any of my money to him. ... I don't mean I wouldn't give him some. Because I had to do that in the latter years, but to hand over my money and expect some to be paid back, not on your life.' [172] She described herself as both committed to her work, and as acting out of necessity. Asked about her husband's attitude, Mrs Hatch explained: 'I don't think he minded because he knew I was much happier at school than doing housework, I don't like housework.' [173] Mrs Hatch's story includes many complex tensions, centred partly over which partner had control over their income, and partly on her pride in her independence and professionalism.

The social norm of the full-time housewife carried less resonance for women teachers than the ideal of the family wage. If women teachers were swayed by the idea of the family wage, then rationally they should have accepted its assumption of the home-based wife, but their sense of their own professional value seems to have been more powerful. There was a distinction in the attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers. For the former, work after marriage had been a tradition or a possibility in many areas, which the marriage bar took away. '[I]t was a recognised thing, you had lots of married

teachers in the schools.' [174] They had previously been able to demonstrate a feminine professionalism in being a married teacher which was now challenged by a strengthened idea of a wife's dependence. Secondary school teachers had a pattern of pursuing their career until marriage or instead of marriage but had developed a strong professional identity in their work and thus resented the marriage bar in principle. Miss Burke, describing secondary school mistresses' feelings said:

Oh, they were furious, but when the bar operated there weren't so many women who wanted to teach, not married women, but we all felt that if they wanted to teach and they could do the work and look after the homes, well that was their business. [175]

The bar created a clash between their professional autonomy and dominant assumptions of marital femininity. Teachers were angry, not necessarily because they wanted to teach after marriage, but because the bar intruded their private circumstances into their work and diminished their professional qualities and identities.

Whether they saw it as a natural phenomenon or as socially constructed, women teachers resented the marriage bar. Mrs Bradshaw observed: 'of course the social climate of the times then; it was more or less recognised that if you got married you stayed at home and so people were prepared to accept the fact that they had to leave when they got married.' [176] Miss Vera Reid said of attitudes to the bar in the 1930s:

it was very much resented, but it was a fact of life. There was not much you could do about it, just hope that you could get part-time work which you sometimes could, or supply work, or something like that. People were conscious of it, but it was like the weather, you know. [177]

In most cases the existence of a marriage bar didn't stop teachers choosing to marry, but they were not keen to become housewives. Mrs Barrett got married soon after the marriage bar was lifted in London in 1935, though her wedding had not been deliberately postponed. She carried on teaching in Berrymsey for another 2½ years until shortly before her son was born in 1938. [178] Mrs Platt, a London secondary school teacher, planned to marry in the summer of 1935. She and her husband talked of 'united independence', reflecting

their views of modern marriage as a partnership of two equals. Since the LCC had just lifted the bar she was able to carry on teaching as a married woman, only leaving to have a baby in the 1940s. Like many women teachers, she was keen to get married, and would have gone ahead anyway, but was also very happy to be able to continue in her profession. [179]

The patterns of women teachers' everyday lives - of supporting family members, of working after marriage - often went against the grain of dominant assumptions about the gendered family. As a consequence, women teachers could experience multiple tensions between various understandings of femininity and ideals of professionalism. While in general terms these contradictions encouraged a political awareness, women teachers were part of a wider society and culture and not immune to its dominant ideas. In some instances, then, knowledge and understanding of these tensions was avoided or denied, and in other instances developed into a critique.

Many women teachers did half accept the ideal that men should be able to earn a family wage; however they also believed that they should be entitled to equal professional salaries. The family wage was a powerful social norm and, particularly in the 1930s, teachers were themselves aware of unemployment and experienced feelings both of insecurity and of relative privilege as teachers. Although teaching suffered less unemployment than almost any other occupation, there were periods of difficulty in the 1920s and 1930s which affected newly-trained young teachers.

The idea of the male breadwinner was entrenched in salary policy and marriage bar regulations. However, rather than being, or becoming, themselves dependent on a male breadwinner, women teachers frequently had dependants of their own to support, whether they were single or married. This provided hard evidence to prove that the family wage was an unfair myth. Although the obligation to support dependants placed women teachers in the masculine role of breadwinner, the admission that they did not fit the assumed social pattern did not involve confronting a personal failing. On the contrary, their responsibilities for dependent parents were seen as an accepted familial duty and, in caring for others, they confirmed their femininity. This made it possible for the contradictory assumptions of the salary structure to be identified and articulated. Equally

important was the strong sense of their professional value as teachers, which was voiced even by women teachers who were ambivalent about the family wage. But, ironically, family responsibilities could restrict women teachers' career advancement, rather than providing a justification for higher pay and promotion as men's dependants did.

The idea that a married woman's femininity should be centred in the home was very strong during this period. Like spinster teachers, married women teachers had to bear attacks made on their personalities, abilities and femininity, including concerns about their inefficiency as housewives, their shortcomings as mothers, and doubts as to whether they could fulfil their professional duties as teachers. In terms of conventional ideas, married women teachers undermined their own femininity and their husbands' masculine breadwinner status. But despite the attacks made on them, women teachers were apparently less ambivalent about their right to work after marriage than they were about the family wage.

One reason for this was their visibility. The power of the dominant ideal was contradicted by the reality that many married women were employed, especially at times of national crisis such as war, but also as a continuing tradition in elementary teaching in many areas. Furthermore, the way that married women teachers were brought into or pushed out of the schools according to the supply needs of the LEAs, clarified the arbitrary and political nature of the policy. Women teachers did not see working after marriage as detracting from their femininity, perhaps because this had already been secured by marriage. It was also 'permissible' to work for financial reasons, especially if this was to support family members. [180] A strong sense of their professional status and autonomy also allowed women teachers to resolve this tension in their own lives and identities. Finally, contradictions within these ideas also provided an argument for the employment of married women teachers. Since the maternal attributes of women teachers were deemed important, the enhanced femininity gained in marriage (and potentially motherhood) could strengthen her professional persona.

SECTION THREE: GENDER AND AUTHORITY

The third important model of gender relations which caused tensions for women teachers was the connection made between masculinity and authority. Attention is focussed first in this section upon changing notions of masculinity and men teachers' concerns about their position in the schools, before going on to examine how women teachers created and negotiated their own sense of professional authority. Masculine authority entails both the subordination of women and a hierarchy among men and masculinities. Like femininity, the idea of masculinity is unstable rather than unified, and has variable and competing elements which change over time. [181] One of the major questions raised by the literature on masculinity is how the gender relations of men's work affects their masculine identity. [182] The construction of masculinity in men's public activities has a relationship with the wielding of authority over dependants in the home. [183] In the home, the man was the head of the household, while in employment, men frequently exercised authority in some form. [184] But men's authority was not uniform across the family and workplace. In some circumstances, women had authority - for example in the home, as mothers - and the power of men was diffuse or contested. [185]

Within the education system, complex and contradictory patterns of gender and authority existed. Authority relations in the school were not only those of gender (men in relation to women) but also those of adults to children (teachers - as parents - to pupils) and of professional hierarchies (heads to assistant teachers). In single sex schools, which generally had a same-sex staff, meritocratic patterns of authority could operate clearly. But in the increasing number of mixed schools, professional authority was cut across by different types of gendered familial authority. The school was often represented as being like a family, with a patriarchal father as head teacher in charge. Women teachers' position could be that of the subordinate wife - male heads would have authority over both male and female assistant teachers - but would also draw upon the idea of maternal power, giving women uncontested authority over younger children especially. [186] But since women teachers were also salaried professionals, gender-free concepts of legitimate authority by virtue of experience and qualifications also came into play,

leading to particular controversies over women teachers' promotion prospects in mixed schools, the relationship of a woman head to male assistant teachers, and women teachers' authority over older boys.

These controversies were heightened because men teachers also had to negotiate insecure forms of masculinity. As a cerebral, sedentary occupation, teaching was insecurely linked to dominant forms of masculinity based on strength and physical power. In the hierarchy of masculine employments, men teachers were 'lower' professionals. They did not command great resources of money or power over other men, only over boys and children. Unlike women, men teachers were not necessarily the intellectual elite of their generation, since teaching competed with other professions and the civil service for male entrants. The belief that women teachers were of higher quality than men occasionally surfaced and may have contributed to men teachers' insecurity around their professional position. [187] But perhaps the most important factor contributing to men teachers' potential lack of confidence in their masculinity was the fact that the occupation was shared with women and the gender boundaries were somewhat confused. How could men teachers be manly if their work dealt with children, was shared with women and associated in some respects with femininity? One solution was to attempt to establish clear gender boundaries through segregating the work of men and women teachers, and the lines of authority and promotion. However there was always an overlap, a fluidity in the system, in relation to mixed schools.

Men Teachers: Shifting Masculinities 1900-1939

'Masculinity is always bound up with negotiations about power, and is therefore often experienced as tenuous.' [188] Men teachers' anxiety about their masculinity, always latent, was intensified during and after the First World War, when traditional gender boundaries in the profession appeared to be unravelling. During the war, women teachers entered boys schools for the first time, while in the 1920s there was an increase in mixed schools in both the elementary and secondary sectors. Men teachers increasingly found themselves dealing with children of both sexes, disrupting hierarchies of masculine authority. This was translated into concern not simply over headships and promotion prospects for men, but over the definition of their work as manly and masculine. The minority anti-feminist National

Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) began to articulate in extreme form the concern about masculinity and authority shared by many men teachers.

Concerns about authority in the teaching profession also reflected shifting gender relations in the wider society and changes in the dominant constructions of masculinity. Many elements of masculinity found at the beginning of the century remained dominant throughout the period, including the association with heterosexuality and the family, physical strength and athleticism, reason, and individual and national authority. [189] Ideals of masculinity were also related to particular concerns of the 1900s. For example, fears about physical degeneration at the turn of the century were partially addressed by the Boy Scout movement with its production of manly boys, which was a means for lower middle-class boys and scoutmasters to assert and strengthen their masculine identity and status. [190]

In the schools, gender hierarchies were fairly stable before 1914, in terms of the types of headships open to men and women teachers, though there was always some overlap in relation to mixed elementary schools. The steady rise in the number of certificated teachers from the turn of the century meant that a declining proportion could expect to obtain a headship, as Tables 2 and 9 show. The problems between men and women teachers were already foregrounded, as falling rolls led to some reorganisation and competition for headships. The Ladies Committee of the NUT alleged in 1910: 'When such a combination takes place it is nearly always the Head Mistress who loses her position and status, not the Headmaster.' [191] Suffrage feminism posed a major challenge to men's power in the wider society, while equal pay became an issue inside teaching. Clear elements of sex antagonism existed, but these were not reflected in a crisis in masculine authority until gender boundaries were disrupted and men felt their power being undermined during and after the First World War.

The First World War severely tested masculinity and has been interpreted by historians in two contrasting ways. On the one hand, war has been seen as the ultimate masculine experience, the final test of men's virility as fighters and protectors of women, home and nation. This provided a heroic and attractive role for male soldiers. On the other hand, men were victims of war. Edwardian masculinity

could not stand up to the test of trench warfare, and its horrors led to shell shock (male hysteria, suggests Elaine Showalter), and a loss of faith in masculinity. [192] Male resentment against women was fanned by the contrast between women's increased power in wartime society and men's impotence on the battlefield.

A similar ambivalence was experienced by men teachers. As a result of the war half of all male teachers had left the schools by 1915 for military service and their places, in boys' schools for the most part, were taken by women supply teachers, mainly married women. By 1917, half the staff of boys' elementary schools were women. [193] Women were rarely employed in boys' schools before 1914 so the war effectively opened up a new field of work to them, temporarily. Women had long taught boys in mixed schools; what was new was the move into the male territory of boys' schools and the usurping of masculine power over boys. Although some doubts were expressed at the beginning of the war about the desirability of women teaching older boys, increasing satisfaction was expressed with their work. [194] In 1916 it was observed that women teachers in boys' schools were no longer seen as exceptional, and that it was usual to find a majority of women in mixed schools. [195] They were not used only to teach the younger boys; '[c]ompetent judges are full of praise for the high level of efficiency these teachers have shown, ... although they have some disabilities as regards drill and organised games.' [196] But the capability of women teachers provoked anxiety among some men. A letter to the TES in 1916 argued: 'the best and most brilliant women cannot teach boys to be men - it would be unnatural if they could.' [197]

The experience of war paradoxically diminished the masculinity of men teachers as well as enhancing it. Men teachers had lost their grip on teaching boys, while women had strengthened their position. While men teachers resented women's gain of formerly male areas of teaching during the war, this was exacerbated further by the threat of equal pay agitation in the profession. These concerns were expressed in anti-feminist rhetoric in which women teachers were bitterly accused of ambushing NUT policy in favour of equal pay while the men were absent at war, defending the nation. [198] Masculinity continued to be seen in some respects as reduced and broken by the experience of war well into the interwar years. Ex-servicemen were perceived as a

burnt-out generation, subject to higher mortality rates and mental instability. [199] But interwar masculinity could still be enhanced by war service. These men had shared the formative experience and conflicting emotions of combat. They saw themselves, and were seen, as a group apart. [200] The wartime insecurities and contradictions of masculinity had an enormous resonance in the postwar decades.

Several writers have shown how men's ambivalent hold on masculinity may be shaken by the intrusion of women into an occupation. This may cause profound anxieties among men, who fear material loss of employment or promotion, but also because it disrupts deep-seated assumptions about gender difference. Under threats of deskilling and introduction of boy or female labour, male workers may respond by asserting their masculinity and the essential manliness of the job. [201] This occurred in a number of occupations besides teaching. Where women had entered new areas of white-collar work as in the civil service, and retained their jobs after the war, they met with hostility from men and attempts to contain them. The postwar Gladstone Committee suggested that although women had capably carried out the higher levels of administrative work in the wartime civil service they lacked the necessary masculine attributes such as 'the attitude of command' to be allowed to compete for these posts on equal terms with men. Women continued to be recruited on a different basis from men in the 1920s and ex-servicemen successfully argued that they had a prior claim to employment. [202]

In teaching, the reorganisation of elementary schools and expansion of the secondary system created more mixed schools, increasing the fluidity of gender boundaries already disrupted by the First World War. This reduced promotion prospects overall for both men and women teachers, and raised the question of whether women should be heads of mixed schools with possibly a mixed staff. Although the decline in promotion opportunities did not affect either sex disproportionately, both men and women teachers feared the consequences of reorganisation would be unfavourable to their position. (Table 9.) Their anxieties were expressed and discussed throughout the interwar years, but most especially in the late 1920s and early 1930s, once reorganisation had really got underway. The recession and education cuts of the early 1920s, repeated in the early 1930s, also increased teacher's anxiety to safeguard their jobs. In

1931 the president of the London Schoolmaster's Association, a branch of the NAS, said:

Reorganisation, carried out in London according to the dictates of expediency and chance, is fast eliminating departments. The chances of promotion are becoming fewer until teaching, to a good man, is almost a blind-alley occupation. [203]

Similarly, the women teachers claimed in 1933:

Men were an almost insignificant section of the whole, yet gradually the chances of promotion for women were becoming less and less. The practice was growing of combining infant departments with mixed schools and putting men in charge. That was how economy worked when coupled with sex prejudice. [204]

This was still a burning issue in 1939, when there was correspondence in the pages of the Manchester Guardian over the headships of mixed schools. [205] Secondary school mistresses were similarly concerned about the almost total lack of women heads of mixed secondary schools and about the unclear status of senior mistresses in these schools, who were not normally given the authority of deputy heads. [206] Although both sexes expressed concern about promotion prospects, the increasing number of mixed schools affected men's day-to-day working experience more than women's, especially in elementary schools (as Tables 6 and 7 show), since they had previously been more confined to single-sex schools. Decreasing prospects of promotion meant that more men would remain assistant teachers and for longer parts of their careers. They would have less chance to acquire the authority of a headship, and would become less differentiated from women assistant teachers, especially if working in a mixed school.

From 1920, the National Association of Schoolmasters took the initiative in preserving the link between authority and masculinity. The NAS effectively set the terms of the debate and got their assertions discussed seriously by policymakers and the educational establishment. [207] The NAS was an extreme group, and only represented a minority of male elementary school teachers, but they did reflect wider moves to reassert masculinity, as well as men teachers' particular fears about their position in the profession. Old and new elements of masculinity became part of the NAS agenda.

NAS arguments aimed to preserve and reimpose gender boundaries within the teaching profession. To support their claim to particular areas of teaching, men teachers had to assert their possession of greater skills than women, that their work was qualitatively different. Since the standard professional qualifications, the certificate or degree, was the same for both sexes, men teachers could only do this on the grounds of intrinsic gender difference - masculinity. Hence their claim for 'men teachers for boys' over seven and headmasters for all schools with boys in them except infants, ie all mixed schools. In particular, the NAS asserted men teachers' power to pass on masculinity to boys. Men teachers were concerned both with their material advantage over women teachers and the gendered meaning of their work of teaching boys.

The elements of masculinity regarded as important by the NAS involved both continuity and changes from the prewar period. Manliness was a matter of great interest to educators throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; interwar concern with the process was not new. [208] But men teachers deliberately promoted their role in the teaching of masculinity in a period when the wider emphasis was shifting towards masculinity as learned behaviour. Kelly Boyd has shown that an important message of boys' story papers in the interwar period was that manliness was to be learnt through the guidance of adults, both fathers and teachers. This contrasted with the construction of masculinity as an inborn quality in the hero in the years before the First World War. Now manliness was a process arrived at through education. [209] The passing on of masculine ideals was a crucial, yet vulnerable moment for men. [210] The 'dazzling schoolmaster' of the boys' story papers, the strong moral exemplar for his pupils, was less often found in reality than his insecure counterpart. [211]

In arguing their claim for 'men teachers for boys' the NAS made a distinction between teaching subjects and teaching gender.

Were it a question of 'teaching subjects' or of 'managing' scholars, it might be conceded that men and women are to a certain extent interchangeable. But when it is a question of inculcating manly qualities in boys and womanly qualities in girls there can be no interchangeability. [212]

Although the different roles of men and women in society were assumed to be 'natural', the manly instinct had to be taught, a frequently expressed contradiction.

Men and women were fundamentally different; the man would find his work in the world, the woman hers in the home ... If boys were to be trained to become men they must have manly *instincts implanted* in them, and these could not be produced by women teachers. [213]

Boys could not become men by virtue of their biology alone, they had to be taught their gender identity - manly characteristics - not just by any male teacher but by a 'true man', thereby confirming the teacher's own masculinity as well as the child's.

It was essential today that boys should be taught by the most manly type of teacher that could be found. Many of the boys in this country had never come into contact with real men at school. [214]

This emphasis on masculinity and 'men teachers for boys' was also used by the NAS to justify their claim for higher pay on the grounds that they were doing a different (and more important) job than women - at the same time avoiding the possibility of undercutting by women. [215]

Some new discourses were poached by the NAS in arguing for the safeguarding of boys' masculinity. The need for men teachers was often put in the language of eugenics: 'We could not produce an A1 race of men unless its boys came under the influence of men.' [216] Concern over juvenile delinquency led to a shortlived panic in the early 1930s, when women teachers, and particularly their alleged inability to discipline boys, were blamed for crimes by schoolboys. [217] The contemporary power of psychology was invoked by NAS assertions that their claims were based on 'sound psychological and professional grounds'. [218]

Other models of masculinity used in NAS arguments were more traditional. Men's 'natural' authority in the family and household should be replicated in the school. The NAS condemned as unnatural the appointment of headmistresses to mixed schools, who compromised the masculinity of the men teachers serving under them. They argued that it was bad for the boys in the school to see a woman in charge of men, as well as being detrimental to the men's self-respect.

Service under a headmistress is distasteful to the majority of school masters. This distaste is based on an entirely healthy instinct, is strongly approved by the great majority of men and women, and reflects the normal and sane attitudes of the sexes to each other. [219]

Authority within the family, it was also suggested, gave men but not women the skills to exercise disciplinary power over boys.

A firm female disciplinarian merely repressed a troublesome boy and thereby turned him into a bad one, while a weak woman teacher was treated with contempt. Women could not control boys. [220]

Men teachers claimed that they were family men in contrast to women teachers who were represented as independent unfeminine spinsters, [221] whose demands threatened men with symbolic emasculation and thus posed a deviant challenge to state authority itself:

Only a nation heading for the madhouse would force on men, many married with families, such a position as service under spinster head-mistresses. [222]

Masculine authority and discipline could also be demonstrated and taught through sport. In schools, games were developed as a way of teaching civilised behaviour and control, as well as proving the manly strength of boys, which was increasingly emphasised in the interwar period. [223] Men teachers promoted the importance of sport to counteract their own indeterminate masculinity as sedentary teachers, and to argue for another aspect of boys' education which could only be taught by men:

Games teachers must be alert, resourceful and vigorous, and men possessed these characteristics in greater measure than women. [224]

This again was a defensive statement, made on the grounds of gender rather than professionalism. Women teachers were in fact ahead of men in the pedagogic development of physical education, having established, by the 1930s, a long tradition of specialist training in gymnastics and games in female colleges, which was unmatched by the men. [225]

The association of masculinity with nationalistic sentiments and militarism continued through the 1920s and 1930s. If women taught boys, the nation's future manhood and defence capacity would be damaged, suggested the NAS: 'if the men of the armies of the Great War had been taught in their youth by women, history would now be somewhat different.' [226] Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War this theme was re-emphasised. In order to combat the threat to democracy:

the utmost efforts must be made to equip the future men of England with that virility of character, steadfastness of endeavour and sense of fair play which alone would enable this country to play its part in the struggle with any hope of success. [227]

In order to assert their own true manliness and maintain male authority, the NAS constantly belittled women teachers' feminine qualities and professional work, especially in boys' and mixed schools.

Some women teachers have been apparently successful in boys' schools. They are mostly of the 'masculine' - not manly - type; STERN, QUERULOUS, TYRANNICAL, PETTY. Boys hate them, and in consequence grow up with unkind thoughts towards women. Nobody is so hard upon boys as the so-called successful woman teacher. By nature women are not physically equal to the strain of teaching boys. [228]

To the NAS women teachers were not seen to be able to possess professional qualities except in deviantly masculine or corrupted forms.

The NAS made the running in asserting masculine authority in the schools, but less extreme forms of their position were endorsed by the LEAs and the Board of Education, indicating that it reflected dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity. The Board of Education and the LEAs were more restrained in supporting male authority in schools; but it was they who had the power to enforce and support it. On the whole, the Board of Education managed to avoid engaging in the debate around the views of the NAS, by pointing out that policy was made by individual local authorities. [229] The Board was keen to reject the demand for 'men teachers for boys' which was increasingly

pressed upon it in the late 1920s and during the 1930s by the NAS, and also successfully avoided the question of whether the headships of mixed schools should be reserved for men or open to both sexes. [230] In the day-to-day context, it was LEAs who were responsible for the staffing of the schools. They considered that men teachers should be used primarily for the older boys, and while women often continued to be employed as heads of junior mixed schools, the headships of senior mixed schools and mixed secondary schools almost always went to men. As one textbook for educational administrators in local government put it: 'it is not customary for a master to serve under a mistress.' [231]

Women Teachers: Resolving Conflicts Over Authority

How could women teachers create and negotiate their own sense of professional authority in this context? Gendered models of authority did give women teachers some legitimate power. They could claim authority over pupils since this paralleled the power of the mother, but not over all pupils equally. Women teachers had authority over girls of all ages, and all younger children, but power over the older boys was contested. Generally, women were not to have authority over adult men. However, this ideal pattern was mediated by the position of women teachers as professionals; gender might have less purchase than training and experience. In reality, women teachers had widely differing experiences of exercising authority in relation to men and to different groups of children. The headmistress in charge of a mixed junior school was in a very different position to the assistant mistress in a mixed secondary school, destined always to be under male authority. It is significant that whatever degree of authority women teachers themselves exercised, they were not necessarily in a position where male authority was directly exercised over them as women. However, when they did work under men in mixed schools, women teachers had a highly developed sense of their own right to authority and promotion which often conflicted with conventional gender patterns.

Women Teachers' Authority

All women teachers exercised some authority, if only over pupils. Women elementary school teachers predominately taught infant, junior and girls' classes, the lower status groups in the education

hierarchy. During the period 1900-1939, however, they were increasingly likely to be exercising their professional authority over boys, albeit junior boys in mixed classes. [232] By 1938 70% of women elementary teachers were teaching mixed classes. Between the wars, the largest group of certificated women teachers taught mixed classes of under 11s (41-54%) and the next largest group taught classes of girls over 11 (13-17%), as Table 7 shows. In secondary schools about 30% of women teachers were teaching boys in mixed schools in this period. Approximately 57% of elementary headships and about 35% of secondary school headships were held by women, in girls', junior mixed or infant schools. (See Tables 4 and 8.) Only a very few would have had male assistant teachers under them, and only a handful were heads of mixed senior elementary or secondary schools. But they were all in the relatively unusual position for a woman of exercising power and authority in a professional capacity.

There were regional differences apparent in the acceptability of women heads, even in junior mixed schools. Mrs Barrett worked in mixed junior and infant schools in inner and outer London between the wars under both men and women heads and usually with mixed staffs. She experienced no problems between men and women teachers. [233] However, in some areas such as Oldham it was highly unusual for women to be heads even of junior mixed schools:

... in the thirties two revolutionary appointments were made. Two women were actually appointed as the heads of junior schools. People were shocked, horrified, disgusted. How could you expect a woman, a woman! to keep a school in order? [234]

Anxiety was expressed here about women exercising authority over both pupils and the administrative responsibility of running a school, with the power and prestige this carried. The same teacher described the reaction to the situation of a man teacher serving under a woman head, presumably in one of these schools:

And because he worked for a woman he became for months, even a couple of years, the chief topic of conversation throughout the Oldham teaching profession: How could he? How could he possibly work for a woman? Why didn't he ask for a transfer? How degrading. Whatever did his wife think? [235]

While actual instances of women having authority over men can be found, this was relatively uncommon. The men teachers involved responded in different ways to this threat to their masculine professionalism. Some men could not cope with women's authority, while others managed. Men's horror of female authority could be very deep-seated. One secondary schoolmistress told of,

a headmaster who was so horrified at the idea of working under a woman that when a woman inspector came to inspect the school in which he taught a particular subject he was ill on the day of inspection - he had worked himself into such a state. [236]

However, the majority of women teachers did not work with men at all - half to two-thirds of elementary women teachers; 70% of secondary school mistresses - but were under women heads. [237] Miss Drysdale described how, in her experience, men and women taught in separate departments in London schools in the 1920s and 1930s: 'we hardly knew men teachers, oh no. We occasionally walked up the road with them if we got out of the same bus but we never really went together at all.' [238]

Women Teachers Under Male Authority

Yet it could be argued that all women teachers, even heads, were ultimately subject to male authority, in the form of male-dominated Education Committees and the Inspectorate, and a significant minority of women teachers did experience direct male authority since they worked in mixed schools with a male head. About one-third to one-half of women elementary teachers and about 30% of secondary school mistresses worked under a headmaster, often in schools such as senior mixed schools, where there was next to no possibility of a woman ever being appointed head. [239] Women elementary teachers rarely objected to working under male head teachers, as such, but they were increasingly concerned about the apparent loss of promotion prospects in areas which had traditionally been theirs - infant and girls' departments which could disappear with reorganisation and amalgamation - while prospects in mixed schools seemed much more limited.

Similarly, women secondary school mistresses were concerned throughout the period with the degree of authority possessed by the senior mistress in mixed schools under a male head. In 1912 it was reported: 'In many schools there was a First Assistant Mistress, but

she received a much lower salary, and in no case was her position or authority equal to [the head's] [240] Not only were women teachers in mixed secondary schools almost entirely debarred from the headships, they were also discriminated against by headmasters in the distribution of posts of special responsibility, such as subject heads.

It is almost invariable that those holding posts of special responsibility are the heads of their faculties and makers of syllabuses - the majority of women, dealing mainly with Junior or B forms, are always doomed to work from the syllabuses of others. It frequently happens that the majority of women in a mixed school are relegated to junior work or B and C forms. This often involves the teaching of larger and less stimulating classes, while the men have a much greater share of the Higher Schools and Matric work. [241]

Thus male authority operated all through the mixed secondary school. Posts of responsibility might be divided between men and women teachers by the headmaster in a variety of ways; but gender was normally an important marker. While this was sometimes done on the basis of senior posts for men and junior for women, posts could also be divided according to the gendered associations of subjects. Women teachers did not necessarily object to the latter. One mistress commented in a meeting in 1934:

The only one allegation that can be made against our school is the fact that the science and maths posts of special responsibility are kept for the men, but on the other hand, the language posts are very definitely kept for the women, and it works out quite fairly. [242]

While public opinion, and many men teachers, felt that women's authority contradicted the usual assumptions about gender and power, women teachers themselves felt they had rights to promotion to senior posts. Direct and indirect competition occurred in mixed junior, senior and secondary schools. Miss Burke described her experience in a mixed secondary school.

I was in one post, I was a senior, and a man was appointed, and the headmaster had the effrontery to say to me, I think you could be joint head with _____. I said I came here into the department,

I will not be joint head. Well, he said, he's a man. I said yes, I'm the head of department here and I'm not sharing it.

[243]

Miss Burke had direct experience, as did many women, of discrimination or attempted discrimination. She had a strong sense of herself as being just as good as a man, and that she didn't deserve to be pushed out of her position of authority on the grounds of gender.

Asserting the Right to Promotion

Women teachers experienced several kinds of conflicts and tensions thrown up between different notions of gender and authority and their own professional aspirations for promotion. In order to examine women teachers' political response to these conflicts, we need to analyse why they sought promotion and why they saw themselves as so strongly professionally equivalent to men. Because some models of women's authority within the education system were well established, it was possible for many women teachers to turn their feelings of frustration into an assertion of their professional identity and promotion rights, on the basis of either neutral professionalism or femininity.

For some single women teachers unequal pay was a spur to seeking promotion. As they got older they were stuck at the top of the scale, earning less than men with no prospect of more except through promotion. [244] In practice, however, success in promotion was no guarantee of greater equality in pay. Women heads were paid less than men heads anyway, and were also more likely to be in charge of smaller schools which paid lower salaries. [245] But because women could hold recognised authority as heads in some mixed schools, the systems of pay and promotion contained further contradictions. Jane Greaves described how: 'One woman teacher whom I knew ... in the thirties became the head of a junior school [and] received less pay than a man on her staff.' [246]

Women teachers could view headships and promotion prospects as part of their rightful professional package because they had a reasonably secure tradition of authority in those sectors of education seen as their own, the education of girls and younger children. It was usual to have women heads in charge of infant schools and girls' departments of elementary schools, and, as shown above, of junior

mixed schools in many areas. In these areas women's authority was legitimated by notions of maternal authority. It has been pointed out that 'motherliness' is normally defined as a natural quality rather than one associated with professional judgement, and that it still implies deference to the more powerful authority of the 'father'. [247] Nevertheless, women elementary heads did have complete autonomy over their departments, and women teachers of infants and young children could assert their professional expertise by reference to contemporary pedagogic theory. [248]

However, it was in the late nineteenth-century reformed girls' secondary schools that a separate and self-conscious tradition of women's authority as heads was developed, which directly influenced early twentieth-century state secondary schoolmistresses, as well as women teachers more broadly. In creating this new role, women heads adopted a difficult blend of publicly exhibiting leadership qualities previously designated masculine, promoting the professional and academic excellence of their own and their pupils' achievements and displaying (to a greater or lesser extent) a nurturing maternal femininity in relation to their staff and pupils. [249] By the turn of the century, it can be suggested that styles of authority for heads of girls' schools had become reasonably well established. While the problem of masculine authority held by women was still not completely resolved, the paternal and maternal polarities had been reconciled to some extent into a female professional ideal based on training, qualifications, skills and expertise in girls' education, illustrated by the successful establishment of professional associations for secondary school headmistresses and assistants. [250] Thus twentieth-century secondary schoolmistresses in particular had a tradition of authority within girls' schools and over girls' education, which fed their professional identity.

This sense of professional authority might have been overruled in the mixed school by conventional assumptions of masculine authority. But there is evidence that women teachers took this sense of a right to professional authority with them into mixed schools, partly because they viewed men teachers as less professionally skilled and competent. This view was expressed by both elementary and secondary school teachers. Miss Burke believed that women had a greater commitment to

teaching and expressed anger at the injustice that women were never considered as heads of mixed secondary schools:

of course in the mixed schools, and there were quite a few mixed schools then, there was no talk of a woman being head, ever. I mean it was like taking a woman off to be Archbishop of Canterbury. There was no talk at all; the woman's place was obviously necessary and all the rest but she was more-or-less a second-class citizen although she did first-class work, and she did more good - she probably did more of the ordinary work work than the men, and all the things that go with a school. [251]

She believed that women were more conscientious, worked harder and were more professionally committed than the men. Miss Burke took the view that the First World War created opportunities for women to move more securely into secondary school teaching. She also suggested that men's experience in the war had so damaged them that they were rendered less efficient teachers, and somehow second-rate men.

men were drifting back from the army, some of them having had experiences which made them quite incapable to cope with life, and because there weren't enough we got into teaching. Some of them were poor fishes, very sad. [252]

Miss Burke represented women as taking over because the men were weakened and emasculated. While this was not an accurate picture of women's changing position in teaching, it shows vividly how some women teachers saw themselves as capable professionals, who could easily and in practice did, do men's work for them. This fracture and weakness in postwar masculinity was also linked to ideas of women's greater social power in the wake of suffrage feminism to produce anxiety among the men.

Women teachers' sense of professional authority and promotion rights may have been historically formed in the female sphere of girls' schooling. Nevertheless, it was also strongly based on the ideas of professional competence, skill and qualifications, and as such was transferred to mixed schools where they worked with men colleagues. But in the mixed schools there was a tension between the lack of promotion prospects for women, and this sense of professional competence; between entitlement to authority on account of gender (masculinity) and entitlement on the grounds of merit. Women and men

teachers could easily compare their qualifications, experience and ability to teach well, because their work was similar.

Nevertheless, these tensions did not affect all women teachers, and even where they did, the issue of promotion prospects was not necessarily engaged with politically. Many women teachers may have supported conventional norms of gendered authority and believed it was more suitable for men to be heads of mixed schools, though remaining secure in their own authority in girls' schools. Women were often quite happy to work under a male headteacher. [253] Some may have agreed with partial aspects of the NAS arguments - that boys were difficult to discipline, for example - or taken on board parental attitudes. In a discussion about women heads of mixed schools, one secondary schoolmistress said, 'Some people have even gone so far as to say a woman would never be as good as a man in that position - we may be sure that only the very best women would stand a chance.' Another responded, 'We think it would be very hard in most cases to get the support of the parents to such a proposition.' [254]

Clearly some women teachers consented to and felt happy with the idea that men teachers should have preference for headships of mixed schools. It may be that their internalisation of this view was linked with their own feminine identity. As women teachers they were professionals, and inevitably had a certain degree of authority over their classes, but working under a male head in a familial model of authority relations might provide some resolution of the other more contradictory and anxiety-provoking aspects of being a woman professional.

But other women teachers deeply resented the way gender norms contradicted their professional skills and restricted their promotion prospects in schools. Many moved towards articulating professional arguments to support women's authority in schools, some based on femininity, others not. Women teachers had access to two main discourses of authority, to the superficially ungendered idea of teacher professionalism on the one hand and to the feminine model of maternal authority on the other. As argued in Chapter Two, teaching meant women could be both professional and feminine, and it was this resolution which enabled many of them to transform their unease and anger into political action in this instance. These two approaches,

the professional and the feminine, held certain contradictions, but were often used in tandem.

Many women teachers voiced the professional ideal in a way which suggests they believed it overrode gender categories entirely, thereby making the sex antagonism over authority in the schools unnecessary. The best person should be chosen for the job; sex did not come into it. Since women teachers were as well qualified as men, it was an injustice to favour men for headships. [255] Often, some sort of androgynous ideal was suggested - the gender of both teachers and pupils should be ignored or denied.

If women were given a chance, they could show they were successful and more women will reach such positions. One of the few mixed schools I know run by a woman is very efficient. I know boys who have had the greatest respect for that headmistress and who have never suffered in the least from the effects of their having had their young minds trained and prepared under a woman's care instead of a man's. [256]

Women teachers exhibited a range of views and responses on the question of gender and authority, but did generally agree that there should be a professionally equitable system of promotion. Tensions around the issue of gender and authority replicated some aspects of the tensions around the family wage, in that women teachers could gain strength from alternative ideals of femininity to enable them to counter dominant constructions of gender in teaching. Women teachers' feminine role as carers and supporters of family members enabled them to identify problems with the ideal of the male breadwinner. Similarly, the idea of maternal authority coupled with legitimate authority roles in girls' schools allowed women teachers to question the association of authority with masculinity in mixed schools. However, this also led to two strands within women teachers' version of professional authority. First, professional authority earned by skill and competence, a gender neutral version; second, an added element of gender-specific authority through maternalism. These two strands were not necessarily in contradiction, and were often developed together. The evidence suggests that women teachers primarily identified with the former strand, but that their sense of professional right to promotion and headships was also validated by the latter strand.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how socially powerful notions of femininity and masculinity were used to justify inequalities in the teaching profession and framed women teachers' understandings of their position. Three dominant gender prescriptions featured strongly in the debates about the position of women teachers; that women should marry, that the family should contain a male breadwinner and a dependent wife, and that masculinity should be associated with authority. Each of these overlapping ideas was modified during the period; sometimes strengthened, sometimes weakened, by contemporary social changes. These included changes in the education system itself such as spending cuts, the intermittent unemployment of young teachers and the reorganisation of schools. It has been suggested that gender relations in the schools, as in the wider society, came under particular challenge during the First World War, while in the 1920s there was a re-emphasis on these normative gender roles. This involved continued anxieties over masculinity and a renewed concern with the links between femininity, marriage, motherhood and domesticity.

The evidence shows that these prescriptive models did not easily fit with the specific employment or domestic circumstances of women teachers. The vast majority of women teachers were unmarried, and of these only some were in their twenties and potentially *en route* to marriage. The remainder had quite evidently not found a feminine destiny within marriage. Many women teachers had dependents which could be a considerable financial burden, whereas many men teachers, though paid a family wage, did not. Where the choice was available, a high proportion of married women teachers did continue in the profession, rather than choosing a housewife role. Finally, many women teachers exercised authority in their work, and in addition a high proportion were not subject to male authority.

How was it possible to be both a 'woman' and a teacher? The mismatch between conventional models of femininity and the day-to-day lives of women teachers was understood by them in a variety of ways. Dominant norms of femininity were extremely powerful. Some women teachers accepted them as given and did not develop any kind of political consciousness or analysis. They did not question masculine authority in schools, they sought marriage and left teaching to become

housewives. But most teachers came up against these tensions within their domestic and working lives and a number of elements of feminine and professional identity came into play in their attempts to resolve them.

There were many complex dimensions within these main themes of professionalism and femininity, and different elements carried different weights. The most difficult issue was the failure to marry, especially as perceptions of spinsterhood became increasingly negative. Since discourses of spinsterhood predominately involved notions of personal cost and denial it was hard for teachers to understand their marital status other than as an individual failing of femininity. Certainly the choice of a professional career became an increasingly poor substitute to set against marriage. Spinster teachers were denigrated for their lack of a husband, despite a number of reasonable explanations for their position: war spinster, victim of the marriage bar, devoted daughter. Perhaps the last explanation was the most acceptable as a means of forging a satisfactory feminine identity. Some women could counterpose their failure to marry by pointing to dependents they had to support and care for, an honourable and womanly duty, though one less archetypally feminine than marriage and motherhood. This muted feminine identity could also be set against the assumption of the family wage and unequal pay. Women teachers' financial support of dependent relatives was seen as morally laudable, not shameful, and a specifically feminine virtue, to challenge the image of the male breadwinner. Feminine qualities could soften the demand for the professional rate for the job. Moreover, it was possible to challenge the family wage without attacking the institution of marriage itself.

However women teachers were able to positively defend their transgression of other norms by asserting professional identities in ways which did not detract from their femininity. It was possible to parry the ideal of the home-centred wife with the strong sense of professional commitment which women teachers had developed. They were able to assert the right to work after marriage because individual femininity had been validated by marriage, and because female professionalism was increasingly associated with maternalism. Similarly, women's tradition of professional authority in girls' and infant schools gave them a strong base to challenge the dominant model

of masculine authority in mixed schools. Teachers' professional identity was rooted in both its masculine and feminine aspects.

Women teachers' professionalism in some respects placed them in a masculine position in relation to the conventional family: they had a clearer choice of whether to marry or not, they could afford to support dependents, and wielded authority in their work. This offered both opportunities and burdens. Moving towards professionalism might mean relinquishing or modifying some conventional elements of femininity. But while the ways femininity was construed presented some barriers to becoming a professional person, a self-determining individual, it could at the same time allow women teachers to embrace professionalism. Teachers created their sense of self from various forms of femininity available across the workplace and family. Familial elements might include seeking marriage, and developing other family roles as a daughter, family carer or financial contributor. In employment, women teachers might find security in working in a feminine area of teaching with young children or girls, being under the familial male authority of the headmaster or in actively developing aspects of feminine professionalism. Women teachers were able to reach over to a potentially masculine professionalism with its attendant privileges in their work, while retaining some stability in femininity. X

Many women teachers negotiated the tensions generated between dominant models of femininity, family life and professional position, by simultaneously holding contradictory ideas. One of the most obvious examples of this is the allegiance by many women teachers to the idea of equal professional salaries and the right to work after marriage and the male breadwinner wage. Women teachers performed a continual balancing act in understanding their lives. But because they were able to see themselves in relation to many elements of femininity (albeit not always the most powerful or dominant forms) rather than being forced to deny their feminine identity, this could be a creative process which might be translated into confident political activity. The exception was in the failure to marry, where it was difficult to subvert a negative meaning. This problem will be discussed further in Chapter Six. However in other respects it was possible to go against the gender norm and still understand their position positively. In contradicting the male breadwinner wage,

women teachers' family dependents could be represented as an important moral duty; they were certainly not a shameful secret. Working after marriage could in many instances be associated with femininity, support for the family, and traditional practices. Exercising authority in the schools brought women teachers considerable power and public respect. For this reason, many (though not all) of these tensions could be easily exploited politically, without creating feelings of personal vulnerability.

Those teachers who developed a critical consciousness and began the process of unravelling or addressing these conflicts and tensions generally found themselves orientated towards the idea of gender-free professionalism. This led them towards the equality strand of feminism from which to begin a critique of their position in teaching. However because women teachers remained firmly positioned within some elements of femininity, this both gave them some security in claiming an equal professionalism, and also provided the possibility of a second type of political approach through feminine professionalism or 'difference' feminism. The next two chapters will discuss how these arguments and approaches were developed in the teachers' associations.

References to Chapter Three

1. J. Lewis (ed.), Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986). J. Rendall (ed.), Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987). One important example is how women justified political activity and public work by arguing that feminine home-centred virtues were needed in the public sphere as well as in the private. P. Hollis, Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987).
2. S. Holton, 'The Suffragist and the "Average Woman"', Women's History Review 1:1 (1992), pp.9-24.
3. The lack of compatibility between feminine nurture and masculine professional knowledge embodied in the teacher's role has already been discussed, for example.
4. M. Poovey, The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984), p.x.
5. For discussion of 'subjectivity' in feminist history and women's studies see: S. Alexander, 'Women, Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s: Some Reflections on the Writing of a Feminist History', History Workshop Journal 17 (1984), pp.130-5. C. Hall, 'Feminism and Feminist History' in C. Hall, White, Male and Middle-class: Explorations in Feminism and History (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), pp.21-4. J. Henriques et al (eds.), Changing the Subject: Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity (London, Methuen, 1984), pp.203-26. J. Stacey, 'Untangling Feminist Theory' in D. Richardson and V. Robinson (eds.), Introducing Women's Studies (London, Macmillan, 1993), pp.64-7.
6. The teachers quoted in this chapter (and Chapter Two) do not constitute a 'random sample' but provide a wide range of qualitative evidence. I carried out twelve interviews with retired women teachers, half of whom had worked in London for most of their teaching careers. Six worked only in secondary schools, four in elementary schools and two in both types of school. Half of this group married, and half were politically active, within teachers' associations, socialist or feminist politics. Other life histories were selected from the University of Essex Oral History Archives, 'Family life and work before 1918 collection' by Paul and Thea Thompson, in addition to accounts from the Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex; Monthly Diaries (kept by teachers) 1937-39; Directive Replies 1939-45: Attitudes to marriage and work.
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8. T. Lummis, Listening to History: The authenticity of oral evidence (London, Hutchinson, 1987). Thompson, Voice of the Past, chapter 4.

9. A Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', History Workshop Journal 12 (1981), pp.96-107. Popular Memory Group, 'Popular memory: theory, politics, method' in R. Johnson et al (eds.), Making Histories: Studies in history-writing and politics (London, Hutchinson, 1982), pp.205-52.
10. J. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', American Historical Review 91 (1986), p.1063. Scott has warned against using 'experience' (for example in autobiographical writing) as a privileged, more authentic form of historical evidence. J. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', Critical Inquiry 17 (1991), pp.773-97. Also see R. R. Pierson, 'Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History' in K. Offen et al (eds.), Writing Women's History: International Perspectives (London, Macmillan, 1991), pp.79-106.
11. It is also useful to consider Catherine Hall's reminder that the construction and elaboration of these meanings occurs within institutions and everyday practices and not simply through language. C. Hall, 'Politics, Post-structuralism and Feminist History', Gender and History 3:2 (1991), pp.205-6.
12. Portelli, 'Peculiarities of Oral History', pp.99-100.
13. V. Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective (London, Macmillan, 1987), p.222. Also see the discussion in Chapter 1.
14. My argument has some parallels with Mary Poovey's argument that the paradoxes and contradictions within the Victorian ideal of the 'proper lady', and between this ideal of femininity and the identity of being a professional writer, produced a creative tension which was resolved symbolically in different ways in the work of the three writers she analyses. Poovey, The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer.
15. Indeed an early tendency of women's history itself was also to naturalise women's progression into marriage as an inevitable part of the life course, though more recent work has problematised women's marital status. See, for example, A. Duquenin, 'Who Doesn't Marry And Why?', Oral History 12:1 (1984), pp.40-7. D. Gittins, 'Marital Status, Work and Kinship, 1850-1930' in J. Lewis, Labour and Love. S. Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930 (London, Pandora, 1985). M. Vicinus, Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920 (London, Virago, 1985). And see the special issue of the Journal of Family History, Winter 1984, on spinsters.
16. Although the number of apparently permanently single women teachers from 1900 to the Second World War was frequently explained as a consequence of demographic factors, some historians have argued that the idea of a husbandless generation of women between the wars is exaggerated. J. M. Winter has argued that First World War male casualties, though high, were largely offset by the virtual cessation of heavy male out-migration after 1914, and into the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed during the interwar period, the sex ratio became more equal, the rate of marriage rose, continuing a trend begun as early as 1911, and the proportion of single women in all the age groups under 45 fell. Nevertheless, his evidence also suggests that the marriage

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34. Woman Teacher, 13 February 1920, p.165. Also see 12 May 1922, p.244.
35. Though unemployment was unevenly distributed across the UK, it was heavy and continuous in the period 1921-1938, never falling below 10%, compared with an average of about 6% before the First World War and virtually none from the later years of the war to early 1921. S. Glynn and J. Oxborrow, Interwar Britain: A Social and Economic History (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1976), pp.143-6. Aldcroft, British Economy, pp.17-19. Pollard, Development of the British Economy, pp.154-5. Beddoe, Back to Home and Duty, pp.60, 84. Braybon and Summerfield, Out of the Cage, pp. 139-41. For NUWT comments on 1930s attacks on women workers see NUWT, Annual Report (1935), p.15. Woman Teacher, 3 February 1933, p.83. NUWT Records. Box 175, letter from man teacher, 4 January 1934.
36. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee for Enquiring into the Principles which should determine the construction of scales of salaries for teachers in Elementary Schools. (1918) Vol I, Report. Cd 8939, p.9. The same argument was used against women civil servants. The 1923 Anderson Committee on the Pay of State Servants recommended lower pay for women since their value was diminished by the likelihood of marriage. E. Reiss, Rights and Duties of Englishwomen: A Study in Law and Public Opinion (Manchester, Sherratt and Hughes, 1934), p.248. W. B. Creighton, 'The Development of the Legal Status of Women in Employment in Great Britain' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1973), pp.257, 295-6. Also see H.

- Smith, 'The Issue of "equal pay for equal work" in Great Britain 1914-19', Societas 8:1 (1978), p.39.
37. S. Webb, The Decline in the Birth-Rate (1907), Fabian Tract no. 131, p.19.
 38. H. Land, 'The Family Wage', Feminist Review 6 (1980), pp.59-62. Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War, pp.220-1. M. Cole, Marriage: Past and Present (London, Dent, 1938), pp.150-1.
 39. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report (1946), Cmd.6937, p.189.
 40. Education, 22 June 1923, pp.401-2. Several speakers expressed similar views.
 41. 'Why are Teachers Unpopular?', TES, 6 August 1932, p.301.
 42. C. Pateman, The Sexual Contract (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), chapters 5 and 6.
 43. There is rather a limited literature on norms of courtship and attitudes to marriage, especially for lower middle-class and middle-class women in this period, but see J. Gillis, For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985), chapters 8 and 9.
 44. Birkinshaw, Successful Teacher, p.77. And see P. Summerfield, 'Cultural Reproduction in the Education of Girls: a Study of Girls' Secondary Schooling in Two Lancashire Towns, 1900-50', in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.164-6.
 45. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989. (Born 1914.) Also see A. Barlow, Seventh Child (London, Duckworth, 1969), p.46.
 46. Birkinshaw, Successful Teacher, p.78.
 47. TES, 23 August 1917, p.333.
 48. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989. (Born 1914.) The only teachers among my respondents who told me about disguising their occupation were secondary teachers.
 49. Cole, Marriage, pp.154-5.
 50. Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex. Miss Howard (pseudonym). Respondent no.3541. Aged 25, PE teacher. Directive Replies: Attitudes to Marriage, March 1944.
 51. AAM, Annual Report (January 1939), p.43.
 52. And it was quite common for teachers to have to postpone marriage in order to pay back these LEA loans. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989. (Born 1910.)
 53. While these office workers had selected the civil service as offering high status work, they always saw their careers as temporary and wished to avoid the bleak life conventionally associated with interwar spinsterhood. Indeed some of them had deliberately rejected teaching for this reason. K. Sanderson, 'Social Mobility in the Life Cycle of some Women Clerical Workers', (PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1988), pp.49-50, 141, 201, 211, 227, 278-9. Also see Collet, Educated Working Women, p.56.

54. Mass-Observation Archive. Miss A. Hibberd (pseudonym). Respondent no. 0078. Aged 37, infant teacher, Prestwich, Manchester. Monthly Diaries, April 1937.
55. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989, describing her own former maths mistress.
56. C. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in late Victorian and Edwardian England (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.78, 174. C. Dyhouse, Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.55. Vicinus, Independent Women, chapters 1 and 8.
57. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. (Born c.1897)
58. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989. (Born 1910.)
59. *Ibid.*
60. Mass-Observation Archive. Miss MacDonald (pseudonym). Respondent no.3415. Aged 31, schoolmistress, Slough. Directive Replies: Attitudes to Marriage, March 1944.
61. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989. (Born 1904.)
62. Gittins, 'Marital Status'. Duquenin, 'Who Doesn't Marry'.
63. The Star, 24 May 1935.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. J. Greaves, 'A Woman in Education Fifty Years Ago', Spare Rib 124 (October 1982), p.7.
67. NUWT Records. Box 176, Married Women Teachers. Evening News, 30 June 1933. Daily Herald, 19 July 1933. Daily Sketch, 29 December 1937.
68. Interview with Mrs Julia Maynard, 28 July 1989, who described such discussions among her teacher friends in London. She also described how they obtained birth control advice without being married.
69. Interviews with Mrs Nan McMillan, 25 July 1986 and 29 July 1987. Even this solution meant women teachers had to forgo motherhood, a fact she recalled with anger.
70. *Ibid.*
71. C. Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in S. Burman (ed.), Fit Work for Women (London, Croom Helm, 1979). Land, 'Family Wage', p.57. W. Seccombe, 'Patriarchy stabilised: the construction of the male breadwinner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain, Social History 11:1 (1986). S. Rose, 'Gender antagonism and class conflict: exclusionary strategies of male trade unionists in nineteenth-century Britain, Social History 13:2 (1988), pp.202-3, 205-6. Previously, all members of the working-class family, including women and children, were expected to contribute to the family income.
72. Land, 'Family Wage'. Seccombe, 'Patriarchy stabilised'. Rose, 'Gender antagonism'. J. Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change (Sussex, Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), pp.49-50.

73. At around 10% according to the Census. J. Lewis, 'Dealing with Dependency: State Practices and Social Realities, 1870-1945' in J. Lewis (ed.), Women's Welfare, Women's Rights (London, Croom Helm, 1983), pp.20-3. Land, 'Family Wage', p.61.
74. Land, 'Family Wage', pp.58, 73. Smith, 'Equal pay for equal work', p.39. Reiss, Rights and Duties of Englishwomen, pp.249, 251.
75. Land, 'Family Wage', pp.58-9. M. Barrett, Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis (London, Verso, 1980) pp.218-9.
76. TES, 27 November 1919, p.600.
77. See, for example, letter to the Schoolmaster, 12 December 1903, quoted in P. Owen, "'Who would be free, herself must strike the blow": The National Union of Women Teachers, equal pay, and women within the teaching profession', History of Education 17:1 (1988), p.86.
78. PRO. Ed 24/418, Confidential Memo on the Employment of Married Women as Teachers in Public Elementary Schools, 30 November 1909. The survey was inconclusive however: it was found that 62 out of the 215 LEAs which responded did operate a bar but a further 117 did not reply.
79. TES, 4 August 1914, p.133. L. Black, 'Attitudes towards the Female Victorian Elementary School Teacher', History of Education Society Bulletin 25 (1980), pp.40-1. G. Partington, Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century (Slough, NFER, 1976), p.3.
80. PRO. Ed 24/418, Confidential Memo, 30 November 1909. In London, where 23% of women elementary teachers were married in 1908, education officials came under pressure to review this state of affairs in 1909-10. LCC Records. EO/STA/2.12. (Married Women Teachers 1909-23.) List compiled 6 May 1909. Resolutions from managers, Greenwich, 4 March 1909; Islington 20 October 1910. Hackney & Stoke Newington Gazette, 4 March 1910. Daily Chronicle, 4 June 1909. D. Copelman, "'A New Comradeship between Men and Women: Family, Marriage and London's Women Teachers, 1870-1914' in J. Lewis, Labour and Love, p.188.
81. TES, 2 April 1912, p.45. Board of Education, Annual Report (1911-12), Cd.6707, p.53. For London, see LCC Records. EO/STA/2.12. Various notes, 14 October 1910; 19 November 1910; 16 May 1912.
82. Board of Education, Annual Report (1914-15), Cd.8274, p.22. TES, 1 December 1914, p.196; 18 April 1918, p.170. LCC Records. EO/STA/2.12. Report to Teaching Staff Sub-Committee, 26 March 1914. Minutes of TSSC, 3 April 1919.
83. Smith, 'Equal Pay for Equal Work'. The campaign for equal pay is discussed further in Chapter Four.
84. TES, 21 September 1916, p.141; 14 December 1916, p.243; 21 December 1916, p.251.
85. Ministry of Reconstruction, Report of the Women's Employment Committee (1918), Cd 9239, p.23. Ministry of Reconstruction, Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry (1919), Cmd 135, p.194. TES, 15 May 1919, p.233. Land, 'Family Wage', p.71.

86. Board of Education, Scales of salaries for teachers in Elementary Schools (1918), Cd.8939. Vol I, Report, p.14. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee for Enquiring into the Principles which should determine the fixing of salaries for teachers in Secondary and Technical Schools [etc] (1918), Cd.9140, Vol I, Report, p.8. Parliamentary Debates (119) col 1232-3, 12 August 1919.
87. The Committee did consider men and women teachers' salaries separately, taking the men's first and then the women's, though without any explicit discussion of the most desirable ratio. PRO. Ed 108/11, Minutes of Burnham Committee 1919-24, 12 September 1919, p.1; 25 September 1919, p.2.
88. PRO. CAB 24/201, CPB (29), 16 January 1929.
89. In 1919 a tax allowance was introduced for married men in respect of their wives, and men were granted dependents' benefits in 1922 under the national insurance system. Land, 'Family Wage', p.73. Lewis, Women in England, p.49.
90. The NAS argued that the Burnham settlement favoured the women teachers, and emphasised their aim of an equal standard of living as opposed to equal pay for men. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/4/3/1. Annual Report (1920), p.23. TES, 28 April 1921, p.195; 19 May 1921, p.227 (NUWT critique); 10 April 1926, p.172 (NAS conference); 13 May 1933, p. 149.
91. TES, 3 April 1937, p.112. (NAS conference.) For other examples of this argument used by the NAS see TES, 5 June 1919, p.276; 28 April 1921, p.195; 10 April 1926, p.172; 13 May 1933, p.149; 11 April 1936, p.132. For general discussion of the argument in letters, articles etc, see TES, 14 December 1916, p.242; 14 June 1917, p.227; 8 November 1917, p.436; 22 May 1919, p.241. Journal of Education, October 1918, p.599; August 1921, p.500.
92. TES, 5 June 1919, p.276; 26 July 1924, p.330; 30 April 1938, p.145. Royal Commission on Equal Pay (1946). Minutes of Evidence, pp.19, 28. (Contribution from the NAS.)
93. TES, 3 June 1922, p.260; 18 April 1925, p.159; 12 June 1926, p.247; 2 January 1937, p.3. NAS rhetoric is discussed further in the next section of this chapter and in Chapter Five.
94. Parliamentary Debates (129) col 1556, 19 May 1920. Creighton, 'Legal Status of Women in Employment', p.220, 235. For broader debates in this period see P. Thane, Foundations of the Welfare State (London, Longman, 1982), p.150. Land, 'Family Wage'.
95. Lewis, 'Dealing with Dependency', p.26. S. Boston, Women Workers and the Trade Union Movement (London, Davis-Poynter, 1980), pp.140, 147.
96. PRO. Ed 24/1744, Returns 1926. LCC. EO/STA/2.12, letters from various LEAs to Education Officer with details of regulations.
97. NUWT Records. Box 175, Report, March 1924.
98. PRO, Ed 24/1744. Note, 4 August 1922. Also see minute, 1 February 1923.
99. PRO. Ed 24/418. Confidential Memo on the Employment of Married Women as Teachers in Public Elementary Schools, 30 November 1909.

100. TES, 29 December 1928, p.569. (Questions and Answers in Parliament.)
101. TES, 5 October 1929, p.438. Woman Teacher, 16 December 1932. NUWT Records. Box 177, Employment of Married Women Teachers (summary), 1927. Box 175, letter from Miss Froud to Miss Pringle, 30 October 1930.
102. TES, 16 November 1929, p.504; 24 February 1934, p.59. (Questions in Parliament.)
103. After operating a marriage bar for six years, Manchester employed only 147 married women in 1928 out of a total of 2,646 women teachers, a proportion of 5.5%. Teachers World, 14 March 1928. The proportion of married women in London in 1935, after a twelve-year marriage bar, was 23%. TES, 20 July 1935, pp.257-8. Lancashire County Council in 1933 employed 700 married women out of 3,200 women teachers, 22%. News Chronicle, 20 December 1933.
104. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.155.
105. LCC. EO/STA/2.12. Collection of press cuttings: Daily Mail, 2 October 1922 (letter). Also see Daily News, 20 June 1922.
106. See, for example, LCC. EC/STA/2.12, anonymous letter to LCC, 20 June 1922; letter from Mr Pearson, 8 November 1922. Also see TES, 23 September 1922, p.427 (debate of the Manchester Education Cttee); 30 September 1922, p.433.
107. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, letter, 2 October 1922. Daily Mail, 2 October 1922 (letter). New Statesman, 3 March 1923, pp.628-9 (letter). TES, 30 June 1928, p.293; 20 July 1935, p.257; 27 July 1935, p.265. Manchester Guardian, 6 Feb 1934. The Star, 24 May 1935, letters.
108. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, letters to LCC, 27 September 1922; 28 October 1922. For further examples of these arguments against married women teachers see A. Oram, 'Serving two masters? The introduction of a marriage bar in teaching in the 1920s', in London Feminist History Group (eds.), The Sexual Dynamics of History (London, Pluto Press, 1983), pp.140-2.
109. TES, 5 August 1922, p.363; 26 April 1930, p.190; 26 July 1930, p.333; 2 January 1932, p.7; 29 April 1933, p.135; 10 March 1934, p.78. Schoolmaster, 20 July 1923. East Ham Express, 27 June 1931. Teachers World, 4 May 1933. NUWT Records. Box 300, letter from Mrs Savill, 14 October 1924. Box 175, letter from

- Manchester branch, 16 May 1922; letter from Mrs Stevenson, Erith, 2 July 1922; letter, 29 November 1922 (Carmarthenshire).
110. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, letter from ratepayer to LCC, 28 October 1922. TES, 25 June 1921, p.287; 30 September 1922, p.433. Manchester Guardian, 8 March 1928.
 111. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, printed report to Teaching Staff Sub-Committee, 4 November 1920.
 112. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, printed report and minutes of Education Committee, 14 and 23 February 1923. Also see TES, 26 January 1924, p.41; 20 July 1935, p.257.
 113. TES, 7 May 1927, p.215; 17 August 1935, p.289.
 114. LCC. EC/STA/2.12, Education Officer of the LCC wrote to other Education Officers, September 1922, to enquire details of their regulations on married women teachers.
 115. PRO. Ed 24/1744, note sent by President of the Board of Education to the Cabinet Committee on the Geddes Committee recommendations, 30 January 1922. Also see letter from the Board to LEAs, 13 November 1922.
 116. TES, 5 August 1922, p.363.
 117. Journal of Education, January 1920, p.143; November 1922, p.697. TES, 5 August 1922, p.363; 30 September 1922, p.433; 26 January 1924, p.41.
 118. The Anomalies Regulations of 1931 ruled that women could not qualify for unemployment benefit until they had paid a minimum number of contributions after marriage, and resulted in the disqualification of over 20,000 women from unemployment benefit. Cuts in the national health insurance scheme in 1932 also reduced sickness and disability benefits to unemployed married women. Also see NUWT, Annual Report (1933), p.2. Beddoe, Back to Home and Duty, p.87.
 119. As detailed above, there were 11,963 married women employed in 1929, and 11,913 in 1933. In June 1931, West Ham Borough Council issued a questionnaire to all women employees, including teachers, with a view to ascertaining whether they were married or single and if married, details of their home circumstances. Although this was challenged by the women teachers, they were forced to compromise. NUWT Records, Box 176, list of LEAs regulations.
 120. 232 out of 260 LEAs would not appoint married women to the permanent teaching staff, according to NUWT Records. Box 176, report, 31 May 1938. 50 LEAs apparently had no bar before the Second World War according to the Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.155. During the Second World War regulations against married women teachers' employment were suspended almost everywhere, and the 1944 Education Act made a marriage bar for teachers illegal. Nuffield College, The Teaching Profession Today and Tomorrow (London, Oxford University Press, 1944), p.7.
 121. It showed that fewer than 20% of all men teachers had one child and a further 17% had two or more children under 16. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.126; Evidence, p.32, para 438; p.122, para 9. Nuffield College, Teaching Profession Today and Tomorrow, p.40. TES, 8 November 1924, p.453; 19 December 1931, p.473; 2 January 1932, p.6. Also see Eleanor Rathbone's figures

- given to the Commons in the 1936 debate, Parliamentary Debates (310) col 2035, 1 April 1936.
122. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.125. Also see Land, 'Family Wage', who cites a number of interwar surveys.
 123. Board of Education, Scales of salaries for teachers in Elementary Schools (1918). Vol I, Report, p.9. TES, 19 December 1931, p.473; 16 July 1932, p.281; 3 February 1934, p.37; The Times 17 April 1914, p.9.
 124. TES, 22 November 1917, p.458; 21 March 1918, p.133; 8 November 1924, p.453; 23 March 1935, p.97; 7 January 1939, p.4. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.19, para.3 (submission from the NAS).
 125. E. Smith, Wage-Earning Women and their Dependents (London, The Fabian Society, 1915), pp.10, 13, 34.
 126. S. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism in the Making of the British Welfare State', Radical History Review 43 (1989), pp.92-3. B. S. Rowntree and F. D. Stuart, The Responsibility of Women Workers for Dependents (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921), pp.21-32. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, pp.127-8.
 127. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, pp.126-30. Evidence, p.91, para 1286. Mary Birkinshaw also asked a question on financial help to family members in her survey of secondary school mistresses in 1935. She found that about 55% of teachers had given some kind of help in the past or present, while about 34% appeared to give fairly substantial help. Birkinshaw, Successful Teacher, p.68.
 128. This was also Rathbone's estimate for women workers generally in 1924. Land, 'Family Wage', p.62.
 129. TES, 22 May 1919, p.241.
 130. The AAM was indignant when in 1937 the latter allowances were raised while the former was frozen. AAM, Annual Report (January 1937), p.57.
 131. Sue Bruley cites the example of an unemployed South Wales man who was refused benefit from the Unemployment Assistance Board because he lived with his sister, a teacher. S. Bruley, 'Socialism and Feminism in the Communist Party of Great Britain 1920-1939', (PhD thesis, University of London, 1980), p.248.
 132. Also see Gittins, 'Marital Status'.
 133. Interview with Miss May Griffiths, 23 March 1989. (Born 1919, elementary teacher.)
 134. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.87, paras 2, 19; p.122, para 4. Smith, Wage-Earning Women, p.15.
 135. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. (Born c.1897.)
 136. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905.) Later in her life, after her marriage, she looked after and supported her mother and aunt until their deaths. For general comment on the effects of the First World War on families see J. M. Winter, The Great War and the British People (London, Macmillan, 1986), pp.273-7, 305.
 137. NUWT, Annual Report (1931), pp.14-15. By 1937 the report of the Mutual Aid Fund announced that fewer colleagues were in

- difficulties, reflecting the general improvement in the economic climate. NUWT, Annual Report (1937), p.11.
138. NUWT, Annual Report (1935), p.14. Dependants became a particular burden if illness struck them or the female breadwinner and expensive medical treatment was needed. NUWT, Annual Report (1932), p.14.
 139. Board of Education, Scales of salaries for teachers in Elementary Schools (1918). Vol II, Evidence, p.69. Also see TES, 30 October 1919, p.547; 17 September 1921, p.417. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.30, paras.21-22.
 140. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.133. Also see Evidence, p.92, para.1308.
 141. A distinction between different types of dependency was recognised by the Royal Commission on Equal Pay in 1946. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.132.
 142. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989. (Born 1914, secondary school teacher.)
 143. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. (Born c.1987, secondary school teacher.) Other respondents mentioned similar problems.
 144. Most women accepted their responsibility to their elderly parents, but some tried to escape it. Miss Burke described a colleague who had gone to work in Germany to escape looking after her elderly mother. By the time she returned, 'it was too late for real promotion'. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989.
 145. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987. (Born 1905, elementary school teacher.) Also see Gittins, 'Marital Status'.
 146. Essex Oral History Archive. Miss Dart, no. 409, pp.16-17. (Born 1895.) After her mother died she was able to go to London for further training to teach handicapped children, and came back to Portland to work in this area of education.
 147. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905.) Even the NUWT admitted that many women did not share their views on the feminist arguments for equal pay. NUWT Pamphlets, Why We do not work through the NUT (n.d.:1920s).
 148. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989.
 149. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989. (Born 1904, elementary school teacher.)
 150. LCC. EO/STA/2.12, reference paper, 18 September 1922.
 151. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Report, p.155.
 152. *Ibid.*
 153. Women civil service clerks, for example, saw their employment as short term and aimed to become domestically orientated wives and mothers. Sanderson, 'Women Clerical Workers', p.47.
 154. TES, 4 August 1914, p.133. Also see AAM, Annual Report (July 1923), p.4.
 155. NUWT Records, Box 175, letter 12 May 1923. Also see Boxes 175 and 300, various letters from married women teachers, June 1922 - June 1924 and later. LCC. EO/STA/2.12, letter, 29 October 1922. TES, 18 June 1921, p.281.

156. Copelman, 'London's Women Teachers', pp.185-6. She also argues that married women's work among the lower middle-class from which women teachers came was more common than has been assumed. *ibid*, pp.176-80.
157. TES, 18 June 1921, p.281; 10 August 1929, p.356; 31 August 1929, p.383. LCC. EO/STA/2.13, reference paper, 25 September 1924. Report to General Purposes Sub-Committee, November 1925.
158. L. Manning, A Life for Education: An Autobiography (London, Victor Gollancz, 1970), pp.47-8.
159. R. Mason, Granny's Village (London, Peter Davis, 1977), p.145. Also see P. B. Ballard, Things I Cannot Forget (London, University of London Press, 1937), p.166. C. L. Turner, A Country Teacher Looks Back (Essex, Essex Libraries, 1980). B Edwards, The Burston School Strike (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974).
160. NUWT Records, Box 175, letter 19 June 1924.
161. AAM, Annual Report (January 1939), p.43.
162. See, for example, TES, 23 August 1917, p.333; 7 May 1927, p.215. Copelman, 'London's Women Teachers', pp.181-7.
163. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987. (Born 1905.)
164. Board of Education and LCC figures tallied to show that the average number of children per married woman teacher was 0.5 and the average number of children per teacher who had children was 1.3. LCC. EO/STA/2.12, Childbearing of Married Women Teachers, 15 November 1922.
165. Lewis, Labour and Love, pp.4, 6, 14. Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society, pp.199-214. Beddoe, Back to Home and Duty, pp.53, 61-3.
166. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987. (Born 1905.)
167. When LEAs passed regulations against the employment of married women they usually advised the managers of voluntary schools (ie. Church schools, also known as non-provided schools) to follow suit, but they had no means of enforcing this. Some managers relished the exercise of this vestige of autonomy. TES, 5 August 1922, p.363; 23 September 1922, p.427; 5 October 1929, p.438; 12 August 1933, p.271. NUWT Records. Box 300, letter to Church schools in Birmingham from Birmingham Church Education Society, 27 April 1923.
168. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987.
169. *Ibid*.
170. Essex Oral History Archive. Mrs Hatch, no.143, p.95. These events occurred in 1916-17.
171. *Ibid*, p.77.
172. *Ibid*, p.116.
173. *Ibid*, p.90.
174. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987.
175. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989.
176. Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987.

177. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989. (Secondary school teacher.)
178. She then left teaching but came back on a part-time basis about two years later during the Second World War. Her mother looked after the baby. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989.
179. Interview with Mrs Nora Platt, 14 July 1989.
180. It is also pertinent to note Dina Copelman's argument that even by the turn of the century the norm of the non-working wife was never completely taken on by the lower middle-class strata from which most teachers came. Copelman, 'London's Women Teachers', pp.175-80.
181. R. W. Connell, Gender and Power (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), pp.109-10. M. Roper and J. Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity', in M. Roper and J. Tosh (eds.), Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800 (London, Routledge, 1991), p.1. A. Brittan, Masculinity and Power (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.1. M. Kimmel and M. Messner (eds.), Men's Lives (New York, Macmillan, 1989), pp.9-10. D. Morgan, 'Men Made Manifest: Histories and Masculinities', Gender and History 1:1 (1989) p.87. J. Pleck, 'Men's Power with Women, Other Men and Society', in Kimmel and Messner (eds.), Men's Lives, p.25.
182. C. Cockburn, 'Formations of Masculinity', Gender and History 1:2 (1989), pp.159-63.
183. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.13.
184. While in some occupations women were employed as superintendents or forewomen over other women workers, they were ultimately subject to male authority in larger commercial, charitable or state organisations such as factories, offices, schools and hospitals.
185. Connell, Gender and Power, pp.109, 111.
186. On teaching and maternalism see C. Steedman, '"The Mother Made Conscious": The Historical Development of a Primary School Pedagogy', History Workshop Journal 20 (1985), pp.149-63. V. Walkerdine, 'On the regulation of speaking and silence', in V. Walkerdine, Schoolgirl Fictions (London, Verso, 1990).
187. TES, 1 February 1916, p.17. And see the discussion at the end of Chapter Two.
188. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.18. Roper and Tosh suggest that different kinds of anxieties in relation to masculinity may be experienced by various groups of men at different periods. They cite the examples of late Victorian male clerks, threatened by the recruitment of women, and the boy scout movement as a response to fears of the 1900s. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.19.
189. Connell, Gender and Power, p.186. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.4, 17. Other ideals were class-related. The manly ideal of the sportsman 'playing the game', and the assertion of authority and racial superiority in an imperial context were associated with middle and upper class manliness; these men were born to rule, with no need for training in masculinity until the interwar years. K. Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place: The tensions of manliness in boys' story papers, 1918-39',

- in Roper and Tosh, Manful Assertions, pp.158-62. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', pp.13, 17. Two key themes of working-class masculinity were respectability and independence, achieved through family life and a skilled trade. K. McClelland, 'Some Thoughts on Masculinity and the "Representative Artisan" in Britain, 1850-1880', Gender and History 1:2 (1989), pp.164-77.
190. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.19. Morgan, 'Men Made Manifest', p.89. Anna Davin has observed that concern with infant mortality in the 1900s was expressed in terms of the needs of Empire for colonisers, soldiers and traders, as if these were all male babies. The need was to build a strong race of healthy virile men as future citizens. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', pp.26, 55.
 191. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 18 June 1910. Men similarly feared being replaced by women heads. See for example NUT, Annual Report (1918, 1923). TES, 19 May 1921, p.227.
 192. E. Showalter, 'Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties', in M. R. Higgonet et al (eds.), Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1987). S. M. Gilbert, 'Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War', in Higgonet, Behind the Lines. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.15. R. R. Pierson, 'Beautiful Soul or Just Warrior: Gender and War', Gender and History 1:1 (1989), pp.77-86.
 193. Board of Education, Annual Report (1914-15), Cd.8274, p.3. TES, 13 September 1917, p.359. Women teachers also entered boys secondary schools. AAM, Annual Report (1917), p.13.
 194. TES, 6 October 1914, p.161; 1 December 1914, p.196.
 195. TES, 1 February 1916, p.17.
 196. TES, 13 September 1917, p.359. Also see: 7 September 1915, p.107; 14 March 1918, p.121.
 197. TES, 1 August 1916, p.104.
 198. NUT, Annual Report (1920), p.xxxiv. Woman Teacher, 30 January 1920, p.150; 12 November 1920, p.61. TES, 15 May 1919, p.238. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/3/H15/3. C. M. Kelly, 'The National Association of Schoolmasters: The Story of a Pressure Group' (thesis, 1959), p.37.
 199. Winter, The Great War, pp.273, 302. M. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959 (London, Macmillan, 1992), pp.79-80. A link was made between war experience and male sexual impotence, for example in D. H. Lawrence's novel Lady Chatterley's Lover. Sexual disorders were sometimes seen as a phenomenon produced by the experience of war itself, or the strains of postwar modern life. L. Hall, Hidden Anxieties: Male Sexuality 1900-1950 (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991), pp.114, 117.
 200. Winter, The Great War, pp.283, 289-95.
 201. Cockburn, 'Formations of Masculinity', p.160. Brittan also suggests that a twentieth century crisis of masculinity has been caused by the erosion of male power in the workplace and home. Brittan, Masculinity and Power, p.25. The need for male bonding and to prove oneself a man probably occurs most strongly among men feeling relatively deprived; men whose social and economic position is declining. M. Wiesner, 'Guilds, Male Bonding and

- Women's Work in Early Modern Germany', Gender and History 1:2 (1989), p.129. In an interesting parallel, Linda Grant, argues that the workplace was an important site for the construction of masculinity and that there was increased sex segregation in the Coventry labour market between the wars. L. Grant, 'Women in a car town: Coventry, 1920-45', in P. Hudson and W. R. Lee (eds.), Women's Work and the family economy in historical perspective (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990).
202. M. Zimmeck, 'Strategies and Stratagems for the Employment of Women in the British Civil Service, 1919-1939', The Historical Journal 27: 4 (1984), pp.901-24. H. Martindale, Women Servants of the State (London, Allen and Unwin, 1938), pp.75-8, 89-91, 96-101. Boston, Women Workers, pp.132-3.
203. News Chronicle, 18 April 1931.
204. Manchester Guardian, 7 January 1933. (NUWT Conference.)
205. Manchester Guardian, 13 January 1939 to 4 February 1939.
206. For the AAM, this was the most pressing of the equality issues throughout the period. AAM, Annual Report (1914, 1917, 1921, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1939).
207. Other discussions of the NAS include M. Littlewood, 'Makers of Men: the anti-feminist backlash of the National Association of Schoolmasters in the 1920s and 30s', Trouble and Strife 5 (1985), pp.23-9. A. Oram, 'Inequalities in the Teaching Profession: the Effect on Teachers and Pupils, 1910-39', in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.101-23.
208. Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.2.
209. Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place', pp.145-6, 157, 160-2. In this fictional world, the men teachers who were the moral exemplars for the boys were themselves depicted as manly, secure in their masculinity, progressive in their teaching methods, and the boys' allies.
210. Cockburn, 'Formations of Masculinity', p.159. Roper & Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.17.
211. Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place', p.153.
212. Secretary of the Oldham branch of the NAS, reported in the Manchester Guardian, 25 February 1930. Also see TES, 23 April 1927, p.191.
213. My emphasis. TES, 18 April 1925, p.159. (Presidential address to NAS Conference.) Also see 19 May 1921, p.227; 3 April 1937, p.112.
214. Manchester Guardian, 22 April 1930. (NAS Conference.) Also see TES, 26 April 1924, p.180; 26 April 1930, p.189.
215. TES, 3 June 1922, p.260; 18 April 1925, p.159; 12 June 1926, p.247; 2 January 1937, p.3.
216. TES, 18 April 1925, p.159. (NAS Conference.)
217. This led to headlines such as 'Are Boys Taught by Women More Likely to be Criminals?' and 'Boy of 13 Who Resented Women Teachers.' Evening Standard, 13 July 1932; 22 April 1933. Daily News, 25 February 1930. TES, 18 April 1925, p.159. Littlewood, 'Makers of Men', p.26. The NAS cited American research which

linked juvenile crime with the feminisation of the schools. Kelly, 'The National Association of Schoolmasters', p.54.

218. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.26, para.381. (Submission from the NAS.) Also see TES, 29 December 1928, p.564; 22 April 1933, p.126; 13 May 1933, p.149; 4 September 1937, p.315. Evening News, 12 February 1930.
219. Report to LEAs by the NAS. News Chronicle, 25 January 1934. Also see Evening News, 12 February 1930. TES, 22 April 1933, p.126. The Times, 19 April 1933; 19 April 1938.
220. TES, 18 April 1925, p.159. (NAS Conference.) Also see TES, 23 April 1927, p.191; 26 April 1930, p.189. Littlewood, 'Makers of Men', pp.26-7.
221. Dominant forms of masculinity are closely associated with heterosexuality and marriage. Connell, Gender and Power, p.186.
222. TES, 15 April 1939, p.142. (NAS Conference.)
223. Connell, Gender and Power, pp.85, 180. Kimmel and Messner, Men's Lives, p.183. Boyd, 'Knowing Your Place', pp.146, 155.
224. TES, 6 April 1929, p.160. Also see 12 June 1926, p.247; 27 April 1935, p.136; 4 September 1937, p.315.
225. S. Fletcher, Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980 (London, Athlone Press, 1984). TES, 27 April 1935, p.138.
226. PRO. Ed 24/1820, Letter to Board of Education, 16 November 1929. Of course most of these men had been taught by women.
227. Daily Herald, 11 April 1939. (NAS Conference.)
228. NAS executive member, quoted in the Woman Teacher, 12 November 1920. Also see TES, 18 April 1925, p.159; 6 April 1929, p.160; 26 April 1930, p.189. Daily Telegraph, 2 April 1934. In this way masculinity was defined in relation to the 'other', by excluding and disparaging feminine behaviour. Roper & Tosh, 'Historians and masculinity', p.13.
229. Answers in Parliament, reported in TES, 15 March 1930, p.120; 17 May 1930, p.219.
230. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee on the Training of Teachers for Public Elementary Schools (1925), Cmd.2409, p.55. PRO. Ed 24/1820, Letter of 29 April 1930, referring to House of Commons answer on 12 December 1929; letter from H. Ramsbotham to Capt. W. F. Strickland MP, 29 March 1934. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.4, para.97-100; p.5, para.123; p.6, para.125-33; p.7, para.147.
231. A. E. Ikin, Organisation and Administration of the Education Department (London, Pitman, 1926), p.64. Also see TES, 29 April 1933, p.133.
232. Before World War One it was rare for women teachers to be found in boys schools, but during the war many were thus employed and they did not withdraw entirely after the war. In the interwar years there was a clear fall in the proportion of boys' classes taught by women, from 25% in 1927 to 15% in 1938. The number of these single sex classes also declined. At the same time the number and proportion of mixed classes rose from 61% in 1921 to 70% by 1938. Women taught mixed classes of any age, but only

about 35% of the over 11s compared to 95-99% of the under 11s. These figures for the number of classes and their teachers are derived from the Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education for this period.

233. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905.) She said that men and women got on together in the staffroom but that the men were lazy, letting the women make them cups of tea while they sat round and talked. In this respect, the staffroom echoed the gendered division of labour in the family.
234. Greaves, 'A Woman in Education', p.8.
235. *Ibid*, p.7.
236. AAM, Annual Report (January 1934), p.34. Also see M. Clarke, A Short Life of Ninety Years (Edinburgh, A. & M. Huggins, 1973), p.35.
237. It is difficult to estimate accurate figures, especially for elementary school teachers from the limited data published by the Board of Education. Even the position for secondary schools is slightly unclear. I have estimated that 30% of women teachers worked in mixed schools, which virtually all had male heads. However the AAM estimated that 40% of its membership in 1938 worked in mixed schools. (Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market', p.47.) The discrepancy may be explained in two ways: either that mixed schools were larger than single sex schools, or that women teachers in mixed schools were more likely to join the AAM.
238. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989. (Born 1904.)
239. See above, note 237.
240. AAM, Annual Report (1912), p.35.
241. AAM, Annual Report (January 1934), p.31.
242. *Ibid*, p.32.
243. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. (Born c.1897.)
244. Interview with Mrs Mary Barrett, 25 July 1989. (Born 1905.)
Interview with Miss May Griffiths, 23 March 1989. (Born 1919.)
245. TES, 1 February 1930, p.48; 16 September 1933, p.314. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence, p.11, para.23.
246. Greaves, 'A Woman in Education', p.7. My respondent Miss Drysdale also experienced this when she became a head after the Second World War. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989. (Born 1904.)
247. C. Dyhouse, 'Miss Buss and Miss Beale: Gender and Authority in the History of Education', in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp.29-32.
248. Steedman, 'The Mother Made Conscious'.
249. Dyhouse, 'Miss Buss and Miss Beale'. Vicinus, Independent Women, pp.178-9, 184-5. E. Edwards, 'Educational Institutions or Extended Families? The Reconstruction of Gender in Women's Colleges in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', Gender and Education 2:1 (1990), pp.17-35. J. Senders Pedersen, 'Schoolmistresses and Headmistresses: Elites and Education in

Nineteenth Century England', Journal of British Studies 15 (1975), pp.135-62.

250. C. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.58, 70-2. E. Edwards, 'Alice Havergal Skillicorn, Principal of Homerton College, Cambridge, 1935-60: a study of gender and power', Women's History Review 1:1 (1992), pp.109-29. J. Milburn, 'The Secondary Schoolmistress: A Study of her Professional Views and their significance in the Educational Developments of the Period 1895-1914' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1969), Chapter 2.
251. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. (Born c.1897.) This is also discussed briefly at the end of Chapter Two.
252. *Ibid.*
253. TES, 8 February 1930, p.61.
254. AAM, Annual Report (January 1932), p.33. Also see Annual Report (January 1934), p.33.
255. See, for example, AAM, Annual Report (January 1932), p.29; (January 1934), p.31. Schoolmaster, 21 April 1933, p.674.
256. AAM, Annual Report (January 1939), p.60. Also see NUWT Records, Box 93, Memorandum on Equal Opportunities, March 1934.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST

AWARENESS AND POLITICAL STRATEGIES: 1900-1920

Women teachers' political development as feminists can only be understood in the context of their membership of teachers' professional associations. Section One of this chapter examines the ways in which women teachers developed an active feminist allegiance. There were two stages to this. The first was joining a teachers' association, which enhanced a sense of professional identity. The second stage, embracing feminism, occurred when women teachers' engagement with professional issues concerning their own position was then stimulated by the external influence of the suffrage movement. Professional identity and professional issues were the threads running through this process of feminist affiliation, but professionalism included a range of shifting and contested meanings.

From the turn of the century to 1920, an individual teacher's choice of professional association was relatively straightforward. Elementary teachers were recruited by the National Union of Teachers (NUT), set up in 1870, and secondary school teachers by the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM), set up in 1884. Each association enjoyed a rapid growth of women members in the period. Both the NUT and the AAM identified themselves as professional bodies for teachers, though the NUT also partly saw itself as a trade union.

It was the meaning and attractions of professionalism, though, which was more important for women teachers' politicisation as feminists. [1] One of the major functions of a professional association is to protect its members' interests and further professionalise the occupation. There are two specific strands of professionalism, both relevant to teachers. The first has to do with professionals' own status, including control over their work and over entry to the profession, as well as pay and conditions. The other stresses the interests of clients and the upgrading of professional skills and knowledge; the quality of service delivered to children in schools. [2] The NUT tended to stress the first of these as constituting its ideal of professionalism, the AAM the latter, though

neither organisation was exclusively interested in just the one aspect and each was shifting its professional self-definition during this period.

The process of professionalisation has been represented by sociologists as a movement along a continuum whereby an occupation attains an increasing number of markers of professional status. [3] Alternatively, it has been seen as involving processes of closure, exclusion and control within an occupation. [4] However the process is conceptualised, the relevant professional association might seek to control and upgrade entry qualifications and the number of entrants, exclude unqualified practitioners, gain state endorsement of these strategies, and seek to improve the working conditions, pay and prospects of its members. [5] Professionalisation is a gendered process and has been associated with masculinity and the exclusion of women. Traditional sociological approaches suggested that the presence of women was inimicable to professionalisation, due to the gendered attributes and role of women. [6] Recent feminist critiques have argued that professionalisation is a patriarchal strategy aimed at excluding women from activities and occupations which they previously engaged in. The more dominated and controlled by men an occupation becomes, the more successful and fully professional it therefore is. [7] Certainly some occupations have successfully gendered themselves as completely male in the process of obtaining social status and power; the medical and legal professions in the mid-nineteenth century for example. [8]

However, professionalism should not be completely associated with masculinisation, male domination and control. [9] Professionalisation has also been sought by women in certain occupations, including nursing and teaching. [10] Seeking professional status is not a masculine project *per se*, though it is undoubtedly a gendered one, and one where men have had greater access to the social and political power with which to accomplish it, eg access to the universities and their accreditation procedures, and political leverage on the state. [11] Rather than engaging in processes of exclusion, the teachers' associations offered women teachers validation of their professional identity (since membership was only open to qualified teachers) and the possibility of obtaining further professional benefits by upgrading the occupation as a whole. The professional values and benefits offered

could be read as gender free, and even the mixed association, the NUT, did not make distinctions of sex in entry or office holding. Women teachers could thus see them as a vehicle for their own professional and later their feminist aspirations. They joined these organisations to gain material and professional benefits in the same way as men, and because they were positively encouraged to join as fellow professionals by both men teachers and other women teachers.

The NUT also described itself as a trade union as well as a professional association, offering its members a collective means to protect their pay, conditions, status and skill, and to resolve disputes with employers. The distinction between 'professional' and 'trade union' interests and strategies is less than clear cut; terms and conditions of employment are intimately related to professional status. There is also a parallel between the actions of professionals and of skilled workers in attempting to restrict entry to the training and education necessary to acquire the relevant skill. [12] Feminist historians and sociologists have shown that like professional associations, trade unions have been based on assumptions particular to male employment and male interests and their activities have been actively hostile to the interests of women workers. [13] Trade unions have often excluded women in order to protect men's position in the labour market, or have enforced their segregation into gender-specific work. The trade unions were an important site for the development of the idea of the male breadwinner wage from the mid-nineteenth century and increasingly opposed married women's employment. [14] Viewed in this light, it is hardly surprising to find that relatively few women joined trade unions, although the years after 1906, and during the First World War, were periods of expansion for women's trade union membership, which was concentrated mainly in the textile trades. [15]

But both the unevenness and the considerable growth of women's union membership indicates that trade unions, under some circumstances, did have utility for women workers. Pat Thane has argued that female trade union membership was not lower than that of men in comparable occupations and grew at a similar rate. She also suggests that the characterisation of trade unions as institutions of male power is overstated; their exclusive practices were not directed against women alone but at all unskilled labour, and they were not solely responsible for creating gender divisions in the workplace. [16] Women had a variety

of experiences, strategies and successes in their trade union involvement, which has been particularly apparent in periods of high demand for women's labour. The First World War saw a great increase in membership rates for women, and also greater pressure for equal pay in a number of industries. The high unionisation rates of women teachers (detailed below), although unusual, were by no means unique. [17] The teachers' associations were organisationally and politically separate from the industrial women's unions, however.

It was professionalism which proved more congenial to women teachers as an identity and a route around which to assert their interests as feminists. The coming together of their professional concerns with the women's suffrage movement in the early twentieth century caused a huge growth of feminist consciousness among women teachers. The suffrage movement provided a focus for the development of teachers' awareness of their position as women workers. The women's movement had sought the improvement of educational and employment opportunities for women since the mid-nineteenth century. Equal political rights at the level of the Parliamentary franchise and the extension of women's rights to vote and stand for local government bodies were also developed as a demand in the later nineteenth century. The revitalisation of the suffrage issue by the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) campaign from 1905 publicised this claim more widely and also drew attention to political, economic and sexual inequalities between women and men. The rapid development of the suffrage campaign after 1906 provided a feminist context for women teachers to make sense of their already existing concerns about equal pay and promotion in the case of elementary teachers, and girls' education in the case of secondary school mistresses.

The transforming of their professional identity into feminist activism also had implications for the strategies which women teachers used to progress their campaigns, examined in Section Two. Women teachers tried to use their professional associations as vehicles to advance their feminist claims of equality. In doing this they drew hostility from men teachers which can be understood not only as a straightforward contest for power between the sexes, but also as a clash over the conflicting gendered meanings of the concept of 'professionalism'. The general language of professionalism was one of liberalism, individualism and merit. [18] While these concepts were

gendered in the nineteenth century and beyond as the attributes of the gentleman (and indeed the formal routes to a liberal classical education were closed to women) they could also be utilised by women to argue for participation in the professions and the public sphere generally. [19] Much nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminist activity used the rhetoric of liberal individualism and equal rights. Women teachers, already accepted into a professionalising occupation, found the meritocratic notions contained within the idea of the 'profession' appealing and used them to advance their cause. Feeling themselves to be professional teachers alongside their male colleagues, the women argued for equal access to professional benefits of pay, conditions and prospects, and increasingly developed this as a rhetorical strategy. Since the notion of professionalism was being used by all groups of teachers to try to improve their status and conditions, this approach carried a good deal of weight.

However, women teachers were operating politically within a gendered profession and, in the case of elementary teachers, in a mixed organisation. Professionalism was seen by many men teachers as having a specifically feminine form; women should keep to their separate place in the schools and in the teachers' associations. Women's assertion of equality therefore generated a great deal of antagonism, especially in the mixed NUT. This conflict over the gendered meanings of professionalism, and the growing schism between men and women teachers will be explored in detail through two case studies: the first on the debates over suffrage, the second on equal pay and opportunities. Hostility deepened during and just after the First World War as women teachers' feminist commitment was heightened by contemporary debates about women's equality, while men teachers felt their masculinity threatened by the experience of war and changes in the schools. However, even in the mixed NUT, feminist teachers were eventually successful in using arguments around professional equality to argue for equal pay, though not for suffrage. But the process of campaigning and facing male hostility led many NUT feminists to feel betrayed and disillusioned with the idea of a mixed professional association. This group broke away to form the National Union of Women Teachers, believing, as a consequence of their experiences in the suffrage movement, that their aims could be more effectively pursued within a single-sex organisation.

SECTION ONE: JOINING THE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND BECOMING FEMINISTS

Joining a teachers' association confirmed women teachers' identity as professionals, though in different ways for elementary and secondary teachers. NUT members were oriented more towards teachers' employment conditions, while the AAM was committed primarily to a client-centred professionalism - the development of education. Women were welcomed into both associations, though the mixed NUT at times emphasised that they were gendered professionals; they were women as well as teachers. By the early 1900s a number of women teachers had already developed a professional interest in women's position in education. For the NUT women the issues were equal pay and opportunities in the profession; for AAM women it was their influence on girls' education in the context of increased state control. These concerns were given new vigour and focus by the suffrage campaign, and many women teachers became active feminists within their own associations and in the outside suffrage movement.

The Growth of Teachers' Associations and their Changing Professional Character

Both the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM) enjoyed a rapid growth in women members in the period 1900-1920, paralleling the growth of women's trade unionism generally. By the First World War the majority of state school women teachers had joined their appropriate teachers' association, marking them out as distinctive among women workers. Women teachers were more densely unionised - though the secondary school mistresses lagged behind the elementary teachers - and took a greater part in union affairs than probably any other body of women workers in this period, in mixed- or single-sex unions.

The membership of the NUT, open only to teachers with a Certificate or equivalent qualification before 1919, was made up mostly of elementary school teachers. [20] During a period of overall growth for the union between 1900 and 1920, female membership increased faster than male membership, as Table 5 and Figure 1 show. In 1895 there had been 11,101 women members, making up 35% of the total membership, but by 1905 there were 30,076 women, 52% of the total. In 1915 women constituted 60% of the total membership. [21]

The density of NUT membership among certificated women teachers rose from 50% to 75% between 1900 and 1914, compared to a unionisation rate among the certificated men of well over 90%. It was reported in 1913 that practically every newly certificated teacher who found an appointment was joining the NUT and women's membership continued to increase rapidly during the First World War and just after. [22] Women's active involvement in the NUT, measured at different levels of the hierarchy - delegates to annual conference, local officials, executive members, and president - increased quite substantially up to 1920, though it was never commensurate with their membership strength. Unlike most mixed trade unions, there was no formal sex differentiation in the rights of NUT members to vote or hold office.

The all-women AAM was slower to recruit from its constituency of potential members. Between 1900 and 1910 the Association grew from 623 members to 1,048. The pace of growth then quickened, particularly during the First World War, from 1,600 members in 1915 to about 4,500 in 1920. [23] The spread and density of membership is hard to assess, but it seems to have been rather patchy in the early years of the century. Only holders of degrees (or the equivalent) were eligible for membership; later, specialist diplomas were also accepted. Penny Summerfield estimates membership density as 54% of assistant mistresses in 1921, following the rapid expansion of state secondary schools. [24] AAM membership density among the women lower than that of the equivalent Association of Assistant Masters (AMA) among secondary school masters. [25]

The two teachers' associations pursued different kinds of professional goals. The NUT placed greater emphasis on improving teachers' status as professional workers, aiming to improve pensions, salaries and working conditions, gain security of tenure and open up channels of advancement, particularly to the Inspectorate. [26] It also represented the views of teachers politically, and provided members with a forum to discuss educational and classroom issues, the service-to-clients aspect of professionalism. Beatrice Webb suggested in 1915 that 'whether estimated in membership or in political influence, [the NUT was] the premier professional association connected with education,' but she also noted that its attempt to lay down a professional code was unsatisfactory, and that it had failed to

regulate entry into the profession or to standardise the qualifications required. [27]

However, at the same time the NUT may also be characterised as a trade union. H. A. Clegg shows that it was the fifth largest national union in 1910, the major white collar union and the largest public sector union. [28] Webb observed that the NUT had 'shown, both in its objects and in its methods, a marked approximation to the Trade Union type'. Its objects included raising teachers' salaries and giving protection against unreasonable employers; its methods, she noted, included strike action as well as collective bargaining and political pressure. [29] Like other successful trade unions in this period, the NUT provided members with welfare benefits against the hazards of unemployment and sickness, and offered legal advice (which Webb believed was particularly important to members). It also tacitly approved of the idea of the family wage as a bargaining element in teachers' salaries until 1918. The NUT's political influence, on local government, Education Ministers and Whitehall officials, was already strong in the prewar period. In so far as the NUT was able, by political lobbying, to influence teacher training and the number of entrants to teaching, and also to press for the number of uncertificated teachers to be reduced, Clegg represents its concerns as akin to those of the craft unions. [30] However, as discussed above, these can also be seen very much as professional concerns.

It was the second strand of professionalism - providing a high standard of service to pupils - which particularly characterised the AAM, especially at the beginning of the period. The AAM has received much less attention from historians than the NUT. The only surviving records are the Association's Annual Reports, which means that only the public face of the AAM can be seen, and there is little detailed evidence of its political perspective or activities. [31]

In 1900 the AAM represented quite a different type of woman teacher to those in the NUT. Originally set up in 1884, its goal had been to bring secondary school mistresses together in a professional association in the context of the expansion of the reformed secondary schools for girls and the opening of higher education to women. Membership of the Association came at first mainly from the endowed high schools for girls, and those of the Girls Public Day School Company. [32] Its principal aims were: '1) To promote the cause of

education generally.... 2) To protect and improve the status, and to further the legitimate professional interests of teachers.' [33] It was the first of these concerns which took prominence during the 1900s. [34] Reports of branch activities and annual general meetings show that the mistresses discussed subjects such as school leaving exams, pedagogic methods, the curriculum and teacher training, as well as contemporary Education Bills or Acts. [35] By the 1900s the AAM was seen as an authoritative and expert voice on girls' secondary education and its advice was sought by the Board of Education on various issues. [36]

The AAM aimed for complete membership of women teachers in all types of girls' secondary schools, which would give it a stronger political voice on educational matters in a period of increasing state influence. It was comparatively reluctant to engage with the other strand of professionalisation and try to improve the material position and status of secondary school mistresses, perhaps because this seemed close to trade unionism and to the lower status elementary school teachers, while the notion of 'professionalism as service' linked well with the ideals of middle-class femininity. However the mistresses did gradually move towards a greater concern with their pay and conditions of service, including pension schemes, sick pay, and their legal rights regarding appointment and dismissal. In 1904 the issue of minimum salary scales was discussed by branches and the annual general meeting, and the Association agreed that the minimum starting salary for a woman graduate should be £120 p.a. [37] But even a limited discussion of salaries drew fire from some members who complained that 'too much ... attention is given to those questions of what may be called educational politics, and too little to that actual work of teaching.' In reply the AAM's leaders stressed the fact that good teaching could only be carried out under favourable conditions of employment. [38] Looking back to this period, one teacher said, 'we were... really more professionally minded about the schools and their subjects than the salaries.' [39] The meanings of professionalism were thus contested within the AAM.

One of the main reasons for the shift towards a greater emphasis on teachers' pay and conditions was the expansion of state sector secondary education after the 1902 Education Act. This caused a rapid increase in the size of the AAM and a change in its membership

profile. [40] From about 1905-6 there is evidence of LEA-employed mistresses among the membership lists of the AAM Reports, and they were explicitly welcomed by the Association: 'We observe with much pleasure that among our new members are many from the newly established Municipal and County Secondary Schools.' [41] There is no doubting that this welcome was genuine, yet this new breed of teachers was a subtle challenge to the established tone and outlook of the AAM. There was quite a gulf between the experience of the municipal school mistresses and that of the women teachers at the prestigious girls' boarding schools. [42]

The assumption seems to have been that the new LEA assistant mistresses would be included and subsumed within the existing structure and ethos of the AAM; as, in the same fashion, the new local authority secondary schools were to be modelled on the pattern of the endowed and privately funded reformed girls' high schools. [43] The challenge of making links between these systems is reflected in the AAM's concern about the implications of state control on school mistresses' professionalism. In particular they feared that teachers' individual initiative and autonomy might be threatened by Board of Education regulations. [44] But while one aspect of teachers' professionalism might be threatened by state control, there was scope for other aspects, including pay and conditions, to be strengthened as the AAM began to follow the example of the NUT. Despite the marked degree of convergence between the NUT and the AAM in their professional approaches, and type of membership, the AAM continued to emphasise the development of girls' secondary education as their primary objective.

Joining the Teachers' Associations: Confirming a Professional Identity

These different types of professionalism were taken on by women teachers when they joined the teachers' associations. It is most useful to analyse women teachers' membership of the teachers' associations in terms of the positive attractions which were offered. [45] The associations encouraged women to join as fellow professional teachers and they were also attracted to membership by the example of other women already active. This process legitimated and enhanced their professional identity and heightened their sense of having equal

professional status with their male colleagues and a similarly important stake in the organisation.

Women teachers, in a similar way to their male colleagues, joined their appropriate association for instrumental reasons, for the insurance and welfare schemes they offered, for legal advice and employment protection. [46] Members of both the NUT and AAM could feel that their interests were represented by a body which had national authority and recognition, and both were forums for the discussion of educational and professional matters. As Miss Burke, a secondary schoolmistress in the AAM suggested, membership was largely an automatic response:

Oh yes, I think we joined the associations of one kind or another simply because we had to make our voice heard. ... We wanted improvement and if you want improvement you've got to. Right from the beginning that was the first thing that I joined, I think some time in 1920. [47]

Similarly, women joined the NUT to protect their interests as elementary school teachers. Asked if she belonged to the union Mrs Hatch responded, 'Oh yes, all my life - all my teaching days.' [48] Miss Rosser, an elementary teacher in South Wales, went to NUT meetings,

because you miss - the professional side don't you, by not going. ... but I wasn't an active member, I paid my subscription, and I think I did it more - for - the safety of my job more than I - was keen on the principle. [49]

The benefits of association membership were understood by both women and men teachers. The structural position of women in teaching was not identical to that of men, however, which may have had some marginal effects on their membership rates and level of activism. [50] Women teachers received lower salaries than men, though there is little evidence that this made membership fees too expensive in this period. [51] Only the higher paid certificated women teachers were eligible for NUT membership in any case. In the AAM, the doubling of the subscription to five shillings in 1906 did bring some resignations, although membership continued to increase. [52] Higher rates of turnover among women teachers, due to marriage and the marriage bar, may have affected women's membership and advancement in

the teachers' associations compared with men, though this shouldn't be exaggerated. [53] Also the greater availability of domestic support services to men teachers than to women teachers probably made some difference to their respective activism. [54] At every NUT conference a presentation was made to the retiring president's wife, with an acknowledgement of her part in enabling her husband to carry out his duties. [55] When Miss Wood, the third woman president of the NUT retired in 1921 she made a speech which included:

an appreciation of the self-sacrifice of her sister, who kept for them both a charming home - 'although they had not got a man' - and made physically possible the carrying out of her work. [56]

Women teachers also joined associations because they were deliberately encouraged to in order to strengthen the profession; in the case of the NUT by the already established male hierarchy. [57] Women's lower membership had been addressed by the union in the mid-1890s, when the proportion of women members was only one-third. [58] From 1897 the union set up a Ladies Committee to represent women on the national executive, recommended women's sub-committees at local branch level, and encouraged discussion of topics identified as being of interest to women. Money was also provided (until 1907) for 'At Homes' - meetings which it was felt would be more congenial for women. [59] In effect, the NUT recognised that some aspects of the union were male-orientated and unattractive to women, and instituted a degree of 'positive action' to draw women into the union. The recruitment effort paid off and the number of women members rose rapidly in the early 1900s. [60] But while being welcomed into the union as fellow professionals, women teachers were subtly gendered in the process. Their professional interests were identified as being slightly different from their male colleagues' and might include domestic subjects teaching, difficulties in mixed schools, and welfare issues. For instance, it was recommended at the 1896 conference that secretaries of local branches of the Benevolent and Orphan Fund should in all cases be ladies. [61]

The AAM had a parallel concern to increase its membership and strengthen its claim to represent the profession. [62] The problem of under-recruitment was diagnosed primarily as one of women's attitude; 'women sadly need educating as to the value of organised co-operation.' [63] However, the Association made only very genteel

efforts to recruit non-members. In 1899 three hundred copies of a leaflet stating the objects of the AAM and urging the need for combination among Assistant Mistresses were circulated to all schools not yet represented in the Association. [64] Generally, however, the AAM simply relied upon members to recruit their colleagues at school. It is clear that one of the most positive factors encouraging women's membership was the example of other women. Miss Burke described how she was encouraged to join :

Oh yes, the second mistress said come along, you've got to join ... there was no feeling of headquarters and the rest of us, we were all of us highly involved. [65]

The small size of the AAM meant that a more intimate feeling of membership could be fostered.

The larger NUT instituted in 1909 a special meeting for women members at their annual conference, under the auspices of the Ladies Committee, which stimulated female membership. [66] Women teachers were also encouraged by the slow growth of women in the hierarchy of the union, achieved by their own efforts, which gave them self-confidence and a sense of their place in the NUT. The election of an increased number of women onto the Executive Committee and the first woman President in 1910, also strengthened women's identity within the union. [67] A leading article in the NUT journal, The Schoolmaster, celebrating women's success and appealing for greater female membership to consolidate this was reprinted as a recruitment leaflet. [68]

Being brought into the AAM or NUT by the example of other women meant that women teachers could see themselves as active participants in the association rather than passive consumers. In so far as they were welcomed as fellow NUT members by the men, a sense of equal or equivalent professionalism was made more concrete.

Women Teachers and Feminism

Women teachers' feminism was built upon their already existing distinct professional identities and concern with gender issues. During the 1900s, women teachers' nascent feminist concern about professional and employment issues converged with the external influence of suffrage feminism, producing a huge growth of feminist

consciousness among both elementary and secondary school teachers. It has been suggested by Hilda Kean that it was the suffrage movement itself which radicalised and politicised women teachers as feminists. She argues that teachers adopted a feminist analysis from this source outside teaching which they then applied to their own position. [69] My own emphasis is slightly different. The suffrage movement should not take the sole credit for inspiring a feminist analysis among women teachers; rather it consolidated and invigorated their previous feminist activities and feelings. At the turn of the century, there were significant if isolated pockets of feminist organising by NUT women concerned with their employment position, which were mobilised and strengthened by the blossoming of the wider suffrage movement after about 1906. Secondary school mistresses followed a similar pattern, though their embryonic feminist disquiet was with their professional and political influence over girls' education.

Becoming Feminists: The NUT Women

Some women teachers within the NUT raised issues of professional equality well before the development of the mass suffrage movement; indeed had been doing so since the 1880s. Before 1900 there was an active lobby campaigning for equal pay in the NUT. From the 1890s there was also a vocal debate over promotion prospects for women teachers and the low representation of women within the NUT hierarchy. [70] These issues were to remain remarkably constant over the following decades, and attracted increasing support. The threat of a marriage bar was also countered vigourously whenever it appeared. The Metropolitan Board Mistresses Association, set up in London in the 1880s, actively defended its members against the threat of a marriage bar, and was succeeded by the Association of London Married Women Teachers working for the same purpose from 1909 until after the First World War. [71]

Women NUT members were encouraged to work for the union's charities as an appropriately feminine activity. Ironically, one who did so, Miss Lane, the headmistress of a London elementary school, found that the Benevolent and Orphan Fund rules discriminated against women. Despite paying the same subscriptions, the maximum benefit was £30 for men, but £25 for women, and in 1899 she began a campaign to obtain equal welfare benefits for women. [72] The achievement of this in 1903 stimulated some women (and men) teachers to set up an Equal

Pay League within the NUT. Their first Annual Report in 1904 listed 73 members, and the group raised the question of equal pay in The Schoolmaster, local associations and at NUT national conference from 1904, making it among the earliest group of trade union women to press for this demand. [73]

In 1906 the Equal Pay League changed its name to the National Federation of Women Teachers (NFWT) and became the focus for feminist issues inside and later outside the NUT. The original aims of the Federation were to bring more women into the NUT at all levels, get more women onto the executive, and get equal pay adopted as union policy. [74] The significance of the Federation (and its predecessor) was its independent existence as a pressure group. At the beginning of the century the Ladies Committee had been the focus for women teachers' demands on the union, but although it consistently took up the issue of women teachers' promotion prospects in the years before the war, it was part of the union establishment and lagged behind the Federation in making feminist demands. [75] Indeed, there was an increasing split between the two groups.

The suffrage movement consolidated women teachers' existing activities, linked them to the wider women's movement, and provided them with a broader political framework for their campaigns. The NFWT became a major vehicle for feminists in teaching. Equal pay was the Federation's first priority, and the hostility shown towards women teachers as early as 1907 in the context of this demand strengthened the resolve of the group and added to its membership. [76] But external events rapidly overtook the Federation and by 1908 it was concentrating on the suffrage issue with the aim of pressing the NUT to support the principle of women's suffrage. [77] In 1912 London feminist teachers set up the single issue Women Teachers Franchise Union. [78] Its membership overlapped with the NFWT's and its wider aims were virtually identical. Suffrage had now become the major political interest for feminist teachers.

Becoming Feminists: Members of the AAM

Like the NUT women, the professional objectives of AAM members also led to their politicisation as feminists; however these professional interests were primarily focussed on girls' education, while women's suffrage did not become a central question for the association. The stimulus for the secondary school mistresses was

their exclusion from political representation at the local and national government levels which prevented them from voicing their professional concern for girls' education. The development of girls' secondary education had in its earlier years been a feminist project, a classic equal rights issue, but by the early twentieth century it appeared less radical and the AAM had developed the respectable professionalism detailed earlier. [79] At this time the provision of girls' secondary education increasingly became a question for local and national policy-making rather than private and charitable enterprise. The AAM felt strongly that their views as teacher professionals should be represented to policy-makers, but found that, as women, they lacked many of the political mechanisms to carry this into effect. It was this which sparked their feminism.

They already had some leverage with education policy-makers. They had given evidence to the 1894 Bryce Commission on Secondary Education, and made representations to the Board of Education and the local authorities on educational matters. However, in 1900 the current President of the AAM, Miss Wallas, drew attention to the under-representation of women on local Committees of Technical and Secondary Education, saying 'women teachers should note with alarm a growing evidence that the local control of Secondary Education is passing to a great extent into the hands of men only.' [80]

The 1902 Education Act abolished School Boards and replaced them with LEAs which had powers to provide secondary as well as elementary schools. While women had been eligible to vote and stand for the old School Boards, the new Education Committees were constituted from the County or Borough Councils, from which women were excluded. [81] Education Committees were required to co-opt at least two women members, but they were not obliged to have knowledge of secondary education. This was a severe reversal for women's local government position and for women educationalists, and became an important issue for the AAM. [82] In the years after 1902, the AAM worked closely with the Women's Local Government Society (WLGS) to open up the local government franchise to women, so that they could better represent the interests of girls' education.

Women's place in 'municipal housekeeping' seemed more acceptable to public opinion than the radical demand for the Parliamentary franchise. [83] While the issue of women's local government franchise

does not appear to have been a contentious one for the AAM, the question of Parliamentary suffrage was treated with considerable caution at first.

Our Committee's position was one of sore perplexity when the change of Government caused it to be bombarded on all sides by the various societies advocating the cause of Women's Suffrage. [84]

The Parliamentary suffrage was treated as a separate issue from local government representation but the Association allowed a debate on the issue at an extraordinary general meeting in 1906. In the same year the AAM saw 'no difficulty' in associating itself with a public demonstration and a WLGS resolution to promote the Local Authorities (Qualification of Women) Bill. However, the argument used to gain the support of the AAM membership for the Parliamentary vote was the same professional one that they used about the local government franchise, that:

In face of the fact that the State is now assuming control of education, the question is one which vitally affects all women educationalists.... By the franchise alone could they hope to secure a voice in framing the very conditions under which their work is done. [85]

A resolution was passed giving the Association the power to officially support women's suffrage, provided it was 'only associated with orderly and constitutional methods of giving expression to its opinions'. [86]

This 1906 meeting was the first and last time that the Parliamentary suffrage was discussed by the AAM, according to the Annual Reports. However, there is evidence that individual members were much more closely involved with the issue and had helped to pressure the Association to take it up. In suffrage demonstrations, contingents of women graduates in their gowns and caps were organised to draw attention to 'what a woman might be and still not have the vote'. The largest section of these would have been secondary school mistresses. [87] Suffrage schoolmistresses appear to have pursued their feminist politics outside the AAM rather than within it.

The convergence of existing professional and employment concerns with the external influence of the suffrage movement triggered the

feminism of women teachers in both elementary and secondary schools. Women teachers' different kinds of professional interests meant they took different routes into feminist politics. AAM members were anxious to maintain their influence over girls' education in a period of increasing state control, while the NUT women placed greater emphasis on their unequal conditions of employment.

SECTION TWO: DEVELOPING FEMINIST STRATEGIES

The second section of this chapter considers women teachers' political strategies as feminists. Feminist teachers might choose to be politically active outside teaching in the wider women's movement, especially for the goal of women's suffrage. But since they were arguing for equality in their profession, they believed that their professional associations were useful vehicles to pursue their demands for equal pay and opportunities and to acquire powerful support for their suffrage claim. The NUT effectively represented the views of elementary teachers to the Board of Education, and in Parliament where it sponsored 2 MPs, and had some influence on LEA policy. [88] The AAM also had leverage with educational policymakers and was recognised by the Board of Education and LEAs as the voice of secondary schoolmistresses in this period of rapid development of municipal secondary education. The support of either association for feminist aims would have an important influence on public opinion.

But the situation of women in the teachers' associations mirrored their complex position in the profession. The all-women AAM was potentially a more congenial organisation to work through for feminist demands than the mixed NUT, which, despite its majority female membership was largely run by men. As indicated earlier, mixed trade unions have frequently been male-dominated and hostile to women workers' needs, while professional associations have also sought to segregate women into designated female sectors of work. In the early twentieth century there were few models of women and men working together on an equal basis in a mixed organisation. Women's political assertiveness of any kind could still be seen as threatening and unfeminine, especially in the context of suffrage militancy. Men wanted women teachers to join the NUT to strengthen the union and the profession, but to a large extent assumed they would act in gender-appropriate ways and restrict themselves to 'feminine' areas.

Meanwhile, in the period 1900-1920, feminist teachers gradually developed arguments for equality based on their sense of an ungendered professionalism. Women teachers did equal work in the same or similar schools, after the same training; they should therefore get the same rates of pay and opportunities for promotion. But many men teachers resisted them with considerable antagonism and hostility. This approach challenged their own masculine definition of professionalism,

as well as their control of the union. The fights over suffrage and over equal pay and opportunities, which will be discussed as case studies, show how professionalism contained a range of gendered meanings, and how these were contested between women and men teachers.

Feminism in the Teachers' Associations: Challenging the Men

At the beginning of this period, women teachers did believe that they shared common professional interests with male colleagues and could pursue their claims within a mixed organisation. In the 1900s the NUT encouraged female membership, and optimistic feminists assumed they could build up a power base within the union hierarchy by using their numerical strength. [89] Indeed, the NFWT had as one of its objects: 'To bring all women teachers into the NUT and secure more women on the NUT executive.' This strategy did begin to be successful in the 1900s, and increased numbers of women held posts at all levels. More women were sent as delegates to NUT conferences, and female membership of the executive increased. Before the First World War the proportion of women was around 10%, while from 1915 to 1920 it reached 25%; nevertheless, women never achieved representation on the executive in proportion to their numbers. [90] The election in 1910 of the first woman president of the NUT, Miss Conway, was greeted with enthusiasm by the women at conference. In her speech, Miss Conway said that the women in the union could now feel that their function was not merely that of paying subscriptions. [91] In the following decade there was a growing number of women officers at both local and executive level, and women presidents were again elected in 1918 and 1920.

Women attempted to press their claims within the NUT using the normal mechanisms available: pressure groups, passing resolutions at branches and at conference, generating debates, and getting their representatives elected to official positions. Two important women's 'sections' expanded within the NUT at this time. The Ladies Committee consisted of the most prominent women in the union establishment, and was the official voice for women members' concerns. These women - a dozen or less - also sat on the Executive Committee of the union, working with the men at the top of the union hierarchy. The NFWT, on the other hand, was a grassroots pressure group, had a more developed feminist politics than the Ladies Committee and indeed directly

challenged the union establishment. All these ways of working were legitimate approaches to take within a trade union or professional association, and were utilised by other interest groups such as class teachers or subject teachers. But by doing this, women teachers were deliberately challenging men teachers' control of the NUT and their privileged economic position.

The articulation of feminist arguments generated huge amounts of antagonism and heat within the NUT between the men and the women. Already by 1910 it was clear that women's activism had begun to effect debate and change within the NUT, and a leading article in The Schoolmaster referred to: 'the quarrel of friend with friend, the new feud of the sexes - the pertinacity of women and the contempt of men.' [92] At one level, this can be read as a straightforward contest for economic and political power between the sexes. If women gained more power in the NUT for their representatives and their policies, then men members would be forced to give up their places in the hierarchy. If they gained access to more headships and higher pay, there might be fewer of these economic advantages for men teachers. So the fight can be seen as one in which the men in the NUT were simply trying to maintain their privileges, and male control of the union. But the clash was more complex than this. Not only did some men support the feminists, but the debates raised fundamental questions about the function of the NUT and the meaning of its aim of professionalism.

Feminists in the AAM did not have to fight for representation in the same way as women in the NUT. However, their association was only beginning to take on teachers' own pay and conditions as professional issues in this period, and secondary school mistresses experienced a less intense development of feminist allegiance. But as in the NUT, as women began to press for feminist demands, different understandings of professionalism were flushed out, and caused some conflict between the AAM and the parallel men's association, the Assistant Masters' Association (AMA), towards the end of the period.

Professionalism: Feminine or Feminist?

In their feminist campaigns, women teachers not only challenged men teachers' material and economic power but also their conceptual categories. Men and women teachers had different interpretations of what was proper union business and what was 'too political'. They

also held competing ideas of teacher professionalism. We have seen how women teachers already had a sense of themselves as both professionals and women, which was confirmed by their recruitment into teachers' associations. Since, for the NUT, a major part of professionalism was about salaries and conditions, women teachers could assume that their claims to share equally in professional status were legitimate. It may be argued that women teachers were naive in their reading of professionalism as gender-free and equally open to women. But they were encouraged in this by the NUT itself. Not only did the union actively try to recruit women; it officially treated them on equal terms, and at times congratulated itself on this. In 1911 the NUT republished a leading article which had appeared in The Schoolmaster as a recruitment leaflet. Entitled Miss Chairman, it welcomed women teachers as equal professional colleagues.

The Union treats alike, enrolls, protects, defends, and honours men and women, wives, widows and spinsters; each is a member of the profession and of the Union; each has an equal claim. ... Every woman who is a member of the Union has just the same right, power, and privilege in voting as any man has ... absolute equality between Adam and Eve is the rule.

It pointed out that although the union did not enter into the suffrage debate, its General Secretary supported women's franchise in a personal capacity in the House of Commons, and that women's involvement would bring equal pay and pensions, suggesting that NUT men would give sympathy and support to their professional colleagues.

If every woman teacher showed the professional spirit, and joined the Union, there would soon be an end to the differentiations between stipends for women and stipends for men. [93]

The NUT journal, The Schoolmaster, several times supported the women teacher's cause. In a leading article on the 1910 conference, it commented:

There certainly was a tendency among some of the women representatives to emphasise sex differences; but that again is human nature, and women may fairly say that, even with more Executive members and the Vice-President belonging to their sex, the many thousands of women in the Union are not proportionally represented in office. [94]

While some NUT men agreed with the feminist claim for professional equality, others believed that women teachers' role in the profession and the union was distinct from that of men. The NUT's charities were identified as a particularly appropriate activity for women members. [95] The presentation of purses at the annual conference showed the extent to which this had become a gendered activity, accepted as such by many women members.

The presentation of purses on Thursday afternoon was a most delightful function, one might almost call it the 'ladies day', for every year sees an increasing number of the fair sex crossing the platform, whilst the men take a back seat or sit in the gallery and criticise our hats and frocks, adversely many times... [96]

The threat of women teachers' professionalism was neutralised by such activities, which turned them into women first, and teachers second. At the 1910 conference, the newly elected vice-president, Miss Cleghorn, speaking to a women teachers' meeting, said 'she felt sure of support and sympathy, not only from the women, but from the men also.' Following her, however, a male executive member emphasised the gendered nature of women's professional expertise.

Work was waiting for them in connection with the education of infants and the medical inspection of children, in respect of which their knowledge and experience were greatly superior to those of men. [97]

Men teachers were split on women's role within the NUT and the legitimacy of feminist demands, as the case studies below will show. There were genuine differences of opinion on the meaning of professionalism, union aims, and women teachers' place. In this period, some men tried to promote a different, gendered female sphere for women members; and some shouted down feminist demands at the union's conference. Some men were broadly sympathetic to the feminists' claims but believed these should not be a union priority; while others wholeheartedly supported the women. [98]

The women, too, held a range of views on what professionalism meant but many endorsed the idea of a different sphere for women's efforts at the same time as asserting equal rights with men. Dina Copelman has argued that in this period, women elementary teachers in

London moved towards constructing a notion of professionalism based on gender difference, emphasising their expertise in and the importance of female-specific curriculum areas, for example, while concurrently campaigning for equal pay and women's suffrage. [99] The promotion of domestic subjects did not preclude NUT women nationally from also supporting professional equality of pay and conditions. The Ladies Committee of the NUT, representing mainstream female opinion in the union, did promote domestic subjects and gender-specific issues in this period. [100] It may be tempting to contrast the Ladies Committee with the NFWT, characterising the former as partially feminist, and the latter as truly feminist, or to see the first as 'difference' feminists and the latter as 'equality' feminists. [101] But this would be to oversimplify. The Ladies Committee also upheld equality issues; at times very strongly and in the face of masculine hostility. In the years before and during the First World War, the Committee worked for equal pay, put pressure on conference to approve the women's suffrage resolution, and consistently took up the issue of women teachers' promotion prospects. [102] The three women NUT Presidents in this period tried to elevate women's particular interests while also advocating equal pay and suffrage, if somewhat less forcefully than the Federation. [103] Certainly there were distinct differences between the Ladies Committee and the NFWT which grew rather than lessened in this period, but these were as much to do with strategy as policy. [104]

At the local level, too, women teachers were involved both in gendered union activities, and alongside the men in mainstream union work. Mrs Hatch, an ordinary member, described herself as an active worker for the NUT. 'Every year I had either a garden party or a sale ..[and] .. we raised a lot of money for the Benevolent and Orphan Fund.' She was also president of the local NUT association several times, and attended the annual conferences. [105] The professional identity of NUT women encompassed both equal status with men teachers and women teacher's particular interests. These beliefs may in some ways have been potentially contradictory, but show the difficulties of constructing a unified feminist politics. [106] Women NUT members had few problems with the wide meaning of their professional identity. It could encompass both gendered activities within the union and feminist

equality interests at the same time; the feminine and the feminist together. [107]

The AAM had a different sense of professionalism again, one which started from the interests of girls' education and only gradually shifted in this period to encompass teachers' pay and conditions. For the AAM, too, a feminine and a feminist professionalism could exist side by side. The experience of the AAM similarly shows that a feminine and client-minded version of professionalism could be self-generated, and not simply imposed by men. Their different professional emphasis meant that the secondary schoolmistresses were much slower to develop campaigns on the equality issues and the AAM made relatively few links with other women's organisations and campaigns. They kept in close touch with the Association of Head Mistresses, and their connection with the Women's Local Government Society in the years before the First World War has already been mentioned. The Association welcomed the extension of the local authority franchise to women in 1907, although they were still concerned about the anomaly which excluded married women. [108] However, the AAM women were also politicised more slowly because the debate over the meaning of professionalism and equality, and the hostility from men, was not forced on them in the way it was for NUT women. During the war, when they clashed with the AMA over equal pay and opportunities, the AAM rapidly confirmed its equality professionalism position.

In the fights over suffrage and equal pay and opportunities, feminist teachers' demands laid bare the varying and conflicting meanings of teacher professionalism. In the NUT, women teachers discovered that apparently gender-neutral concepts were profoundly gendered. It became evident that professionalism was largely defined on men's terms; it certainly included teachers' pay and conditions, but these were men's pay and conditions, and any threat to these was to be fought. Because women teachers' reading of the concept of professionalism within a mixed trade union context was in conflict with that of most of the men, this led to acute gender antagonism.

The teachers' associations did not at first deliver what the feminists wanted, especially the mixed NUT. The men's control of definitions turned them from being women teachers into women teachers - women were labelled as women, rather than gender-free professionals.

Their professional identity ceased to be gender neutral, or ceased to be defined by the women as gender-specific on their own terms. Both the idea of professionalism and the functions of a teachers' association became the object of a fight between men and women for control of meanings and strategies. This development further politicised many women, as it suggested that their own professional aims were not legitimate.

The pressures of the First World War meant that the issue of professional equality continued to be highly charged. Unequal war bonuses in a period of inflation led to great feminist mobilisation, especially among London teachers, at a time when equal pay had become a matter for national debate. With many men teachers away at the war, gender relations in teaching shifted, raising questions about women's position in mixed schools, especially secondary schools. Increasing numbers of women teachers came to adopt a feminist perspective. The NFWT was at the height of its influence as a pressure group within the NUT during the war, and had recruited up to a half of women NUT members. [109]

In the period to 1920, women teachers made substantial progress with the argument for equality on professional grounds, and showed that in the context of the professional aims of the teachers' associations it was largely unanswerable. However, NUT women became increasingly disillusioned about working within a mixed association for their feminist aims. Their vision of a shared gender-free professionalism which would lead to equality was attacked and denied by their male colleagues over a number of years. As a consequence of their more positive experience of women's organising in the suffrage campaign, the most committed feminist teachers decided to initiate a new strategy at the end of the war, and set up a separate organisation for women teachers by transforming the NFWT into the National Union of Women Teachers.

The Debate Over Suffrage

The debate over women's suffrage in the NUT illustrates how deeply gendered readings of professionalism were, and how women teachers' feminist politics were sharpened and changed by their experience of male hostility. Women teachers passionately believed

that their suffrage claim was proper, relevant union business, but they failed to win support from the men. The connections between their professional identity as teachers and their right to the suffrage were made in their political activities in the external suffrage movement as well as in the teachers' associations. The suffrage movement gave feminist teachers an independent political base outside the teachers' associations, and the experience of an alternative single-sex method of campaigning.

Women teachers contributed to the suffrage movement in a major way. Traditional histories of women in teaching have assumed that they were not greatly involved in suffrage. [110] More recent work by feminist historians on the huge amount of evidence available suggests that these assertions need considerable modification. [111] The existence of the single-issue Women Teachers' Franchise Union, the rapid growth of the NFWT and the massively contentious debates over the issue at NUT conferences, show that women teachers were centrally involved with suffrage. They provided substantial contingents on suffrage processions, were platform speakers at the Hyde Park demonstration in 1908 and were also involved in more militant activities, such as setting fire to post offices, leading to arrest and imprisonment. [112] Certainly contemporaries believed that both elementary and secondary school teachers were often suffragists. In 1910 The Journal of Education noted that 'women teachers through their various associations have pronounced themselves almost unanimously in favour of Woman Suffrage.' [113] The anti-suffragist Mrs Humphrey Ward, in a debate in The Times in 1912, wrote of 'the almost exclusive staffing of our higher schools and colleges for girls, at the present moment, by women holding suffragist opinions.' [114]

Women teachers became actively involved in suffrage in a number of ways. [115] Individual recruitment via friends or teacher colleagues was of great importance for drawing women teachers into the movement. Mary Harris, a Swansea teacher, joined the NFWT after coming into contact with 'the magnetic influence of Miss Phipps, the pioneer of the women teachers' movement in Swansea'. [116] A family commitment to women's equal rights may have precipitated some teachers into support for suffrage. Miss Rosser's mother, who was a headmistress in Pontypridd and worked both before and after marriage,

was a co-opted member of the Local Education Authority, and 'a big suffragette' with strong views. [117]

Feminist enthusiasm was also lit by the drama and sacrifice of the militant suffrage campaign. One teacher, 'went from Leeds to join the great Suffrage Procession in London in 1908, [and] joined the National Federation of Women Teachers when a branch was formed in Leeds.' [118] Miss Phipps, who was president of the NFWT in 1917, and continued to be a prominent activist in the post war years, described how she was converted to militant feminism by her disgust at witnessing the treatment of suffragettes at a meeting in Swansea in 1908 where Lloyd George was speaking:

The audience listened with rapt attention to the speaker until, suddenly, a small voice said 'We pay taxes.' And what was Mr Lloyd George's reply?: 'The lady says she pays taxes. I wonder how much she was paid for coming here this evening.' Then pandemonium; stewards rushed on the speaker, seized her roughly and flung her from the hall. While this was being done, Lloyd George called out, 'Fling them out ruthlessly; show them no mercy.' From that moment, Miss Phipps was a militant suffragette, and she had never looked back. [119]

The Woman Teacher's Magazine, a short-lived commercial paper for teachers, was forced to shift its position after making anti-suffragist comments in the first 1909 issue, to reflect the growing feeling among women teachers for political and professional equality. [120] Many teachers and former teachers were in fact among the leadership of the suffrage movement, including suffragettes Emily Davison and Teresa Billington-Greig. [121]

The suffrage issue dominated British feminist politics after about 1907, being seen as the key to all the other equality demands by women. Feminists in the NUT tried to get their union to back the principle of suffrage for its women members from 1911, believing that this would aid the wider suffrage cause in influencing public opinion and the government. [122] The NUT's national conference was asked to support the motion:

That this conference expresses its sympathy with those members of the NUT who desire to possess and exercise the parliamentary

franchise, but because they are women, and for that reason alone, are by law debarred from it. [123]

Despite local antagonism and opposition, women teachers got motions to this effect passed by many NUT associations and sent up to the national conference. [124] The women's business meetings at conference between 1910 and 1914 each discussed the issue and the tactics to be used in bringing it up in the main debate, and were almost unanimously in favour of it. Suffrage supporters also gained the support of the NUT Ladies Committee, and in 1911 Miss Cleghorn used her power as president to ensure that the suffrage resolution was introduced at conference. [125]

However, although the union executive did back the resolution in 1911, as a result of women teachers' lobbying, and proposed the discussion of it at conference, the issue provoked huge expressions of hostility from the rank-and-file men members. At the 1911 conference, with Miss Cleghorn in the chair as president, a male supporter attempted to introduce the resolution expressing sympathy with women's suffrage.

Then broke out the wildest scenes of disorder... Hundreds of men, massed at the back of the hall, prevented Mr Croft from obtaining a hearing. They stamped, howled, hurling insults at the speaker and at suffragists... This continued without intermission for thirty minutes. [126]

The motion was formally objected to on the grounds that it was not part of the union's business and was soundly defeated, as it was at the following NUT conferences in 1912, 1913, and 1914. [127] The acute controversy caused within the union by the suffrage issue after 1911 - the annual disruption by both men and women at conference, the ejection of women teacher suffragists and the panic among the men whenever a woman teacher rose to speak - cannot be over-emphasised. [128]

Women teachers felt they had a perfectly good case, which was prevented from even being properly debated at conference. But many men teachers, including some on the executive, represented the suffrage issue as one which was 'too political' and therefore not proper union business. 'The Union does not enter into the battles of suffragists, suffragettes, or anti-suffragettes; with politics and

electoral movements, apart from Bills which relate to Education, the Union has nothing to do.' [129] Although one of the objects of the NUT was: 'To secure the effective representation of educational interests in Parliament,' it was argued that women's suffrage was a political, not an educational question. At the 1912 conference when it was first properly debated, the suffrage resolution was opposed on the grounds that it would create disunity among teachers, and that it would 'lower the dignity of the profession' if women teachers were associated with militant methods. [130]

Insofar as the question was extremely divisive for union members, the opposition on 'political' grounds can be understood. Indeed, the AAM also thought that suffrage was a sensitive issue, and proceeded very carefully before endorsing it. [131] But the NUT women strongly contested the suggestion that suffrage was too political in the sense that it was outside the scope of the union. They argued that 'the Parliamentary influence of their Union was one of the greatest assets and that they were continually in their Association meetings and in Conference discussing politics.' [132] The NUT was a potent force in the settlement of educational questions, it was pointed out, because nearly all the men in the union were voters. Women argued that the NUT had spent union money to obtain the franchise for male members, for example if they lived in school houses. Claims by individual men teachers to be entitled to a vote were dealt with on many occasions by the union's Law Committee and action taken, including an appeal to the High Court in one case. [133] Feminist teachers also pointed out that women members contributed to the NUT's Parliamentary activities and to the salary of the union's MPs, though they themselves were excluded from the parliamentary process. [134] Beatrice Webb considered all these arguments in 1915 and pronounced in favour of the suffragist teachers; their case was 'not only plausible but just'. [135]

The feminist teachers strongly refuted the charge of being unprofessional, but they believed professional and union unity could only come on a basis of equality. The 1912 NFWT president, Miss Thomas, 'hoped that ... their co-workers would realise they did not as suffragists wish to capture the NUT. The vote was a sign of equality, and they wished their menfolk to recognise their equality and joint rulership.' [136]

A minority of NUT men did support women's suffrage as a legitimate union concern. Suffrage resolutions were supported by male speakers at each of the conference debates. [137] In 1911 The Schoolmaster condemned the intolerant reception of the suffrage resolution at that year's conference, and supported a proper discussion of the issue, on the grounds of 'fair play' and other considerations.

There are the 38,374 women in the Union, there is the question of voting strength and electoral influence of the Union, there is the Osborne Judgement, there is the (foolish but earnest) refusal of suffragist women teachers to remain in the union. [138]

But for most men teachers, the contentious issue of women's suffrage did not fit easily into traditional trade union and professional goals.

For the women, however, there was no conflict between professional status and aims and the suffrage question - possession of the franchise would strengthen their profession and the union. The two conferences of 1911 and 1912 were the real testing ground for women's claim to an equal professional status and recognition by the NUT, as fought out over the suffrage issue. But the definition of women's franchise as too political, while men's vote was a legitimate cause for concern, indicates that the balance of power to control the meaning and direction of NUT politics still lay in men's hands, despite women teachers' pressure.

For women teachers, the links between their professional status, citizenship and the vote were both obvious and passionately felt, and this helped feed their feminist politicisation, often as militant suffragettes. In arguing for the suffrage resolution in the 1912 debate, Miss Cleghorn stressed her elevated position in the union and her contribution to the community.

They thought her good enough to be their President. (Cheers) She had not a vote. ('Shame!') She was a householder; she paid rates; she paid income tax - ('Oh!') - not much - (laughter) - but she had no vote.

In their professional work they were entrusted with the task of creating citizens, for a state which did not properly recognise the teachers themselves as citizens.

Their earned their own living. They had to teach the children citizenship, loyalty and patriotism, and all that was necessary to make them good citizens, but were thought not to have the qualifications for the vote. [139]

Miss Cleghorn was a moderate suffragist and part of the union establishment. It has been suggested that teachers' need for respectability within their local communities and their vulnerability to social pressure may have led them to shun the militant suffrage organisations. [140] Many women teachers were members of the moderate National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). For others, however, anger and frustration at their voteless position led them into active involvement in the militant wing of the movement. Hilda Kean has demonstrated that many serving teachers were local branch officers for the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and for the less well-known but politically important Women's Freedom League (WFL), both militant suffrage groups. [141] The links between the women teachers and the WFL are worth exploring further.

Kean suggests that their position as state employees accounts for the involvement of a number of women teachers in the Women's Freedom League, which broke away from the WSPU in 1907 to form a democratic militant suffrage organisation. The WFL focussed its militancy and analysis upon the relationship between women and the state, attacking the role of the state in taxing women, in passing legislation which affected women, in discriminating against women in the courts of law; all without women's representation. [142] The focus of the Women's Freedom League had particular meaning for women teachers who, like their male colleagues, were employed by the state, but were barred, on the basis of their sex, from the political processes which determined the discriminatory conditions of that employment. [143] Kean also suggests that they drew on the WFL's practice of democratic procedures to inform their criticism of the NUT structure. [144] Women teachers enthusiastically supported the WFL's militant strategies such as resisting taxation and the Census. Some London women teachers were among the crowd who spent enumeration day at the Aldwych skating rink, while Miss Emily Phipps and the Swansea WFL group spent Census night 1911 in a cave on the Gower peninsula. [145] Miss Phipps later described this action and its purpose.

Many women had determined that since they could not be citizens for the purpose of voting, they would not be citizens for the purpose of helping the Government to compile statistics: they would not be included in the Census Returns. Different methods of evasion were followed. She and Miss Neal, together with two Training College lecturers and a business-woman, spent the night on the coast of Gower in a sea-cave, which they had previously located. Only one of their number obtained any sleep, since sitting or lying on sharp rocks was not conducive to repose. Their purpose accomplished, they returned the next morning to school, college, and shop, and the secret was well kept. [146]

Many women teachers, including Ethel Froud, who was to become the first general secretary of the NUWT, remained active members of the WSPU, and were involved in activities such as open-air speaking, chalking pavements and poster parades. In 1910 The Times reported that a woman teacher at a Deptford school was reprimanded for absenteeism in order to attend a suffrage demonstration, and was later obliged to resign because she had been sent to prison. [147]

The fact that many teacher feminists were militant suffragettes shows how deeply they felt the injustice of their voteless position and how this jarred with their status as professionals. However, the constitutional National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) also held meetings at NUT conferences before the war, indicating that it, too, had a following among women teachers. [148] Agnes Dawson, a prominent NFWT member, later recalled that she had been 'twitted' by her comrades for being a constitutional suffragist. Interestingly, she also 'confessed' that the only time that she 'strayed from the path of virtue', was to take part in the 1911 Census boycott. [149] Clearly this was a political action resonant with meaning for women teachers. Although these teachers were profoundly divided by the type of tactics they were prepared to pursue to achieve suffrage, they were nevertheless prepared to sink these differences in their active membership of the NFWT, to focus on their professional association. [150]

The strong links for women teachers between their professional identity as teachers and their suffrage politics is also shown by the formation of a professionally-specific interest group, the Women Teachers Franchise Union, set up in 1912, which can be compared with

other occupational groups within the women's movement organised by women writers, actresses and artists. The skills these groups had to offer were utilised in the cause of suffrage by designing banners, writing propaganda plays and organising dramatic set piece processions. [151] Women teachers for their part drew attention to their professional status in suffrage demonstrations and attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to bring the weight of the NUT behind the demand for the vote. [152]

The debate and hostility aroused by the suffrage issue also served to politicise women teachers more deeply, especially those in the NUT. Some women teachers took the rebuff as a stimulus to action. Isabel Cleghorn's message to women teachers after the 1911 conference was: 'Defeat is sometimes a victory ... and I am a more advanced suffragist today than when I came to Aberystwyth.' [153] However, others began to count the costs of working within a mixed organisation. The first woman president of the Birmingham NUT, Miss Byett, wrote,

The Aberystwith Conference first revealed the bitter antagonism of Union men towards the aspirations of their women colleagues. No woman who faced that 'howling mob' (as the newspapers described it), in the attempt to ask, not for money, not even for help, but merely for an expression of sympathy, will ever forget it. [154]

The anger felt by suffragette teachers also increased as a consequence of government actions, including the betrayal of suffrage Bills and the force-feeding of suffragettes. [155] Miss Froud linked the treatment of teacher suffragettes outside the NUT with that which they received inside the union, in paying tribute to: 'those members who were ruthlessly flung out of Cabinet Ministers' meetings, or as ruthlessly gagged in teachers' meetings'. [156] It was in these years before the First World War that the hostility between women and men teachers began to be seen and experienced as a 'sex war', as the women's strongly feminist views were matched by many men's antipathy.

After the rejections of 1911 and 1912, suffrage was again raised in the NUT conferences of 1913 and 1914, but the issue had become so explosive and divisive that in the latter years women delegates often had difficulty in gaining admission to conference sessions. In 1913 the guest speaker, the cabinet minister Lord Haldane, was interrupted

by suffragette teachers, including one who protested against the forcible feeding of women teachers. A woman who asked him a question about girls' education was thrown out of the meeting. [157] By 1914, male anxiety and hostility to the suffrage question in the NUT had grown to the point that women teachers were almost prohibited from speaking. Indeed, the fact that women teachers had lost the battle over suffrage being seen as a legitimate professional issue was not only symbolised by the increasingly hostile rejection of feminist topics, but also by the controlling and silencing of the professional voices of women members of the NUT. At the 1914 NUT conference:

The promoters of the conference were 'nervy'; they feared awkward questions - nothing worse - from suffragist teachers; every woman delegate was closely scrutinised before admission, and sometimes roughly handled...

Soon after 10 o'clock, Miss Byett rose, and said, 'Mr President, may I ask a question?' Now, Miss Byett was known to be a believer in Women's Suffrage, and questions on that topic were not welcomed. Pandemonium ensued, with shouts of 'No!' 'Sit down!' 'Turn her out!' all of which Miss Byett took with characteristic calmness. At last, the President managed to secure order, and Miss Byett propounded her question: 'Would it be contrary to the regulations, Mr President, to ask if a window might be opened?' [158]

Women teachers increasingly came to see suffrage as deeply connected to their idea of themselves as professional teachers. This was true of the secondary schoolmistresses as much as the elementary teachers, although the AAM endorsed the symbolic importance of suffrage rather than actively working for it. But anti-feminist men teachers in the mixed NUT were largely successful in their bid to represent suffrage as too political, inadmissible union business, and its women proponents as unprofessional. As a consequence of the hostility shown to the women's ideal of professionalism in the NUT, it is not surprising that the most committed feminist teachers began to see the women's movement as a more attractive campaigning vehicle than the mixed NUT.

Equal Pay and Opportunities

The issue of equal pay and opportunities shows a similar pattern of disagreement over proper professional aims within the teachers' associations and the ways in which these became gendered. The campaigns were not entirely parallel, though. The fight for equal pay and opportunities was a much longer running battle. An equal pay debate developed in the NUT in the early 1900s, but it took second place to the suffrage issue and made little headway until the First World War. The Independent Equal Pay League, subsequently the NFWT, put forward resolutions and amendments at national conference in 1904 and again in 1913, 1914 and 1916, which were always heavily defeated, but gained increasing support from women teachers. In this period interest in the equal pay issue was shown even in the non-political women teachers' magazines. [159] Feminist teachers did achieve some success in securing higher salaries for women by working through the local machinery of the NUT. In places where the NFWT had organised particularly strongly, such as in outer London and South Wales, it succeeded in obtaining some form of equal pay for teachers such as an equal minimum salaries and equal increments from the local authorities. [160] This advance was, of course, lost when the national Burnham scales were introduced in 1920.

Further support for equal pay was gathered during the war years, when teachers' salaries were generally under pressure from inflation and the issue of equal pay was raised in other occupations. The entry of women into 'men's jobs' such as munition-making and the Civil Service generated demands for equal pay and several government committees considered the issue. [161] When war bonuses and pay increases were conceded by government and local authorities these were often grossly unequal for women and men teachers. In 1918 the London County Council proposed a revision of teachers' salary scales which would have meant an increase in the differential between men and women, and obtained the agreement of the London Teachers Association to this. [162] The NFWT organised a petition of protest signed by 10,000 of the 12,000 women teachers employed by the LCC, held mass meetings, threatened strike action, and achieved a compromise over the offending scales. [163] The chairman of the Committee 'regretted the heat and violence introduced by the women teachers' while the TES linked this example of women teachers' militancy over pay with 'the

important fact that women will possess votes at all future elections'. [164] The women's anger over salary policy was also fuelled by the unequal distribution of benefits to women by the NUT's War Aid Memorial Fund, which recalled the protest over the Benevolent and Orphan Fund some 18 years previously. [165]

Teachers were the first women workers to develop and sustain a demand for equal pay. They always had support from a number of male colleagues, some on the traditional trade union basis of avoiding undercutting, but also from many who believed that salaries should reflect the training, qualifications and expertise of the professional worker rather than their gender. In the early years, however, equal pay was met with hostility and derision from most men teachers. Mr Tate, one of the founders of the Equal Pay League in 1904, later described, 'the support he had confidently expected to get and the rude awakening he received. Aversion, ridicule, indifference, dislike were his reward.' [166] At the 1904 NUT conference he appealed to the self-interest of the largely male audience by pointing out that if there was equal pay, 'the undue competition that men now suffered ... would drop'. [167] But this classic trade union argument was to no avail. Male antagonism was expressed physically. At a meeting of the London Teachers' Association in 1907, a woman who moved an equal pay motion was immediately howled down. 'Whistles were blown, feet stamped, comic songs were sung by organised opposition, and finally the meeting... broke up in disorder.' [168] Indeed the LTA, which in 1919 became the London branch of the NUT, was so anxious to silence the feminists, that it changed its rules and abandoned open AGMs after further agitation in 1912 and 1913. [169] In this way, which has parallels with the suffrage campaign discussed above, women members were prevented from even voicing their demands in their own association.

In the 1900s equal pay was met with hostility rather than reasoned argument from the men. But feminist teachers were developing arguments around an ungendered professionalism which proved more difficult for their male colleagues to counter. As with suffrage, women union members started from the premise that they had the right to raise professional issues which affected their working lives within their own teachers' association. [170] In 1911, the NFWT compared teachers to doctors: 'They must see that the NUT had the same jealous

regard for its members irrespective of sex that the medical profession had.' [171] In the discussion of equal pay at the women's business meeting at the 1913 NUT conference, arguments based on professional equity were clearly being prepared. Miss Byett (a member of the NFWT) said, with the strong approval of the meeting, that there were three conditions which helped determine the market value of the worker, 'the status of the worker, his [sic] preliminary training, and the power of his professional organisation'. [172] However rather than using the professional argument in the conference debate the next day, feminist speakers attacked the 'family wage' argument by asserting that women had dependents too, and argued that equal pay would prevent undercutting. In the debate, interruptions from the mainly male audience turned the situation from one in which professional teachers were having a serious discussion of economic and salary issues into one which was profoundly gendered, by making jokes about finding a husband for the feminist speaker.

Miss Palmer ... was frequently interrupted... There was one 'thing' they wanted more than big salaries. The audience put their own interpretation on the meaning of the word 'thing.' Miss Palmer, when the hilarity had subsided, retorted: 'You have made a very amusing guess, but you have guessed wrong.' A would-be wit interrogated 'Have you found him?' and amid laughter and cheers the speech ended. [173]

In this way the feminist teachers were sexually denigrated, and demoted from fellow union members into women.

The NFWT developed the professional 'rate for the job' argument, as well as the undercutting argument that pay differentials threatened men's jobs, in their first major propaganda pamphlet, 'Sex Differentiation in Salary', written by Helena Normanton, later to become the first woman KC. [174] These arguments were increasingly taken up by the establishment women of the NUT. In a letter to The Schoolmaster in 1917, Miss Jennie Wood, (president of the NUT in 1920) wrote 'The men teachers who oppose the women's claim must consider their attitude in comparison with that of other professional bodies - the Medical Association, the National Union of Clerks, and with that of the trade unions...'. [175]

In the debate at the 1918 NUT conference, the supporters of the equal pay motion kept returning to the term 'profession', and the

proposer began her speech with an emphasis on the professional equality argument.

The prospective teacher (man or woman) was required, before he or she was trained for their profession, to pass through the same period of probation, through the same number of years of training, at the same cost and the same qualifying examinations, certified each as a teacher. When trained and appointed to their positions in the schools they worked under exactly the same conditions of employment, their working hours were the same, their holidays were the same, and the work they did was the same, while the tests applied were also the same. Finally, the same grants were applied by the Board of Education in respect of the work of both. (Applause) From a professional point of view, therefore, which was a point she wished to put forward, men and women were alike in every respect - (laughter) - except in regard to salary. [176]

It was clear that the men who opposed the resolution could not counter the professionalism argument directly, but relied on the family wage argument and the fear of men being driven out of teaching by being paid 'women's' salaries. Indeed, the men could only deal with a debate at this level by again gendering the equal pay supporters as women, who had another sex-specific 'profession'. The main male speaker concluded his speech by saying, 'They were proud of their profession, but there was a nobler one, which was that of motherhood. ... surely motherhood must have its claims also. He asked them, even as unmarried women, to have an interest in the future life of this country ... '. [177] The issue then went to a referendum of the membership, and the weight of women members in favour ensured that the principle of 'equal pay for men and women of the same professional status' was won by 35,004 votes to 15,039. The policy was officially adopted by the union in 1919. [178]

However, an editorial in The Schoolmaster in 1919, while it accepted the referendum decision and the professional argument, did not suggest that equal pay would actually happen. This perception was perhaps encouraged by the just published Report of the War Cabinet on Women in Industry which supported equal pay for teachers only alongside some form of family allowance. [179] Furthermore, although equal pay had now won its policy place as a professional and

legitimate union issue, the NUT still represented NFWT supporters of equal pay as 'fierce Hippolytas' and 'wildest Amazons'. [180] The union also still faced the problem of male antagonism. Not only did men teachers accuse the women of rushing through equal pay while men were off at war, but though some men voted for equal pay in the referendum, others spoilt their ballot papers or abstained. [181] To some extent this gender tension was resolved by lack of union discipline and enthusiasm for the issue. NUT representatives did not press for equal pay during the interim Burnham negotiations the following year, and the ratio of teachers' salaries was fixed at 4:5. During negotiations in March 1920 to establish standard scales the few women members of the NUT panel had difficulty in challenging this accepted ratio and were not supported by their male colleagues in their proposal for equal pay, which was opposed by 'a solid mass of masculine imperturbability'. [182] The NUT called on its members to support the Burnham settlement and the 4:5 compromise until 1925, while the agreement lasted. [183]

The intensity and rapid development of the equal pay issue deserves reiteration. Equal pay was laughed at in 1904, but seriously considered by the NUT by World War One, and indeed the principle was won after fifteen years campaigning. The strategy of using the professional equality argument inside the mixed union was effective. But by this time the feminist teachers had long given up on the likelihood of the NUT's really committing itself to equal pay, and the question was further complicated by the splitting off of the feminist women and anti-feminist men from the main union.

In the all-women Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM), equal pay could be discussed in a calmer forum. The AAM moved towards adopting equal pay as association policy quite slowly. The creation of the new municipal secondary schools was one incentive to discussing the topic, as secondary school mistresses' terms of employment moved closer to those of the elementary teacher, whose salaries were rising and were increasingly likely to be on an incremental scale. [184] As Penny Summerfield points out, the increase in the number of maintained secondary schools in this period itself created a favourable labour market for graduate women teachers. [185] The Association was also conscious that the type of secondary schoolmistress was changing. Formerly they had often been educated women of independent means; now

they were more likely to be 'wage-earners', sometimes with other family members to support, and little chance of saving towards their retirement. [186]

Hints that the idea of equal pay was in the minds of secondary school teachers occur in 1904 when one member 'contended that the standard fixed was too low as compared with men's salaries and with those of elementary teachers', and again in 1907, but the subject first appeared directly in 1909, when the South Wales branch (always the most radical) passed a unanimous resolution to the effect that a joint Memorial on salaries with the Assistant Masters Association (AMA) must include a commitment to equal pay. This was apparently agreed to by the men. [187] During the war years there was a general concern with salaries, under the pressure of inflation and inadequate war bonuses, and due to the wider equal pay debate. An increasing number of mistresses took posts in boys' schools (as did women elementary teachers), making pay differentials between the sexes more apparent. [188] Several branches discussed the question of equal pay, although the AAM generally seems to have become much more concerned with the position of women in mixed schools, and only belatedly took on the issue in a wholehearted way. [189]

The experience of women teachers working alongside men in mixed schools for 'far lower' pay was cited, however, in support of an equal pay resolution moved at the Association's AGM in 1918. Although equal pay was described by the AAM as 'the most burning question of the day', the resolution was typically described in very moderate, almost apologetic terms. The Welsh teacher who proposed it began

by emphasising the fact that the resolution she was about to move did not assert, or even imply, that the average woman teacher does as much as the average man teacher, but surely that if she does as much work she should have the same pay. [190]

As in the NUT, equal pay was argued for on professional grounds - the rate for the job. The resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority, and in the following year the AAM's recommended salary scales were revised upwards to the level of those suggested for assistant masters in the Report of the Departmental Committee on Secondary Teachers Salaries. [191]

The inclusion of the AAM on the Burnham Committee gave it some direct influence on the establishment of women teachers' salary scales. Although all the associations representing secondary school staff (known as the Joint Four) were agreed on the policy of equal pay, the same 4:5 formula as for elementary school teachers was proposed, and accepted. This, together with improved pension provision under the 1918 Act, did improve secondary schoolmistresses' financial position, as the AAM pointed out. But it stressed that the settlement was agreed to as a compromise, and like feminist elementary teachers, the AAM was disappointed by the failure of the Burnham Committee to agree the principle of equal pay for teachers and felt that the starting salaries were set too low. [192]

Despite the fact that the AAM was an all-women association, it did not pass a resolution in favour of equal pay until 1918, only a year before the mixed NUT agreed to the principle. Professionalism for AAM members only gradually extended to an interest in their own employment conditions. There was little evidence of antagonism over the issue with their male colleagues, though no agreement with them could be reached, either. By this time the relationship between men and women secondary school teachers was becoming strained over a different matter.

It was the issue of promotion in mixed secondary schools which really politicised the secondary school mistresses, as the number of mistresses serving in such schools increased. The National Union of Women Workers (NUWW) made a report on the position in 1912, which was followed in 1913 by an AAM enquiry. Both stressed similar points of concern: the much lower salaries received by the senior assistant mistress compared to the head or senior assistant master, the lack of clarity about her powers and authority, and fears for the educational interests of the girls in the school in a context where men were invariably in charge. [193] The AAM, NUWW and Association of Head Mistresses subsequently met with Board of Education officials to discuss the issue, where they urged separate schools for girls and boys in areas where there were sufficient pupils, and measures to upgrade the status of the senior mistress. [194]

The AAM was here using the idea of professionalism in both its manifestations to support its argument for equal treatment; the interests of the girl pupils in the schools, and the employment

position of its members. However, the men teachers refused to accept this consequence of professionalism during direct discussions in 1917. The sticking point was whether the senior mistress should effectively be the deputy head and take over the running of the school when the headmaster was absent. The Assistant Masters Association was 'immovable' in its belief that school discipline would suffer unless the senior assistant master took that position and further discussion with the Joint Four in 1918 failed to reach a conclusion. [195] The AAM believed that its demand for automatic deputy head status and a higher salary than any other member of staff for the senior mistress was not at all unreasonable. However, the clash of interests with the men over the interpretation of professionalism, which clearly was developing around the time of the First World War, was largely contained for the secondary schoolteachers by their sex-specific associations.

Women Working with Men Teachers

The process of women teachers voicing their feminist demands created immense conflict and antagonism with the men. It laid bare the power that men teachers exercised through their associations. Men teachers turned out not to be the benign professional equivalents of women teachers, their supportive colleagues. Many men, indeed the majority, were concerned to defend their gender interests and power in the teaching profession, their better promotion prospects in mixed secondary schools, their higher pay and their control of teachers' associations. To do this they were also prepared to defend a particular set of meanings of professionalism. Thus women teachers' use of the apparently gender-neutral but in reality masculine ideas of professionalism to further their feminist demands, drew a particularly strong reaction from men. Men teachers attempted to become gatekeepers of their understanding of professionalism, in contestation with the women.

Huge strife was caused within the NUT by these arguments over whether equal pay and suffrage were admissible professional issues, echoed to a lesser extent in the relations between the AAM and the AMA. At least in the case of equal pay, the women won the battle of professional principle in the NUT, but this did not reduce the antagonism. Some feminist teachers felt that the men's failure to

follow through the implications of professionalism within the NUT and the attempt by some men to re-gender the women teachers as a different type of female professional was a betrayal. Despite all that had been held out to them by their union, they were denied a fully shared professionalism in the NUT. Instead, they had to face massive hostility - noise, shouting and disruption - aroused at both local and national NUT meetings whenever the issues of equal pay and suffrage were raised. This affected the women teachers deeply. One commented:

Coarse jokes, at the women's expense, were not unknown, until some of the most brilliant women were too sickened to be able to add to the debate. This, of course, was a phase through which many women understood they must expect to pass, but there comes an end to human endurance. [196]

It led some of them to believe that they were wasting their energy by working within a mixed organisation such as the NUT. Women teachers were particularly enraged at the manipulation of the union's machinery by male opponents. For example, male delegates often ignored their local mandates in favour of women's suffrage or equal pay and voted against them at national conference. At times men also obstructed equal pay motions from being discussed at local meetings, and women's protests about illegal minute-taking (ignoring their interventions) also went unheard. There were also instances of men abusing the machinery of the union to prevent women from being elected to union posts. [197]

Women now were beginning to understand how it was the men won every time, even when they were beaten in debate; it was 'Heads we win and tails you lose' with them. Look at the Election results, look at the Suffrage debates, examine the results locally and then at Conferences, examine too the Salary debates, and those on Equal Pay; they, the men, were in possession of the machinery, and knew its cranks, every one. [198]

Continuing male control of the NUT, often through unfair tactics, created great bitterness among the feminist teachers and was a major reason for the NFWT's eventual breakaway. By 1918 they considered: 'that it was a waste of time and effort to try to work for equality between men and women through an organisation in which the machinery was controlled by men.' [199] They also found it impossible to influence the union through the executive, since once on the executive

NFWT members could only voice NUT policy. [200] Before the end of the war feminist teachers had already become disillusioned with the NUT and were running out of patience with male intransigence and obstruction. Despite achieving agreement to equal pay within the NUT, they did not believe the union would fight for it, and the NUT's lack of commitment to its equal pay policy during the Burnham negotiations of 1919 and 1920 was seen as a betrayal and simply confirmed the feminists' analysis of the union. [201]

Rumours and threats of the NFWT women's secession from the NUT were voiced from 1911 onwards, over the suffrage issue, equal pay and the unfair treatment of women in the union generally. [202] By 1916 the financial position of the Federation was quite healthy, and since it seemed at that time that the NUT was unlikely to adopt equal pay as official policy, the group decided to prepare for a separate existence from the main union. The following year its former honorary secretary became the first full-time paid official and offices were rented and from that year on the Federation held its annual conference at a different date and in a different town to the NUT. [203] Membership grew steadily and the feminist teachers decided to formally leave the NUT in 1919. The group changed its name to the National Union of Women Teachers in 1920 and passed a resolution declaring NUT members ineligible for membership of its central council. [204]

A more positive pressure for this new strategy of separatism by the most committed feminists was their experience of the contemporary women's movement. As feminists they had so far worked within two types of organisation; their mixed trade union-cum-professional association, and the all-women suffrage groups. Now they decided to plump for the latter as the most effective means of furthering their aims; in effect to create a feminist professional association which would unite the best features of both. They believed a new world was opening out for women. In a 1917 speech the president quoted Mary Wollstonecraft and Harriet Martineau, showing that teachers were well aware of the historical roots of their feminism, and spoke of the new possibilities for women. [205] Their experience of the pre-war suffrage movement had been a validating one; it had also, by 1918, achieved partial women's suffrage. This strengthened their belief that large numbers of women could be mobilised around feminist issues and successfully campaign for them. The NFWT itself had proved that

it could organise women teachers effectively in its 1918 London action for equal pay and against higher bonuses for men.

The women teachers' campaigns had a profound effect on the NUT. The pressing of the feminist professional argument had been sufficiently successful to provoke a reaction from the most anti-feminist men. Separate organisations of men teachers were set up within the NUT in Cardiff in 1913, and in Liverpool and London during the First World War. The National Association of Men Teachers (later the National Association of Schoolmasters) was set up at the 1919 NUT conference to incorporate these local associations, and claimed to have 38 branches within a year, all vehemently opposed to equal pay. [206] In order to avoid the professional argument, these men pressed for higher salaries on the grounds of the family wage, a traditional trade union demand, and on the grounds of sexual difference. [207]

Not only were the feminists splitting with the men teachers by their separatist strategy, but also with the majority of the women in the NUT, who judged it more appropriate to remain and fight within the mixed union. Other prominent women within the NUT establishment, while supporting the principles of equal pay and suffrage, were more equivocal about pushing for them, and more inclined to weigh women's achievements rather than their failures. The Ladies Committee members who were part of the Burnham Committee made strenuous efforts to push for equal pay, but noted that although this was not achieved, the scale decided upon 'reduces the difference in salary between the sexes and brings us one step nearer to equal pay for equal work in the teaching profession'. [208] This response to the Burnham negotiations by the women of the NUT establishment was very different to that of the NFWT. The theme of unity promoted alongside that of professionalism for NUT women by the 1920 NUT president Jane Wood, foreshadowed the response made by the NUT in the interwar period to the secession danger. This made a subtle shift in the meaning of professionalism, and in some ways returned to the trade union model, to stress the theme of a united profession and a united union. [209]

Conclusion

Between 1900 and 1920 considerable numbers of both elementary and secondary teachers developed an allegiance to feminism as their

existing professional concerns were stimulated and contextualised by the wider suffrage movement. A larger proportion of elementary than secondary teachers became feminists, and a group of these women became particularly committed to 'the Cause'. This was partly because they were already more highly attuned to the importance of pay and status within the profession, as a result of their different understanding of professionalism, and partly because their political development was forged in the context of acute male resistance. Nevertheless, the AAM also came to accept suffrage and equal pay as matters of professional principle.

For reasons already explored in Chapter Three, many women teachers were more attracted to 'equality' than to 'difference' feminism. Working within the teachers' associations was one strategy of pursuing their feminist claims. Their professional identities as women teachers might include an interest in gender-specific 'difference' issues, but at the same time involved an apparently ungendered set of professional ideals. This latter notion of professionalism was mobilised by feminist teachers as an equal rights rhetoric. Women teachers' position as equality feminists, demanding the same rights as their male colleagues, was also fostered by the ideas of contemporary feminism; suffrage was similarly about demanding equal citizenship rights with men. The professional equality argument was made within both mixed- and single-sex associations. The NUT women assumed that men and women teachers' interests could converge through professionalism, but found that this was not the case. Professionalism itself was gendered and in a mixed organisation it was unrealistic to believe sex antagonism could be avoided. However secession from the NUT was only one possible response to male opposition.

The feminists had achieved a great deal within the NUT in a short period of time. Women teachers had gained greater power as conference delegates, executive members and presidents. The vast majority of NUT women came to support the feminist agenda; indeed up to one half of the NUT women were members of the NFWT by 1918. Despite considerable resistance, women teachers did succeed in shifting the union's agenda towards acknowledging their claims by 1920. Women won a referendum on equal pay within the NUT, which became union policy in 1919. While the Burnham Committee of 1918-20 failed to deliver equal pay, it did

give women teachers a proportionally better settlement than the men. Outside teaching, the parliamentary suffrage had been partially achieved, as had the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. In the immediate postwar period, women teachers might reasonably have expected to develop more clout within their union and in relation to government. They had challenged the male culture of the NUT, to some extent effectively. By leaving the union, the NFWT risked the danger that feminist issues would be silenced again, especially as many of those who left to set up the NUWT were formerly leading women in the NUT, including members of the executive and presidents of local associations. [222]

On the other hand, the NFWT believed that equal pay had become an issue despite the NUT. The NUT men on the Burnham Committee were all against equal pay, the union hadn't delivered, in their view, and by the end of the First World War feminism looked like a more attractive way to pursue women teachers' aims than the mixed teachers' union. To what extent this new structure, the feminist teachers' union, could work, will be analysed in the following chapter. But the pre-First World War experiences of the NFWT women were to profoundly influence their position and strength in the 1920s as the NUWT.

References to Chapter Four

1. The definitions used here are: Professionalism - understanding oneself as a professional. Professionalisation - the process of deliberately seeking the status of being professional.
2. These two processes can be compatible, but in some circumstances may be mutually exclusive. Furthermore the rhetoric used to argue for improved status may be expressed in terms of the interests of clients. For example, teachers' claim for improved salaries may be argued for on the basis that it will benefit the standard of teaching, but may be accompanied by militant action not necessarily in the interests of pupils. See E. Hoyle, 'Professionalization and deprofessionalization in education', in E. Hoyle and J. Megarry (eds.), World Yearbook of Education 1980: Professional Development of Teachers (London, Kogan Page, 1980). E. Hoyle, 'Sociological Approaches to the Teaching profession', in A Hartnett (ed.), The Social Sciences in Educational Studies: a selective guide to the literature (London, Heinemann, 1982).
3. Traditional sociology identified (though could not agree) a number of criteria to be attained. Teaching has frequently been represented as engaged in this process. See Hoyle, 'Sociological Approaches', p.216. R. Crompton and G. Jones, White Collar Proletariat (London, Macmillan, 1984), p.232.
4. The first notion of professionalisation has been criticised on a number of grounds. See A. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy (London, Routledge, 1992), chapter 2 for an exhaustive discussion.
5. J. Purvis, 'Schoolteaching as a Professional Career', British Journal of Sociology 24 (1973), p.51. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.40-1 and *passim*.
6. See, for example, A. Etzioni, The Semi-Professions and their Organisation (London, Collier-Macmillan, 1969).
7. At the same time, men seek to control and contain the semi-professions, those related subordinate occupations staffed mainly by women. J. Hearn, 'Patriarchy, Professionalisation and the Semi-Professions' in C. Ungerson (ed.), Women and Social Policy (London, Macmillan, 1985). Also see Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.61-2.
8. Anne Witz has argued that medical men struggled to establish gendered social closure in medical work - i.e. women were excluded from practising medicine as recognised qualified doctors - and were aided in this by the state. At the same time, male doctors engaged in a process of demarcation, by which they defined their own preserve of medical work, while relegating women to marginalised aspects of medicine, such as nursing, under male control. A. Witz, 'Patriarchy and the labour market: occupational control strategies and the medical division of labour' in D. Knights and H. Willmott (eds.), Gender and the Labour Process (Aldershot, Gower, 1986). Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.74-82. Also see H. Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989), pp.188-92.

9. As Hearn's approach implies. Hearn, 'Patriarchy and the Semi-Professions'.
10. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.5, 68. Women also vigorously contested men's strategies to oust them from other professions.
11. *Ibid*, pp.64-7.
12. H. Perkin, The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880 (London, Routledge, 1989), p.23. S. Turner, Social Class, Status and Teachers Trade Unionism: The Case of Public Sector Further and Higher Education (London, Croom Helm, 1988), chapter 3. Crompton and Jones, White Collar Proletariat, p.231. The slippage between unionism and professionalism is discussed at length in relation to teachers by J. Ozga and M. Lawn, Teachers, Professionalism and Class: A Study of Organised Teachers (London, Falmer Press, 1981).
13. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp. 29-30, 35. But although trade unions have been seen as a central part of masculine working-class culture, over 75% of men remained non-unionised in 1900. A. John (ed.), Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.23.
14. See S. Walby, Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1986). S. Rose, 'Gender antagonism and class conflict: exclusionary strategies of male trade unionists in nineteenth-century Britain', Social History, 13:2 (1988), pp.191-208. W. Secombe, 'Patriarchy stabilised: the construction of the male breadwinner wage norm in nineteenth-century Britain', Social History, 11:1 (1986), pp.53-76. P. Hudson and W. R. Lee, Women's Work and the Family Economy in Historical Perspective (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), pp.23-4. John, Unequal Opportunities, pp.24-5. Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, p.44.
15. In 1896 women made up 7.9% of trade unionists, and only 2.7% of women workers were trade union members. J. Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950 (Sussex, Wheatsheaf, 1984), p.169. The number of women trade unionists rose by 300% between 1892 and 1913. E. Roberts, Women's Work 1840-1940 (London, Macmillan, 1988), pp.60-2. Just before the First World War less than 10% of women workers were trade union members, compared to 30% of male workers. Roberts, Women's Work, pp.62-3. In 1900, two-thirds of all organised women were in the textile trades. John, Unequal Opportunities, p.23.
16. P. Thane, 'Late Victorian Women', in T. R. Gourvish and A. O'Day, Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900 (London, Macmillan, 1988), pp.201-4. P. Thane, 'Women's history and labour history', Labour History Review, 55:3 (1990), pp.14-16. For the specific trades of pottery and boot and shoe-making before and during the First World War, it has been argued that there was strong union organisation among women, and that although men resisted women's competition, women members were assertive rather than subordinate in the mixed unions, challenged male union dominance and tried with various degrees of success to get their unions to address women workers' issues, such as equal pay. R. Whipp, 'Kinship, labour and enterprise: the Staffordshire pottery industry, 1890-1920', in Hudson and Lee, Women's Work. Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, pp.157-8.

17. Among the ten largest unions in Britain in 1910, three had majority female memberships; these were the teachers and two cotton unions, the weavers and the cardroom operatives. H. A. Clegg, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889. Vol 2. 1911-1933 (Oxford, Clarendon, 1985), pp.2-6.
18. Entry to the professions was based, in theory, on individual merit and the possession of the required education and training. W. J. Reader, Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth Century England (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), pp.9-10, 43. Perkin, The Rise of Professional Society, pp.xii-xiv, 4. Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, p.173.
19. Perkin, The Rise of Professional Society, pp.430-1. Witz has argued that in the nineteenth century, women mobilised liberal equal rights discourses in their claims to enter the medical profession. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.92-3.
20. The union did enrol secondary school and other teachers. The number of NUT members who were not elementary school teachers was probably about 3-4,000 or 3% of the total. Times Educational Supplement (TES), 5 May 1914, p.80; 11 January 1930, p.12.
21. The figures for 1895 are taken from H. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the National Union of Teachers 1870-1920', in P. Summerfield (ed.), Women, Education and the Professions (Leicester, History of Education Society, 1987), p.58. The other figures in this paragraph are calculated from the Annual Reports of the National Union of Teachers (NUT).
22. NUT, Annual Report (1913), p.lvii.
23. These figures are taken from the Annual Reports of the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM) for the relevant years. Also see P. H. J. H. Gosden, The Evolution of a Profession (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972), p.14.
24. P. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market 1900-1950: The Case of the Secondary Schoolmistress', in P. Summerfield (ed.), Women, Education and the Professions (Leicester, History of Education Society, 1987) p.43.
25. In this period, the comparative figures, from a similar size pool of teachers, were: 1901 AMA-1593: AAM-636; 1911 AMA-3259: AAM-1229; 1921 AMA-6752: AAM-5157. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, pp.11, 14. However comparison is difficult on this point. Beatrice Webb suggested that the AMA had a broader base as, unlike the AAM, it included masters from private venture schools as well as from endowed and publicly maintained schools. B. Webb, 'English Teachers and their Professional Organisation', Special Supplement to The New Statesman V:129 (25 September 1915), p.17.
26. A. Tropp, The School Teachers (London, Heinemann, 1957), pp.114-34.
27. Webb, 'English Teachers', pp.2, 6, 10.
28. Clegg, Trade Unions 1911-1933, p.3.
29. Webb, 'English Teachers', p.5. Webb concluded that while the NUT had succeeded in raising the status of elementary school teachers, it had failed (by 1915) to achieve an adequate rise in their salaries, despite increasing influence on local pay

bargaining with employers, the local authorities, in this period. *Ibid*, p.10.

30. *Ibid*, p.5. Clegg, Trade Unions 1911-1933, pp.5-7, 12.
31. Historical analysis of the AAM includes: J. Milburn, 'The Secondary Schoolmistress: a study of her professional views and their significance in the educational developments of the period 1895-1914' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1969). Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market'. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession. The Annual Reports of the Association, which are the main source for the discussion in this chapter, give details of branch activities as well as summarising the year's work, the text of the presidential address to conference and some of the debates. Committee minutes and other archival records of the Association were destroyed in the Second World War. This lack of detailed records means that little evidence remains of any conflicts or divisions within the organisation.
32. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.81-3. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, pp.12-13.
33. AAM, Annual Report (1919), p.47. Also see Webb, 'English Teachers', p.15.
34. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.41-2, 52, 95.
35. In 1900, for example, the Lancashire and Cheshire branch held a discussion at their autumn meeting on 'The Use of Dictated Notes in Teaching Literature and History'. AAM, Annual Report (1900).
36. Including, for example, in 1906, School Leaving Certificates and Regulations for Secondary Schools. AAM, Annual Report (1906), pp.52-3. M. O'Brien Harris, 'Secondary School Teaching', in E. J. Morley (ed.), Women Workers in Seven Professions (London, Routledge, 1914), p.34.
37. AAM, Annual Report (1905), p.46. This shift has also been identified by Webb, 'English Teachers', pp.15-16 and by M. Vicinus, Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920 (London, Virago, 1985), p.175.
38. AAM, Annual Report (1906), p.10. In practice, the AAM worked with the Association of Head Mistresses over desirable salary scales and conditions of tenure, and to a lesser extent with the Assistant Masters Association, making joint representations to the LEAs on the subject. The tensions in the AAM's approach were pointed out in the Fabian Women's Group book on women's professional employment, published in 1914: Morley, Women Workers, p.35. Morley went on to argue that it was surely correct for the teaching profession to claim salaries commensurate with the dignity and worth of the profession, linking pay levels with professional status.
39. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. Secondary schoolmistress, born c.1897.
40. Some of the new municipal high schools were schools elevated from the elementary sector, and the NUT continued to recruit among secondary school staff, particularly non-graduates. For example Miss Phipps, head of the Higher Grade School which became Swansea Municipal Secondary Girls School (and who held a London University external degree) remained an active NUT member, and

later broke away with other feminist teachers to form the National Union of Women Teachers. NUWT Records, Box 124. But it appears that most women teachers in secondary schools joined the AAM, especially after the First World War.

41. AAM, Annual Report (1906), p.11.
42. The AAM's Presidents, and to some extent its Central Committee, continued to be drawn from the famous girls' public schools such as Wycombe Abbey although the growth in the number of new secondary schools and mistresses meant that they soon came to dominate the AAM numerically.
43. Indeed women teachers were recruited from the older to the new schools to do just that. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market', p.44.
44. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.130-2.
45. Rather than trying to account for women's lower membership in terms of trade unions' negative features and women's weak position in the labour market, recent work has emphasised the importance of examining the positive attractions of union membership to women. See, for example, D. Thom, 'The Bundle of Sticks: Women, Trade Unionists and Collective Organisation before 1918', in John, Unequal Opportunities. Roberts, Women's Work, p.58.
46. Webb, 'English Teachers', p.5. The AAM also provided practical assistance to secondary school mistresses in finding posts throughout the period, via the Joint Agency for Women Teachers.
47. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989. Secondary schoolmistress, born c.1897.
48. University of Essex Oral History Archives, 'Family life and work before 1918' collection by Paul and Thea Thompson. Mrs Hatch, no. 143, p.84. (Born 1886, teacher in West Yorkshire.)
49. Essex Oral History Archive. Miss Rosser, no. 371, p.108. (Born 1890, South Wales teacher.)
50. Some writers have argued that women's union membership reflects their structural position in the workforce rather than their gender. As lower paid, less skilled, lower status, part-time or short term workers, employed in smaller units of production, women joined trade unions later historically and in smaller proportions than men. Women's 'dual role' - their greater responsibility for domestic work than men - as wife, mother or daughter may also mean they have less time for trade union and political activities, especially after-work meetings. Kate Purcell, for example, shows that women's militancy or acquiescence at work can be argued to be a function of their experience as workers, rather than as women. The labour market for women is restricted by their gender, but men similarly situated behave in the same way. K. Purcell, 'Militancy and Acquiescence Amongst Women Workers', in S. Burman (ed.), Fit Work for Women (London, Croom Helm, 1979), pp.128-9. V. Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective (London, Macmillan, 1987), pp.86, 90-2, 125-6.
51. This was acknowledged as an issue by the NUT in the late nineteenth century however. NUT Archive. NUT Circulars, Union

- Membership - Women Teachers (1896), C1.167, 169. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', p.58.
52. AAM, Annual Report (1906), p.11. This was still half the cost of the parallel organisation for men teachers, the Association of Assistant Masters.
53. High labour turnover in any occupation and regardless of sex, is normally associated with apathy towards trade unions and difficulty in organising. Purcell, 'Militancy and Acquiescence', pp.127-8. R. M. Blackburn, Union Character and Social Class (London, Batsford, 1967), p.124.
54. However Dina Copelman shows that in London at the turn of the century, married women teachers took a full part in union activities, despite their domestic responsibilities. D. Copelman, '"A New Comradeship between Men and Women": Family, Marriage and London's Women Teachers, 1870-1914' in J. Lewis, Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986).
55. See, for example, The Schoolmaster, 9 April 1910, p.684. (The Schoolmaster was the official journal of the NUT.) In the unusual event of a single man becoming president, his sister officiated as hostess. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1937, p.615. And see Schoolmaster, 6 April 1918), p.430.
56. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1921, p.619.
57. This contrasts with the traditional picture of women's exclusion from unions by their masculine style. Meetings may be held in masculine space, at times suited to men rather than women. Trade unions may be unwilling to take women's concerns seriously, or exhibit hostility to women as potential competitors. Randall, Women and Politics, pp.93-4, 132. But men's attitudes to recruiting women to mixed trade union have not been uniform.
58. NUT Circulars, Union membership - women teachers (1896), C1.167, 169. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', p.55.
59. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', pp.57-9. D. Thompson, Professional Solidarity Among the Teachers of England (New York, Columbia University Press, 1927), pp.113-14.
60. See Table 5 and Figure 1. Also see: NUT, Annual Report (1911), p.lviii; Annual Report (1912), p.lxi. See Randall, Women and Politics, p.94, for general comment on the appeal to women of women's associations.
61. NUT Circulars, Union membership - women teachers (1896). C1.167, 169.
62. AAM, Annual Report (1904), p.34.
63. AAM, Annual Report (March 1911), p. 40; Annual Report (1907), p.48.
64. AAM, Annual Report (1900), p.8.
65. Interview with Miss Burke, 4 May 1989.
66. NUT, Annual Report (1910), p.lv. The Woman Teacher's Magazine, 2:17 (April 1911).
67. NUT, Annual Report (1911), p.lviii; Annual Report (1912), p.lxi.

68. Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.997. NUT Propaganda leaflet, Miss Chairman (1911).
69. She also argues that politicisation occurred as a consequence of their position in relation to the state. H. Kean, 'State Education Policy 1900-1930: The Nature of the Socialist and Teacher Trade Unionist Response' (PhD thesis, University of London: Kings College, 1988) pp.206, 216, 224, 226. H. Kean, Challenging the State? The Socialist and Feminist Educational Experience 1900-1930 (London, Falmer Press, 1990), pp.99, 123, chapter 5.
70. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', pp.55-6. Also see H. Corr, 'Politics of the Sexes in English and Scottish Teachers' Unions 1870-1914' in H. Corr and L. Jamieson (eds.), Politics of Everyday Life (London, Macmillan, 1990), p.192. London women teachers also campaigned against unequal pay in the 1890s. D. Copelman, 'Women in the Classroom Struggle: Elementary Schoolteachers in London, 1870-1914' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 1985), pp.220-3, 280-1.
71. Webb, 'English Teachers', p.8. Letters from ALMWT to TES, 15 February 1917, p.58; 20 September 1917, p.366; 3 April 1919, p.164; 19 February 1920, p.100. A. Turnbull, '"So extremely like Parliament": the work of the women members of the London School Board, 1870-1904' in London Feminist History Group (eds.), The Sexual Dynamics of History (London, Pluto Press, 1983), p.131. Copelman, 'Women in the Classroom Struggle', pp.217, 259, 261.
72. E. Phipps, A History of the National Union of Women Teachers (London, National Union of Women Teachers, 1928), pp.1-2. A. M. Pierotti, The Story of the National Union of Women Teachers (London, NUWT, 1963), p.1. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', pp.56-7. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.102.
73. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.2-5. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.1-2. According to Miss Lane, there were 30 teachers at the first meeting of the Equal Pay League. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.2.
74. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.4. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.2.
75. The official Ladies Committee of the NUT had tried to raise the issue of equal pay (for union employees) in a very modest way in 1900, but had been immediately squashed by the executive committee. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', p.59. Corr, 'English and Scottish Teachers', pp.199-200. For concern over mixed schools and promotion see Schoolmaster, 4 January 1908, pp.9-15; 22 August 1908, p.295; 24 April 1909, pp.739-40. Resolutions stating that each infant and girls' school should have a separate headmistress, were passed at NUT conferences in 1911, 1912 and 1914. NUT, Annual Report for these years.
76. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.5. The 1907 incident is discussed later in the chapter: see p.201 and n.168.
77. *Ibid*, p.6.
78. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.5-6. Kean, 'State Education Policy', p.226.

79. C. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up In Late Victorian and Edwardian England (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), chapter 2. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress'
80. AAM, Annual Report (1900), pp.33-4.
81. P. Hollis, 'Women in Council: Separate Spheres, Public Space' in J. Rendall (ed.), Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987) pp.199-200. P. Hollis, Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), pp.328-9.
82. AAM, Annual Report (1902), *passim*; (1903), *passim*; (1904), pp.12, 40-1; (1905), *passim*; (1906), *passim*.
83. Hollis, 'Women in Council'.
84. AAM, Annual Report (1907), p.50.
85. *Ibid*, pp.44-5.
86. *Ibid*, p.50. Milburn, 'Secondary Schoolmistress', pp.113-16. The AHM also gave its support to women's suffrage in the same year. See N. Glenday and M. Price, Reluctant Revolutionaries: A Century of Head Mistresses 1874-1974 (London, Pitman Publishing, 1974), p.68. Journal of Education, December 1908, p.808.
87. L. Tickner, The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1987), p.220. S. Delamont, Knowledgeable Women (London, Routledge, 1989), p.156. See also the discussion of women teachers and the suffrage movement later in this chapter.
88. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, pp.5-6.
89. See, for example, letter to the Schoolmaster, 25 May 1907, p.1020. I am indebted to Hilda Kean for this reference.
90. NUT, Annual Reports for various years.
91. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1910, pp.583-4.
92. Schoolmaster, 24 December 1910, p.1075.
93. Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.997. NUT Propaganda leaflet, Miss Chairman (1911).
94. Schoolmaster, 9 April 1910, p.661. In the following year, the Schoolmaster also supported the right of feminist teachers to have their demand for the suffrage properly debated at the NUT conference. Schoolmaster, 29 April 1911, p.869, leading article.
95. The most common local officer post held by women was Secretary to the Benevolent and Orphan Fund, and to a lesser extent the Teachers' Provident Society.
96. Schoolmaster, 20 April 1912, p.771. 'A Woman's View of Conference.'
97. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1910, p.628.
98. For the latter, see for example, Schoolmaster, 25 April 1908, p.805; 18 April 1914, p.849.
99. Copelman, 'Women in the Classroom Struggle', chapter 6 and pp.308-9.
100. The interests of women teachers as represented by the Ladies Committee included: the teaching of infant care and needlework in

schools, supporting compulsory domestic subjects for girls over 12, the pastoral roles of women teachers, school clinics, infant welfare, the education of girls, and teachers' housing problems as well as an equal professionalism. They were also interested in the wider questions of women's employment, including trade schools for girls, unemployment among women, and women's war work, and the Ladies Committee had close connections with the National Union of Women Workers between 1915 and 1918. NUT, Annual Reports for various years; report on the year's work of the Ladies Committee.

101. The concepts of 'equality' and 'difference' feminism have been discussed in the Introduction, and are explored at greater length in Chapter Five.
102. NUT, Annual Reports (1911-1917).
103. For Miss Cleghorn see: The Woman Teachers' Magazine, 2:17 (April 1911), pp.261-2. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', p.63. Miss Conway, NUT president in 1918: NUT, Annual Report (1918), p.xxvii-xxx1. Miss Jane Wood, NUT president in 1920: NUT, Annual Report (1920), p.xxxiv. Schoolmaster, 10 April 1920, p.750.
104. The majority of the Ladies Committee wished to work for equality for women teachers but had a formal position in the union and were constrained by a desire not to antagonise the men. As early as 1908 the Ladies Committee held a women's conference (of invited women and men, rather than representative delegates) to try to diffuse the feminist threat of the NFWT, and Isabel Cleghorn described the Federation as a 'menace', even though at this point she was sympathetic to its aims. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT', p.63. Hilda Kean, in contrast, emphasises the reluctance of the Ladies Committee to support the feminists' aims. Kean, 'Challenging the State?', pp.134-5.
105. Essex Oral History Archive. Mrs Hatch, no. 143, p.85. She may be referring to the postwar period as well as the 1900s.
106. J. Scott, 'Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism', Feminist Studies 14:1 (1988), pp.33-50. D. Riley, 'Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History' (London, Macmillan, 1988).
107. In this they contrasted with the Scottish teachers examined by Helen Corr, who were inhibited from activity on equality issues, Corr argues, by their definition of professionalism as winning the respect of the public by avoiding any suggestion of trade union activities. Corr, 'English and Scottish Teachers', pp.194-6.
108. AAM, Annual Report (1908), p.44; (1909), p.42. Several branches, followed by the national executive committee in 1910, decided to affiliate to the National Union of Women Workers (as did the Ladies Committee of the NUT), although this seems to have been a result of the NUWW's increased interest in educational matters, rather than AAM concern with wider women's issues. AAM, Annual Reports (1908-1911).
109. Public Record Office (PRO) Ed 24/1784. Notes on equal pay in preparation for deputation from NUWT on 13 May 1920. Note 5B. 'Private information from the NUT indicates that the NFWT numbers 25,000-30,000.'

110. G. Partington, Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century (Slough, NFER Publishing, 1976), pp.10-11.
111. H. Kean, Deeds Not Words: The Lives of Suffragette Teachers (London, Pluto Press, 1990), especially chapters 1 and 2. Kean, 'State Education Policy', pp. 206-30. Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the NUT'.
112. Journal of Education, December 1908, p.808. The Times, 21 April 1910, p.9. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.720. Kean, Deeds Not Words, pp.13, 21-2, 24-5. For example, Dorothy Evans, a prominent feminist from the 1920s to the 1940s, began her career as a teacher, and was imprisoned nine times as a young woman in the suffrage movement and was forcibly fed. International Women's News 39:1 (October 1944), pp.5-6. (Her obituary)
113. Journal of Education, August 1910, p.516. Also see Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.907.
114. The Times, 12 April 1912, p.15; also see 9 April 1912, p.8.
115. Olive Banks suggests a range of ways in which women were precipitated into activism in the women's movement generally: through personal contacts and social networks, as a result of propaganda, and in response to inspirational speakers and leaders and to the drama of militancy. O. Banks, Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of First Wave Feminism (Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986), pp.9, 68, 132-3, 139-41.
116. Woman Teacher, 3 February 1933, p.84. (Obituary of Miss Harris.) Women teachers also became involved through attending women's or suffrage meetings at NUT conferences. See Woman Teacher, 15 January 1937, p.127 for an example of the latter. These teacher suffrage circles overlapped with the national suffrage organisations at both local and leadership levels.
117. Essex Oral History Archive. Miss Mary Rosser, no.371, pp.4, 53. (Born 1890.) A family history of feminism had also inspired Miss Jackson, later a President of the NFWT: see Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.4.
118. Woman Teacher, 26 October 1934, p.26. For the interconnections of teachers with suffrage also see Amy Barlow, Seventh Child (London, Duckworth, 1969), p.64.
119. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, pp.2-3.
120. It began as a supposedly apolitical paper, but shifted its line after complaints from readers. Woman Teacher's Magazine, 1:1, December 1909; 1:3, February 1910. By 1911 the paper came out wholly in support of feminist teachers' demands. Woman Teachers Magazine, 2:21, August 1911.
121. L. Stanley with A. Morley, The Life and Death of Emily Wilding Davison (London, Women's Press, 1988), p.15. Teresa Billington-Grieg never lost her links with her former profession and advertised her stationery business in the Woman Teacher in the 1930s. Banks' survey of feminists' backgrounds shows that teaching was by far the largest occupational category for her cohort of prominent feminists of the suffrage generation, both middle-class and working-class women. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, pp.11-12. Kean, Deeds Not Words, pp.12-13.
122. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.6-8.

123. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.718.
124. The resolutions which were sent up from local associations to the 1912 conference in favour of the motion far outnumbered those against. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.720.
125. She continued to support suffrage resolutions in later years. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.718; 18 April 1914, p.794.
126. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.5. Also see Journal of Education, May 1911, p.32 and Schoolmaster, 22 April 1911, p.795.
127. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 20 May 1911. Schoolmaster, 22 April 1911, p.822.
128. Schoolmaster, 22 April 1911, pp.795-6; 13 April 1912, pp.718-20; 29 March 1913, p.626; 18 April 1914, p.790. TES, 5 May 1914, p.80. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.5-6. The suffrage and equal pay issues also caused trouble at London Teachers Association meetings in 1912 and 1913, discussed later in this chapter.
129. Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.907. Hilda Kean has a different interpretation of the suffrage issue being too 'political' for the NUT, arguing that the NUT refused to back women's suffrage because it would set a precedent for other political groups, especially socialists, to operate within the NUT. Kean, 'State Education Policy', pp.228-9. Kean, Challenging the State?, pp.99-100, 139.
130. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.719.
131. AAM, Annual Report (1907), p.50.
132. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.718. From Miss Cleghorn's speech at conference.
133. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, pp.719-20.
134. Corr, 'English and Scottish Teachers, p.202.
135. Webb, 'English Teachers', pp.8-9.
136. The Times, 8 April 1912, p.8. NFWT conference.
137. Schoolmaster, 18 April 1914, p.794. At the same time as arguing that women's suffrage was too political, an editorial in the Schoolmaster noted (approvingly) that the 'General Secretary has voted a dozen times in the House of Commons in favour of woman suffrage...' Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.997.
138. Schoolmaster, 29 April 1911, p.869.
139. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1912, p.719.
140. Partington, Women Teachers, p.10.
141. Kean, 'State Education Policy', pp.218-19, and Appendix. Kean, Deeds Not Words, chapter 2.
142. For discussion of the Women's Freedom League, see L. Garner, Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty: Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement 1900-1918 (London, Heinemann, 1984), chapter 3. C. McPhee and A. Fitzgerald (eds.), The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Greig (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).
143. Kean, 'State Education Policy', pp.207-8, 213. Kean, Challenging the State?, pp.132-3. This relationship was also of concern to

the secondary schoolmistresses, as discussed above. AAM, Annual Report (1907), pp.44-5. For further discussion on the relationship between women teachers, the state and their allegiance to the WFL see H. Kean and A. Oram, "'Men Must be Educated and Women Must Do It": the National Federation (later Union) of Women Teachers and contemporary feminism 1910-30', Gender and Education, 2:2 (1990), pp.149-51.

144. Kean, 'State Education Policy', pp.219-20. Kean, Challenging the State?, pp.133-4.
145. NUWT Archive, Box 124. File on Miss Phipps. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.3; 15 January 1937, p.127.
146. She told this story at the 1928 NUWT dinner to celebrate full women's franchise. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.3.
147. The Times, 21 April 1910, p.9. She was subsequently re-appointed as a supply teacher. For Miss Froud's activities see Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.4.
148. Kean, Challenging the State?, p.99.
149. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.3. Miss Crosby, another leading NUWT figure, had also been a suffragist: *Ibid*, p.4.
150. Similarly, Sandra Holton and Liz Stanley have shown that many women held overlapping membership of both militant and non-militant suffrage societies, and often co-operated in campaigns at a local level. S. Holton, Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1918 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.4, 37-46. Stanley and Morley, Emily Wilding Davison, p.152 and *passim*.
151. J. Holledge, Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre (London, Virago, 1981). D. Spender and C Hayman (eds.), How the Vote was Won and Other Suffragette Plays (London, Methuen, 1985). Tickner, Spectacle of Women.
152. Tickner, Spectacle of Women, pp.102, 119, 220. D. Atkinson (ed.), Mrs Broom's Suffragette photographs (London, Nishen, n.d.). NUWT Archive: Photographic evidence of women teachers' suffrage activities. Kean, Deeds Not Words, p.22.
153. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 20 May 1911, p.17. Kean and Oram, 'Men Must be Educated', p.151.
154. NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT (n.d./early 1920s), p.8.
155. In 1914 the NFWT passed a resolution at their conference protesting against the revival of forcible feeding and drugging. The Times, 13 April 1914, p.13.
156. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.4.
157. In his speech he had concentrated on boys' education. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.11-12. Schoolmaster, 29 March 1913, p.626.
158. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.4. Schoolmaster, 18 April 1914, p.790.
159. Woman Teachers Magazine, 2:16 (1911), p.250.
160. In Tottenham, Wood Green, East Ham, Leyton, Hendon, Finchley, Swansea, Mountain Ash and York. Some of these authorities paid higher maxima to men. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Minutes of

- Evidence (1946), pp.29, 32. Woman Teacher, 26 September 1919; 15 January 1937, p.127.
161. H. Smith, 'The issue of "equal pay for equal work" in Great Britain 1914-19', Societas 8:1 (1978), pp.39-49. For civil servants see M. Zimmeck, 'Strategies and Stratagems for the Employment of Women in the British Civil Service, 1919-1939', The Historical Journal 27:4 (1984), pp.905-6.
162. The London Teachers Association merged with the NUT in the following year to become its London branch.
163. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.11, 14-15. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.37-9. NUT, Annual Report (1918), p.xxxi. TES, 14 March 1918, pp.117-19. Schoolmaster, 9 November 1918, p.511. The Vote, 5 April 1918, p.206. The Times, 11 March 1918, p.5. I am indebted to Hilda Kean for some of these references. Kean, Deeds Not Words, pp.78-81.
164. Journal of Education, September 1918, p.526. TES, 14 March 1918, p.119. Also see TES, 7 March 1918, p.105; 21 March 1918, p.219; 17 July 1919, p.366.
165. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.40-2. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.9. NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT (n.d.:early 1920s), pp.4, 8-9.
166. Woman Teacher, 5 October 1928, p.2. The tiny Civil Service Typists' Association also pressed for equal pay and conditions in the years before the First World War. K. Sanderson, 'Social Mobility in the Life Cycle of some Women Clerical Workers' (PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1988), p.164.
167. Quoted in P. Horne, 'Hippolytas and Amazons', TES, 22 August 1986, p.16.
168. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.5.
169. It was decided that control of the LTA was to be vested in a conference following disorder over both equal pay and women's suffrage at the open meetings. Some women teachers took the LTA to court on the grounds that this was unconstitutional. The Times, 26 July 1913, p.3. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.17-18. For further comment see Kean, Challenging the State?, pp.100, 135-6; Deeds Not Words, pp.68-71.
170. They were at times encouraged in this belief by the NUT itself, as discussed above, p.186, n.93. Schoolmaster, 10 December 1910, p.997.
171. Schoolmaster, 29 April 1911, p.885.
172. Schoolmaster, 5 April 1913, p.724.
173. Schoolmaster, 29 March, 1913, p.626.
174. H. Normanton, 'Sex Differentiation in Salary' (London, NFWT, 1914). Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.6.
175. Schoolmaster, 3 November 1917, p.480.
176. Schoolmaster, 6 April 1918, p.430. The same set of arguments against sex differentiation was used by the NFWT in its memorandum to the Board of Education's Departmental Committee on Salaries. Board of Education, Report of the Departmental Committee for Enquiring into the Principles which should determine the construction of scales of salaries for teachers in

Elementary Schools. (1918) Vol II, Summaries of Evidence, Cd 8999, pp. 67-8.

177. Schoolmaster, 6 April 1918, p.432.
178. Schoolmaster, 26 April 1919, p.654. TES, 17 April 1919, p.368. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.19.
179. Schoolmaster, 31 May 1919, p.851. Ministry of Reconstruction, Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry (1919), Cmd. 135, pp. 193-4. And see Kean, Challenging the State?, p.142.
180. Schoolmaster, 6 December 1919, Quoted in Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.21.
181. NUT, Annual Report (1920), p.xxxiv. TES, 15 May 1919, p.238. Schoolmaster, 3 May 1919, p.698. Woman Teacher, 30 January 1920, p.150; 12 November 1920, p.61. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/3/H15/3. C. M. Kelly, 'The National Association of Schoolmasters: The Story of a Pressure Group' (thesis, 1959), p.37.
182. PRO. Ed 108/11, Minutes of Burnham Committee (1919-24), 6 May 1920, p.11; 20 May 1920, p.12. TES, 8 January 1920, p.20. Schoolmaster, 3 January 1920, p.12.
183. Schoolmaster, 18 December 1920, p.1063.
184. AAM, Annual Report (1905), pp.45-6.
185. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market', p.39.
186. AAM, Annual Report (1907), pp.54-5.
187. AAM, Annual Report (1905), p.46; (1909), p.35.
188. AAM, Annual Report (1917), p.13.
189. AAM, Annual Report (1914), pp.16, 48-9; (1916), *passim*; (1918), pp.22-3.
190. AAM, Annual Report (1918), p.34. Partington, Women Teachers, p.18. The Association of Head Mistresses had pledged support for equal pay for teachers much earlier, in 1910. Journal of Education, May 1910, p.322.
191. AAM, Annual Report (1919), p.50.
192. Journal of Education, December 1920, p.779. AAM, Annual Report (1921), p.10.
193. AAM, Annual Report (1912), p.35; (1913), p.24.
194. AAM, Annual Report (1914), p.11.
195. AAM, Annual Report (1917), pp.7-8; (1918), p.18.
196. Agnes Dawson in NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT (n.d.:early 1920s), p.4.
197. NUWT Pamphlet, Why I Left the NUT (n.d.:early 1920s); Women in the Majority in the NUT (n.d.:1920s). Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.8-10, 12-18.
198. Agnes Dawson in NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT, p.4.
199. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.2-3.

200. *Ibid*, pp.2-3, 5. NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT; Why we do not work through the NUT. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.31. TES, 10 January 1918, p.19.
201. NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.19-23. Agnes Dawson set out these arguments at length in 'The Woman Teacher's Struggle for Equality', The Woman's Leader, 6 February 1920, p.11. TES, 21 March 1918, p.133; 21 November 1918, p.509.
202. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 18 February 1911; 21 October 1911. Schoolmaster, 29 April 1911, p.869. TES, 5 May 1914, p.80; 8 November 1917, p.437.
203. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.1-8. TES, 3 January 1931, p.3.
204. During the period 1918-21 the Federation moved steadily away from the NUT to become a separate union providing an increasing range of services to its members. In 1918 a legal aid fund, a mutual aid fund and a provident sick fund were set up and a financial secretary employed. The Woman Teacher, a weekly paper, was started in 1919 to publicise the ideas and existence of the union. The union was by this time making separate representations to LEAs, departmental committees of the Board of Education and other official bodies on behalf of women teachers. In 1921 the union leased a house in Gordon Square which provided a club for London women teachers as well as larger office premises, and appointed more staff including a full-time organiser. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.9-17. Woman Teacher, 31 October 1919. NUWT, Annual Report (1926). TES, 22 May 1919, p.246; 23 October 1919, p.534; 15 October 1921, p.460; 5 November 1921, p.492; 3 June 1922, p.260; 3 Jan 1931, p.3.
205. TES, 12 April 1917, p.122. NUWT, Annual Report (1933), p.11.
206. TES, 1 May 1919, p.210; 22 May 1919, pp.241, 246; 5 June 1919, p.276; 9 October 1919, p.513; 8 April 1920, p.188. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/3/H15/3. C. M. Kelly, 'The National Association of Schoolmasters: The Story of a Pressure Group' (thesis, 1959), pp.37-9.
207. Their arguments were reprinted and debated in the pages of the Schoolmaster in 1919: Schoolmaster, 12 July 1919, p.80; 19 July 1919, p.125; 26 July 1919, p.162. These issues are explored further in Chapters Three and Five.
208. NUT, Annual Report (1920), p.1x.
209. NUT, Annual Report (1920), pp.xxxiv-xxxv. Also see Schoolmaster, 18 December 1920, p.1063. The NUT's stress on unity is discussed further in the following chapter.
210. TES, 31 March 1921, p.141. NUWT Pamphlets, Why I Left the NUT.

CHAPTER FIVE

EQUAL OR DIFFERENT?: WOMEN TEACHERS' FEMINIST STRATEGIES 1920-1939

In the years before the First World War, women teachers had developed a feminist politics based on arguments which linked professionalism and equality. In the interwar period they added two major issues of gender equality to their claim for equal pay: the marriage bar, which was an acute concern for women in the early 1920s; and promotion prospects, which by the late 1920s had taken over from equal pay as the most important gender issue for women and men teachers. Although the argument for an equal professionalism had proved powerful in the years up to 1920, it became more difficult to pursue in the interwar context of education cuts and the breaking away of the NUWT and the NAS from the NUT. The call for equality was also challenged by the shift within the mainstream women's movement in the 1920s towards a greater emphasis on women's 'difference', and the re-ordering of feminist goals towards women's needs as mothers.

In pursuit of feminist aims, women teachers were obliged to fight on a number of levels and had a complex set of strategic choices to make. One question was that of political and rhetorical approach; in the interwar years this became a judgement as to whether 'equality' or 'difference' feminism would yield more concrete results. Another was the comparative utility of different organisations to work through; mixed, single-sex and feminist teachers' associations or external channels such as the women's movement and the Labour Party.

Strategic and Rhetorical Choices for Women Teachers

All the teachers' associations had buoyant female recruitment for most of this period. Like other white-collar unions in the 1920s, teachers' associations grew, and a significantly higher proportion of women teachers were members, compared to the unionisation rates of most women workers. [1] Joining a teachers' association had become an automatic process and both the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) recruited extensively in the teacher training colleges. Women teachers continued to seek instrumental and professional benefits from membership; the protection

of their salaries, welfare benefits, legal protection, a social organisation, and a professional identity as teachers. They were also an important forum for developing educational issues. Vera Reid joined the Association of Assistant Mistresses (AAM) as well as the NUWT:

most of my staff [colleagues] were members of the AAM and if I wanted to chat over educational problems in general ... [and] .. if I wanted to have any influence through a teachers' association on what was happening in my type of school I had to join the AAM as well. [2]

But membership could also be an expression of teachers' political adherence to feminism now they had the choice of joining the NUWT. Not only did the NUWT fight for equality for women teachers, but it also maintained a clear allegiance to the wider women's movement:

What the women's suffrage movement began is left for women workers generally to continue; it is for us to establish a freedom and equality of opportunity amongst women which has been denied them hitherto. [3]

Having broken away from the NUT and formally constituted itself in 1920, the NUWT continued to grow. Its membership was concentrated around London and the major provincial cities and by 1922 had grown to about 8,500 in 122 branches throughout England and Wales. Although it only recruited a minority of women teachers, about 13% of the NUT's female membership, the NUWT was larger than the average interwar trade union, and, indeed, larger than the AAM. [4] A high proportion of my respondents had had some dealings with the NUWT. This was partly a consequence of the networks through which I found them, but it also indicates the importance of the NUWT in interwar teacher politics.

Unlike the situation in the NUWT, where a particular feminist line was normally taken for granted, equality issues were usually fully debated in the AAM, reflecting, not surprisingly, a greater divergence of views and a less-developed sense of themselves as feminist teachers. The AAM grew rapidly from just over 4,000 members in 1920 to 9,200 in 1939, by which time membership density had reached about 88% of secondary schoolmistresses. [5]

Because the NUWT was perceived as a marginal group, some women teachers who held strongly feminist views felt it was a more effective

strategy to work through the NUT. One teacher who agreed with NUWT aims but not with their tactics expressed the opinion:

Oh, I thought that the NUWT was really progressive but ... we said no, we stay in the NUT and we fight for equal pay there, because it's the men who don't want to give it to us. ... We thought they had made the wrong decision by coming out of the NUT but we greatly admired them for their fighting spirit, oh yes, we did. [6]

Women's membership of the NUT had increased rapidly during the First World War and subsequent years to 1922, by which time almost 70% of NUT members were women. [7] However, the breaking away of the NUWT and a sudden increase in the subscription caused a drop of 10,000 members in 1923, mostly women, as Figure 1 shows. [8] During the following years membership recovered and continued to rise again and by 1929 84% of women elementary teachers belonged to the NUT, compared with 95% of men. (Separate membership figures for men and women were not published by the NUT after 1929.) But the union treated gender issues very warily after the First World War, and women were not very active participants. The breaking away of the NUWT meant that the NUT lost many of its most forceful women members and women were persuaded to suspend their feminist demands under the call for unity, at a time of education cuts and competition between unions for members. This subsuming of women's interests also occurred in the mixed industrial trade unions in this period, as previously separate women's trade unions and federations amalgamated with those of the men. Many women union leaders believed that this was likely to improve the conditions and status of women workers, but overall their position in the mixed unions remained secondary to that of the men. [9]

The teachers' associations went against the general trend by exhibiting greater gender polarisation rather than less. Not only did the feminists break away from the NUT but, ^{so} ^{do} also some of the men teachers, to form the anti-feminist National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS). The single-sex secondary teachers associations also remained separate, though they worked together in the Joint Four. [10] This configuration of the teachers' unions acted to institutionalise direct gender antagonism in the profession to a greater extent than had been the case before the war, since the most strongly held feminist and anti-feminist views were now

organisationally distanced, in the NUWT and NAS, from the mass of the elementary teachers in the NUT.

The women's associations appeared to offer more opportunities for activism on behalf of women teachers' specific interests, but their access to the centres of decision-making was variable. Education policy making in this period was gradually shifting from local authority to central control. Even when decisions were nominally made by the LEAs, the Board of Education used both open and covert influence. [11] The most influential teachers' associations, the NUT and the AAM, had places on the respective Burnham Committees for elementary and secondary teachers, which gave them a direct voice in pay negotiations. They were also consulted by governments on proposed changes to the education system and on other matters affecting teachers. But the NUWT was completely outside this circle of power (as was the NAS), and could only try to exert pressure by sending deputations and memoranda to government ministers and relevant committees. The NUWT also had less well-developed relationships with the LEAs, except in a few areas; the NUT was the recognised voice of elementary teachers.

For the strongly feminist NUWT, a further possibility was to work through the women's movement. As it emerged from the First World War, organised feminism seemed in a reasonably strong position. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, now renamed the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), provided a national focus for organising, and the winning of the principle of suffrage in 1918 raised women's political profile. New feminist groups were established in the postwar period (such as the Six Point Group), and a number of pieces of legislation to benefit women were passed in the early to mid-1920s. [12]

Women's enfranchisement, though only partial, offered feminists a new kind of influence through direct electoral power at both local authority and Parliamentary level. [13] In the early 1920s, the NUWT, like other feminist groups, lobbied Parliament enthusiastically, continuing to use contacts with sympathetic MPs originally developed during the suffrage campaign to raise questions in the House of Commons on equal pay, the marriage bar, the effects of school amalgamations and other issues. [14] Both the AAM and the NUWT also worked with other feminist groups to introduce Bills and tried to put

pressure on parliamentary candidates at election times on a whole range of women's issues. [15]

But in practice interwar feminism proved to be weaker and less able to deliver women teachers' equality than had been hoped. From the late 1920s, organised feminism showed signs of decline. Interwar depression and unemployment contributed to the re-emphasis on domesticity and women's place in the home rather than the public sphere, and contemporary feminists (such as Winifred Holtby) identified a backlash against feminism, which included antagonism to women's employment, the idealisation of maternity and anti-feminist new psychology. [16] Like other feminist groups, NUWT members found it increasingly hard to recruit their younger women colleagues into the union in the 1930s. [17] Single-sex organisations began to be seen as rather old-fashioned and many women wished not to be labelled as 'extreme feminists' but as 'normal' women teachers working alongside men. [18] One teacher said of the NUWT: 'it was too narrow and sectarian... I thought it should be the men and women together, working.' [19] The belief that women had now achieved broadly equal rights by the late 1920s meant that the ideals of feminism no longer had the same power to mobilise women as they had done previously. Although many younger women teachers were concerned about unequal pay and other injustices in teaching they were not so powerfully influenced by one single encompassing cause, as had been the case in the prewar suffrage era. Pacifism, anti-fascism and socialism also competed for the attention and energy of women teachers, as for politically active women generally. [20] These problems were compounded by the ascendancy of 'difference' ideas within the women's movement.

The perennial tensions between 'equality' and 'difference' became more apparent within feminism during the 1920s. [21] Though the NUSEC, the largest interwar feminist group, achieved a number of equal rights successes in the early 1920s, such as divorce law reform, Eleanor Rathbone led the organisation in a clear shift towards difference feminism, which became known to contemporaries as 'new feminism', arguing that true equality could only be attained by acknowledging the different social roles of women and men, and treating women as equal but different. Rathbone believed that state endowment of motherhood, in particular, combined with easier access to

birth control, would elevate woman's prestige and status as a home manager and create genuine equality with men. The different approaches of equality and difference feminists were fought out in the NUSEC, and difference reforms were pushed towards the top of what had previously been an 'equality' agenda for change. [22]

Joan Scott has argued that the binary opposition of equality and difference is not a useful means of analysing the history of feminism. She suggests that equality and difference are not analytically distinct - notions of equality rely on implicit assumptions about difference and vice-versa - and that the history of feminism is full of examples of the refusal of this dichotomy. [23] Certainly most British interwar feminist organisations included elements of both approaches in their thinking. Yet the split in NUSEC in 1927, when a number of prominent equality feminists left the organisation, indicates the real tensions between these two approaches. Women's movement politics was often seen in these terms by contemporary feminists. Scott further suggests that historians should become aware of the political and strategic purchase of these different types of argument and their relative success in specific contexts, rather than seeing them as clearcut choices and oppositions. [24]

Women teachers provide a good example of a group of feminists experimenting with the uses and implications of these strategic choices. Arguments based on women's difference did have political salience in the interwar years and were developed by feminist teachers alongside their continuing use of an equality rhetoric. But the use of difference arguments could also make women teachers vulnerable, as it might mean their claims were restricted to a traditionally feminine sphere in teaching. Furthermore, I argue that the teachers' experience shows that the rhetoric of gender difference could be usurped by anti-feminist men to assert their own claims against women on the basis of masculinity.

Rhetorical Choices: Equality and Difference

Although equality feminism retained more strength than it has sometimes been given credit for, the rhetoric of difference used by 'new feminism' - that women had particular claims based on their gender-specific roles - gradually became more powerful in the 1920s

women's movement. This approach was not, in fact, so novel. Women's suffrage had been argued for on the grounds that women had particular qualities to offer the nation as citizens, such as their moral superiority, and knowledge of women's and children's needs. [25] The renewed emphasis on women's difference by interwar feminists had a number of potential strengths. The positive appraisal of women's motherhood and family roles could broaden the idea of feminism and make it relevant to wider groups of women, including housewives and working-class women. Women workers in industry, for instance, had long fought for protective legislation and rejected middle-class equality as ignoring their real needs. [26] It spoke directly to women's shared gender-specific experiences and by-passed the problem of women measuring their rights and achievements by male values and standards. In Rathbone's words, feminists sought reform 'not because it is what men have got, but because it is what women need to fulfil the potentialities of their own natures'. [27] It was radical, too, in its challenge to the male breadwinner wage and women's economic dependence on men, making instead far-reaching claims for state support for mothers.

Some historians have argued that 'new feminism' was rhetorically powerful because it worked with ideas about gender difference in the dominant culture rather than against them. [28] Feminist demands based on sexual difference may also have appeared less threatening to men and to the established gender order, than demands for equality. The re-emphasis on a domestic and conservative construction of femininity after World War One meant that a type of feminism which sought to uphold and elevate marriage and motherhood would have wider political relevance. Harold Smith observes that feminist campaigns for legislation concerning motherhood were 'noticeably more successful' in the 1920s than those for greater sex equality. [29]

Equality and difference were not two separate and mutually exclusive strands which feminists and women teachers had to choose between. Women teachers used both arguments at times, including the strong equality feminists of the NUWT. As shown in Chapters Two and Three, women teachers did see themselves at least partly in a maternal role, as well as aspiring to gender-free professionalism. Many believed that women's femininity fitted them appropriately for particular aspects of their work, such as infant teaching. Difference

ideas did have some resonance for women teachers and it was feasible for them to develop this approach alongside equality professionalism.

This became a more attractive strategy in the context of the 1920s recessions, anti-feminism and attacks on teachers' position. The Geddes cuts in social spending impinged heavily on education in the early 1920s (with further cuts in the 1930s) and there were knock-on effects in the temporary unemployment of newly trained teachers, especially in the years 1922-24 and 1932-35. Pressure was also put on the Burnham salary levels, and teachers' pay was cut in various ways in the early to mid 1920s, and again in the early 1930s. These pressures should not be exaggerated. Relative to other workers women and men teachers fared quite well between the wars, and teacher shortage in the late 1930s may have benefitted women in particular, but teachers did feel on the defensive in the economic gloom of the early 1920s. Structural changes - the expansion of secondary schools and amalgamation of elementary schools - also created a sense of insecurity about promotion prospects for women and men teachers. The NUT, in particular, cited these difficult economic circumstances as a reason to downplay its policy of equal professionalism, and instead stressed the need for unity in the profession.

As a feminist political rhetoric, equality was difficult to sustain when teachers were in a defensive position in relation to salary cuts and union competition, and the two women's associations were able to maintain and promote an equality position more successfully and more strongly than the NUT, unhampered by the need to conciliate male members. The NUWT remained committed to an equality perspective in its political rhetoric and retained clarity in its aims. It persisted with the claim for equal pay for equal work, forcefully resisted the family wage argument, and made an extensive equality argument on professional grounds for equal promotion opportunities and against the marriage bar. The failure to attain equal rights with men teachers continued to be obvious in teachers' daily professional lives and the achievement of suffrage was seen as a weapon in the fight, not an end in itself. The prewar experiences of the NFWT resonated in their position and strength in the 1920s, and in many respects the NUWT carried on the fervour and commitment of suffrage feminism. [30]

In the early 1920s, when equality continued to feature as the dominant approach in the mainstream women's movement, the NUWT worked with the NUSEC and with newly established feminist groups such as the Six Point Group. [31] But as the main debates shifted towards difference and women's welfare, in a sense the NUWT found itself on the 'wrong side' of interwar feminism, and left the NUSEC in 1926. It was involved in the setting up of the Open Door Council in 1926, which pressed for equality in employment and continued as an important voice for equality within the women's movement. Even in the 1930s, a series on feminist philosophy in the NUWT's journal The Woman Teacher reasserted the principles of equality feminism. [32]

The AAM also maintained an equality line on the three gender issues, if less single-mindedly than the NUWT. Their position was arrived at after lengthy discussion at conference, during which a range of views was aired by members. In this way and to some extent guided by their General Secretary, Mrs Gordon Wilson, they consolidated and developed their equality position in this period. For the AAM, too, equal pay was a fundamental professional principle though they took a defensive position on salaries for much of the interwar period. They also had a clear position on equal promotion prospects and the marriage bar, though the latter was the least important of the issues to their members.

This emphasis on equality of employment rights was common to other women's professional associations and white-collar unions between the wars (though not in the women's industrial unions), with whom teachers were able to make useful political alliances. Like women teachers, the minority of women civil servants who were actively organised in the Federation of Women Civil Servants (the higher ranking clerical and administrative officers) demanded complete equality - a fair field and no favour - in pay and promotion opportunities. [33] However, neither of the women teachers' associations, it will be shown, achieved very much by using equality arguments between the wars, though they did keep equal pay and opportunities on the public agenda.

As difference feminism became the dominant feminist discourse in the later 1920s, teachers were in danger of being left in a relatively weak position as their arguments based on equality had less purchase in national politics. As skilled feminist strategists, women teachers

also began to use difference ideas to try to catch the political tide. On the face of it, 'difference' rhetoric could also make it easier to work in mixed sex organisations. Women teachers had found in the NUT that equality arguments had led to great conflict over the ownership and gendered nature of the idea of professionalism, whereas difference implied complementarity between the sexes, rather than confrontation over the same terrain.

All three teachers' associations flirted with some aspects of difference feminism in trying to defend women teachers' position. Even the equality-minded NUWT made a discernible move towards difference arguments, especially in the debates on equal promotion prospects where they were prepared to designate and defend girls' and infant schools as women's territory on the grounds of their gender and special experience, and in relation to the marriage bar, when they hinted at the superior womanly qualities of teachers who were wives and mothers. The NUT, too, stressed the need for infant schools to have women as heads, and argued, though not very strongly, for the 'traditional' place of married women teachers in elementary schools.

In the interwar years the AAM were willing to consider difference ideas and debated them much more thoroughly than the NUWT. They, too, recommended separate girls' schools to protect women teachers' career structure, and also tangled with the difference issue of family allowances in relation to equal pay. Interestingly, however, the AAM became increasingly strongly committed to the equality arguments, though they undertook less campaigning than the NUWT. This indicates that the idea of equality professionalism was widely attractive to women teachers; it was not the prerogative of only a particularly militant or politicised minority of feminist teachers.

The use of difference arguments also allowed the NUWT to make a useful, if slightly odd, alliance with the Labour Party at the local government level. As a channel to press women's claims, the interwar Labour Party appears to have limited usefulness since equality at the workplace was not part of its programme and feminist claims by Labour women were blocked by the male leadership. [34] At best, the Labour Party promoted a dilute version of 'difference' feminism in the form of welfare measures which improved the position of the working-class family without disturbing the gender order. [35] But as workers with children, the NUWT feminists could make positive connections with the

party's welfare policies and had some success in working with the Labour Party against the marriage bar in some localities using the rhetoric of women's difference, despite the fact that it was at least as male dominated as the NUT.

The rhetoric of difference had some utility for women teachers between the wars, but it also brought a number of problems. The strength of appealing to mainstream ideas about gender difference was also a major weakness of interwar 'difference' feminism. With its stress on women's role as mothers, it accepted existing distinctions of gender and reinforced traditional views about femininity and the organisation of family life. Because feminist difference relied on the same framework of assumptions about gender as the dominant culture, it was vulnerable to political appropriation by conservative opponents in the interwar context, to maintain women's traditional sphere rather than their emancipation. [36]

Susan Pedersen in her study of the 1925 Widows Pensions Act, has shown how the potentially radical aspects of difference feminism could easily be undermined when used to argue for women's rights in the political sphere. In the manoeuvring over the Act, feminist arguments which challenged the male breadwinner ideal were redefined and watered down by social scientists, Labour movement men and civil servants, and the final very limited scheme for widows' pensions was a welfare measure based on men's traditional right to maintain their dependent wives, rather than on women's rights and demands of the state. Pedersen shows that 'new feminism' had insufficient political leverage to successfully promote a radical vision of women's difference and furthermore that it sidelined and marginalised equal rights claims. She concludes that:

[the] story of the campaign can be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of the adoption of difference based arguments in a world where women lack significant institutional or economic power. [37]

My study of the feminist women teachers leads me to largely agree with the broader aspects of Pedersen's argument about the dangers of difference arguments for feminists. [38]

Although difference was always a secondary line of argument for women teachers, it did contribute to their limited interwar successes,

for instance in protecting their position as heads of girls' and infant schools, as the case studies below will show. But these 'successes' were in fact defensive positions, holding onto their position in the profession rather than extending it. Furthermore, difference arguments used by teachers were also potentially dangerous; they could easily be watered down and usurped into dominant sets of ideas and used to restrict women's professional sphere to traditionally 'feminine' areas of teaching. They also therefore ran the risk of undermining or marginalising their main claims for equality. But perhaps the greatest danger in articulating gender difference as a feminist strategy was that there was no guarantee that this rhetoric would remain under the control of the women teachers.

Masculinity and Difference

A feminist politics of difference might appear to provide a conciliatory meeting place between women and men in mixed organisations and occupations, since it avoided a direct gender clash and competition for the same resources and status. In teaching between the wars, gender antagonism was to some extent formalised in teachers' associations which separated the sexes; marginalised in the NAS and NUWT and institutionally controlled in the AAM and AMA. But the use of difference as an argument did not diminish the conflicts between men and women teachers whether in these organisations or the mixed NUT. Men could also use the rhetoric of difference, against women. Most commonly this operated to force women back into designated feminine spheres - in the family or in gendered areas of employment. But the concept of difference, usually used to identify women's difference from the male norm was also developed by the anti-feminist NAS to emphasise men's gender difference and to rework notions of masculinity as a superior category, by arguing for 'men teachers for boys' and higher pay. Men teachers were able to force the debate largely onto their own terms through the use of 'difference' and marginalise feminist arguments around equal professionalism.

The gender anxieties of the interwar period were not focussed only on femininity and women's proper place, but also on the reassertion of the social and cultural meanings of masculinity. The rhetoric of masculine difference can be placed in this context. The

NAS was concerned to protect men teachers' position in a period when the challenge of feminism was perceived to be still strong, in the aftermath of a major war, and the continuing economic insecurity of the Depression. The men teachers reasserted the links between masculinity and authority; between masculinising boys and strengthening the nation and empire.

Women could teach boys but the education of the boy required and included the manliness of character which was his birthright and which the nation would require when he grew up. [39]

Men teachers in the NAS thus enhanced their own masculinity as workers and demanded control over boys' education. 'Their association claimed that the virile boy had a right to a teacher of his own sex, and that the effeminate boy required it no less.' [40] Throughout the 1920s and 30s, as outlined in Chapter Three, the NAS pressed their demands for 'men teachers for boys' over seven, for headmasters of mixed schools, and for higher pay for men teachers, using images of trade union strength, 'fighting talk', of not being pushed around by the government or by women.

After the First World War, conflict was engendered around women who remained in any but the traditionally female jobs. Antagonism was particularly pronounced in the less sex-segregated white-collar sector, where men's jobs were more vulnerable to women's advance. In the civil service throughout the 1920s and 30s, ex-servicemen bitterly (and successfully) fought to have preference over women for the higher level posts and evoked images of masculinity - as proved by their war service - in their attempt. [41]

This use of masculine difference can be seen as part of a process of demarcation, an attempt to create gender boundaries within an occupation, to contain women within lower status work. In teaching, NAS men were trying to masculinise parts of the profession - the teaching of boys and the holding of positions of authority in mixed schools - and exclude women from them. [42] This attempt at segregation was a classic trade union tactic to remove the perceived threat from women workers. Similarly, the claim for a family wage (as opposed to professional salaries related to expertise), expressed by the NAS in its call for 'Separate Consideration' for men teachers' pay, was a strong component of masculine trade union culture. [43]

Masculine difference arguments were at the opposite end of the continuum from feminine difference arguments. They similarly picked up on dominant discourses of gender, but unlike the feminists' arguments, they were made from a position of social power. This had two important consequences. The first was on the debates over the equality issues. The links between masculine rhetoric and trade unionism contributed to the marginalisation of the feminist arguments for equal professionalism. In the prewar period of suffrage feminism, it was women teachers who took the lead, by making demands for equal rights in the profession. Between the wars, however, men teachers regained the initiative in the debates, by using arguments of gender difference. As the NAS masculine rhetoric also undermined the feminist equality arguments, the NUWT was forced onto the defensive and had to continually make the old arguments against the idea of the family wage for teachers. Men teachers further sabotaged the feminist use of difference as an effective line of argument, and confirmed the potential dangers of this approach, by arguing that women teachers should be limited to feminine areas of teaching.

The second consequence was the response forced from the mixed NUT. The gendered rhetoric of the NAS proved powerful and attractive to many men teachers in the 1920s and 1930s, including NUT members; it resonated with their fears about their pay and promotion prospects. In order to hold their male membership and win numbers back from the NAS, the NUT were keen to establish a competing identity for men teachers as masculine professionals and trade unionists. Although the union had largely accepted the equality argument in principle, this began to disappear as professionalism was linked with the theme of unity in the context of education cuts and the threat of the breakaway unions. The NUT was obliged to defend their own policies against the NAS ones, and began both to adopt some aspects of NAS policy and represent its own as masculine. The NUT moved towards accepting the 'men teachers for boys' argument and began to use similar language to the NAS to celebrate the masculinity of its trade union and professional identity. In doing this, the interests of male members were promoted, while women's concerns became increasingly submerged.

Masculine Rhetoric: The Effects on the NUT

The effects of the NAS's masculine rhetoric on the mixed NUT can be assessed in a number of ways: its concern over male membership, the emphasis on 'unity', the gendering of recruitment propaganda, and the behaviour of NUT women members. NUT membership was threatened by the secession of both the NAS and the NUWT in the early 1920s, as suggested by Table 5 and Figure 1, but the union took the loss of male members more seriously. During the crucial period of 1918-22 the NUT balanced the possible loss of thousands of members by admitting uncertificated teachers and amalgamating with the London Teachers Association. [44] By 1922-23 the union's executive had become seriously concerned and was forced to admit a considerable falling off of both male and female membership, particularly in London and the provincial cities, and a membership drive was begun to try and win them back. [45] The participation of young men was particularly encouraged by the NUT. As the TES put it in 1930:

though admittedly both seceding bodies have meant for the National Union a distinct loss in personnel, it is ..[the NAS] which gives the more concern, for the men are the more scarce. [46]

The NUT was doubly defensive because the secession crisis coincided with the period of severe education cuts, and it warned that the existence of the breakaway unions would give teachers a bad press and would encourage reactionary LEAs to lower salaries. [47] An early strategy of the NUT was to emphasise the need for unity among teachers, and it linked this call for unity to the quest for professional status. This professionalism and unity rhetoric had the effect of dislodging the link between professionalism and gender equality which feminist teachers had worked to build in the years up to 1920. Between 1919 and 1924 The Schoolmaster ran many leading articles attacking the secessionists and calling for unity in the profession, some of which were reprinted as propaganda leaflets. These criticised the 'sex conscious efforts' of both the foolish 'pre-suffrage feminists and misogynists', but was particularly harsh on the women. [48] At first the NUT simply warned against the waste of time and energy involved in having rival and overlapping organisations, but its anxiety visibly increased during this period. By 1922 it referred to 'protracted and vindictive attempts' to weaken the power of the

union, and warned that advances in professional status could only come through unity. [49] Membership of the NAS, shown in Table 10, steadily increased after 1923 and it also recruited an increasing proportion of men in elementary schools, the biggest leap occurring in the early 1930s, by which time approximately 20% of men teachers were members. This inspired a fresh wave of leading articles in The Schoolmaster critical of the men secessionists, challenging NAS salary policy and putting forward the NUT's achievements for men and aim of a professional rate of salary.

The desire to appease and retain men as members is also revealed in the volume and style of NUT recruitment literature aimed at women and men. Between 1920 and 1939 the NUT published approximately 40 different propaganda leaflets aimed at men teachers, about 20 appealing to both sexes not to join the breakaway unions, and only six leaflets specifically addressed to women teachers. Although immediately after the war NUT recruitment leaflets for women mentioned the equal pay policy, equality issues were soon avoided, and subsequent leaflets took a passive approach to women, emphasising the instrumental benefits of membership rather than the potential opportunities. A leaflet first issued in 1921 entitled What the Union does for Women Teachers made a typically subdued appeal. It said that the NUT was the only union 'able to voice the opinions and serve the interests of women teachers effectively' and claimed support for the work done on status, salaries, security of tenure and superannuation. 'The recently passed Superannuation Act should make every teacher - and particularly every woman teacher - become a member of the NUT out of gratitude alone.' [50] Rather than equality of treatment, women's different interests in union welfare benefits were assumed and promoted. [51] After the Burnham agreement of 1925, which reduced women teachers' increment, the NUT issued a leaflet appealing to women teachers on the grounds that they would have been in an even worse position without the representation of the union. [52]

In contrast, NUT membership was increasingly presented to men as an active, positive and professional activity. By the 1930s, the NUT had begun to respond directly to the masculine slogans of the NAS and appealed to men teachers itself in similar terms. Pamphlets directed at men often took up specific points of NAS policy, for example showing that NUT policy was also in favour of 'men teachers for boys'

in a leaflet which was reportedly very popular. [53] The rise in male membership of the NUT was celebrated, sometimes using similar militant language to that of the NAS:

These Men take a Man's Part in the determination of professional conditions. Join Your Colleagues in the Fighting Line. [54]

In direct competition with the NAS for a masculine union image, the NUT offered positive benefits and active participation to its male recruits.

It could be argued that as the NUT came to stress men's concerns and obscure women's in this period, it moved closer towards a trade union style rather than a professional approach. The explicit use of a rhetoric of masculinity together with its militant style identified the NAS very clearly as a masculine trade union with which the NUT had to compete. Certainly the NUT placed an emphasis on pragmatism at this time. Women teachers were in a poor bargaining position over salaries and conditions during the interwar period owing to teacher unemployment (especially, at times, of women) and cuts in education spending. In this context pursuit of equal pay and opportunities seemed likely to lower wages all round as well as generating hostility from men. But it is an over-simplification to suggest that the NUT retreated to a trade union identity. The idea of professionalism was also kept very visible by the NUT, and even though this was diverted away from gender equality towards gender unity, the links and arguments remained available for use in the more congenial circumstances of the later 1930s.

However, the effect on women NUT members of their union's concern with male membership, the NAS challenge of masculine difference, and the call for unity, was to stifle discussion of equality issues. This was partly a self-imposed restriction by the women, it was partly encouraged by the male leadership, and it was partly a consequence of the loss of feminist teachers to the NUWT. Women teachers occupied a complex place in the NUT. The union had acknowledged their equality rights in policy terms, and took some steps to protect their position, but they were not permitted to identify their gender interests by using the language of equality or feminism.

During the early 1920s, women's participation in positions of power in the NUT waned, and the union began to present this as a

positive development. In 1921, in the wake of the women presidents of 1918 and 1920, the election of men to the top positions was cause for some self-congratulation. [55] In 1923 the women's under-representation at conference was noted with approval.

Of 1,700 delegates about 460 were women, and of those some were wives of representatives. The disparity of the sexes as members of conference proves that women teachers, existing in larger numbers than their confreres, cannot be suspected of any desire to dominate the union. [56]

Women took a low key role at the annual conferences, and provided no more than a third of the delegates in the interwar period. [57] They 'showed decidedly less inclination to join actively in debates'. [58] The TES commented on the low proportion of women elected to the executive throughout the period. [59] The Ladies Committee met rarely and ceased to have a separate committee report in the NUT's Annual Report after 1932. [60]

The downplaying of women's issues became part of the union's culture and, even when these echoed women's difference professionalisation, such as children's welfare and infant schools, they got very little time at NUT conference. Visiting speakers at the women's conference meeting addressed wider educational and professional issues - for example Dr Letitia Fairfield on 'The Health of the Professional Woman' in 1934 and Lady Astor on 'Nursery Infant Care' in 1937. [61] Even when the visiting speaker was a prominent feminist, equality issues specifically affecting women teachers such as equal pay or the marriage bar were rarely discussed. In 1932 it was said that there was no longer a distinct need for separate women's organisation or a distinct policy for women and 'there were very serious dangers which could arise from the misuse of the organisation.' [62] This process can be compared in some respects to the incorporation of women in other mixed trade unions, or in the Labour Party nationally, in which their independent voice was neutralised, and they were forced to make compromises with few tangible benefits. [63]

The two women presidents in this period were also under pressure not to articulate the separate claims of women teachers. Leah Manning, later a Labour MP, was described as 'an able speaker, a strong women's advocate, and a prominent member of the Labour Party',

but her election as NUT president in 1930 was seen as rather shocking. [64] In a comment reminiscent of the turn-of-the-century it was observed that,

She had the courage to mount the platform, when few women dared even to speak in the conference, and to address an audience of somewhat lordly and rather astonished men. [65]

She was praised by The Schoolmaster for avoiding feminism and preferring femininity:

It was prophesied that her address might be concerned with the wrongs of womanhood and be marked by zeal for the welfare of a single sex, but ... [it was] concerned with the rights of children and zeal for humanity as a whole. [66]

Leah Manning complained that she was accused of having 'a feminist complex' simply because she praised the abilities of women and welcomed them as local NUT presidents. [67]

Although thousands of feminist teachers had broken away to form the NUWT, it was the masculine appeal of the NAS to men teachers which was treated as a greater threat by the NUT. The redefinition of professionalism away from equality and towards unity was one way in which the NUT tried to damp down sex antagonism and prevent further erosion of its male membership, but this was done at the expense of women teachers' interests. The effects of masculine rhetoric on the NUT, and the further consequences of feminists' strategic choices, will be examined next in three case studies of promotion prospects, equal pay and the marriage bar.

Promotion Prospects

The question of promotion prospects was the most intensely felt and widely debated equality issue for teachers right through the interwar period (and especially from the late 1920s), engaging the attention of both elementary and secondary school teachers, women and men. Women teachers could argue for improved promotion opportunities on both equality and difference grounds, illustrating the complexity of feminist political rhetoric. However, men teachers in the NAS also used masculine difference arguments very powerfully to resist women's equality claims and promote their own interests, and successfully put

the NUT on the defensive. School staffing was officially an LEA policy decision, but the Board of Education was also concerned with it and could regulate and guide LEAs. [68] The NUT and AAM carried more weight with these policymakers than the NUWT and NAS, though the latter could put pressure on LEAs and lobby government.

Arguing for Equal Promotion

All three of the teachers' associations with women members - the AAM, NUT and NUWT - were committed to policies which supported gender equality in promotion opportunities. The two women's unions led the way in promoting equal opportunities in this period, and interestingly it was the AAM which kept closest to a pure equality line of argument. As far as many AAM members were concerned, the position of mistresses in mixed secondary schools was more important to them than the marriage bar and equal pay. In 1925, 25% of the AAM membership worked in mixed schools; by 1938 this had risen to 40%. [69] The Association had already developed two main aims before 1920, that women should be eligible for the headships of mixed schools, and that the position of the senior mistress should be upgraded to deputy head - she 'should automatically take the place of the head master in his absence' - and these issues were again highlighted from the end of the 1920s. [70] A standing committee concerned with the position of senior mistresses in mixed schools was set up in 1929, and the issues were discussed at some length at the Association's AGMs in the 1930s. [71]

In these debates, speakers based their claims solidly on arguments of professional equality, and called for recognition that women could make capable heads of mixed secondary schools. The problems of parental attitudes and the ability of women to maintain discipline over boys were discussed and rejected as arguments against women heads. There was also some resentment among women teachers that men tended to be given posts of special responsibility with their extra status and pay, as well as having a greater chance of a headship, although women staff were equally well qualified academically and professionally. The assistant mistresses pointed out the negative effects of this upon the girl pupils as well as on the female staff. [72]

By 1939 the AAM discerned some slight improvement in the position of the senior mistress, and called for such posts to be publicly advertised to reinforce the idea that they should be analogous to a

deputy headship. [73] The association forcefully reaffirmed its view that women should be equally eligible for the headships of mixed schools, and expressed concern that women's chances of promotion in teaching were becoming increasingly limited. Conference speakers continued to couch their arguments for women's suitability for such posts in terms of professional equality, indeed androgyny, rather than suggesting that women had specific or different qualities. The efficient management and disciplinary skills of women heads were emphasised. 'I know boys who have had the greatest respect for that head mistress and who have never suffered in the least from the effects of their having had their young minds trained and prepared under a woman's care instead of a man's.' [74] However, these arguments largely failed to affect LEA policy; only three women were heads of mixed secondary schools between the wars. [75] The AAM's particular concern to achieve deputy head status for senior mistresses might be seen as accepting a traditional support role for these women who would remain under the authority of the male head. However, the AAM never argued for this in difference terms, and in fact had less engagement with difference arguments than the NUWT. The issue reflected the real position of many of its members, and it was viewed as a pragmatic means of attaining greater (if not complete) equality for them.

The NUWT took the feminist equality arguments further. Not only did they argue that regardless of sex the best person should be appointed to a post, but they also attacked the idea of gender roles and the notion of natural male authority. After the publication of the Hadow Report in 1926, which added to the momentum of elementary school reorganisation, the NUWT became increasingly anxious that women teachers' chances of promotion were being blocked by the policy of reorganising and amalgamating schools and giving the headships to men. [76] They argued that the headships of mixed departments should be open to men and women equally, on the grounds that: 'The only relation possible in the work of education, which required the very best that men and women had to give, was that of equality.' [77] Equality of opportunity would improve the efficiency of mixed schools by ensuring that the best heads were chosen, the NUWT argued, and as well as doing justice to women class teachers would also be in the interests of the

children who ought not to be taught that the male sex was the superior, and always in charge.

The NUWT was deeply critical of the way in which traditional gender roles were fostered in the organisation of mixed schools and felt that the preference for headmasters derived from socially constructed ideas about gender and power relations. One member observed, 'There was in many people's minds ... a customary traditional feeling of the superiority of one sex. It was an intangible barrier, but it was one that was very difficult to break down.' [78] They believed it was only by minimising gender distinctions of masculinity and femininity that women would be able to achieve full emancipation. This process should be actively encouraged in the school itself. [79] Although many NUWT members supported co-education in theory as a progressive educational development, the union argued that mixed schools did not provide true co-education if the men teachers were favoured by higher pay and status. [80] Excluding women from headships was an injustice to the girls because they would only see women in a subordinate position.

For a man to be at the head of a mixed school engendered in the boy a false idea that Nature had destined him, the lord of creation, for positions of authority, and it developed in the girl a cramping lack of confidence and ambition. [81]

The NUWT also observed that 'in a mixed class the boys received the attention and the girls were not catered for.' [82]

The NUWT always believed gender distinctions should be minimised. However, it felt obliged to argue for separate single sex senior schools in order to defend women teachers' promotion prospects and preserve girls' education. This argument for parallel systems was not made on the grounds of difference, but as a tactic for avoiding further inequality. [83] The union advocated that 'in the present stage of development', adolescent girls and boys should wherever possible be taught in separate departments, each with its own head teacher in 'the cause of establishing right relations between the sexes', that is, to avoid the disadvantages suffered by girls in senior mixed schools and to provide the girls with positive role models. [84] It cited the recommendations of the Hadow Report for

separate senior schools for boys and girls and separate infant schools in support of its policy. [85]

Defending Women's Headships through Difference

The preferred approach of feminist teachers was to stress women teachers' equal qualifications and competence for headships of both junior and secondary mixed schools. However, in order to defend the position of women heads of junior and infant schools (which were increasingly threatened by amalgamation), the NUWT also began to use difference rhetoric to argue that certain areas of work were more suitable and should be reserved for women teachers; in this case women teachers' greater aptitude in managing infant departments. The gendering of some areas of work in this way was therefore not simply a male strategy to restrict women's sphere, but also one used by women to defend a particular space for themselves.

The NUWT maintained that wherever possible there should be a separate infant school under its own headmistress, although they stressed women's specialised training as much as feminine qualities in justification. The amalgamation of infant with mixed departments (often under a headmaster) was: 'depriving the youngest children of a head teacher who has been specially trained for infants' school work'. [86]

The control of infant schools was an important and delicate work calling for special insight and sympathy and specialist training. The best men knew they were not qualified and did not apply for headships. [87]

Feminist teachers tried to use all available arguments on the promotion issue, arguing that women's difference made them better infant school heads and that they should also have a separate channel of promotion opportunity in girls' schools, while also contending that gender should make no difference in appointments to mixed-school headships. Although the NUWT had by far the most developed critique of the gender system, they remained content to designate and defend infant schools as women's space.

Attacking Women's Headships through Difference

Women teachers' campaigns were also complicated by the huge amount of gender antagonism generated by the competition for diminishing promotion prospects. The real concerns of women and men

teachers about their prospects in the growing number of mixed and reorganised schools were fanned by the rhetoric of the NAS which tried to establish the idea of the naturalness of masculine authority in the schools. At almost every one of its conferences and meetings in the interwar period the NAS bitterly attacked the practice of appointing women as heads of mixed elementary schools, including junior schools. These headmistresses took posts which were rightfully men's and compromised the masculinity of the men teachers serving under them. [88] The union argued that it was bad for the boys in the school to see a woman in charge of men, as well as being detrimental to the men's self-respect:

Service under a headmistress is distasteful to the majority of schoolmasters. This distaste is based on an entirely healthy instinct, is strongly approved by the great majority of men and women, and reflects the normal and sane attitudes of the sexes to each other. [89]

The NAS pledged itself to sustain any member who refused to serve under a headmistress following the reorganisation of a school, but this was a rare occurrence. The NAS argued that, where possible, there should be separate schools for girls and boys so that the two kinds of work could be clearly demarcated, and where mixed schools were unavoidable they should have headmasters in charge. [90]

The NAS pressed its demands upon the Board of Education and the LEAs throughout the interwar period. The Board was firm in its rejection of the idea of men teachers only for boys over seven, though it approved of men teaching senior boys and it passed responsibility for decisions on headships down to the LEAs. [91] But the NAS did have some success in fostering a climate of opinion in which the importance of masculinity and male authority was discussed and to which the other teaching unions, and indirectly the LEAs, were forced to respond.

The Shifting Promotion Policy of the NUT

At the beginning of the 1920s, the NUT did adopt an equal opportunities position on the promotion issue, arguing that LEAs should appoint the most suitable applicants to the staff and headships of mixed schools, regardless of sex, but should include both men and women to give adequate provision for the education of both boys and

girls. [92] But the NUT was also anxious to be seen to be protecting the interests of men teachers and gradually amended its policy. In a 1924 pamphlet directed at men, the union said that boys needed the influence of both men and women teachers and tried to argue that the application of the 'men teachers for boys' principle was not in men teachers' own interests. [93] The NUT soon attempted to avoid the gender clash over teachers' opportunities in mixed schools by recommending, like the AAM and NUWT, that older boys and girls should, if possible, be educated in separate schools. Infant departments should not be amalgamated with juniors but should have a separate headmistress. [94] By 1934 the NUT went even further and did endorse the principle of 'men teachers for boys', but not surprisingly said that this was difficult to apply in practice, as it also supported the principle of the best person for the post. [95]

In practical terms, too, the NUT was more concerned about the position of its men members than its women members. At the local level, some NUT associations supported the appointment of headmasters to mixed junior and infant schools. [96] The Kent NUT branch requested the Kent Education Committee in 1933 to ensure that vacant headships should go to men, 'as it is an advantage to a locality to have a man in charge of the village school.' [97] In contrast, the NUT really only helped women teachers by trying to protect their jobs as headmistresses of infant schools, thus representing the issue only in difference terms and avoiding any threat to men. [98] Although the union tried to protect the position of individual teachers displaced under schemes of reorganisation, women's equal promotion prospects were not seen as an issue that was linked to professionalism, and the NUT's equal opportunities policy was increasingly undermined in a period when unity in the profession was presented as a way of overcoming gender antagonism.

Women NUT members were powerless to affect their union's practice. In 1930 the Ladies Committee had to draw attention to the fact that many advertisements for men heads of combined junior and infant schools were carried in The Schoolmaster, the NUT journal, and it accused the union of not acting according to its principles. [99] But so complete was the obscuring of women's interests that by the mid-1930s ordinary women NUT members did not realise that equality was official union policy, and the feeling was created that they were

being disloyal to the union if they stood up for women's rights. At the 1933 conference Miss Haswell, of the NUT's executive, had to remind a meeting of women members that:

On the question of headships that policy was absolutely definite - that the headships of schools should be given, not on a sex basis at all, but that the best applicant, irrespective of sex, should be appointed. She often found some hesitation on the part of women in pressing their just claims with regard to headships for fear of jeopardising the ideal of professional unity. Such action, however, could in no way be interpreted as being contrary to Union policy or involving lack of professional loyalty. [100]

However, in practice only the difference argument in support of women's headships of infant schools was uncontentious, and the professional equality argument was seriously undermined.

In fighting for protection of women teachers' promotion prospects, the NUT and the AAM were probably the most influential of the teachers' associations in pressuring government and LEAs. The single sex associations of the NUWT and AAM represented what women teachers wanted with far greater clarity than the NUT, which increasingly actively worked for men teachers' interests rather than women's, caught between its equality policy and its desire to appease the men in response to the masculine rhetoric of the NAS. [101]

Tactically, women teachers defended their position most successfully on difference grounds, by achieving acceptance of the idea that women rather than men should be heads of schools which contained infants, ie combined junior and infant schools. After 1928 the Board of Education declared against any further combination of infant with mixed junior schools and credit for this was claimed by both the NUWT and the NUT. [102] But in the long term, the continuing expansion of mixed schools that began in this period meant that women's promotion prospects were increasingly threatened.

Equal Pay

The next section will discuss the fate of equal pay arguments during the changing circumstances of the interwar years. Equal pay was only really a live issue for teachers at the beginning and end of the period. Routes through which the demand could usefully be pressed

were the Burnham Committee and the government generally. The feminist movement did not prove to be a very powerful channel, due to the ascendancy of difference feminism and the issue of family allowances in particular, which weakened and split the arguments feminists made for equal pay. The use of masculine difference arguments by the NAS to promote higher salaries for men teachers was sufficiently effective to force the NUT to argue defensively against NAS policy, on NAS terms, for much of the period. However, in the late 1930s the issue of equal pay was revived and linked once more to the idea of professional salaries.

Equal Pay and the Burnham Committee

From 1919-1920 teachers' salaries were negotiated nationally through the Burnham Committee, between representatives of the LEAs and the teachers' associations, including the NUT and the AAM. In the first Burnham negotiations of 1919 the question of equal pay was raised briefly by the NUT but not pressed, and more strongly by the AAM, and equal increments were secured. Once the 4:5 ratio had been established it was difficult to effect any change later. [103] After the intense activity and debate of 1918 to 1920, the subject of equal pay was soon dampened down by economic crises and the consequent cuts in education and other public spending. Unemployment among teachers in the early 1920s reduced their bargaining power and teachers' associations were concerned to hold on to existing salaries and reduce cuts to the minimum. As the NUT journal put it in 1921: 'These are not times in which "equal pay" can be either protagonised or antagonised with any advantage to anybody.' [104] From 1922 teachers' salaries were subject to a 5% deduction as a contribution towards superannuation and in 1923 the teachers accepted a 'voluntary abatement' of 5% of their salaries for one year.

The AAM feared that women teachers' pay would be particularly under threat when the Burnham agreement was due to be renegotiated in the mid-1920s, as indeed proved to be the case, and deplored the fact that the enforced salary cuts of 12% fell unequally upon the women. [105] As well as reducing women teachers' increments, but not men's, the pay award made extra allowances for a good honours degree discretionary instead of mandatory. Before 1925 the proportion of women receiving such allowances was higher than that of men; this change reversed the position at women's expense, a fact which still

rankled in 1936. [106] The NUT similarly accepted the 1925 changes only under protest, and there was a rare display of feminist spirit when a 'considerable number of women teachers' in the NUT bitterly opposed the reduction of their annual increment from £12 10s to £9 and got the annual conference to pass a resolution deploring it. [107]

This activity around the Burnham Committee in the early 1920s left the NUWT out in the cold. Since the NUT was the only union representing elementary teachers on the Burnham Committee the NUWT now had less direct leverage on salary policy than it had before 1920 when salary scales were negotiated locally and changed its tactics to publicising the arguments for equal pay and bringing pressure to bear on the government and on the Burnham Committee. [108] The NUWT continually criticised the Burnham Committee for not being truly representative of women teachers' views, ie, not including the union on the teachers' panel. [109] From 1928 the files of the Burnham Committee are full of resolutions sent by the NUWT urging equal pay and requests for representation, but the general consensus of the Committee was that the NUT was sufficiently representative of elementary teachers and the inclusion of other organisations would prevent agreement from being reached. [110]

The early 1930s offered no better prospects than the 1920s for the progress of the equal pay question. In 1931 a general 10% cut was imposed on teachers' salaries, to be restored in two stages in 1934 and 1935, though since the cost of living continued to fall, teachers were largely no worse off than other employees. [111] In a final attempt to address the Burnham problem, in 1932 the NUWT forbade dual membership with the NUT, hoping to strengthen its argument that it was the sole representative of an important group of women teachers, but the main effect was to weaken the feminist union, since a number of members left. [112] Although its exclusion from the Burnham Committee meant the NUWT could have little effect on policy-making, its campaigning did keep equal pay on the agenda, especially at election times and when the Burnham Committee was meeting, at a time when the NUT virtually ignored it.

Feminism and Family Allowances

Equal pay was the archetypal professional equality issue and could hardly be argued for except on the grounds of equal rights. Between the wars all three of the teachers' associations representing

women continued to adhere to the aims of equal pay and professional salaries, though with varying degrees of commitment to the equality argument. Both the AAM and the NUWT worked closely with the associations of women civil servants in the interwar years to press the claim for equal pay for women in the public services. This created a persistent voice for equality feminism in this period. The AAM took part in the pressure leading up to the establishment in 1929 of a Royal Commission on Women in the Civil Service. They were keen to get involved with the civil servants' fight, because the position of these professional women seemed so close to their own, but their contacts with other feminist groups on the equal pay issue were very limited and restrained compared to the NUWT. [113] The NUWT worked closely with the broader feminist organisations such as the NUSEC (in the early 1920s), the Six Point Group and later the Open Door Council to press the demand for equal pay wherever possible, internationally as well as in Britain. [114]

But interwar feminist groups took diverse positions on the strategies and arguments to be used to attain equal pay, and with the increasing influence of difference feminism and the stress on family allowances, the women's movement became a fairly weak channel for women teachers to use. Eleanor Rathbone, leader of the NUSEC, believed that family allowances would not only serve to recognise the mother's work in the home, but would also facilitate the achievement of equal pay by making payment for actual family responsibilities. This would undercut the family wage argument and enable workers to be paid for the value of their labour, not according to their sex. At times, Rathbone advocated the experiment of occupational family allowances; the teaching profession being one of the most obvious possibilities, and NUSEC increasingly linked the demand for equal pay with that for family allowances. [115]

The NUWT, which was affiliated to NUSEC, did consider these arguments carefully. After enquiring into the various schemes of family allowances, the NUWT clarified its position in the mid-1920s, deciding that the issues of equal pay and family allowances should be kept separate. Equal pay must come first, and family allowances must be paid by the state and not be incorporated into a salary scale for teachers. The NUWT did not object to family allowances in principle, but believed that the issue was not relevant to the claim for equal

pay for equal work, which was for the proper payment for work done, regardless of the sex of the worker. [116] Final estrangement from the NUSEC came in 1926 when the NUWT politely disaffiliated on the grounds that 'the NUWT does not find itself in accord with the immediate programme and policy of the NUSEC,' amid mutual expressions of regret and hopes for continued co-operation on other issues. [117]

Although they continued to keep in touch on some issues, the NUWT and NUSEC crossed swords again over family allowances and equal pay, showing that the political differences within interwar feminism weakened its political effectiveness. Before the 1929 general election, the three party leaders each agreed to receive a deputation from the feminist societies. These included the NUSEC, which by this time was committed to the principle of family allowances. The NUWT complained bitterly that their representatives, after making a straightforward plea for equal pay, 'had to listen to Miss Rathbone cutting the ground from under our feet, by urging that the establishment of equal pay would be facilitated by the introduction of family allowances in the Civil and Municipal Services.' [118]

While the AAM always argued for equal pay on equality grounds, it did tangle with the difference issue of family allowances in response to the external feminist debate, linking the two to a greater extent than the NUWT. Family endowment was raised as a possible means of facilitating equal pay by the general secretary, Mrs Gordon Wilson, in 1925, though she later shifted closer to an equality feminist position. At the 1930 AGM she said 'we are thinking of equal pay for equal work and are leaving out of the question any method of adjusting payment for something else done by some member of the community for the community.' [119] Two years later she won applause at conference by saying: 'Personally I have always thought that the payment of allowances to men and women in respect of dependents should be a corollary to equal pay.' [120] Family allowances was dropped from the AAM's equal pay rhetoric after 1933, however, when the Assistant Masters Association decided that they were not in favour. [121]

The AAM continued to consolidate its equality approach and campaign in tandem with the women civil servants. Their fight was reinvigorated by the resolution passed in the House of Commons in 1929 supporting equal pay and equal opportunities for women in the civil service and local government. [122] A resolution was passed at the

1930 AGM instructing representatives of the AAM to press for the removal of the existing inequalities at the next Burnham revision of salaries. [123] At the Annual Meeting in 1932 Mrs Gordon Wilson again stressed that equal pay should mean the raising of women's salaries to the level of men's, but she also said that they were prepared to accept a gradual movement towards that ideal. [124] Her willingness to take seriously the arguments against equal pay and to consider slow change contrasts with the much more emphatic feminist line of the NUWT, and also reflected the fact that the AAM were themselves a party to the Burnham agreement.

Gender Difference and Equal Pay

The problem of divisions among feminists was exacerbated by the NAS onslaught against equal pay using arguments of masculine difference. The NAS slogan calling for 'Separate Consideration' for men teachers' salaries was taken from the 1918 Departmental Committee on Teachers Salary Scales. The union stressed the need for a family wage for men: 'What was an adequate wage for the spinster teacher was entirely inadequate for the family man.' [125] They argued that the Burnham settlement favoured women teachers, whom they depicted as wealthy enough to afford cars and foreign holidays while men teachers had to work overtime to support their families. [126] However, the opposition of the NAS to equal pay was not only based on the family needs argument; they could have advocated family allowances as a solution but avoided this issue. [127] Their demand for 'separate consideration' was also based on the promotion of their masculinity in connection with their 'men teachers for boys' policy. [128] They believed that men teachers should be paid more as their work was more valuable: 'The training of boys is, in its very essence, of greater importance to the state than the training of girls.' [129]

The NUT was forced onto the defensive by the strength and popularity of the NAS's arguments, and was particularly concerned not to alienate and lose any more of its men members. It began to respond to NAS arguments, although it was never prepared in this period to return to the notion of the family wage, and continued to make a strong case in its public propaganda for professional salaries for teachers. It emphasised the qualifications, skill and long training of teachers and the service they provided to the community, and contrasted this professional rate to the 'fodder basis', ie the family

wage demanded by the NAS. But while making this argument about professional rates of pay, and directing it particularly at men teachers, the NUT managed to lose sight of the connections with its agreed policy of equal pay. [130]

It is likely that many men members of the NUT disagreed with the union's policy of equal pay but were not prepared to relinquish the benefits of belonging to the larger union, and did not believe that equal pay was likely to be accepted by the LEAs anyway. [131] Pressure to drop the equal pay policy came from men within all levels of the union. In 1920 Miss Conway, the union's second woman president, stated that all the NUT women on the Burnham Committee (of whom she was one) were in favour of equal pay, and that all the men were against it. [132] There were unsuccessful attempts to force the annual conferences between 1922 and 1924 to debate motions dropping the equal pay policy in favour of supporting the 4:5 ratio instead, but in practice the NUT had already adopted this course. [133] A local NUT meeting where the women teachers renounced equal pay to pacify the men was quoted with great approval in a leading article in The Schoolmaster in 1923. [134] In such an atmosphere women's leaders in the NUT could only advocate activity to bring about step-by-step reform towards equal pay. [135] Other than protesting against the 1925 Burnham settlement the NUT women were quiescent during the 1920s and 1930s, the most vocal feminists having left for the NUWT. Many were probably most concerned with defending their Burnham pay award, and recognised the heavy odds against equal pay. It is also likely that they accepted the argument that pressing for equal pay would split the union further. By the 1930s the subject was so dormant that at the women's conference meeting in 1933 there was an inquiry as to whether equal pay was still union policy. [136] As with promotion prospects, the NUT's official policy of gender equality had all but disappeared.

The Revival of Equal Pay

The equal pay campaign was revived in the later 1930s after the restoration of the 1931 salary cuts and the re-establishment of the Burnham Committee made pressure possible. Mrs Gordon Wilson of the AAM made a strong speech to the full Burnham Committee in 1936 advocating equal pay, though with little practical effect. [137] Renewed discussion of the issue in the House of Commons in 1935 in

relation to women's employment generally, and Ellen Wilkinson MP's temporarily successful resolution on equal pay in the civil service in 1936, also encouraged the women teachers. [138] Tax concessions given in the 1936 Budget to married men with dependents but not to women was condemned as preferential treatment for men which ignored women's dependents and also added to a feeling within the AAM that they should take a high-profile position on the equal pay issue. 'We must convince the government that public opinion is ripe.' [139] One member, who became a prominent official said:

We supported the cause of equality right from the very start ... and we could see no justice in different salaries at all.... We felt that as proper professionals we should be paid the rate for the job whatever sex we were. [140]

The renewed possibility of making equal pay arguments was also felt in the NUT. Debate seems to have been generated by the Commons' discussions in 1935 and 1936 of equal pay. [141] The economic situation was improving, teachers' pay cuts had been restored, and a shortage of women teachers was becoming apparent. In 1938, the fight for professional salaries was once again explicitly linked to the union's formerly dormant equal pay policy, in a series of eight articles published in The Schoolmaster. The author, Mr Cove, was a past president of the NUT, a teachers' MP, and a strong supporter of equal pay on the grounds of professionalism and justice. [142] In a debate on salary policy at the 1938 conference a male executive member at last confirmed that: 'The Executive did not say that there should be no differentiation on a sex basis to satisfy only women, but because it believed that equal pay in that respect was essential to a policy for professional people, men and women alike.' [143] In 1939 a union memorandum on salary policy reaffirmed the importance of equal pay and made a commitment to fight for a higher percentage for women of up to 100% of men's salaries. [144]

The professional equality argument for equal pay was muted and marginalised for much of the interwar period. Feminist arguments for equal pay were not helped by the ascendancy of difference feminism, despite Rathbone's argument linking equal pay with family allowances. The latter failed to be taken up by policy makers and so could not even begin to have consequences in the labour market, while the political split within feminism weakened its lobbying power. At the

same time NAS men teachers argued directly against equal pay and professional salaries using arguments of masculine difference, putting the NUT on the defensive for much of the 1920s and 1930s. The only real leverage on the level of teachers' salaries was that employed by the NUT and AAM, through their representation on the Burnham Committees. The NUT took an equivocal position on equal pay, however, not only due to the pressure of NAS arguments, which some NUT men found attractive, but also because of the unfavourable context of public sector spending cuts. The revival of the issue came through the propaganda work of the women teachers' and civil servants' associations, rather than through the independent feminist groups. Economic improvements in the late 1930s made it possible for the NUT's official policy on equal pay to be positively reaffirmed for the first time in two decades.

The Marriage Bar

Both equality and difference arguments could be developed by women teachers in the campaign against the marriage bar, which was a live issue in the 1920s, and reappeared in the late 1930s. The choice of how and where to apply political pressure was a complex one for feminist teachers, and they tried a number of different strategies, using the courts, lobbying Parliament, and putting pressure on Local Education Authorities to abolish the marriage bar. Difference arguments had particular salience, and were used by both feminist teachers and the NUT with some success at the local level. In fighting the marriage bar, feminist teachers developed an unlikely (though rewarding) alliance with the Labour Party, and were also helped by changing labour market conditions in the late 1930s.

Married Women Teachers: Equal or Different?

NUWT arguments against the marriage bar stressed women's equal rights, alongside professional and educational perspectives. 'It is a woman's right to decide for herself, in view of all her circumstances, whether she wishes to work outside her home or not.' [145] The union also argued that the dismissal of women on marriage was a waste of their experience and of the cost of their training. [146] They strayed into difference territory by also arguing that the marriage bar:

robs the children of the invaluable contribution made to their training by those women, who, through marriage, have experienced a wider and fuller life. [147]

In contrast, the NUT only partly argued against the marriage bar on professional equality grounds. While some action was taken to defend married women teachers' jobs, the leadership did not directly challenge the view that married women had less right to employment, preferring to cite educational arguments by maintaining that the children had a right to be taught by the best teachers available, married or single, and that it was a waste of a teacher's experience to dismiss her on marriage. It was also an infringement of women's freedom and a matter for professional concern. [148] However:

The egalitarian argument may be pertinent in some cases but this is not the one we use. The married woman has a traditional place in the elementary system of this country which is being wrested from her. Our Committee wish her to be restored to that traditional place in the education system, and they feel the strength of their position lies in the insistence upon the educational value of the service of the married woman teacher. [149]

This argument for the married woman teacher's traditional place and her educational value made a strong appeal to the notion of women's difference.

The marriage bar was not a major issue for the assistant mistresses of the AAM, and it was only occasionally discussed. There was majority, rather than unanimous, support for a resolution at the 1923 AGM which condemned the exclusion of women teachers from the profession on the grounds of marriage. Arguments were made against the bar from both equality and difference perspectives: that it violated the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, that married women brought fresh interests to the profession, and that only those who were keen teachers or driven by financial necessity would wish to continue after marriage in any case. [150] The marriage bar hardly figured again until the late 1930s, by which time AAM members had moved further towards equality. [151] The raising of the bar by the LCC and by some outer London boroughs prompted the London branch to put a resolution to the annual conference condemning the bar, which

was passed after detailed discussion during which only one woman spoke against. [152]

Although the AAM opposed the marriage bar and upheld the principle of choice, there was a range of opinion on the issue within the association. A number of mistresses did not in fact oppose the marriage bar, though they became more equality minded over the period. The AAM's leadership always condemned the bar, but they were not obliged to defend or promote their members' interests in the public arena, as the NUWT and NUT did. It was seen as a fairly marginal issue which would affect few members. There was more immediate action reported in support of members who lost their posts because they were older and more expensive to employ. [153]

Fighting the Marriage Bar Policy

The marriage bar was a locally imposed restriction on women teachers and the Board of Education professed to have no influence on the matter. Women teachers, the teachers' associations and feminist organisations used a range of tactics concurrently throughout the 1920s to try to get the marriage bar lifted and to protect married women teachers whose jobs were threatened.

The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 apparently protected married women teachers from dismissal by upholding their equal rights as citizens. It stated: 'A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage . . . from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation.' The Act was cited in a series of court cases brought in the 1920s by married women teachers with the support of teachers' unions claiming unfair dismissal, but it was interpreted by the courts in the most conservative possible way. The main argument in these cases centred around the permissible 'educational' grounds for dismissal by LEAs.

Pragmatism guided the deployment of the NUT's legal resources. It investigated the case of 64 married women sacked in 1922 by Rhondda Urban District Council, but refused to help them because it was advised by lawyers that there was little chance of success. [154] The Rhondda women were angered by this lack of support. They pointed out that the union normally used all its legal resources in tenure cases, but despite the fact that they had been union members for many years and their posts and pensions were in danger, NUT protection had been

withheld. [155] The women teachers took the case to court at their own expense, contending that the LEA could only consider the efficiency of the schools in its staffing policy, that this did not include any problems in the supply of teachers, and that the policy was in breach of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. However, the judge found against them on each point. [156] The NUT did support another major test case brought in 1925 by Mrs Short against the Borough of Poole, contending that the authority, in dismissing married women teachers, had taken into account matters alien and irrelevant to the carrying out of their statutory duties, by inquiring into the husbands' salaries and so on. Although initially the teachers won, this case was lost on appeal. [157] This meant that LEAs were quite at liberty to dismiss married women teachers on the general grounds of promoting the efficiency of education, unless they could be shown to have acted in a particularly corrupt or unorthodox way. The test case of Fennell and others versus East Ham in 1925, financed by the NUWT and expensively lost, confirmed this. [158] The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act simply freed the employer from any restrictions, but gave no rights to the employee.

The NUWT (and to a lesser extent the NUT and AAM) also worked with equal rights feminist groups to lobby Parliament, but direct feminist pressure on government using equality arguments to protect women teachers from the marriage bar achieved little success. Using contacts originally developed during the suffrage campaign, the NUWT prompted the series of questions on dismissals of married women teachers in the Commons during the 1920s. [159] It continued to pressurise the government by a deputation to the Home Secretary in 1923, when a spokeswoman accused the Board of Education of deliberately encouraging LEAs to bring in marriage bars, which contravened the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, and cheated women teachers out of their pensions. [160]

After the 1925 East Ham test case had been lost, the feminist groups turned their attention to legislative action. The Married Women (Employment) Bill, sponsored by the NUSEC in 1927, was intended to end the marriage bar in the public service. This was defeated on its second reading, but some speakers referred to the special case which could be made for the continued employment of married women teachers. [161] On the strength of this and the return of a Labour

government, a further attempt was made in 1930 to prevent discrimination against married women teachers only, but this Bill failed even more rapidly. [162] The NUT gave limited support to the 1927 Bill and also took part in a deputation to the Board of Education later in the same year, but only after considerable pressure from its London members, a high proportion of whom were married women. [163] The NUWT largely abandoned national lobbying after this point and in the 1930s turned its attention to wider feminist work around married women's right to earn and became involved in various campaigns alongside the equality feminist group The Open Door Council. [164]

However, pressure at the local level, often using difference arguments, was more rewarding, although as with the promotion issue it was a largely defensive action. Casework to assist individual married women teachers was undertaken by both the NUT and the NUWT, particularly in the early 1920s when thousands were threatened with dismissal. The national machinery of the NUT enabled action to be taken in many districts, but it is impossible to estimate how many married women were helped in this way. The NUT felt there was a greater chance of success if it intervened either on moral grounds, where a teacher had given long service and had only a short time to go before being entitled to her pension, or on compassionate grounds, where the husband was unable to support the family. [165] There is little evidence to suggest that the NUT tried to directly influence LEA policy on the marriage bar and, indeed, there were some cases of the local NUT officers actually supporting the marriage bar. [166] Many married women teachers were also given advice by the NUWT throughout the period, but it did not have such a well-developed machinery for liaising with local education committees on tenure cases as the NUT, which was normally the recognised voice of elementary teachers. [167]

The NUWT, the Labour Party and Local Politics

However, in a few areas the NUWT did successfully exert direct political influence on the local council, in some cases by becoming policymakers themselves, and prompted removal of the marriage bar. Women's enfranchisement had been extended at the municipal as well as the national level in 1918, and the NUWT was quick to advocate the use of female political pressure. In 1919 The Woman Teacher ran an article giving practical instructions on 'How to run a Woman Candidate

at a Municipal Election'. [168] In many instances the NUWT worked through the Labour Party, indicating the complexity of their political strategies.

The relationship of the NUWT to the Labour Party poses a number of questions and contradictions. The Labour Party was at least as male-dominated as the NUT, which the feminist NUWT had already rejected as a useful political vehicle, and blocked feminist equality demands very effectively at its national level. The interwar Labour Party officially treated women's issues in terms of difference, or indeed as social welfare issues. [169] Local Labour councils often showed themselves willing to protect men teachers' interests against women's, and certainly Labour Education Committees brought in marriage bars as frequently as their Conservative counterparts, the party in general being more concerned to protect the employment of male breadwinners than female workers.

Nevertheless, feminist teachers were drawn to socialism for a variety of reasons. The Labour Party in some areas brought many more women into public life as local councillors, for example in London, where Labour women were a significant minority on the LCC, though the influence of feminism was variable through the Labour Party. [170] The NUWT could exploit this skilfully in those towns and cities where the party was more progressive in relation to women's issues, and where there were women councillors willing to support feminist policies. Many NUWT women were also prepared to positively support Labour Party policies for improved housing, better public health, and maternity and child welfare measures as well as for smaller classes, the expansion of nursery schools and secondary education and other progressive education policies. [171] For women teachers, many of whom were concerned with the poverty they found in inner city schools, these were professional as much as difference issues. NUWT feminists in any case showed they were prepared to use difference arguments based on notions of married women teachers' maternalism, when trying to persuade the Labour Party to lift the marriage bar. While the party did not support the working-class married woman's right to work, they were more likely to defend the position of professional women. [172] Women's working relationship with Labour Party men was also less fraught, since they were not directly challenging their employment privileges as had been the case in the NUT.

This uneasy relationship bore fruit in London. The greatest success of the NUWT on any equality issue between the wars was the major part they played in the removal of the marriage bar by the London County Council (implemented in 1923). In 1925 a massive campaign to influence LCC election candidates on the issue was organised by Lady Rhondda and the Six Point Group, with support from over 20 feminist organisations and associations of professional women. [173] This had little immediate effect, but in the same elections Agnes Dawson, a leading NUWT member, was elected to the LCC in order to lead the attack on the marriage bar and watch the interests of women teachers.

Agnes Dawson was born into a working-class family in Peckham in 1875, became a pupil-teacher and taught in various Camberwell schools after attending training college. Her 'forceful and attractive' platform manner was developed during her years (as a non-militant) in the suffrage movement. She joined the NFWT on its formation, came to prominence in 1918 when she took a leading part in the union's successful negotiations for a salary increase for London women teachers, and was elected President in 1919 and 1920. From 1925 London NUWT members paid an extra subscription to enable her to give up her post as a headteacher in order to be eligible to stand as joint Labour candidate for North Camberwell. [174] Agnes Dawson was committed to general Labour Party policy alongside her feminism; however she told NUWT members immediately after her success that she hoped she would have the opportunity and courage to serve 'The Cause', i.e. the women's movement, inside the LCC. [175] The 21 women now on the LCC, including 11 new members, represented 15% of the members. Agnes Dawson was the only directly elected teacher-member and the Times Educational Supplement reported, 'Her outlook on education is known to be broad, and the general interests of children and teachers alike will be safe in her hands.' [176]

In 1934 Labour gained control of the LCC for the first time and Agnes Dawson became Chairman (sic) of the powerful Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Labour Party in London was pledged to abolish the marriage bar, probably influenced by the NUWT and the London Teachers Association (LTA). But although she was in a powerful position as chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Agnes Dawson was unable to get the Labour Party to implement its policy for

another year, until she threatened Herbert Morrison with her resignation over the issue. Nan McMillan, another NUWT activist, described her tactics.

I was on the London Executive [of the NUWT] and every month we met and asked Agnes Dawson for a report. Herbert Morrison wouldn't move - she was in a very invidious position as we were paying her wages and they wouldn't move. She just didn't know what to do. In 1935 she came up with a proposition. A year had gone by and nothing had happened. She was desperate. Would we support her if she went to Herbert Morrison and threatened to resign on the issue and called a press conference to give her reasons. We said we'd support her. So she went to Morrison who said, 'Oh, good God Agnes, you can't do that', and so he said 'we'll set up a working party to look into it!' [177]

While it is difficult to verify the exact sequence of events, intense political pressure was brought to bear at this time from feminist groups and the LTA, as well as from inside the Labour group of councillors, sufficient to raise the marriage bar to a higher place on the political agenda, and to ensure that the bar was finally lifted in 1935, against the advice of LCC Education Officers. [178] In the 1935 debate in the London County Council, Agnes Dawson spoke in support of the change using only difference arguments:

It was not difficult to realise that, given a good teacher, marriage must bring fresh experience and more human understanding. To debar married teachers the opportunity to serve was to do a disservice to education. [179]

In other parts of the country where women councillors were prepared to take up the marriage bar question, they too were often successful. Feminist pressure both inside and outside the council chamber had not been enough to prevent the implementation of a marriage bar in Manchester, as well as in London in the early 1920s. [180] In Manchester, however, several men and women councillors led by Shena Simon succeeded in getting the bar lifted in 1928 and prevented it being reimposed in 1934. They were aided by a commitment to feminism among Manchester Labour women and the efforts of the NUWT and other women's organisations who sent circulars to the education committee and letters to the local press and The Manchester Guardian. [181] In Leicester in 1936, the marriage bar was lifted on the

prompting of a single Labour woman councillor, an NUWT sympathiser.

[182]

Feminist teachers had little success nationally in opposing the marriage bar. The AAM was not particularly interested in the issue, the NUT was reluctant to treat it seriously at this level, while the NUWT and feminist groups who pressed women's concerns more forcefully using equality arguments were marginalised in the context of male unemployment and the backlash against married women's work. More was achieved at the local level; by the NUT in individual casework, and by the NUWT, who intervened in the political process itself by making careful alliances with the Labour Party. They were also helped in this because the marriage bar could be argued against on 'difference' grounds, which were more politically acceptable to public opinion and the local authorities than were arguments of professional equality. However, this meant that women teachers were heavily gendered as women with a particular biological and social affinity to children, rather than as professionals with associated rights of employment. A further danger in using difference arguments to protect married women was that this implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) suggested that single women were less competent teachers. The problems created for women teachers when their marital status as single women was highlighted in this way will be examined in the next chapter.

Conclusion

An important element of feminist teachers' strategy was the rhetorical presentation of their arguments. The choice of 'equality' or 'difference' was a real political issue for professional women in the interwar years, as well as for feminists campaigning on women's position in the family. Women teachers always identified more strongly with equality arguments for improvements in their employment position, especially when linked with professionalism, but difference arguments held some attractions between the wars. They were politically powerful arguments because they resonated with ideas about gender difference in the dominant culture. The limited interwar successes of feminist teachers were achieved mainly through difference arguments, though these 'successes' can more accurately be seen as defensive positions, holding onto what they had in the profession rather than extending women teachers' rights. Difference could only

be used in relation to a restricted traditional sphere for women in teaching, rather than the wider possibilities offered by professionalism and thus was not a useful strategy for interwar women teachers. They made only a few gains from it, while it could be effectively usurped by men.

Superficially, difference arguments, by emphasising women's distinct nature and social roles, would seem to avoid confronting men directly and thus provoke less sex antagonism. However, difference did not prove a conciliatory meeting ground between the sexes and men teachers' use of difference as a discursive strategy proved more effective than women's. The NAS regendered the debates on their own terms, privileging masculinity from a position of dominance. In particular the NAS marginalised the formerly powerful feminist equality arguments constructed around professionalism as the NUT linked professionalism with unity to protect the union from NAS attempts to poach members. Thus the use of difference arguments by women teachers not only achieved little in policy terms, but contained further dangers. In a period when it was part of the dominant discourse, difference could be more effectively developed by men to further their own gender-specific interests.

However men teachers, taken as a whole, were divided in their beliefs, aims and tactics. While many preferred to defend their masculine interests as different, and demarcate particular areas of teaching and higher pay as their own, others were prepared to accept the professional argument for equality. The second approach had slowly won ground over the first within the NUT before, during and after the First World War and the men who favoured difference had left to pursue this approach in the NAS. However, there was still a continued tension between the two approaches in the NUT, which allowed the NAS to take so much of the rhetorical high ground in the 1920s and 1930s.

Although it was a powerful argument, the utilising of masculinity, the process of making gender conscious for men, can be seen as a sign of weakness as much as of strength. Masculinity is usually not identified as gendered, but taken as the norm against a gendered femininity. The men teachers' argument was made from a position of relative vulnerability. Women had begun to achieve some of their aims in teaching and successfully developed arguments of

professional equality before 1920. By shifting key aspects of the debate over equal pay and promotion prospects onto their own terms, men teachers successfully, if temporarily, marginalised feminist equality arguments around professionalism which in any case had been derailed by the NUT's call for unity. The NAS (and to a lesser extent a section of the NUT) was attempting to regender professionalism as masculine and abandon equal professionalism. But the balance of power in teaching was not completely in these men's favour. Although feminists were not able to make much headway in the interwar context, equality and professionalism were able to be linked again at the end of the 1930s.

There was no obvious best way of campaigning for feminist teachers in this period, whether through type of rhetoric or political organisations. The women's movement, the teachers' associations, working with men or without them; all had their attractions and disadvantages. Feminist organisations, including the NUWT, had clearer aims but generally less leverage on the relevant sites of power. Even if little was achieved through the feminist movement between the wars, these equality issues were kept alive to the late 1930s, when labour market shortages began to favour the women teachers' position. As a teachers' association, too, the NUWT was relatively weak compared to the NUT, being outside the main circles of influence. The AAM was more powerfully positioned and had clear aims but still couldn't make much headway, indicating the difficult economic and political context for women at this time. The interwar political activities of feminist teachers, and indeed of the men, were influenced by the prewar battles over suffrage and equal pay. This made the mixed NUT deeply anxious about gender issues, while alienating the NUWT feminists from the main teachers' association.

For the NUT women the biggest problem was the undermining of the link between professionalism and equality. Instead, professionalism was linked much more strongly to 'unity' for most of the period, an interesting connection since unity was a classic trade union concern. While separate women's sections and demands were seen as divisive, the NUT tried to support men teachers' sex-specific interests as far as it could. Although the NUT supported women teachers' equal employment rights in theory, it did not press for them very hard in practice, if they appeared to challenge men. Difference professionalism was the

only discourse freely available to NUT women as women, though they didn't use it to any great extent to pursue feminist demands. In a sense the NUT women were forced into difference, rather than choosing it as a political strategy.

Many feminist teachers had already rejected the NUT and mixed trade unionism as a vehicle for women's progress in order to create the NUWT. This was not a particularly successful strategy, but nor can it be said to have failed either, despite the difficult context. The NUWT had a variety of functions and played an important part in interwar feminism as well as operating as a trade union for women teachers. It had some powerful members, and developed a clear feminist analysis, which was broadened out from simply teachers' position alone. It also offered women teachers a feminist community, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Men's and women's interests were not inevitably opposed. There were specific conditions under which feminists could work with men; for a shared professionalism in the NUT, or for common aims and interests in the Labour Party. Ironically, some successes of the feminist teachers in the separatist NUWT were achieved through alliances with the mixed sex Labour Party. Feminist teachers could work with the Labour Party on the basis of its progressive education and social policies, distanced from any employment threat to men. Since the mainstream Labour Party saw women as mothers rather than as workers, women teachers furthered their demands most successfully when arguing on difference grounds. The gains wrought by this approach show the complexities of Labour Party policy on women's issues and the variety of its local manifestations.

Women teachers were important players in interwar feminism, even though the movement couldn't very effectively aid their campaigns. They recruited fresh blood to the movement (for equal rights feminism moreover) in a period when feminism was less popular than before the war, and took a leading part in some major campaigns, including equal franchise and the peace movement, and new organisations such as the Six Point Group and the Open Door Council. The achievement of the franchise was not a point of closure for women teachers; they had a continuing sense of the inequalities which affected themselves as teachers and women generally.

In contrast the AAM maintained a certain distance from mainstream feminism, though there was some collaboration with other women workers on equality issues such as the marriage bar and equal pay. Unlike the NUWT the AAM did not speak of itself as a central part of the women's movement. Their feminism was rather more cautious and they were less inclined to link their grievances to the wider condition of women, perhaps because they saw themselves as different and separate from them in their professional identity and lifestyle. When discussing the equality issues which affected them, the AAM was disposed to examine all sides of the argument, rather than assuming a feminist analysis from the beginning as the NUWT did. Nevertheless they were strongly committed to an equality perspective on women teachers' employment issues, showing that this was not just a minority concern for women teachers.

Rather than dying away, equality feminism continued to be a significant force in the interwar women's movement, although it had little mainstream political purchase for much of the period, and the teachers were an important component of it. Equal pay in particular engaged the commitment not just of the teachers but also of the women civil servants and debate resurfaced in the later 1930s.

The issue of difference raised further questions. Not only did it foster debate around gender difference, but it also highlighted differences between women. These were not only political disagreements but also differences of professional versus familial identity, and distinctions in marital status. In the difference debates around the marriage bar, the spinster teacher was at risk of being represented as less womanly than the married woman teacher. In fact the majority of women teachers did not fit the ideal of femininity - they were single and had no children. The personal and political repercussions of this, and the way they dealt with them, will be explored in the next chapter.

References to Chapter Five

1. H. A. Clegg, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889. Volume 2. 1911-1933 (Oxford, Clarendon, 1985), p.543. Over 60% of women in the Post Office were unionised in the 1920s, but this was still lower than their male colleagues and the women teachers. K. Grint, 'Women and Equality: The Acquisition of equal pay in the Post Office 1870-1961', Sociology 22:1 (1988), p.101.
2. Interview with Miss Vera Reid, 6 September 1989.
3. Woman Teacher, 26 October 1919, p.1. The NUWT was also very committed to developing broader educational and pedagogic questions. See Times Educational Supplement (TES), 5 November 1921, p.492; 11 January 1930, p.12; 31 December 1932, p.481; 30 May 1936, p.201; 19 February 1938, p.59. They arranged annual conferences on educational subjects after 1925 and published a series of pamphlets on the different stages of school life. E. Phipps, A History of the National Union of Women Teachers (London, NUWT, 1928), pp.62-6.
4. P. Owen, "'Who would be free, herself must strike the blow": The National Union of Women Teachers, equal pay and women within the teaching profession', History of Education 17:1 (1988), p.92. TES, 21 January 1922, p.33; 16 May 1931, p.180. For average size of interwar unions see Clegg, British Trade Unions 1911-33, p.543. The basic facilities of the union were supplemented by insurance and house purchase schemes, travel clubs and social clubs. NUWT, Annual Report (1930, 1931, 1933).
5. This estimate is made by P. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market 1900-1950: The Case of the Secondary Schoolmistress', in P. Summerfield (ed.), Women, Education and the Professions (Leicester, History of Education Society, 1987), p.43. All membership figures are taken from the relevant Annual Reports of the AAM. Also see P. H. J. H. Gosden, The Evolution of a Profession (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1972), p.14. Membership density was still less than that of assistant masters. The main gaps in membership were of specialist teachers of domestic science, physical education, and Froebel teachers, who had their own associations. AAM, Annual Report (January 1938), p.19. As before the war, a tension continued in its professional aims between the development of girls' education and teachers' pay and conditions. AAM, Annual Report (February 1927).
6. Interview with Mrs Julia Maynard, 28 July 1989. Mrs Bradshaw joined the NUWT straight out of college in 1925 to fight for equal pay, but later left for the NUT believing that 'we would never get equal pay if it was just the women's union working for it.' Interview with Mrs Alice Bradshaw, 20 November 1987.
7. This increase was aided by the admission of uncertificated teachers to membership in 1919 and the merger with the London Teachers Association in 1922.
8. TES, 7 April 1928, p.149.
9. In 1921 the National Federation of Women Workers amalgamated with the National Union of General Workers and the Women's Trade Union League became the Women's department of the TUC. In many cases even women's control over their own sections was lost, and few mixed unions treated women's issues as priorities. Most unions

- also had lower subscriptions and fewer benefits for women members. Clegg, History of British Trade Unions, pp.200, 304, 309. E. Roberts, Women's Work 1840-1940 (London, Macmillan, 1988), pp.71-2. S. Boston, Women Workers and the Trade Union Movement (London, Davis-Poynter, 1980), pp.127, 148-50. J. Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950 (Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1984), p.176. M. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959 (London, Macmillan, 1992), pp.99-100. Barbara Drake had drawn attention to these problems in 1920. B. Drake, Women in Trade Unions (London, Virago, [1920] 1984), pp.210-19.
10. This pattern was followed to a lesser extent by other white collar unions. Separate women's unions remained in the civil service, while the small Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries continued as a single sex union until 1940.
 11. B. Simon, The Politics of Educational Reform 1920-1940 (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), pp.10-11, 88-112, 294-6. L. A. Selby-Bigge, The Board of Education (London, Putnam & Co, 1934). D. W. Thoms, 'The Education Act of 1918 and the Development of Central Government Control of Education', Journal of Educational Administration and History VI:2 (1974), pp.26-30.
 12. H. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', in H. Smith (ed.), British Feminism in the Twentieth Century (Aldershot: Hants, Edward Elgar, 1990) pp.47, 52-5. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement pp.108-9.
 13. Only women over thirty who were householders, graduates or married to a ratepayer had been given the vote in 1918, but these included many teachers. At the 1917 NFWT conference Emily Phipps, the wartime president, put forward the idea that women had common political interests that were not answered by the existing party political system, and spoke of women's new political power. TES, 12 April 1917, p.122. Miss Phipps herself tested this out by standing for Parliament (unsuccessfully) as an Independent candidate in the 1918 general election. NUWT Records. Box 69. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.52-3. H. Kean, Deeds Not Words: The Lives of Suffragette Teachers (London, Pluto Press, 1990), pp.88-9.
 14. For discussion of lobbying as an interwar feminist tactic see D. Doughan, Lobbying for Liberation: British Feminism 1918-1968 (London, City of London Polytechnic, 1980). B. Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries: Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), pp.1-10. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp. 51, 111. Also see comment by Lady Astor: PRO. CAB 27/226, CP 467(23), Letter from Astor to Sir R. Hall, 15 November 1923. Phipps, History of the NUWT, pp.60-1, 67-8. M. Pierotti, The Story of the National Union of Women Teachers (London, NUWT, 1963), pp.21, 31.
 15. NUWT Records. See, for example, Box 69, Box 300. In 1921 the NUWT worked with the Women's Freedom League to protest against the dismissal of a married woman doctor by St Pancras Borough Council, and in 1922 took part in a conference of women's organisations to consider the question of marriage bars. The Vote, 14 Oct 1921, p.644. TES, 11 Feb 1922, p.64; 12 Aug 1922, p.378. AAM, Annual Report (December 1921), p.8; (March 1922); (November 1922), p.6; (July 1923), p.9; (February 1924), p.30; (November 1924), pp.7-8.

16. See discussion in Chapter Three. W. Holtby, Women (London, John Lane The Bodley Head, 1934), chapters 3 and 4.
17. Historians suggest a variety of reasons for this; the sense that the worst inequalities were gone, the lack of a single grievance to campaign on, the association of feminism with old-fashioned sexual prudery, women's greater interest in seeking marriage, and competition from other political causes. These reasons did not all apply to teachers, however. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', p.62. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.260-3, 313. O. Banks, Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of First Wave Feminism (Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986), pp.70-1. This problem grew so acute for the NUWT that in 1938 it organised a Youth Conference, 'to give the younger members some knowledge of the significance of the women's movement'. NUWT, A Short History of the Union to 1956 (London, NUWT, 1956), p.3.
18. This was also a consequence of the renewed emphasis on a heterosexual lifestyle discussed in Chapters Three and Six.
19. Interview with Miss Ruth Drysdale, 8 September 1989.
20. Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries, pp.7, 311, 314. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.73-6, 235-6. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', p.62. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, pp.71-2, 142-3.
21. For general discussion of the ideas of equality versus difference in the history of feminism see: D. Riley, 'Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History (London, Macmillan, 1988). J. Scott, 'Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism', Feminist Studies 14:1 (1988), pp.33-50. K. Offen, 'Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach', Signs 14:1 (1988), pp.119-57. (Offen uses different labels, but addresses the same tensions within feminism.)
22. For discussion of these changes in the 1920s see J. Alberti, Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-28 (London, Macmillan, 1989), chapter 7. Lewis, Women in England, pp.102-6. S. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism in the Making of the British Welfare State', Radical History Review 43 (1989), pp.86-110. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s'. The terms 'new' and 'old' feminism were coined by Winifred Holtby in an article 'Feminism Divided' in The Yorkshire Post 26 July 1926, and reprinted in Time and Tide 6 August 1926. P. Berry and A. Bishop, Testament of a Generation: The Journalism of Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby (London, Virago, 1985), pp.47-50.
23. Scott, 'Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference'.
24. *Ibid*, pp.47, 49-50.
25. S. Holton, Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1918 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter 1. Lewis, Women in England, pp.95-7. P. Levine, Victorian Feminism 1850-1900 (London, Hutchinson, 1987), pp.61-3, 71. J. Rendall, 'Introduction', in J. Rendall (ed.), Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987) Riley, Am I That Name?, pp.77-8, 83, 91.
26. E. Mappen, 'Strategies for Change: Social Feminist Approaches to the Problems of Women's Work' and D. Thom, 'The Bundle of Sticks: Women, Trade Unionists and Collective Organisation before 1918',

- in A. John (ed.), Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918 (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986). Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, p.99. Banks, Becoming a Feminist, p.102.
27. From Rathbone's presidential address to the NUSEC in 1929, quoted in Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', p.56.
 28. Lewis, Women in England, pp.103-4. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism', pp.86-7. Offen, 'Defining Feminism'.
 29. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', p.54. Martin Pugh argues more strongly that the development of difference (or as he terms it, domesticity) within British feminism, meant that women shrewdly worked with the grain of contemporary society and politics. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.xii, 102-3, 114-15, 236-7, 244, 249, 312.
 30. The inspiration of Mrs Pankhurst continued to be honoured by an annual NUWT ceremony at her statue in Westminster Gardens into the 1930s. Woman Teacher, 19 July 1935, p.353. This profound experience of suffrage feminism made the main body of older NUWT women appear a very different political generation to the younger teachers, as Nan McMillan commented. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 25 July 1986.
 31. Feminist organisations also independently campaigned on the women teachers' behalf. The Six Point Group had equal pay for women teachers as one of its six points, and Time and Tide and The Women's Leader published many discussions of equality issues as they affected teachers. See, for example, Time and Tide, 9 February 1923, pp.142-4 on equal pay.
 32. Woman Teacher, 7 December 1934; 15 February 1935; 21 June 1935; 5 July 1935; 13 September 1935.
 33. M. Zimmeck, 'Strategies and Stratagems for the Employment of Women in the British Civil Service, 1919-1939', The Historical Journal 27:4 (1984), p.906. H. Martindale, Women Servants of the State (London, Allen and Unwin, 1938), pp.69-72, 98-101. The women Post Office workers on the other hand were not very active in pursuit of equality at work. Grint, 'Equal pay in the Post Office', pp.100-1. Teachers did try to assert some common links with women in industry from time to time, though their approach was quite different.
 34. P. Thane, 'The Women of the British Labour Party and Feminism, 1906-1945', in H. Smith (ed.), British Feminism in the Twentieth Century (Aldershot: Hants, Edward Elgar, 1990), pp.132-4.
 35. *Ibid*, pp.140-1. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.132, 137-8. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism', pp.96-9. L. Walker, 'Women in the Labour Party in the 1920s and 1930s', unpublished paper given to Manchester Women's History Group, 17 May 1990.
 36. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s'. Scott, 'Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference', p.39. Offen, 'Defining Feminism', p.154.
 37. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism', p.106.
 38. Similarly, though other welfare measures concerning mothers and children received some political attention in the interwar years, the feminist difference arguments on these issues were rejected, while equality reforms which would widen women's roles (the

abolition of the marriage bar, for instance) barely got onto the agenda. The 1925 Guardianship of Infants Act merely improved the legal position of mothers, rather than giving them equal guardianship rights with fathers, as the original feminist Bill had provided for. Rathbone's campaign for the endowment of motherhood gradually lost its specifically feminist thrust and became a campaign for family allowances on the grounds of alleviating child poverty. H. Land, 'The Introduction of Family Allowances: an Act of Historic Justice?', in C. Ungerson (ed.), Women and Social Policy: A Reader (London, Macmillan, 1985). Lewis, Women in England, p.105. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism', p.99. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', pp.55, 57. Pugh also begins to concede that difference could be a problematic strategy for feminism. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.249, 312.

39. TES, 19 May 1921, p.227. (NAS Conference.)
40. TES, 26 April 1924, p.180. (Presidential address at NAS Conference.)
41. Zimmeck, 'Women in the British Civil Service'.
42. Male radiographers in the 1930s, fearing the feminisation of the occupation, tried to establish an equivalence between masculinity and technical competence, and between femininity and patient-centred, caring skills. This battle of demarcation was similarly carried out largely at a discursive level. A. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy (London, Routledge, 1992), pp.197, 203-4 and chapter 6.
43. M. Glucksmann, Women Assemble: Women workers and the new industries in inter-war Britain (London, Routledge, 1990), pp.8, 193. L. Grant, 'Women in a car town: Coventry, 1920-45', in P. Hudson and W. R. Lee (eds.), Women's Work and the family economy in historical perspective (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), pp.223-244. Pedersen, 'The Failure of Feminism', pp.96-99. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.137-8. Roberts, Women's Work, p.67. Thane, 'British Labour Party and Feminism', pp.140-1. S. Walby, 'Gender Politics and Social Theory', Sociology 22:2 (1988), pp.223-4.
44. The extent to which secession threatened the NUT is difficult to assess. Women could hold dual membership of the NUT and NUWT during the 1920s.
45. In 1922 the NUT admitted a loss of 700 members in Lancashire, 600 in Yorkshire and 300 in London. TES, 15 April 1922, p.175. (Report of NUT conference) NUT, Annual Report (1921), p.lxiv. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 21 June 1919. NUT Decisions (Executive Committee minutes), August 1922-May 1923. In London the NUT could only muster 10,429 members out of 18,600 London elementary school teachers in 1925, 56% compared to a national unionisation rate of 77%. It was reported in 1919 that the NAS had recruited 95% of Merseyside men teachers, and the union continued to be strong in this area. Even by 1931 nearly half of NAS membership was found in Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and London. TES, 21 January 1922, p.33; 3 June 1922, p.260; 6 March 1926, p.116; 28 March 1931, p.117; 16 May 1931, p.180. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1926, p.545. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/4/3/1, Annual Report (1920). MSS 38A/3/H15/3. C. M. Kelly, 'The

National Association of Schoolmasters: The Story of a Pressure Group' (thesis, 1959), p.39.

46. TES, 19 April 1930, p.177. Also see TES, 19 March 1932, p.102; 22 April 1933, p.125.
47. Schoolmaster, 8 February 1919, p.179; 8 May 1920, p.915; 4 September 1920, p.339; 18 December 1920, p.1063; 18 June 1921, p.1115; 26 January 1923, p.127; 9 February 1923, p.207; 26 October 1923, p.631; 15 August 1924, p.215; 19 September 1924, p.391; 28 November 1924, p.807.
48. Schoolmaster, 26 January 1923, p.127. Also see 18 December 1920, p.1063.
49. TES, 21 March 1918, p.133; 12 June 1919, p.294. Women's Leader, 23 April 1920, p.281. NUT, Annual Report (1922), p.xxxvi.
50. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 10, What the Union does for Women Teachers (reprinted October 1921, July 1923).
51. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 47, Why Women Teachers Should Be Members (1923-1930).
52. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 56, Women Teachers and the Burnham Award (1925). The Ladies Committee did, however, successfully press for the appointment of a woman organiser in the mid 1920s since: 'On the surface our Union looks like a man managed affair.' NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, 18 March 1924. Also see 17 April 1926; 29 May 1926. NUT, Annual Report (1925), pp.xl, lxxiii.
53. NUT, Annual Report (1935), p.xlviii.
54. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 93, Men Membership (c.1931).
55. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1921, p.672.
56. Schoolmaster, 13 April 1923, p.640.
57. TES, 26 April 1924, p.177; 18 April 1925, p.157.
58. Schoolmaster, 29 April 1922, p.744. Also see 1 May 1930, p.854.
59. TES, 27 September 1917, p.375; 31 March 1921, p.141; 26 April 1924, p.177; 13 April 1929, p.170; 11 January 1930, p.12; 13 January 1934, p.14.
60. In the interwar years there were only 3 or 4 women on the NUT's 25 member Burnham panel. TES, 18 January 1930, p.23.
61. Subjects of the Address at the Women's Meeting at the NUT Conference in the 1930s:
1930: Miss Gardner (NUT) - Educational and Professional Problems of the Day.
1931: Various subjects by women executive members.
1932: Miss Gardner - Family Allowances.
1933: Mrs Helena Normanton - Are Women Really Advancing?
1934: Dr Letitia Fairfield - Health of the Professional Woman.
1935: Miss Winifred Holtby - Women in the Modern World.
1936: Miss Jennie Lee - School and Teacher in Other Countries.
1937: Lady Astor - Nursery Infant Care.
1938: Miss Mary Somerville - Keeping Oneself Well-Informed.
62. Schoolmaster, 1 April 1932, p.605.
63. Boston, Women Workers in the Trade Union Movement, p.127. Lewis, Women in England, p.176. Roberts, Women's Work, p.72. Walby, 'Gender Politics', pp.227-8.

64. TES, 19 April 1930, p.177. She was a Labour MP in 1931 and 1945 and was also well known for organising the evacuation of Basque children to England during the Spanish Civil War. The Times, 19 September 1977. The Teacher, 23 September 1977, p.2. Daily Telegraph, 19 September 1977. Cambridge Daily News, 22 April 1930. L. Manning, A Life for Education: An Autobiography (London, Victor Gollancz, 1970).
65. Schoolmaster, 25 April 1930, p.784.
66. Schoolmaster, 25 April 1930, p.794. Also see NUT, Annual Report (1930), for transcript of her presidential address.
67. Schoolmaster, 16 October 1930, p.588; 20 November 1930, p.795. Mrs E. V. Parker, president in 1938, also encouraged women teachers' activity within the NUT. She was prominent in the nursery and infant schools movement and concerned with juvenile welfare. Schoolmaster, 23 February 1939, p.345. NUT, Annual Report (1938). Manchester Guardian, 29 March 1937. Daily Herald, 16 April 1938.
68. P. H. J. H. Gosden, The Development of Educational Administration in England and Wales (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1966), Chapter 6. A. E. Ikin, Organisation and Administration of the Education Department (London, Pitman, 1926). Selby-Bigge, Board of Education, passim.
69. Summerfield, 'Women and the Professional Labour Market', p.47. Journal of Education, February 1925, p.110. I have suggested earlier that the proportion of women working in mixed secondary schools was around 30%, based on the number of pupils in these schools. The discrepancy between this and the 40% of AAM members in such schools may be due to a higher proportion of these women teachers joining the Association during this period.
70. AAM, Annual Report (1921), p.11; also see (May 1925), p.8.
71. Regular meetings were held of senior mistresses to discuss their status and position. This Committee periodically drew attention to the lack of uniformity in the level of responsibility and extra allowances enjoyed by senior mistresses.
72. AAM, Annual Report (January 1932), pp.29-30; (January 1934), pp.31-4.
73. AAM, Annual Report (October 1928); (May 1931); (January 1934), p.84; (January 1935), p.83; (January 1938); (January 1939), pp.61-3, 74-5. But the AAM apparently failed to secure the agreement of the AMA to this policy. AAM, Annual Report (January 1934), p.84.
74. AAM, Annual Report (January 1939), p.60.
75. AAM, Annual Report (January 1934), p.33. G. Partington, Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century (Windsor: Berks, NFER, 1976), p.44.
76. TES, 19 May 1921, p.227. (NUWT conference.) TES, 12 February 1927, p.81. NUWT, Annual Report (1926); (1930), p.15.
77. TES, 3 January 1925, p.10. (NUWT conference.)
78. TES, 7 January 1928, p.6. (NUWT conference.)
79. NUWT Records. Box 93. Printed Circular, March 1934. The NUWT also argued that equal opportunities should apply to the

- curriculum too, and if domestic subjects were to be taught in schools, they should be taught to both sexes as 'a more equal preparation for future home life'. TES, 10 January 1931, p.18. Also see S. King, 'Feminists in Teaching: The National Union of Women Teachers, 1920-1945', in M. Lawn and G. Grace (eds.), Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work (London, Falmer, 1987).
80. TES, 5 January 1924, p.6; 13 April 1929, p.170; 17 October 1931, p.406. NUWT, Memorandum on Reorganisation and Headships of Schools (London, NUWT, May 1928).
 81. Presidential address, NUWT Conference, Daily Herald, 3 January 1935. Also see, Manchester Guardian, 31 December 1930. TES, 4 January 1930, p.4. NUWT Records. Box 93, report of NUWT activity in Ilford, The Recorder, 21 March 1935.
 82. TES, 5 January 1924, p.6. Evening News, 12 February 1930. This argument is still made by feminists today. For contemporary discussion see Dale Spender, Invisible Women: The Schooling Scandal (London, Writers and Readers, 1982), pp.54-61.
 83. NUWT Records. Box 93. Printed Circular, March 1934. Arguing for separatism is not the same as arguing for difference. Other professional women have also resorted to it, often alongside equality arguments. Women doctors, for example, attempted to open up separate gender-specific routes into medicine for women, via the London School of Medicine for Women. Witz, Professions and Patriarchy, pp.89, 195.
 84. NUWT Records. Box 93, Equal Opportunities. NUWT, Memorandum on Reorganisation and Headships of Schools (May 1928), p.3. TES, 12 February 1927, p.81; 10 March 1928, p.116; 29 December 1928, p.564; 13 April 1929, p.170; 3 January 1931, p.6, and many other reports of NUWT views.
 85. NUWT, Memorandum on Reorganisation and Headships of Schools. TES, 12 October 1929, p.449.
 86. TES, 12 February 1927, p.81. Also see 5 January 1929, p.6; 3 January 1931, p.6. NUWT Records. Box 93. NUWT Memorandum to LEAs, February 1934.
 87. Manchester Guardian, 7 January 1933. (NUWT conference.) NUWT, Memorandum on Reorganisation and Headships of Schools.
 88. See, for example, TES, 6 April 1929, p.160. These sentiments were reiterated at every NAS conference.
 89. Report to LEAs by NAS, News Chronicle, 25 January 1934. Also see The Times, 19 April 1938. TES, 22 April 1933, p.126; 15 April 1939, p.142.
 90. TES, 10 April 1926, p.172; 10 March 1928, p.116; 14 April 1928, p.160; 6 April 1929, p.160; 24 April 1937, p.136.
 91. PRO. CAB 27/386, EBC(29)31, 11 May 1929. Ed 24/1820, letter of 29 April 1930, referring to House of Commons answer on 12 December 1929. Ed 24/1820, letter from H. Rambotham to Capt. W. F. Strickland MP, 29 March 1934. CAB 27/590, EBC, 8 November 1935.
 92. NUT, Executive Committee Minutes, October 1924. NUT, The Hadow Report and After (September 1928). TES, 10 March 1928, p.116; 29 December 1928, p.564; 9 March 1929, p.116; 11 January 1930, p.12.

93. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 42, Group Home Rule - A Reply to the NAS (1924). The NUT did not take up the issue of promotion and reorganisation in its leaflets aimed at recruiting women.
94. NUT Propaganda leaflet no.88, The NAS states the Union is not in favour of men teachers for boys! That is not true (1926). TES, 13 April 1929, p.170. News Chronicle, 22 March 1934. The union also argued that this would be to the educational benefit of the children.
95. NUT Propaganda leaflet no.128, A Heart to Heart Talk (1934). Also see Manchester Guardian, 8 June 1933.
96. TES, 12 February 1927, p.81. Woman Teacher, 8 March 1929; 27 March 1931.
97. Woman Teacher, 13 July 1933.
98. Schoolmaster, 17 April 1925, p.719.
99. They alleged that between May 1929 and May 1930 over 200 such advertisements had appeared. NUT, Ladies Committee minutes, November 1930.
100. Schoolmaster, 21 April 1933, p.674.
101. But the NUWT was quite a powerful propaganda force in relation to its size. Its members mounted local campaigns and deputations to press their views on equal opportunities, and claimed success in achieving gradual acceptance by many LEAs of their policy that the best person should be appointed to headships irrespective of sex. The union inspired questions on women teachers and amalgamation in the House of Commons, and in 1929 promoted a Private Members Bill to give publicity to the problem. NUWT, Annual Reports (1926-37) Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.20, 22. TES, 12 February 1927, p.81; 8 February 1930, p.61; 19 February 1938, p.59.
102. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.117. NUWT, Annual Report (1926, 1935). Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.28, 30-2. TES, 10 March 1928, p.116; 7 April 1928, p.149.
103. PRO. Ed 108/11, Minutes of Burnham Committee, 1919-24; 25 September 1919, p.2. Speech by Sir James Yoxall, General Secretary of the NUT and leader of the teachers' panel. 6 May 1920, p.11; 20 May 1920, p.12. Also see TES, 8 January 1920, p.20. AAM, Annual Report (1921), p.10. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.48. The 4:5 ratio, which remained throughout the interwar period and beyond, did represent an improvement in most women teachers' pay compared to men's, as detailed in Chapter Two.
104. Schoolmaster, 18 June 1921, p.1115. The same argument was put forward again ten years later. TES, 20 February 1932, p.66.
105. AAM, Annual Report (November 1923), p.3; (March 1924), p.18; (February 1925), pp.24-5; (March 1925), pp.4-5. PRO. Ed 108/11, Minutes of Burnham Committee, 16 November 1923; 27 June 1924.
106. AAM, Annual Report (May 1936), p.5.
107. TES, 25 April 1925, p.172. Also see 18 April 1925, p.157; 18 July 1925, p.314. The only time equal pay was raised at the NUT annual conference between 1919 and 1938 was in 1930, when an intervention by two women members in a salary debate: 'got

virtually what they sought - a reaffirmation of Union policy on the principle of equal pay.' Schoolmaster, 1 May 1930, p.355.

108. In its journal The Woman Teacher the NUWT published detailed critiques of the Burnham recommendations. Large equal pay campaigns were organised by the union. It lobbied the government by means of deputations, and sympathisers raised the subject in the Commons. Women's Leader, 21 May 1920, p.358. PRO. Ed 24/1783, Equal Pay 1919-35. Standard letter to MPs from NUWT, 26 February 1920. TES, 17 May 1924, p.210; 11 October 1924, p.420; 18 May 1935, p.164. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.14, 43-4.
109. TES, 23 October 1919, p.534; 9 December 1922, p.538; 5 January 1924, p.6; 3 January 1925, p.10; 24 January 1925, p.40; 25 April 1931, p.147; 23 May 1931, p.194.
110. PRO. Ed 108/12. Burnham Committee Minutes 1925-35.
111. V. Greenhalgh, 'The Movement of Teachers' Salaries, 1920-68', Journal of Educational Administration and History 1:1 (1968), pp.29-30.
112. NUWT, Annual Report (1931), p.20; (1932), pp.13,19. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 25 July 1986. Nan McMillan was a leading member of the NUWT in the 1930s and was elected president in 1939. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.116.
113. AAM, Annual Report (January 1921), p.45; (November 1924), p.8; (July 1929), pp.7-9; (February 1930), p.29; (January 1932), p.34; (July 1935), pp.8-9; (May 1936), p.6; (July 1936), pp.6, 11; (January 1937), pp.57-61. NUWT, Annual Report (1931), p.16; (1935), pp.11, 16; (1936), p.9.
114. Phipps, History of the NUWT, p.68. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, pp.18, 31-2, 44.
115. Letters and articles from Eleanor Rathbone and the Family Endowment Society to TES, 8 November 1924, p.453; 26 March 1932, p.109. For other discussion of the idea see: 18 October 1924, p.429; 19 December 1931, p.473; 2 January 1932, p.6; 19 March 1932, p.92. Journal of Education, January 1925, p.15; February 1925, p.108 - letter from Rathbone. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', pp.48, 57-8. Land, 'The Introduction of Family Allowances'.
116. NUWT Records. Box 77. Correspondence between the NUWT and the NUSEC, 1924-27. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.31. TES, 5 May 1921, p.204; 2 January 1932, p.6. The issue of family allowances and teachers' salaries came up for debate again in 1932, and the NUWT confirmed its view. NUWT, Annual Report (1932), pp.4-5.
117. NUWT Records. Box 77, letter to the NUSEC, 21 June 1926. In fact the NUWT supported the women who split from the NUSEC the following year and was itself heavily involved in setting up the Open Door Council.
118. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.31. Also see NUWT Records. Box 176. Report of Joint Deputation of Women's Organisations organised by the Equal Rights General Election Campaign and the NUSEC.
119. AAM, Annual Report (February 1930), p.30; (February 1925), pp.25-6; (March 1926); (July 1929), p.11. And see her letter to Journal of Education (February 1925), p.110.

120. AAM, Annual Report (January 1932), p.35.
121. The men feared that such a scheme might depress overall salaries. The AAM decided to refrain from urging a scheme which affected the men more, and to which the men were opposed. AAM, Annual Report (January 1933), p.67; (March 1933).
122. In fact the Tomlin Commission on the Civil Service (1929-31) opposed equal pay, though it advocated 'a fair field and no favour' for women in the civil service.
123. AAM, Annual Report (February 1930), pp.29-31.
124. AAM, Annual Report (January 1932), p.34.
125. TES, 3 April 1937, p.112. For other examples of NAS use of this argument see: TES, 5 June 1919, p.276; 28 April 1921, p.195; 10 April 1926, p.172; 13 May 1933, p.149; 11 April 1936, p.132.
126. NAS Archive. MSS 38A/4/3/1. NAS, First Annual Report (1920), p.23. TES, 13 May 1933, p.149.
127. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence (1946), p.24. Evidence given by NAS.
128. TES, 3 June 1922, p.260; 18 April 1925, p.159; 12 June 1926, p.247; 2 January 1937, p.3.
129. TES, 27 November, 1919, p.600. Also see: TES, 22 May 1919, p.241; 23 April 1927, p.191. Royal Commission on Equal Pay, Evidence (1946), p.21, para 26.
130. NUT Propaganda leaflet no. 42, Replies to the NAS (1924); no. 108, Union Salary Policy (1932); no. 133, The Professional Basis of Salaries (1935).
131. Gosden, Evolution of a Profession, p.113.
132. TES, 8 January 1920, p.21.
133. NUT Executive Minutes: September, November, December, 1923. TES, 1 April 1922, pp.147, 193; 12 January 1924, p.15; 13 April 1924, p.171.
134. Schoolmaster, 9 Feb 1923, p.207. NUT Decisions (Executive Committee minutes), July 1922; September 1923. NUT Ladies Committee minutes, 17 November 1922.
135. Schoolmaster, 2 April 1921, p.670; 1 May 1930, p.896.
136. Schoolmaster, 21 April 1933, p.674.
137. AAM, Annual Report (May 1935), p.6; (October 1935), p.3; (January 1936), p.21.
138. AAM, Annual Report (July 1935), pp.8-9; (May 1936), p.6. The issue was turned into a vote of confidence by the government and her victory was reversed. Parliamentary Debates (302) col.2211-47, 7 June 1935; (310) col.2017-82, 1 April 1936; col.2472-8, 6 April 1936.
139. AAM, Annual Report (January 1937), pp.57-61.
140. Interview with Miss Sarah Wainwright, 26 May 1989.
141. NUT, Parliamentary Committee minutes, June 1935.
142. W. G. Cove, Equal Pay in the Teaching Profession (London, National Union of Teachers, 1938), Part 1: pp.5, 23; Part 2, pp.5-6. This pamphlet reprinted a series of articles previously

published in the Schoolmaster, 10 February 1938; 3 March 1938; 17 March 1938.

143. Schoolmaster, 20 April 1939, p.766.
144. NUT, Annual Report (1939), pp.cvii-cviii.
145. TES, 19 May 1921, p.227. Also see: 12 August 1922, p.378; 9 January 1926, p.22; 11 January 1936, p.10.
146. TES, 7 January 1922, p.2; 12 January 1924, p.18; 10 January 1925, p.18. LCC. EO/STA/2.13, Memorandum sent by NUWT, 6 February 1926.
147. LCC. EO/STA/2.13, Memorandum sent by NUWT, 6 February 1926.
148. The Times, 5 November 1929 (letter). TES, 19 July 1924, p.318; 16 February 1929, pp.78-80. LCC. EO/STA/2.14, letter from LTA to LCC, 23 July 1934.
149. NUT Parliamentary and Superannuation Committee minutes, 17 May 1930 (letter from LTA).
150. The motion was eventually carried by 37 to 13, that is, by three-quarters of those present. AAM, Annual Report (July 1923), pp.4-5.
151. In 1937 the secretary said that the marriage bar was gradually being withdrawn for teachers. AAM, Annual Report (January 1937), p.18.
152. AAM, Annual Report (January 1939), pp.42-4.
153. AAM, Annual Report (May 1923), p.4; (February 1926), p.30.
154. NUT Law Committee minutes, 1 September 1922.
155. NUT Law Committee minutes, 1 December 1922, letter from Rhondda women teachers.
156. The NUT condemned the perversity of the Rhondda women and justified their own lack of support, taking the view that the failure of the case would threaten the position of married women teachers elsewhere by publicising the freedom of LEAs to carry out these dismissals. NUT, Circular 48/23 (May 1923).
157. Schoolmaster, 6 September 1928, p.352.
158. NUWT, Annual Report (1926). Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.23.
159. NUWT Records. Box 176. Box 300. TES, 12 August 1922, p.378.
160. PRO. Ed 24/1744. Deputation, 27 July 1923. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.21. For AAM activity see: AAM, Annual Report (March 1922), p.4; (March 1923), p.4; (November 1923), p.6.
161. Parliamentary Debates (205) col.1175-1234, 29 April 1927. TES, 30 April 1927, pp.201-2; 14 May 1927, p.227. W. B. Creighton, 'The Development of the Legal Status of Women in Employment in Great Britain' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1973), pp.541-2.
162. Parliamentary Debates (240) col.1967-70, 2 July 1930. TES, 12 July 1930, p.315.
163. NUT Parliamentary and Superannuation Committee minutes, 16 July 1926; 16 October 1926; 21 May 1927; 18 June 1927; 22 October 1927. TES, 14 May 1927, p.227.

164. It was heavily involved, for example, in the campaign against the 1931 Anomalies Regulations, and in later political activities affirming the right of married women to paid employment. NUWT, Annual Reports (1932, 1933, 1935). Holtby, Women, p.113. This is an important, if rare, example of cross-class co-operation by women workers in this period of attacks on their status. Also see NUWT Records. Box 267, Restrictive Legislation.
165. NUT, Annual Report (1921), p.1; (1922), p.xlix; (1923), pp.lxxvii, lxxx. NUT Decisions (Executive Committee minutes), January 1923.
166. NUWT Records. Box 177, letters from Miss Fortey (Leicester councillor), 24 March 1936 and Miss Brown (local NUWT Secretary), 26 March 1936. Woman Teacher, 10 April 1936. Also see NUWT Records. Box 175, circulars, letters, press cuttings, January-May 1937 (Sunderland). East Anglian Daily Times, 20 July 1938. Birmingham Evening Despatch, 22 February 1934. Schoolmaster, 13 August 1936 (Leeds).
167. NUWT Records. Boxes 175, 177, 300, letters. TES, 12 August 1922, p.378. Pierotti, Story of the NUWT, p.20.
168. Woman Teacher, 3 October 1919, p.12; 24 October 1919, p.34. During the interwar years NUWT members were encouraged to put pressure on local council, as well as Parliamentary candidates at election times, on a range of feminist issues. Most NUWT members seem to have been Labour or Liberal voters, and there were also a handful of Communist Party members. A number of NUWT women did take up the challenge to stand for Council elections themselves. In 1924 Miss Marion Allport successfully secured election to Dartmouth Borough Council as the Independent and Progressive candidate. In the 1925 London Borough elections Ethel Froud, the union's General Secretary, stood for St Pancras as a Labour candidate, though she failed to get elected. NUWT Records. Box 69. (Local Government.) TES, 4 Jan 1936, p.6. Kean, Deeds Not Words, p.91.
169. Thane, 'British Labour Party and Feminism'. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, pp.129-39.
170. Thane, 'British Labour Party and Feminism', p.140. Pugh, Women and the Women's Movement, p.133.
171. NUWT Archive. Box 69. See especially: NUWT questionnaires in Ilford, 1922; Walthamstow and York branches, 1929. Miss Froud's election address in St Pancras election (with other Labour candidates), November 1925. Interviews with Mrs Nan Mcmillan, 25 July 1986; 29 July 1987. Hilda Kean suggests that the NUWT were much less successful in pressing their views on the Labour Party at national level. Kean, Deeds Not Words, p.94.
172. Boston, Women Workers in the Trade Union Movement, pp.140-3.
173. NUWT Records. Box 300, letters February, March 1925.
174. NUWT Records. Box 8, Box 69, for details of Agnes Dawson's career and election campaign. Also see Time and Tide, 24 September 1920, pp.404-5. For a more detailed discussion of Agnes Dawson's political activities see A. Oram and H. Kean, 'Who Would Be Free Must Herself Strike The Blow', South London Record 3 (1988), pp.40-53.
175. NUWT Records. Box 69. Letter to London NUWT members, thanking them for assistance in her campaign, 7 March 1925. For her

speeches at this time see TES, 9 January 1926, p.22; 13 February 1926, p.74.

176. TES, 14 March 1925.

177. Interview with Mrs Nan McMillan, 25 July 1986.

178. NUWT Records. Box 175, papers, 1935. NUWT, Annual Report (1935), p.5. NUWT, A Short History of the Union to 1956 (London, NUWT, 1956), p.6. LCC. EO/STA/2/14. Employment of Married Women in the Education Service; Report by Education Officer, 9 January 1935. TES, 20 July 1935, pp.257-8; 11 January 1936, p.10. Agnes Dawson left her advisory post with the NUWT in 1937, at retirement age, and did not stand again for the LCC. She was still actively involved in local politics after her retirement to Newport, Essex, however, where she stood unsuccessfully for election to the parish council. NUWT Records. Box 69, letter from A. Dawson to M. Pierotti, 14 April 1946.

179. TES, 20 July 1935, pp.257-8.

180. TES, 23 September 1922, p.427. Woman Teacher, 6 October 1922, p.13.

181. Manchester Guardian, 8 March 1928; 3 February 1934; 6 February 1934. Manchester Evening Chronicle, 31 January 1934; 6 February 1934; 21 February 1934. News Chronicle, 30 January 1934; 1 February 1934. Woman Teacher, 6 October 1922, p.13 NUWT Records. Box 175, Box 300, letters and press cuttings.

182. NUWT Records. Box 175. The NUWT also claimed some responsibility for lifting (or preventing) a marriage bar in other areas including in Middlesex in 1935 and in Tottenham in 1938. NUWT Records. Box 175, action in Bacup, 1924. Letters January, March 1937. Box 176, letters, July 1938. TES, 7 December 1935, p.428. NUWT, Annual Report (1937), pp.5-6. East Anglian Daily Times, 20 July 1938.

CHAPTER SIX

THWARTED SPINSTERS?: MARITAL STATUS, FEMINIST POLITICS

AND WOMEN TEACHERS BETWEEN THE WARS

In the preceding chapters we have seen that one of the most significant reference points for women teachers, as for all women, was marital status. In a society where femininity was so closely tied to marriage, women teachers, around 90% of whom were spinsters, were anomalous. [1] Women teachers' feminist strategies around professional demands such as equal pay and an end to the marriage bar constantly came up against issues of marital status: the conventional family breadwinner model versus the supposedly affluent spinster, for example. Women's history has so far inspired little research on the twentieth-century spinster, though there is some work on the single woman's position in the family, and on the interwar feminist positions on sexuality and marriage. [2] Feminist teachers faced many difficulties between the wars in their project to pursue employment equality in a context of economic retrenchment and masculinist backlash against feminism. An added problem was the elaboration of the meanings attached to spinsterhood and marriage. While the use of 'difference' arguments by women teachers to defend the position of married women teachers was politically telling, it was also risky, in that it could backfire on spinster teachers. As indicated in Chapter Three, early twentieth-century sexology and psychology meant that single women began to be seen as unfulfilled and sexually repressed while married women could be represented as truly womanly, and by extension, possibly better teachers than their unfortunate spinster colleagues.

The idea that the staffing of schools by spinsters was undesirable began circulating in the interwar public and political debates on the marriage bar. A letter to a newspaper in 1937 asserted that married women were more successful teachers because they 'understand children in a way that is impossible to spinsters' and that all mothers should demand the repeal of this 'stupid and dangerous rule'. [3] This view of the respective merits of married and single women teachers was also echoed by official sources by the

end of the period. A 1944 Nuffield College Report commented that it was 'absurd and unwise to insist that all women teachers should be spinsters'. [4] In the same year the parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education similarly argued (in a private memo) against a marriage bar on the grounds that 'acute difficulties are not infrequently caused on staffs when a Head Mistress in her fifties who had led a life of repression has to deal with young and good looking assistants,' and that married women teachers were better able to deal with adolescent pupils than 'a sex-starved spinster'. [5]

This argument against spinsters was also used by feminist teachers themselves, on occasion. In the 1935 debate on the marriage bar in the London County Council, Agnes Dawson, the London councillor sponsored by the NUWT, argued:

To debar married teachers the opportunity to serve was to do a disservice to education. Men would not send their boys to schools where all the male teachers were celibates. They would consider it an unhealthy atmosphere. She claimed the same for the girls. [6]

This change in attitude towards spinsters therefore created a number of problems and contradictions for women teachers, both in their personal lives (some of which have already been discussed), and in their feminist politics, especially when they made arguments on the grounds of women's 'difference'. The suffrage movement had upheld the rights and lifestyle of single women as often preferable to marriage. But in the interwar period feminist teachers, like some elements of the broader women's movement, began to represent spinsters as less feminine, following ideas prevalent in the wider society.

This chapter returns again to examining the connections between subjectivity and meaning, and political strategies, mainly in the interwar period. How could the negative associations of spinsterhood be negotiated by women teachers, not just personally, but also politically? One way was to challenge the negative meanings of spinsterhood. The activities of feminist teachers show that there could be political intervention in the dominant meanings of spinsterhood, challenging, reworking and subverting them, as the ideas of new psychology were mediated by feminist doctors and writers. Responses could also be organised on a practical level, addressing some of the conflicts of personal subjectivity - the stigmatising of

spinsters - through political structures. Women teachers did this by creating new twentieth century versions of women's communities out of their teachers' associations, especially in the feminist NUWT. Although the women teachers' associations did not deliver much political success or advance equality claims very far in this period, they did provide useful community support for their members, a practical defence in the face of the denigration of spinsters, and an opportunity to organise a rewarding life. In this way feminist politics helped shape the lives of women teachers. Feminist politics around spinsterhood changed in the interwar years, but did not disappear.

Sexology, Psychology and Hostility to Spinster Teachers

Contempt for spinsters was no new development of the 1920s. In the mid nineteenth century 'redundant old maids' were scorned as having failed in the main business of a woman's life, the marriage market. [7] At this level of simply failing to marry, the spinster teacher stereotype continued throughout this period to echo that of the unfortunate Victorian governess. 'School teaching is regarded by the community at large as a very useful way of using up superfluous unmarried women.' [8] The notion that, lacking a husband, spinster teachers were cut off from the real life of the world, continued to be articulated in the interwar years. Secondary school mistresses, in particular, were often referred to as leading 'a cloistered life'. [9]

While this traditional stereotype of the spinster continued, it gained an additional inflection after the First World War, through the pathologising of spinsters' sexuality. Negative representations of single women changed in tone as a consequence of the influence of sexology and the new psychology, as several studies have shown. [10] These new 'sciences' placed a premium upon marriage, motherhood and heterosexual fulfilment for women's psychological happiness, a condition which spinsters were unable to attain. As discussed in Chapter Three, eugenic concern about the quality and quantity of the nation's children reinforced the idea that spinsters were failures because they were not mothers.

Sexology and psychology provided different understandings of the functions of the mind and body, but together they contributed to new

ideas on marriage, sexuality and the family. In his Studies in the Psychology of Sex (1897-1910), the British sexologist Havelock Ellis put forward the radical argument that it was normal for women to experience sexual desire and pleasure. More conservatively, he recommended that this sexual instinct needed to be exercised in marriage and motherhood. [11] These ideas found a wider constituency in the 1920s, especially through marriage manuals such as Marie Stopes' Married Love, first published in 1918. [12]

The British 'new psychology' of the interwar years was derived from the ideas of Freudian psycho-analysis which, it has been shown, were quite widely circulated among the educated public before 1920. [13] British psychologists preferred to dilute or reject Freud's premise that the sexual drive was the organising principle of mental life. Nevertheless, they retained his theories of the unconscious and of the mechanisms of repression and sublimation, and together with ideas from other writers (such as Jung's more positive and creative view of the unconscious), created an eclectic 'new psychology'. [14] Despite the rejection of Freud's stress on sexuality, the biologicistic emphasis of the new psychology on 'instincts' and the importance of the 'normal family' for the healthy development of children and adults, also contributed to the problematising of the spinster. According to this model, if sexual and parental instincts could not be expressed, their consequent repression might lead to anxiety, neuroses and even mental illness. The cocktail of ideas that constituted the new psychology became immensely fashionable in the 1920s, and psycho-analytic concepts ranging from repression to dream interpretation became common cultural references among the educated public. [15]

Though premised somewhat differently, both sexology and the new psychology posited heterosexuality as desirable and indeed necessary for women's health and happiness: single women faced the dangers of sexual repression and frustration, leading to complexes and neuroses. Those who had deliberately avoided or rejected marriage could be further pathologised as frigid. As the idea of marriage as a psychological as well as a social necessity for women gained ground in the interwar years, single and celibate women who lacked an outlet for their sexual and parental instincts were increasingly vulnerable to being seen as warped and unfulfilled. [16]

Sexology and psychology also categorised lesbian sexuality for the first time, but created an ambiguous overlap with spinsterhood. Ellis defined two types of lesbian, the congenital invert (the true lesbian), and the psuedo invert, the woman who might have been heterosexual, but who became homosexual either through seduction by the true invert, or as a result of living in an all-female environment. He included non-sexual attachments in his definition of lesbianism and further suggested that women could be quite unaware of their inverted natures. [17] Although sexology did not necessarily condemn the 'true' invert, only her psuedo companion, popular understanding did not make such a distinction; the lesbian was stigmatised along with the celibate woman. Indeed, now that the sexual instinct was identified in every woman, the deviant categories of spinster and lesbian could easily be confused, and female friendship increasingly came into question.

Legal challenges as well as sexological ideas raised the public profile of lesbianism in the period during and after the First World War. In a scandal which hit the headlines in 1918, the dancer Maude Allen failed in her libel action to counter the charge that she was a lesbian. Radclyffe Hall won an action for slander in 1920, which was also reported in the press. In 1921 lesbianism was discussed in Parliament, but the attempt to bring it within the scope of the criminal law in the same way as male homosexuality was defeated. [18] However it was the prosecution in 1928 of Radclyffe Hall's novel in defence of lesbianism, The Well of Loneliness, which really marked a watershed in public awareness of lesbianism. This obscenity trial aroused a huge amount of publicity, and it has been argued that after this point, close friendships between women or adolescent girls were more closely scrutinised as potentially abnormal. [19] There could be no more innocence about unmarried women.

Fussy provincial Edwardian parents gladly consigned their daughters clamouring for art, musical and other careers to the care of young women friends or aunts or cousins - anything provided that it was female and that no goings-on with men were allowed. And then came 'The Well of Loneliness' that rather dull novel, so disappointingly lacking in detail. And oh! the vicarages and country homes who felt their peace of mind forever

poisoned as they contemplated Daphne, Pamela, Joan and Margery all living together with unthinkable consequences. [20]

These new images of the sexually unfulfilled spinster and the mannish lesbian were also increasingly common in popular cultural representations. Women's magazines in the twenties, for example, cited psychological theories to urge women to preserve their femininity and seek marriage, and warned readers against following the example of 'the woman who tries to be a man ... those stiff-collared, short-haired, tailor-suited imitation males with which our clubs and streets are now abounding.' [21] In popular romance fiction, positive images of female friendship and fulfilled single women in their thirties (albeit inevitably rewarded in this genre by marriage) which can be found in the years before the First World War disappeared by the 1930s. [22] Interwar literary fiction, before and after The Well of Loneliness, showed spinster and lesbian characters of various types, usually unfavourably depicted. Annabel Faraday's study of the content of interwar novels with lesbian characters found that the most common occupation for these women was teaching, while 14 out of 49 novels were set in a school. [23]

Single women teachers were a particular target in these new representations of attacks on spinsters, echoed in the popular press, by doctors, educationalists and the NAS. Teachers were anomalous women in their marital status, in their economic position and in their political commitment as feminists. In all these areas they challenged existing norms of gender relations and created anxieties; in all these areas they could be identified as unfeminine. There were three overlapping negative images of the single woman teacher: as an unfulfilled celibate and hence undesirable role model, as the predatory lesbian teacher, and as the militant feminist man-hating spinster.

The celibate spinster teacher, it was suggested, might have a morbid effect on her pupils as a result of her own sexual repression. Sex reformers suggested that the 'cold-natured' woman, often 'very ill-equipped emotionally' could be harmful to pupils of both sexes.

As a teacher, the frigide wields considerable power over the unformed minds of her pupils. She rarely takes pains to examine the justice of her indictment of man, and her bias is obvious to

those whom she instructs. Her prudery is often imitated by the girls she is able to influence. [24]

In her book, Sex and the Young, published in 1926, Marie Stopes argued that pupils in single sex schools were negatively affected by unmarried teachers, of whom: 'a certain number will be embittered, and consciously or unconsciously will suffer some lack of balance, some inner thwarting and sense of failure in their own lives.' [25] The professional limitations of spinster teachers were also insinuated in the debate over men teachers for boys, by one prominent 'new' psychologist.

A warning of the danger of rearing a generation of 'spinsters' sons', by allowing boys in elementary schools to be taught only by women, was uttered by Dr H. Crichton-Miller ... They were likely to be warped in their development. [26]

Influenced by the new psychology, the 'progressive' educationalist A. S. Neill argued strongly that the sexually repressed person made a bad teacher.

Repressed sex always becomes converted into something else, often anxiety, sometimes nervous breakdown, probably sometimes physical breakdown, often just pure irritation and hate of life. ... It may be masculine arrogance on my part when I say that women teachers who have no sex life are more dangerous to children than men teachers in the same predicament ... [27]

Neill, who set up a fee-paying co-educational school, Summerhill, and published a number of books on education and teaching in the interwar years, elaborated his argument at length.

I have a very clear picture in my mind of the bad woman teacher. Her voice is shrill and all-pervading. Her sharp eye roves around the room glaringly. She constantly fusses about trifles. If she is allowed to, she straps a lot, boxes ears, raps over the knuckles with a ruler, shakes little devils into submission. But there is no need to go on. In nine cases out of ten the poor woman is only acting as a sex-starved woman will act, and the cure for this type of teacher is manifestly a love life. [28]

The second type of dangerous spinster teacher was the powerful predatory lesbian. Ellis had warned against single-sex schools as breeding grounds for psuedo-inversion among both teachers and girls.

Explicit attacks on spinster teachers as lesbians were rare, but the malevolent lesbian teacher certainly appeared in fiction from the First World War. A very popular contemporary novel, Clemence Dane's Regiment of Women published in 1917 depicted a powerful and sinister senior mistress who exploited her influence over a younger mistress and a girl pupil, wrecking their lives and causing the latter to commit suicide. [29] Clemence Dane - herself formerly a teacher - also wrote about 'the problem of emotional attachments between members of the same sex' in girls' schools in her non-fiction. [30]

..the present system of education does not render it impossible for a morbid and selfish woman to amuse herself and gratify her love of excitement by playing on this tendency to exaggerated hero-worship in the children and mistresses under her care. Such women do exist. [31]

She quoted a headmistress who had 'known at least four of these vampire women... and [had] heard of many others.' [32] Marie Stopes also warned that among an unmarried staff:

there is increasingly the risk that there may be one or other member ... who is partly or completely homo-sexual. ... it is not unknown (although it is generally hushed up) that such an individual may corrupt young pupils ... Such perverts are not so rare as normal wholesome people would like to believe ... [33]

She went on to give examples from girls' schools and advised: 'Any mistress who has a love-sick following, which she encourages instead of cooling off, should be watched most carefully...' [34]

Public criticism and stigmatisation of friendships between women teachers and between teachers and pupils increased during the interwar years. [35] By the 1930s women teachers were vulnerable to direct attack and insinuation on the grounds of sexual deviance. In an address given to an educational conference in 1935 it was said:

'The women who have the responsibility of teaching these girls are many of them themselves embittered, sexless or homosexual hoydens who try to mould the girls into their own pattern. And far too often they succeed.' Dr Williams declared that girls who have no desire to play combative games are cajoled and coerced into taking part by 'these thin-lipped, flat-chested, sadistic creatures'. [36]

This kind of accusation was extreme; most did not go so far. What is interesting about this particularly nasty example is that by the 1930s it was possible for attacks of this type to be made, backed up by a serious medical discourse. Similar views were expressed by A. S. Neill, using Ellis's ideas of the dangers of pseudo-inversion, in a discussion of homosexual 'pushes' (ie crushes) in girls' schools.

A system that puts the education of girls in the hands of a body of women who have no sex life is a mad one. It affords too much opportunity for jealousy. The homosexual woman does not want her girls to go on to heterosexuality, and I do not mean the conscious homosexual woman. She has her own outlet for sex: much more dangerous is the woman who is unconsciously homosexual, the woman who would be genuinely shocked at the mention of the word.

[37]

The conflation of spinsterhood, antagonism to men, and suspicion of lesbianism in the third negative image of the spinster teacher as feminist was already a constant theme in nineteenth- and twentieth-century anti-feminist rhetoric. Sexology and psychology strengthened this type of attack on interwar feminism which was taken up in particular by the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS). In 1920 a man teacher made a strong and sustained attack on the National Federation of Women Teachers as a body of 'jaundiced spinsters'. He quoted from a marriage manual to argue that feminist spinster teachers were living abnormal lives:

'Those who can marry and do not are ... deliberately disregarding their biological duty to the race to which they belong. Those who would marry and cannot are supremely unfortunate. Both of them are a menace to the society in which they live.' Now I submit that the NFWT is dominated by such as are here described, and that the unrest exhibited by that organisation is not caused by inadequate salaries, but by the morbid condition of its militant members. [38]

Sexological ideas of the pathological spinster were directly used to discredit feminist campaigning by women teachers. At the 1924 NAS conference, it was said: 'The claim of the teacher feminist was no longer for equal rights, but for the canonisation of the spinster.' [39] By 1939 women teachers were attacked by the NAS in terms which linked the mannish lesbian image to feminism. 'There is in the

teaching profession a small politically-minded minority of advanced feminists who curse their Maker that He did not allow them to enter this world wearing trousers.' [40]

Dealing with the Spinster Image: Women Teachers' Responses

The influence of these changing constructions of spinsterhood on women teachers themselves is difficult to assess, though they were likely to be circulating among educated and middle-class women. [41] Teachers had a professional interest in the new psychology; it was used in education in intelligence testing and in identifying and treating the maladjusted child, and the psychology of child development was studied at training colleges and teachers' educational conferences. [42] We have seen how negative perceptions of spinster teachers were voiced at educational conferences and in books on teaching, suggesting that the new psychology had a deeper and earlier penetration among teachers than the population as a whole. [43]

Nevertheless, these ideas, although influential, were not hegemonic, even in the 1930s after the new psychology had been quite widely popularised, and single women teachers as individuals took them on in varying ways. Some teachers did apply the new psychology to themselves, internalising the view of their having stunted lives. In a newspaper article of 1930, Ellen Wilkinson MP quoted a secondary school teacher who complained about her limited lifestyle.

'I would rather be married to a drunken collier who beat me every week-end than live as I am doing at present,' said my visitor
.... 'I know I'm becoming thwarted and spinsterly and my pupils despise me secretly for it. And what have I to look forward to?'
[44]

Some journalistic exaggeration may be evident here, reflecting public expectations of schoolmistresses. In any case, Wilkinson went on to comment: 'No one can pretend to the modern intelligent woman that marriage is the automatic solution of every psychological trouble.' [45] Some teachers internalised this negative identity to the extent that they were unwilling to seek friends among others similarly marginalised, regarding their colleagues as being 'as shallow as teaspoons' and leading 'very narrow lives'. [46] Miss Redford exhibited considerable self-hatred and frustration in declaring, 'I

loathe and detest living in a school, and think that women who teach are the most awful things that ever happened.' [47]

On the other hand there were plenty of schoolmistresses who apparently did not take these ideas on board at all. Some may have started out with positive role models of spinster life to guide them. Mary Clarke, who later became a head, wrote of her family life as an adolescent:

our social life was much enriched by visits from delightful unmarried women, relatives and friends of my mother. Looking back on their stimulating personalities and on the gifts which many of them possessed, I marvel at the lives and careers they achieved for themselves out of unpromising circumstances. [48]

Margaret Miles, who became a prominent headmistress and educationalist after the Second World War, quickly created a congenial life in her first permanent post as a secondary school teacher in a suburban town, despite living in lodgings.

I was at Westcliff for nearly five years. I worked hard, but I lived in a fairly carefree way. I read a lot... I played tennis at the local club, I went to dances, and I went to London to the theatre. I went home for half term or any special week-ends. I was interested in the League of Nations Union, and helped with the Nansen pioneer camps in Devon during the holidays.

My proudest possession was a second-hand Baby Austin, the 'pram' type, which I bought for £25 and drove recklessly and often, I regret to say, brakelessly, to all sorts of places. I could not really afford it and I suppose I should have saved my money, but it gave me a great deal of fun and a sense of adventure. [49]

Miles may have found it easier to establish a social life as a young woman, but her experiences show that the new psychology did not cast a shadow over all teachers.

Many teachers felt obliged to negotiate at least some aspects of the spinster image, while ignoring other elements. There was certainly a concern among many single women teachers to affirm their albeit unfulfilled heterosexual normality. Mary Clarke was keen to stress that she was attracted to men, though she never married: '... although I had been from childhood susceptible to the charms of the other sex, I was not prepared to accept marriage on these terms.' [50]

Other teachers suggested that a boyfriend or fiance had been killed in the First World War (in many cases genuinely of course), or in more general terms that they belonged to the postwar generation for whom there were insufficient men. This tactic was used to deflect aspersions on their normality by a wide cohort of women. [51]

The views of those teachers who wrote to Mass-Observation about themselves are interesting, since they show the state of affairs at the very end of this period in the late 1930s (or in some cases during the Second World War), when it might be supposed that new ideas about women's instincts and sexuality had become widely disseminated. However, as a self-conscious, self-selecting sample they may not have been typical. One teacher who replied to Mass-Observation had taken on the new ideas, but they were in competition with her professional identity and her opinion that the marriage bar was unfair:

In the past I would have preferred marriage and children, but would have felt resentful about giving up my work. I believe marriage is essential to a woman for her complete development and realisation. [52]

Some teachers were prepared to acknowledge certain feminine instincts, but fulfil them in less conventional ways. One single woman teacher wrote: 'I have a very strong maternal instinct (which was, I suppose, what compelled me to seek out a child to adopt, which I did in 1921 at the age of 36).' [53]

When women teachers expressed positive feelings about their spinsterhood, they may have moulded their subjective experiences to fit into acceptable conventions. The testimony of one 62-year-old spinster teacher to Mass-Observation provides a good example of this point.

I cannot remember ever having thought about marrying. I'm sure that I did not deliberately decide against it. I think I was too busy thinking about my profession and other things to bother about it. I liked the company of men, but never met one whom I had the slightest inclination to marry, and never had a love affair. While I think that a happy married life is probably preferable to a happy single life, when I see other people's husbands my usual feeling is one of thankfulness that I haven't one of my own. [54]

The writer is careful not to reject marriage and men in principle, or the idea that happy marriage is the best way to live. In this way she preserves a facade of normal femininity, and accedes to dominant ideas about marriage. But everything in her own experience mentioned here contradicts this norm, including prioritising her work over marriage and judging her friends and acquaintances' husbands as unattractive. Women teachers felt obliged to show familiarity with current ideas, but did not necessarily accept them wholesale. In her autobiography, a headmistress of the 1930s explained at great length the various manifestations of what she had observed as spinster teachers' frustration - yet also denied the existence of frustration in the psychological sense.

Perhaps [this frustration] will show itself in unsteadiness of judgement or control, in unreasonable prejudices, in uncertain or violent temper, in over-earnestness about professional work, in exclusive friendship, in aloofness from human beings and perhaps a dotting fondness for dogs and cats and birds ..., in an unwholesome and perverse view of the world, in bitterness about things in general and particularly men, and in all the odds and ends of pain and contrariety which can be briefly comprehended in the saying 'nerves'. Heaven forbid that I should say all these things are necessarily due to 'frustration' in the accepted sense! They may just as well spring from fatigue, a sluggish liver or lack of religion. [55]

While she has taken on the whole litany of spinsters' problems, the author is also trying to exercise denial, indicating perhaps a conflict between acknowledging medical expertise and a desire to defend her fellow teachers.

It might be assumed that women teachers who lived with a friend had to negotiate the increasing doubt about 'obsessive' female friendships, possible aspersions on their femininity, and the growing social awareness of lesbianism, by the 1930s. One advice book to spinsters, published in 1935, observed that: 'within recent years the subject of sexual inversion or homosexuality has become a topic of frequent discussion in certain sections of society' and that as a result, 'friendly couples of the same sex are now much more readily suspected of homosexual tendencies than would have been the case, say, twenty years ago.' [56] However, despite this awareness, women

teacher couples may still have been regarded benignly. Their education, respectability and middle-class status may have protected them from suspicion, particularly if they were older and seen to have left the years of youth and sexual attractiveness behind them. Coupling up with a friend may well have been construed as sensible for those women unfortunate enough to have been left without a man.

Women teachers themselves varied widely in their awareness of these issues. Leah Manning wrote that she learnt a lot from her membership of the Fabian Society at Cambridge in the years before the First World War, which included discussions about homosexuality as well as family endowment. [57] One 29-year-old secondary school mistress reported to Mass-Observation in 1939:

Though I loved teaching I found the life unbearable, chiefly through petty instructions, a high moral atmosphere, homosexuality, and the empire-building tone of the school. [58]

However, an elementary teacher of the same generation suggested that consciousness of lesbianism was not very widely shared.

I would say right up to the second world war, homosexuality, lesbianism were almost terms which you didn't use and didn't recognise ... lesbianism - I just didn't know what it was all about. ... no one ever said two women living together were lesbians ... [59]

Thus spinster teachers were not necessarily going to be subject to 'a readiness to suspect an "unnatural relationship" whenever two women live together.' [60] Even in the 1930s, after The Well of Loneliness trial and after the new psychology had been widely popularised, the effects of the disparagement of spinster teachers were partial and fragmented. The image of the thwarted, unfulfilled spinster teacher was powerful, but not completely taken on by single teachers themselves.

Feminist Politics and Spinster Teachers

The new edge to the social disparagement of single women that developed between the turn of the century and the Second World War appears to have been accompanied by parallel shifts within feminist politics. There is some consensus among feminist historians that a

specific politics of spinsterhood existed in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century suffrage feminism, which began to be sharply challenged by the ideas of sexology. In the interwar period this spinster politics seems to have disappeared and it has been suggested that it was silenced by sexology. This interpretation, I will argue, is insufficient.

Feminist teachers themselves took on to some extent the negative attitudes towards spinsters in their political rhetoric. But they also tried to ignore or deflect attacks which used sexological ideas about frustrated spinsters or lesbian teachers. Without a clear feminist political analysis of sexuality women teachers were on the defensive between the wars, and had to deal with contradictory political discourses in relation to marriage, spinsterhood and sexuality. The feminist National Union of Women Teachers will be used as a specific example.

In the years before the First World War an important strand of suffrage feminism put forward a strong critique of women's position in marriage together with the argument that remaining unmarried was a politically and personally important strategy for feminists. [61] The continuing 'surplus' of women (shown again in the 1911 Census) was not seen to constitute a problem. Indeed, feminists argued that it would enable women to channel their energies into the public world of increasing employment and educational opportunities, avoid the ill-health incumbent on marriage and motherhood, and free them from slavery to the 'lower appetites' of men, and the sexual double standard. [62] Christabel Pankhurst stated categorically in 1913 that spinsterhood was a political decision:

There can be no mating between the spiritually developed woman of this new day and men who in thought and conduct in regard to sex matters are their inferiors. [63]

For the individual single woman, the freedom of a career or work within the women's movement was presented as a more rewarding life than the subordination of marriage. In her book Marriage as a Trade, published in 1909, the suffrage feminist Cicely Hamilton argued that if women remained unmarried this would improve the position of the spinster and of all women, give women a real choice between marriage and spinsterhood, and eventually improve the conditions of marriage

for women. [64] Spinsterhood was thus seen by some as a political strategy.

During the same period, however, a different approach to sexual politics was beginning to develop among some other feminists, which was to become more influential between the wars. These feminists were influenced by sexology, especially the writings of Havelock Ellis, and tended to be allied with the sex reform movement. They supported 'free unions', divorce law reform and the use of birth control to separate sex from reproduction. These women, including Stella Browne and later Dora Russell, demanded that women had a right to sexual pleasure in heterosexual sex. But along with the other sex reformers, they also condemned spinsters who remained outside heterosexuality. [65] Spinsterhood was beginning to come under criticism from within as well as outside the women's movement.

In the wake of sexology, the parameters of the debate around spinsterhood and feminism had shifted, leaving feminists divided. Thus far, historians are broadly agreed on the main events and issues for prewar feminists. However, the later relationship between feminist politics and spinsterhood is more open territory. [66] In The Spinster and her Enemies, Sheila Jeffreys argues that interwar feminism was subverted and undermined by sexology. Feminists, she claims, were swept into adopting a sexological or sex reform approach; illustrated, for example, by the postwar feminist emphasis on birth control. In this way, she argues, feminists betrayed the interests of spinsters and independent women; indeed some of them attacked the previous generation of feminists for their prudery and spinsterhood. Jeffreys concludes that sexology blunted feminist campaigns around issues of sexuality and silenced a feminist politics of spinsterhood. [67]

My own reading of the evidence challenges some aspects of this argument. Certainly the politics of 'marriage refusal' as such did disappear from feminist debate between the wars. The changing politics of spinsterhood also echoed the postwar ascendancy of 'difference' feminism. The dominant feminist organisation, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, took on some of the agenda of the sex reform feminists, including birth control and women's sexual pleasure within marriage, and as we have seen was generally directed towards the concerns of married women and mothers.

Certainly interwar feminists did criticise marriage, and demanded more rights for wives and divorce law reform, but they advocated ameliorating the conditions of marriage, rather than avoiding it altogether, as earlier feminists had done. [68] But there was still considerable political activism by interwar spinsters, much of it associated with interwar feminism, expressed in practical campaigns to improve single women's access to employment, pensions and housing. [69]

A further problem for interwar feminists in formulating a politics of spinsterhood was the increased association of spinsterhood with lesbianism. Lesbianism was virtually a taboo subject for feminists. In 1921 a feminist Bill which provided for tougher penalties against indecent assault on girls was wrecked by the addition of an amendment attempting to criminalise lesbianism. Feminists were conspicuously silent on the reason for the Bill's failure, while deploring its effects. [70] Similarly, the publication and prosecution of The Well of Loneliness in 1928 drew forth only a review in Time and Tide and a very brief debate in the correspondence columns of The Woman's Leader. [71] Feminists of that period were anxious to avoid associating themselves with sexual deviance, and lacked a sexual politics to deal with lesbianism as a feminist issue.

In this context it is not surprising to find that between the wars feminist teachers in the NUWT, reluctant to positively defend themselves as spinsters. As feminists of the suffrage generation it is likely that some, perhaps a significant number, of the older spinster teachers in the NUWT had remained single in the political context of suffrage feminism, as well as for personal or professional reasons. As we have seen in Chapter Four, many were members of the WSPU, the suffrage organisation which had the strongest politics of celibacy. Writing at the time of the First World War, the author of an NUWT pamphlet on the marriage bar expressed a degree of surprise that any woman should want to get married:

The fact of being married is, as some of our bright young women begin to perceive, a decided drawback, so great a drawback that many, not the least intelligent, deliberately choose single life. [72]

But by the 1920s the union was trying to ignore or remain aloof from the increasingly negative references to spinster teachers, and

its very real splits over spinster identity are revealed only in private correspondence. In 1920 the union attempted to brush off a series of attacks that it was a body of 'jaundiced spinsters'. The union's journal, The Woman Teacher, refused to comment on one accusation that unmarried women teachers were living abnormal lives as it was in such 'bad taste'. 'It is so unspeakable that we refrain from commenting on [these] points.' [73] The NUWT had no answer to an attack couched in sexual terms and could only identify it as being typical of the postwar hostility towards women workers in general. [74]

By the 1930s it was evident that a generation gap was emerging between the older women pioneers and the younger post-suffrage women teachers on spinster identity. A tendency for the union to ignore spinsters' rights was first identified by some members in 1934. One woman wrote to The Woman Teacher to:

suggest that the problem of the woman worker and also the status of women as a whole will be easier solved if a little more decent attention is paid to the bachelor woman and her welfare and dignity as a worker. ... This preoccupation with the rights and desires of the married woman has reached such proportions and the statements publicly made and circulated have become at times ... disparaging both to the house-keeping family woman and to the wage-earning spinster ... [75]

As this suggests, the major discordancies over spinsterhood within the union occurred in the context of the NUWT's campaign against the marriage bar. Not only was it sometimes implied that single women were less competent teachers than feminine married women, but also that spinsterhood was an undesirable way of life.

In May 1935 an NUWT official, Elsie Fisher, wrote an article for a popular newspaper on the marriage bar, with the headline 'Where Are My Children? Spinsterhood Forced on the Teacher'. This argued that the marriage bar forced young women teachers into clandestine marriages and illicit unions with men, and ended:

Young teachers all over the country refuse to remain celibate, refuse to see their lives thwarted, refuse to deny themselves the love and companionship that means a fuller, deeper, richer life.

Why indeed should they be sterilised by the order of town councillors? [76]

Spinsterhood was portrayed here as completely negative - as being thwarted, denied and sterilised. One older NUWT member, Miss Morrison, took exception to the article, especially the suggestion that many young women teachers lived with men. She wrote to Ethel Froud, the General Secretary of the union, to complain. In the correspondence on this matter between Elsie Fisher and Ethel Froud, it emerged that Miss Fisher, rather than deploring free love, as she did in the article, in fact privately endorsed it. 'As you probably know I personally believe profoundly in companionate marriage [meaning free love here] and the freedom of the Russian system with regard to this relationship, but I carefully avoided committing the Union to this.' Elsie Fisher, then, was a good example of the new approach by feminists to sexuality. In her letter to Miss Froud she went on to say, 'I am really more concerned with your criticism than with that of the writer of the letter, because I hadn't realised how deep a division of opinion could exist inside the women's movement on this question.' [77] She underestimated the strength of Miss Morrison's convictions as 'an old campaigner in the fight for Votes for Women', and for that matter those of Miss Froud, who belonged to the same political generation. Indeed, Miss Froud took the view that: 'The inequality of the sexes arose in and through the marriage relationship', a position little different from the politics of the prewar suffrage feminists. [78]

Two months later, in July 1935, came the debate in the London County Council over the raising of the marriage bar in London, the fruition of the NUWT's long campaign. In the debate, Agnes Dawson, the London councillor sponsored by the NUWT, argued that: 'given a good teacher, marriage must bring fresh experience and more human understanding'. [79] At this, Miss Morrison wrote again to the union to deplore the line that married women were better than single women teachers. She said that it was unfortunate that progressive women in 1935 should still consider a woman incomplete unless linked with a man:

That 'wives give best work' or are 'enriched by marriage' (especially modern marriage) or are given 'better understanding' or are in any way superior to a celibate woman I absolutely

challenge; and a Union largely composed of devoted celibate teachers, giving their creative energy unstinted to their profession, that allows this attitude and these statements to go unchallenged is no good to me ...

In her reply, Ethel Froud blamed the statement on the distortion of the male-controlled press, repeated the union line that married women should be as free as single women to follow their profession, but added, 'No, we can't have it said that we celibates are only some fraction of a human being.' Miss Morrison continued to press her point, saying that women are not improved, or their intelligence augmented, by intimate physical contact with a member of the male sex, and that it should not be implied that spinsters are unhappy, or less fortunate. Ethel Froud replied that to a large extent she shared her feelings. [80]

These fundamentally different attitudes among women in the NUWT towards spinsterhood reflect the changing position of mainstream feminism towards sexuality in the interwar period. Miss Morrison was expressing her very positive identity as a spinster in 1935, twenty years or so after it would have ceased to have had a resonance for feminists generally. These ideas still existed among the older spinster feminists but had 'gone underground'. They were now to be found only in private correspondence and no longer had purchase in a public debate, in the context of sexology and the new psychology.

Redefining Spinsterhood

However, while a political advocacy of spinsterhood was difficult to make in the context of sexology, psychology and a feminist politics constructed around sexual difference, interwar feminism was certainly not silenced on the issue. The feminist response was complex, varied and very much stronger than it has been represented, and it did directly challenge and mediate the ideas of sexology and psychology. There were two specific levels of defence which spinster teachers took up: the level of meanings and language, and the level of practical organising and the creation of women's communities. Single women teachers were not simply victims of sexual stigmatising but were, to a greater or lesser extent, actively engaged in resisting and redefining

the meanings of spinsterhood, at a time when these meanings were not fixed but shifting and often confused.

Feminist Doctors and Advice to Spinsters: Reworking Psychology

In the 1920s and 1930s, several feminist doctors and psychiatrists published 'advice books' for spinsters or similar texts, which engaged in a sustained critique of the anti-spinster elements of the new psychology from within psychology itself. Taken together, these texts constitute a feminist re-working of the 'frustrated spinsters' model. Single women teachers could defend themselves positively as spinsters by utilising these arguments. The common theory behind these psychology books was that spinsters could avoid repressing their sexual and parental instincts, which might have harmful consequences such as 'nerves' and neuroses. Instead, through self-knowledge and awareness, single women could more healthily sublimate these drives and direct them to happier ends, via female friendship, and by working with children, for example. In the case of teachers (and social workers), this process would even enhance their professional skills. In making this argument, feminist doctors utilised and developed ideas about the process of sublimation already suggested by the new psychology.

Sublimation is the process by which instinctive emotions are diverted from their original ends and redirected to purposes satisfying to the individual and of value to the community. [81]

It is important to note that the following discussion is of the writings of individual feminist psychologists in the 1920s and 1930s. This was not a feminist political position as such, nor an organised response; however each writer created a positive image of the single woman, in particular the professional independent woman. Teachers were specifically cited as examples by these writers, and so these books could also act as a defence on behalf of spinster teachers to the outside world.

The three texts discussed here took slightly different positions in defending spinsters. Mary Scharlieb was a feminist gynaecologist well known in the fight for women's entry into the medical profession. Despite its title, The Bachelor Woman and her Problems (1929), her book took a positive view of spinsterhood and, indeed, suggested a feminist critique of marriage. Scharlieb was less directly influenced

by the new psychology; instead she offered a commonsense and moral approach to single women, based on a strongly Christian perspective. Esther Harding wrote her study of women, The Way of All Women: A Psychological Interpretation (published in 1933), from a Jungian perspective. Laura Hutton's The Single Woman and her Emotional Problems (1935), was more influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis. Hutton, who worked for a period as a clinical psychologist at the Tavistock Institute, a centre of the new psychology, took a more explicitly feminist approach to her work (and to Freudian psychoanalysis) than Harding. [82] The three writers came from different traditions of psychology, yet each managed to assert positive space for single women within that tradition.

Each of these books defended the single woman's ability to live a happy and well-balanced life and provided a feminist critique of the traditions and stereotypes that stood in her way. Moreover, they also stressed the social importance of women's friendships. Scharlieb condemned the idea that not becoming a wife and mother meant that a single woman had failed to attain her full development as a woman, although she pointed out that such feelings would be injurious to spinsters who held them. [83] She suggested that spinsters had at least as good (and possibly a better) chance of health and happiness than their married sisters, although more alone in life. 'Against these losses may be set the very evident gains of independence and of being, as someone once said to me, "A person in herself."' [84]

Esther Harding suggested that single women were in a class of their own.

These women, far from being the weaklings, the stupid or unattractive members of their generation, may be the most vital and enterprising, the ones with greatest intelligence and initiative. [85]

She went on to observe that remaining single might be a positive and deliberate choice, and that while conventional opinion favoured marriage above female friendship, the latter could be more satisfying for particular individuals. [86] Laura Hutton also recognised the weight of social pressure to marry, but highly valued female friendship instead. She made reference to the 'large body of active intelligent single women' in the cities, and made it clear - quoting from Virginia Woolf's feminist tract A Room of One's Own - that it was

social attitudes which caused problems for single women, not their personal lack of worth. [87]

Each of the three doctors acknowledged that single women had sexual drives and maternal instincts, but believed these could be sublimated in work, other activities and wider relationships. [88] Harding saw female friendships as the place for single women's emotions and sexual drives to be expressed, rather than being repressed. [89] Scharlieb believed there was a real danger of spinsters' feelings and character remaining underdeveloped through lack of use and urged children, young people and dependent animals as an outlet for the affections. [90] Her concept of instinct was as a maternal rather than a sexual drive, and a teacher's work was seen as ideal for this function. [91]

All the books discussed female friendships at length. Mary Scharlieb was the most cautious about them, endorsing 'wise and good friendships' between women, but warning against obsessive friendships. [92] Doctors Harding and Hutton expressed more positive and liberal attitudes towards female partnerships. Harding described female couples as family units comparable to marriage. Indeed, she suggested that relationships between women could be superior to heterosexual relationships as they were free from ulterior motives and financial dependence:

The bond between such friends is one not of convenience but of mutual love and their life together is consequently likely to be very rich, attaining a permanence and stability equalled only in marriage. [93]

Hutton also examined the emotional and sexual significance of women's friendships very closely. Because they often carried the whole charge of the emotional life of the women concerned, such friendships might become over-heated and unstable, she observed, but if they were built on an adult pattern, and the friends had work and other interests to absorb them, then they would be very rewarding. She pointed out that it would be helpful if society regarded such friendships with greater respect and sympathy:

When two women decide to set up house together, they lack all social support, and their proposal is of significance only to the friends themselves ... Such partnerships in living, then, get

nothing comparable with the hopeful start of every normal marriage, although they may, and often do, represent what has been called the 'major relationship' of two women's lives. [94]

Hutton suggested that sexuality was bound to play a part in any intense emotional relationship, although this was not necessarily recognised by those concerned, and went further than the other writers in freely justifying sexual relationships between women friends under certain circumstances. [95] Although she placed stricter limits Harding, too, endorsed sexual love between women friends: 'Love between women friends may find its expression in a more specifically sexual fashion which, however, cannot be considered perverted if their actions are motivated by love.' [96] In supporting lesbianism as a natural progression of friendship in some cases, Harding and Hutton were not only reworking psychological discourses of spinsterhood, but challenging sexological ideas of lesbianism. [97]

All three texts directly challenged the notion of single women's incomplete sexuality. Harding and Scharlieb went further, however, than simply validating spinsters as individuals, and provided a world vision of the spinster's function. Scharlieb suggested that spinsters could have a wider role to play than the ordinary wife and mother. The motive of the mother was the welfare of her offspring; the motive of the unmarried woman must be the welfare of the race. Single women were not simply universal aunts but, 'they are individuals who by position and training, by their very freedom and their independence, are essential to the welfare of the nation.' [98] In essence, this view of the single woman's place was little different from the nineteenth century feminist argument that the femininity of independent single women was utilised in their work as 'public mothers'. [99] What was being defended had changed, however. Formerly it was the public role of women which needed to be justified; in the 1930s it was the sanity and personal value of single women.

Esther Harding went furthest in transforming the new psychology from a male medical discourse to one which emphasised female qualities and values. She suggested that single women had a crucial role to play in the development of twentieth century civilisation. Women's cultural task (to be achieved through female friendship) was to bring feminine values to society. [100]

In the last few decades friendships between women have come ... to hold a place of unprecedented importance in the community. This change in the emotional life of women is significant not only for the individual but also for our whole civilisation, for we are passing today through a distinct phase of culture the outcome promises an increased solidarity among women, resulting in an entirely new development of those values which have to do with feeling and relationship. [101]

While the increase in unmarried women and in female friendships may be regarded biologically as a regression, wrote Harding, psychologically it had a progressive significance and 'may fore-shadow the development of the woman of the future.' [102] With such a role to play in the progress of civilisation, what spinster could hanker after marriage?

The feminist preacher Maude Royden offered another variation on this approach, meshing the idea of sublimation with religious belief. [103] Royden was heavily influenced by the new psychology, and although she was not uncritical of the psycho-analytic emphasis on sexuality, she agreed that women often had strong sexual passions, which could be damaging if repressed. [104] She stressed that all were equal in the sight of God; thus to believe that single women were 'less' because they were not wives or mothers was unchristian. [105] Royden spoke of sex as a sacrament, and of the spiritual significance of sexual union in a true marriage. However, sexual passion ran through life itself, 'it is part of the great rhythm of life... it is the instinct to create,' which meant it could be acknowledged by all, including spinsters. [106]

Instead of the miseries of repression, Maude Royden offered single women what might be labelled the 'sublimation as social work' solution.

[T]here are already more children in the world than there is mother-love to care for them, and that hunger of yours should find expression in caring for all children, in the love of all who are little and helpless and oppressed. [107]

Sublimation was also a religious journey; Christ's 'agony of longing' was the example to follow. [108]

What was supremely achieved by Christ can be achieved by us also in our degree. We too can transmute the power of sex and

'create' in other ways. He did it supremely for the world. You and I can do it for our village, our city, for England, for the world, for anything you like. I tell you what I know when I say that the power of sex can be transmuted into a power that will make your lives as rich, as fruitful, as creative as that of any father or mother in the world. ... those of you who have never borne a child may some day bear the new world. [109]

Maude Royden was well known to feminist circles in the interwar years, and The Woman Teacher included notices of her speeches and sermons. To women teachers, as to other single women, she offered understanding and a feminist justification of professional women's work both as honourable service and duty in the nineteenth century mode, and as a positive field for their creative and sexual energies. [110]

Sublimation and the Teacher

The teacher's work was seen as particularly appropriate for sublimating sexual and maternal drives. [111] It has already been suggested that women teachers, through their professional training and educational concerns, were more open to the ideas of psychology than other groups. On the one hand this made them more open and vulnerable to the anti-spinster rhetoric of the new psychology. But equally, they could more quickly take on those aspects of it which could justify their position.

The idea of sublimation was further disseminated in discussions about women teachers. In a 1935 survey of secondary school mistresses, Mary Birkinshaw observed: 'for the majority of teachers the society of men is restricted and the marriage bar is applied. Some among them do not mind. Their sexual impulses are sublimated satisfactorily in teaching...' [112] However, she also suggested that this was a difficult and elaborate task.

To be able to enjoy the presence of children for long periods, and to be ready to protect them and guide them, a woman must have well-developed parental impulses. But whilst a teacher must protect and guide, many of the ways in which a mother can normally satisfy her maternal impulses are not open to her: and the necessity of diffusing her maternal impulses on the one hand among large groups of children, and of limiting them on the other to some aspects only of the child-parent relationship, demands

great powers of sublimation on the part of the unmarried teacher.
[113]

There is evidence to show that women teachers were aware of these ideas and sometimes used them. Individual teachers may have taken on the idea, as part of a process of coming to terms with their spinsterhood. A respondent to Mass-Observation wrote: 'I have always felt that if marriage did not present itself, one could only become mature by throwing oneself into other activities - certainly not by hankering after marriage.' [114] The sublimation model was also used by women teachers' organisations. The 1933 President of the Association of Assistant Mistresses suggested that most women desired marriage, but that:

if we do not [marry], let us see that we do not waste our lives in vague repinings, becoming abnormal and irritable, difficult to live with and impossible to work with. It is quite possible to survive our disappointment, to be abundantly happy, and to use those qualities which would have made us good wives and mothers in making our work a more vivid and beautiful thing. [115]

The NUWT seem to have been more reluctant to use sublimation to defend their position. Earlier in the period they had tried to ignore attacks on themselves as frustrated spinster teachers. But they did respond to the attack made by Dr Williams in 1935 that women teachers were 'embittered, sexless or homosexual hoydens who try to mould the girls into their own pattern'. This accusation was angrily repudiated by the NUWT, in a counter-psychological vein: '...he should know that in the vast majority of cases a woman teacher's work is a complete outlet for her maternal instincts. Her womanly impulses are sublimated and diverted, but splendidly employed.' [116] The NUWT then, was involved in several parallel, confusing, and indeed contradictory approaches: trying to ignore anti-spinster attacks, using the language of the new psychology against spinster teachers when arguing for a married woman's right to work, and beginning to use the ideas of psychology to defend themselves on the same terrain. Perhaps the NUWT was more suspicious of psychology from its suffrage feminist perspective; the AAM, more in the mainstream, showed a greater willingness to use this approach.

Winifred Holtby: Resistance and Refusal

But women teachers also had other kinds of pro-spinster feminist critiques to draw upon, which refused the ideas of the new psychology rather than reworking them. In both her journalism and successful fiction, the interwar feminist Winifred Holtby condemned the attacks on spinsters. She simply refused to accept the validity of the psychological writing on spinsterhood, though she recognised its power, observing that: 'The legend of the Frustrated Spinster is one of the most formidable social influences of the modern world.' [117] In her book Women and a Changing Civilisation, published in 1934, she criticised the new psychology at length in a section entitled 'Are Spinsters Frustrated?'

The twentieth century having dethroned human reason set up the nerves and memory in their place. Freudian psychology has sanctioned the extreme veneration of sex. The followers of D.H. Lawrence have taught us to venerate instinct, emotion and the intuitive vitality of the senses and to pity virgins for being unacquainted with a wide, deep and fundamentally important range of intuitive and sensual experience. They are taught to pity themselves. From their childhood they learn to dread the fate of 'an old maid'. In more sophisticated circles they anticipate a nemesis of 'complexes'. [118]

In a period when the ideas of sexology and new psychology were fashionable and widely disseminated, Holtby's feminist analysis was courageous and direct.

Pointing out that 'there are as many wasted and frustrated lives among the married as among the unmarried,' Holtby saw the remedy as 'putting sex in its proper place' and enabling women to find their own work and meaning in life, a life in which marriage would be just one possibility among others. [119] She countered the criticism of the new psychology with her belief that spinsters could be happy and well-balanced, and drew positive feminist images of spinsterhood which made reference to the productive work of teachers.

Teachers, doctors, political organisers, artists and explorers may deliberately choose to remain unmarried in order not to be hampered in their work. In some cases this means that they remain celibate; since the spread of contraceptive knowledge it

generally means that they avoid motherhood. But it is impossible, with any regard for the meaning of words whatsoever, to call such women frustrated; most of them live lives as full, satisfied and happy as any human lives can be.... They have contributed something to the world and known the satisfaction of creative achievement. [120]

Holtby also provided fictional reworkings of spinsterhood, notably in her most well-known and popular novel, South Riding (1936), set in a school. Sarah Burton, the spinster headmistress heroine, is an energetic and competent woman whose life is rich in political and emotional incident. Holtby engages with the issue of women's sexual 'instincts' when Sarah Burton falls in love with the landowner Carne, a man of completely opposite political and social values. As Carol Dyhouse has pointed out, Holtby avoids resolving the consequences of this situation through the device of Carne's heart attack at the bedroom door and his later disappearance. [121] For the successful spinster, love and marriage would mean relinquishing her independence. Like the feminist doctors, Holtby wrestled with the sexual choices open to the single woman. She might be happily celibate, engage in heterosexual affairs, or set up house with another woman. 'We still are greatly ignorant of our own natures. ... We do not even know - though we theorise and penalise with ferocious confidence - whether the 'normal' sexual relationship is homo- or bi- or hetero-sexual.' [122]

Winifred Holtby herself maintained close connections with the education system and with women teachers. She was a School Manager in Bethnal Green in the early 1920s. [123] As an 'equality first' feminist she moved in similar feminist circles to the NUWT women and had direct links with the organisation, spoke at their meetings and opened their garden parties. [124] Time and Tide (of which she was a director from 1926) frequently published articles by her and others on women teachers' battles for equal pay and against the marriage bar, while Holtby for a time contributed a column to The Woman Teacher. Women teachers strongly endorsed her views. An editorial in The Woman Teacher which reviewed Holtby's book Women, said: 'To all who look upon spinsterhood as 'frustration' and marriage, for a woman, as "fulfilment" we recommend the passage on "Are Spinsters Frustrated?"', commenting on its 'astringent truthfulness'. [125]

Spinster Teachers and Women's Communities

Women teachers also created a second, practical, level of defence for themselves as spinsters, by forming women's communities from their teachers' associations. These offered an opportunity to live out spinsterhood in a positive manner in a supportive social haven, with the validation of associating with others of their kind. This was most successfully done by the NUWT, where feminist commitment and social opportunities could mutually reinforce each other. Female friendships could easily be formed in such a context where they were not likely to be stigmatised.

Martha Vicinus has shown in Independent Women how women's communities enabled single middle-class Victorian women to create a life of social purpose and self-respect. They offered a positive alternative to family life, and a means for women of making spinsterhood a virtue rather than a failure. Vicinus examined work-based, residential institutions - the new hospitals, women's colleges, girls' boarding schools, religious sisterhoods, and settlement houses - as examples of 'women's space'. These communities were sustained by the nineteenth-century women's movement and provided a base from which to demand political and social change for women. [126] Vicinus also identified the WSPU as a women's community which provided support in a different fashion for the suffragettes' militancy and commitment. [127] The significance of these communities declined in the twentieth century, especially after the First World War. All-women communities were seen as positive and respectable for middle-class Victorian women, but increasingly as restricting and unfulfilling in the new century - as retreating from the public world rather than being an entry into it. [128]

Teacher training colleges, for example, came under attack for being restricting, stale and dull. In the interwar years, their regimes and discipline were criticised for petty restrictions which reduced student life to a 'prolonged and hopeless childhood'. [129] For nineteenth-century spinsters, life in a girl's boarding school or other residential institution represented freedom and an escape from the family; similarly, a period at university was an opportunity to be won against the odds. By the twentieth century, secondary school teaching had for many graduates become a profession tolerated through lack of choice. Living arrangements, in lodgings and mistresses'

hostels, could be seen as imprisoning, rather than liberating. [130] Contemporary young women teachers might also have begun to view single-sex residential communities as less attractive. Looking back, one teacher wrote of her experience of teaching in a boarding school in the early 1900s: '...our school, which was our main preoccupation, was a closed single-sex community. Our general interests and outlook were too much bounded by the school walls.' [131]

As these communities deteriorated in importance, a new type of community was being formed by women teachers. Rather than the school itself being the focus of community life, that role was taken by women teachers' associations. For state-employed teachers their school had never been a community in the same way it had been for boarding school teachers, since they did not live in. But a women's community was not necessarily based on physical proximity, as in the nineteenth-century schools, but could include shared work or vocational commitments, common political aims and campaigns, a shared identity or beliefs, and a focus for social contacts. [132] Women teachers' associations were looser, and less coherent communities than the nineteenth-century ones. They were elective rather than automatic; women did not necessarily seek to join them. They provided a forum for a shared political and professional purpose and mutual companionship, but not one that was necessarily desired by all women teachers. These new women teachers' communities were not a direct continuation from the old girls' boarding schools and colleges and these twentieth-century women teachers were from a different social and economic background. However, these communities took a central place for teachers in both their professional work and the contemporary women's movement, in the same way that the girls' schools Vicinus describes had done in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, they also provided a retreat and validation for single women, now more necessary than ever.

The NUWT as a Feminist Community

The obvious women's communities for teachers were the NUWT and the AAM. The NUWT had a rather more spinster-friendly feel in practice, as a result of its strong feminist heritage, and provided more direct social support. AAM members were a little more ambivalent about themselves as single women, and placed less emphasis on organising community activities for teachers.

The NFWT existed as a women's community before and during the First World War, with the suffrage movement as a reference point. As the NFWT and later the NUWT, its social and cultural aspects were interdependent with its political activity. Friendship ties fostered the considerable campaigning work the union undertook, while conversely, women teachers' shared enthusiasm and common feminist aims and assumptions easily led to shared social activities and the formation of friendships. A variety of cultural events strengthened and merged the feminist teachers' political and personal identity, especially in the early years. From the beginning a need was felt for more social gatherings, and comfortable places to meet. Even the NUWT's rather stuffy official history acknowledged:

These social functions, both at the education and annual delegate conferences and extended as they were, in the branches, did much to strengthen the bonds between members, the executive and the officials and fostered the feeling of personal knowledge of and responsibility for the work which is so important in any minority movement. [133]

With the opening of their new headquarters in Gordon Square in 1921 the union was able to set aside some rooms for social purposes for the first time, and satisfy the desire by London women teachers for a club. At the official opening members contributed songs and the Roslake Orchestra, a women's string band, played. [134]

The social evening at the annual conference was described as one of the most useful as well as the pleasantest functions of conference, since delegates could get to know one another and also meet the Central Council members. At the 1922 conference delegates were entertained by the Manchester branch. 'A varied program [sic] of vocal and instrumental music and recitations was provided, with intervals sufficiently long to enable us to make one another's acquaintance.' [135] Branches also sponsored study circles and lectures on a range of subjects from economics to Esperanto, which served a social as well as an educational function. The garden parties, plays and dances which branches put on, frequently had the dual purpose of raising money for the union's charities, such as the Old Guard Fund for elderly teachers left without pensions, as well as creating solidarity and friendships between members.

The NUWT's central position in the wider feminist movement is also shown by its cultural activities. In 1924 a reception for the women Members of Parliament, to celebrate the increase in their number since the 1923 election, was almost embarrassingly well attended. The union booked the University of London's premises at South Kensington, which could accommodate 2,000 people, but the huge hall and the galleries were full to overflowing. The refreshments, speeches from the women MPs, and a musical programme were followed by dancing to the Roslake Women's Orchestra. [136]

The union also hosted a wide range of other social activities, including theatre parties, river trips, evening motor tours, whist and bridge parties, 'At Homes', and receptions to prominent members, or to celebrate some feminist victory. For example the union held a Victory Dinner in 1928 on the occasion of winning the vote for all women over 21, at the Restaurant Frascati in London. As well as the food, the programme included toasts, community singing, short speeches by past presidents and songs from the NUWT Choir. [137]

Some events were purely recreational. The London Unit announced its first dance for members and friends in 1921 at Australia House in the Strand. [138] The Tottenham branch ran an evening class in ballroom dancing in the 1920s, advertising its winter course of six dances held fortnightly in The Woman Teacher and advising members to secure tickets early in order to enjoy the 'Excellent Floor - First Class Ladies Band - Latest Dances - Good Refreshments Obtainable.' [139] They also held country dancing parties, some of them in London parks, showing a comfortable appropriation of public space. [140] Although not specifically advertised as women only, it is likely that few men attended these functions. Occasionally, one or two men can be found in the photographs of the union's dinners and conferences. These may have been the union's solicitor, perhaps an MP (such as Fred Pethick-Lawrence) who aided the NUWT in the Commons, the husbands of the few married members, or other male supporters. But the general feeling of these social and political activities is that they were by and for women.

The NUWT also organised holidays for its members. In 1922 the Mutual Aid Fund of the union rented a guest house on the top of the downs near Liphook in Hampshire to provide a convalescent and holiday home for members. [141] The London Unit Travel Club offered tours to

Europe to NUWT members and their friends. In 1928 they organised a tour to Luxembourg, Yugoslavia and Bruges as well as more modest weekend rambles in and near London. By 1937 members could save up for a four week tour to the USA and Canada, voyaging across on the Queen Mary, or an 'Educational Tour' to central Europe, taking in Nuremburg, Vienna, Budapest and Prague. [142]

The friendly tone of letters sent by members and union officials - full of concerned enquiries after one another's health and general chat - suggest an atmosphere of comradeship and shared interests, both political and social. As enthusiastic feminists they had something in common apart from their professional endeavours, and in the NUWT they moved in an environment which fostered friendships and a feeling of community. As the political environment grew harsher in the 1930s and membership levels fell off as suffrage days became more distant, there seems to have been slightly fewer social activities, but still a tightly knit group of women teachers remained. Disguised as a trade union, the NUWT provided an enduring familial and feminist community, in the tradition of the nineteenth-century feminist pioneers.

The Association of Assistant Mistresses: Social Opportunities

The AAM was also a single-sex organisation which could offer secondary school mistresses some aspects of a women's community as well as those of a professional association. Secondary school mistresses in fact needed a women's community more than elementary teachers, since they were more isolated from their local communities. Many lived in lodgings during term time (which amounted to 40 weeks in the year), away from family sources of companionship. [143] A young respondent to Mary Birkinshaw's 1935 study of secondary schoolmistresses said:

[one] great objection to teaching away from home is that your life is cut into two halves, neither of which is satisfactory. Contacts at home are lost, and at the town in which you teach you have little time or opportunity to make and keep up outside contacts, particularly as you are usually regarded as 'one of the staff' who doesn't really belong there. [144]

Secondary schoolmistresses educated an elite minority of local girls, were less involved in political and community activities than elementary teachers, and were seen as being somewhat apart from the

local community. Clearly they needed alternative sources of support and social life. At the same time, the separation of home and work made community formation more difficult, especially for the less well-established younger teachers, if they were not really committed to the towns in which they worked.

The AAM offered a potential women's community, but not a particularly strong one, for several reasons. Birkinshaw suggested that the more dissatisfied secondary schoolmistresses were not keen on friendships with other teachers and so may have shunned the AAM for this reason. [145] Indeed, the AAM may have contained less of a mixture of teachers than the NUWT. Branches might be based on one or two schools in a particular town, and mixing with one's work colleagues may have been seen as less attractive and less stimulating. In any case individual school mistresses may have made friends as readily among their colleagues as via the AAM. There were larger staff groups in secondary schools compared to the elementary schools, and many examples of women teachers sharing accomodation or holidays. Branch meetings were held relatively infrequently, perhaps once or twice per term, militating against the growth of a community spirit.

But most importantly, AAM members generally lacked the binding motivation of feminism which made the NUWT such a successful community. As already shown, they developed a fairly clear feminist position on major women's issues, but they didn't share the militant strength and purpose which the NUWT had retained from the suffrage struggle through to the interwar years. The AAM included all secondary schoolmistresses, not just the feminists, and this spectrum of opinion meant they would not share a common and strong political purpose. The AAM was a less successful women's community than the NUWT, although it grew in strength during the period. Nevertheless, it could be used as a source of practical support and as a place to form friendships by women teachers. Branch meetings might combine business and social activities, by having a relaxed tea after the formal business, and a summer meeting was often devoted to social activities. These included excursions to local beauty spots or places of historical interest, informal visits to each others' schools (especially in the earlier part of the period), while the annual picnic was a feature of many branches. [146]

Where available, and when sought by women teachers, the new-style women's communities such as the NUWT and, to a lesser extent, the AAM, could provide a solution to the problem of isolation and a refuge from the public spinster-baiting of women teachers. In fact, women teachers' communities provided a forum for the exercising and display of a whole range of positive benefits of being a single woman teacher, from the autonomy of a professional body outside male control, to the formation of friendships between women, and adventurous holidays. The more successful of the two, the NUWT, could also provide links with other women's networks and communities. [147]

Women's Community and Women Couples: The Personal and Political Meaning of Teacher Feminism

These networks provided opportunities for various types of friendships to be established and sustained without social disapprobation. Teachers' experience of training (if not university) would already have encouraged a homosocial rather than a mixed-sex pattern of friendships. These friendships would have carried a range of emotional significance, from casual friendships maintained to share social activities to lifelong partnerships. Some friendships between women teachers were important, but clearly did not represent major life commitments. Amy Barlow sustained a friendship with her friend 'L' over a longer period of time, and shared a home with her for three years when they both taught in Sussex. The two shared holidays in later years, but Amy also holidayed with other friends, of whom she clearly had a wide circle. [148]

Other friendships can be described more accurately as 'significant friendships' involving emotional commitment and household formation, and were of the type which Dr Laura Hutton had described as equivalent to marriage. The friendship of the prominent NUWT activist Miss Emily Phipps with first Miss Clare Neal and later Miss Adelaide Jones shows how for the most committed feminist teachers, the personal and political elements of their lives came together naturally within the women's community of the NUWT. The basic details of each woman's public life are readily available in the NUWT records, but information about their closeness to each other can only be found in Miss Phipps' obituaries, and the private letters written immediately after her death by other friends and colleagues at the NUWT. [149]

Emily Phipps was a remarkably active woman teacher, politically and professionally. She was born in 1865 in Devonport where she became a pupil teacher, went to teacher training college, and took a London University degree as an external candidate. She taught in London for a few years before her appointment to a school in Swansea in 1895, and she later became headmistress of the Swansea Municipal Secondary Girls' School. Before the First World War she was prominent in the NUT, and then became president of the National Federation of Women Teachers for the years 1915-17. She stood for Parliament in 1918, was editor of The Woman Teacher from 1919 to 1930, qualified as a barrister in 1925, while continuing for most of that time to work as a headmistress. She was one of the NUWT's most important figures, and an inspiration to many of its members. One letter written just after her death in 1943 testifies to her magnetism.

My mind goes back to those early days ... when Miss Phipps championed the cause of women in a mixed association ... and what a champion she was! You have seen her eyes flash with fiery indignation when she attacked her opponents on questions of 'equality', haven't you? Who can forget her platform oratory, her manner of attack, her unassailable arguments for the righteousness of her cause and her scorn for anything which in her view assigned to women an inferiority complex. [150]

Emily Phipps was a very active militant suffragette, and was the leading spirit of the Swansea Branch of the Women's Freedom League.

She resigned her teaching post in 1925, before retirement age, and went on to study law before being called to the Bar in 1928. The NUWT, naturally, had a dinner to celebrate this occasion. Ill-health prevented her practising for long in the courts, but as one of the first women barristers she subsequently acted as standing counsel for the union, giving them legal advice as necessary. [151]

Clare Neal seems to have been the more important of her two friends. 'Her closest associate was another Swansea headmistress, Miss Clare Neal... who had come with her to Swansea.' [152] In 1930 Miss Neal resigned from her own Swansea headship, and she and Emily went to live in London. Clare Neal also had a history of involvement in the suffrage movement, was a former president of the NUWT and was on the council of the Women's Freedom League. In the 1920s her particular concern was the influence of the cinema on children. [153]

Miss Neal died in 1937 and her own obituary in The Woman Teacher was clear about the depth and meaning of her friendship with Miss Phipps. It described the period at the turn of the century when they both taught in the same Swansea school: 'it was then that the friendship which already existed between Miss Phipps and Miss Neal was further deepened and strengthened so that it became a life-long unbroken association. ... To her chosen friend, Miss Phipps, she was the light that never failed ...' This account of her life also shows that the partnership was publicly accepted by colleagues and friends. At a public dinner in Swansea to celebrate Miss Neal's presidency of the NUWT:

Mr T.J. Rees, Director of Education, referred to the two friends, who were both Devonshire women, as 'Cider and Cream', leaving us to decide which was which. On another occasion, in referring to some criticism which Miss Neal had made on something just done by the Education Committee, the Director said: 'Miss Phipps makes the bullets and Miss Neal fires them.' [154]

The author of this obituary, Miss Adelaide Jones, herself became Miss Phipps' close friend and companion in her last years. Miss Jones had first been a teacher in West Ham, had helped Emily Phipps in her 1918 election campaign, and from 1918 was full-time financial secretary to the NUWT. [155] By the time war broke out in 1939, Miss Phipps and Miss Jones were living together in retirement in Eastbourne. Because of the war and her ill-health, Miss Phipps spent the last few months of her life at her brother's home with Miss Jones, who stayed on there after her death, indicating an unproblematic merging of friendship with family. The letters of condolence on Miss Phipps' death in May 1943 show that her close relationship to Miss Jones was fully acknowledged, and most of the writers were very concerned for 'her devoted friend' who 'will miss her sorely'. 'We wish to send our sympathy to Miss Jones in the great loss she has sustained by the death of Miss Phipps' [156]

Such friendships were by no means unusual, though difficult to trace, even for women teachers who were well-known as feminist activists. Agnes Dawson, the London teacher and LCC member, also had a long-standing friendship with another woman teacher, the only reference to which appears in a personal letter written to the General Secretary on the death of that friend. 'You will I know be sorry to

learn that I have lost my pal and partner. Miss Munns (Munnsie to me) died on Tuesday last. We had lived together for the past 27 years.' [157]

Conclusion

The interwar years were a time of increasing pressure and difficulty for women teachers in a number of ways. Their campaigns for equality in the profession were difficult to fight in the context of education cuts, splits over gender issues in the NUT, the decline of feminism compared to the suffrage years, and the re-affirmation of masculinity by men teachers as an anti-feminist device. New challenges in negotiating marital status and professional identity added to these problems and pressure mounted on both single and married women teachers. If women continued to work as teachers after marriage, they were criticised for being poor wives and mothers, selfish and greedy individuals, and less efficient teachers. Yet in the 1920s and 1930s, it was also argued that the professional abilities of single women teachers were undermined by their marital status as spinsters, and they were subject to increasing aspersions on their sexuality and femininity. Single women teachers were in a particularly difficult position, not only by living as single women in contrast to the cultural norm of marriage, but also as spinster feminists in a period when feminist politics was shifting away from upholding women's independence towards an emphasis on sexual difference.

The political strategies which feminist teachers used to argue against the marriage bar complicated the situation further. Arguments for equality - that marital status should not matter - could be met by attacks on married women teachers' deviant femininity. Arguments made on the grounds of women's difference - that married women brought an extra experience of life to their work - implied that spinster teachers were incomplete women and less competent teachers. Women teachers thus had real problems in negotiating dominant models of femininity using the available feminist discourses.

But contemporary feminists were not completely grounded by the new psychology, as has been suggested, and did try to address the problems it posed, however incompletely. While it did limit some

feminist approaches to sexuality and spinsterhood, new psychology also opened up new ones. Some feminists took on the new psychology and reworked it into a more positive version for single women, by developing the idea of sublimation. Prominent feminist writers used different kinds of texts to reject the pessimism of the psychologists and sexologists, and to create alternative readings of spinsterhood on the terrain of the psychologists themselves. In some ways this was more defensive than the prewar politics of celibacy, since on the whole it simply asserted that contented spinsterhood was a viable option for single women, rather than being a political strategy against the oppressive features of marriage. But it was a particularly effective retort for women teachers, who could now argue that their parental instincts and sexual drives, far from being dangerously repressed, were beneficially sublimated in their work, to the good of themselves, their pupils, and the whole community. Nevertheless, this argument did carry with it some of the dangers of 'difference' feminism, insofar as it emphasised women teachers' maternalism and essential femininity. Although, in theory, sublimation could be undertaken by teachers of both sexes, it resonated in particular with the idea of 'the mother made conscious' (discussed in Chapter Two) and so contributed to the slow drift towards the aligning of maternalism, femininity and women teachers' professionalism which began in this period.

It was also possible for feminists to challenge psychology straight on, as Winifred Holtby did, contrasting a rationalist feminism with the mystical anti-feminist tendencies of the new ideas. These discussions opened up questions of single women's sexuality and lifestyle in ways that had not been possible before the First World War. While some feminists were constrained by the linking of female friendships and lesbianism, Holtby and the feminist doctors suggested more radical possibilities and ways of approaching these issues.

Women teachers also created for themselves a practical politics for spinsterhood; new forms of community which could function to shield them from some of the hostile winds of the interwar years. Their professional associations, especially the NUWT, gave them access to a social life as well as to political and professional activity. Within this environment women's friendships (though not inevitably stigmatised in the public world outside) had an encouraging

environment in which to flourish. However women's communities were an answer only for some women teachers, and were limited by geography as well as by choice and political identity. Although they had references back to the nineteenth century, these communities also foreshadowed the looser political and personal networking of second-wave feminist sub-cultures after the Second World War. Women teachers' personal and political lives were interconnected. Their position in the teaching profession and their responses to contemporary meanings of femininity encouraged many of them to embrace the women's movement. But feminism also provided them with new and alternative choices of how to live and how to interpret their private as well as their working lives as teachers.

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85. Harding, Way of all Women, p.87.
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91. *ibid*, pp.53-4.
92. *ibid*, pp.49, 53-4.
93. Harding, Way of all Women, p.92; also see p.87. As well as asserting the immense value of women's friendships, Harding discussed the problems of managing such relationships at length, stressing the particular need for honest awareness of the emotional state of the friendship and the maintenance of sufficient privacy and separateness. *ibid*, pp.96-109.
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95. She discussed such problems as possessiveness, anxiety, jealousy and impermanence, with reference to a psychoanalytic mother-daughter model. *ibid*, Chapter 2. In her view, sexual friendships were only likely to be actively engaged in by women who were to some extent homosexually inclined. She quite vigorously defended such relationships, so long as they were entered into by mature women who regarded sex as an expression of their love for each other. *ibid*, pp.84-104.
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100. Harding, Way of all Women, p.87.
101. *ibid*, pp.89-90; also see pp.93-4.
102. *ibid*, pp.111-12.
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104. Royden, New Age, pp.3-5, 7. Sex & Commonsense, pp.4-9, 21-2, 27, 34, 116-20. Rising Generation, p.7.
105. Royden, Sex & Commonsense, pp.29-30.
106. *ibid*, p.30.
107. Royden, 'The Future' (1918), quoted in S. Fletcher, 'Single Women Between the Wars, The New Zealand Journal of Women's Studies (1990).
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113. *ibid*, p.101.

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118. *ibid*, p.132. Cicely Hamilton was also still defending the spinster in her interwar journalism. Time and Tide, 14 October 1927. The Woman Teacher drew attention to her argument about the value of spinsters. Woman Teacher, 4 November 1927, p.33.
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120. Holtby, Women, pp.128-9.
121. C. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.37-8. I would like to thank Penny Summerfield for her comments on South Riding and Holtby's views of single women's sexuality. Also see W. Holtby, The Crowded Street (London, Virago, [1924] 1981) for her views on spinsters.
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123. F. H. Spencer, An Inspector's Testament (London, English Universities Press, 1938), p.309. Berry and Bishop, Journalism of Brittain and Holtby, p.275. W. Holtby (ed. by A. Holtby and J. McWilliam), Letters to a Friend (London, Collins, 1937), pp.134-6, 193.
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125. Woman Teacher, 9 November 1934, p.35.
126. Vicinus, Independent Women, pp.5-7, and throughout.
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128. There was a renewed emphasis on marriage and attacks on women's careers as the birth-rate fell, and, Vicinus argues, the fading away after the war of the women's movement which had sustained them earlier. And as shown above, women's loving friendships and single-sex institutions began to acquire questionable overtones, with the new psychology. Vicinus, Independent Women, pp. 281-92.
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139. Woman Teacher, 7 October 1921, p.11.
140. Woman Teacher, 17 February 1928, p.157. Also see Auchmuty, 'The rise and fall of the schoolgirl story', pp.131-4 for a discussion of the significance of country dancing, female friendship and community.
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152. NUWT Records. Box 124, papers.
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154. Woman Teacher, 15 January 1937, p.127.
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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

When women teachers marched in suffrage processions and hid in protest at the 1911 Census, when they fought against the marriage bar in council chambers and asserted their professional achievements in support of their claim to headships, they were creating a powerful, lasting and flexible feminist politics within teaching in the first half of the twentieth century. As well as stimulating considerable debate within their own associations, many women teachers were important contributors in sustaining the wider women's movement. They had arrived at their feminism through experiencing particular stresses in their lives as teachers and as women, coupled with the possibility of making direct comparisons between their own position and that of their male colleagues. With this political awareness they were able to intervene forcefully in teacher and feminist politics, developing a political language of gender both by creatively shifting the discourse of professionalism towards equality, while at times also making use of a language of feminine difference.

The history of teachers - and indeed much of the general historiography of education - has often been narrowly focussed on institutions such as the school, the classroom, the teacher training college and the teacher associations. Even feminist approaches have only gradually moved away from adding women in to traditional debates about the class status of teachers, their professionalisation and their relationship with the state, towards analysing gender relations in the schools. [1] What I have done in this study is to extend the recent work on women teachers' feminist politics and used women teachers - as a case study in some ways - to ask a broader question about women's politicisation as feminists, which necessitates seeing them in a wider context as women workers, and as women with personal lives outside the classroom.

In doing this, I have also sought to emphasise and understand the significance of the 'ordinary' feminist. This parallels the discussion by Sandra Holton of the importance of the relationship between feminism and the 'average' woman. [2] Up until now,

historical studies of why women became feminists have tended to concentrate on prominent individuals or leaders, while also attempting to make generalisations about them. [3] Instead, I have used women teachers to seek new methods of analysing the process of politicisation for groups of ordinary followers and supporters of women's movements, while recognising that teachers were not average or typical in the extent and depth of their feminist allegiance. This study has gone beyond the individual biographical approach, which is dependent on particular kinds of sources left only by prominent individuals, to suggest new methods by which the politicisation of groups or aggregates of women can be analysed.

Why do some women become feminists? In answering this question I used different types of analysis and borrowed from a number of current debates in women's history. One of the most important of these theoretical debates is about the contested relationship between discourse, meaning and material reality. Joan Scott and Denise Riley have emphatically argued that we can only produce histories of women and gender relations through the analysis of discourse and representation. [4] Some women's historians have criticised this as moving away from the discussion of 'real' events and real people. [5] Catherine Hall, however, has helped to bring the different approaches together with her reminder that the Foucauldian definition of discourse includes sites, institutions and everyday practices, not only language and representation at an abstract level. [6] What I have done in this thesis is to use these new insights alongside more conventional forms of historical analysis, and followed Jane Rendall's call for historians to use a range of source materials and methodologies. Historians, she has written, 'must still supplement the new skills of the reading of meaning with older historical practice. We have not only to learn from literary and psychoanalytic paradigms, but to meld those with our own.' [7]

To arrive at a full and rich picture of feminist politicisation I took as a starting point the premise that gender relations are played out both in 'reality' and in representations of gender and that these are not two separate realms but inform each other. To analyse why women come to political consciousness we need to assess their location within the family and at the workplace. In doing this we may understand how their experiences in these and other areas, and their

sense of themselves (and therefore their openness to new interpretations of the world) is constantly recreated through changing constructions of gender as well as other discourses. Tensions which exist within and between these constructions and experiences of gender relations become difficult to resolve in certain historical circumstances, and may make women likely to seek political solutions. The processes by which these stresses become untenable has been explored in detail for women teachers. Women teachers were a relatively small group, though a significant one. They show a very strong and distinctive course of politicisation and political allegiance. However some elements of this model of feminist politicisation may also be applicable to other groups of women.

Women teachers' political consciousness was partly stirred by the conflicts inherent in their structural position in the profession. In contrast to other women, teachers were well educated, relatively highly paid, and had confidence in their professional skills. However, comparison with their male colleagues showed that they did similar work but received only four-fifths of men's pay, fewer promotion opportunities and less job security as a result of the marriage bar. These injustices were the more telling because considerable equivalence did exist between women and men teachers, and because they were not highly segregated in the profession. For teachers, a pattern of relatively little sex segregation interacted with the way the work was gendered and the strength of their professional identities to produce a concern with their interests as women workers. It would be useful to make comparisons with other occupational or industrial groups of women workers, especially those with strong attachments to skills and professional identities such as nurses, civil servants, or skilled factory workers, to examine how other conjunctions of these elements may result in different levels of political awareness and activity. As in teaching, changing patterns of sex segregation in an occupation produce new gendered meanings of work as well as concerns about material gains and losses.

Without losing sight of the material pressures and context for feminist politicisation, it is vital to look at the meanings women attached to their experiences and how these changed. However imperfectly we can get at this, it is important to understand the interplay between different elements of womens' subjectivities, the

relationship between their various selves. The significance of different aspects of identity will vary between groups of women, but the ones I have highlighted as important for teachers were their family relationships and their professional identity as workers. Tensions within these identities played a significant part in their politicisation as feminists. Women teachers had to try to make sense of the different gendered meanings within professionalism itself, which were at times out of kilter with dominant representations of femininity. These sometimes had material effects - women's dependants had to be supported on lower pay than men's, justified by the male breadwinner argument. But they were also experienced as a clash of meanings between femininity and professionalism. These tensions did not inevitably lead to political understanding. In some cases they could lead to personal insecurity; for example the experience of being a spinster against the dominant norm of marriage. But many women teachers were able to develop further political understandings of their situation because they were securely grounded in a professional identity which was partly feminine, yet could also be re-read as offering gender-free privileges on the basis of their intellectual abilities and professional skills in a similar way to men.

Oral history and the use of autobiographical sources have helped to map out some broad parameters of women teachers' subjectivities; how they saw themselves as women and as teachers, how they made sense of their own lives, and the different ways in which they understood and managed the contradictory tensions in their experience. The example of the teachers has shown that it is important to look at how the relationship between family life and employment creates particular expressions of women's political activity. Examining this relationship in detail has illuminated significant fractures and complexities in women's experience and sense of self. As a way of understanding the subjective experiences of groups of women, this approach can provide a deeper and more subtle way into the conflicts and tensions which women were obliged to negotiate and which made many of them open to a feminist political analysis.

Being a feminist means embracing the identity of 'woman', yet at the same time rejecting some aspects of contemporary social understandings of femininity, as Denise Riley has emphasised. [8] Uneasiness about elements of feminine identity must be a key factor in

precipitating feminist consciousness. Women teachers strongly identified as women, in their work as teachers, in their family lives, and as feminists. But because they also had powerful competing identities, as professional teachers, they could afford to reject certain aspects of their social subordination as women. They were women, but in important ways were not like other women.

The wider context of their politicisation was also important. Changes in the social and psychological constructions of female selfhood during this period included the sexualisation of women in relation to marriage, an increased emphasis on maternity, and the idea that true psychological fulfilment could be attained through engaging in these activities. These discourses and meanings shaped women's experience but were neither ubiquitous nor impervious to political challenge. For example, the new psychological ideas about spinsterhood certainly appeared in the public debates over the marriage bar, and to some extent in personal understandings of being single. But this did not necessarily extend to the pathologising of female friendship to the degree which some have suggested. [9] And while it became more difficult for feminists to assert spinsterhood as a positive lifestyle of independence and strength, they were able to develop alternative understandings of this and other discourses, such as that on married women's employment.

Recent debates in the history of women's movements have centred on the significance of feminist political philosophies and the success of feminist strategies, especially in periods of stress and change in gender relations, such as the First World War and the interwar economic depressions. [10] Making a distinction between 'equality' and 'difference' remains a useful approach to analysing the history of feminism in the twentieth century. These philosophical distinctions did divide feminists in the interwar period, as the split in the NUSEC shows. However, the teachers' political activities also exhibit the close links between these approaches.

Because professionalism was a central aspect of their work identity, women teachers who became feminists tended to be orientated towards equality rather than difference feminism. Equality and difference gave a productive tension to women teachers' political outlook, and flexibility to their feminist strategies and campaigns. Equality was a more powerful argument than difference in promoting

equal pay and promotion prospects, since it could be harnessed to the idea of professionalism and the notions of status and merit which this carried with it. Difference arguments had some utility in the interwar years when they echoed the growth of maternalism and domesticity in dominant ideas of femininity. But this approach could only be used to defend the headships of infant and girls' schools already designated as feminine and the employment of married women teachers, by using arguments about women teachers' innate gendered qualities which undermined their professionalism. Equality arguments met discrimination head-on. Difference could only be used to salvage or defend women teachers' existing position in periods of difficulty and pressure for teachers such as the interwar years.

This flexible borrowing from both equality and difference (as well as, of course, from other sets of ideas) can be found among many feminist groups in this period and it is important to assess their differing political utility and effects in varying circumstances. Both approaches had strengths, weaknesses and dangers attached to them. Feminists needed to identify their collective interests as women, even if this meant emphasising qualities based on the idea of sexual difference. But to claim equality - whether this implied male privileges or ungendered human rights - could be the more radical and disruptive approach.

Equality was a particularly challenging approach for feminists to take in a mixed-sex organisation such as the NUT. The debate among teachers contributes to the complex picture of women's position in trade unions being developed in current historiography. Trade unions were not simply monolithic anti-women bastions of male power, and women did have opportunities for political activity in mixed unions, even before the turn of the century. Men were not necessarily united against feminism - some might support women's fight for equality, although many did organise explicitly in opposition to it. Complex processes of occupational gendering occur within trade unions and professional organisations as well as in the workplace itself.

Because professionalism was a common goal shared by all teachers, arguments for equality based on a notion of gender-free professionalism carried a great deal of force within a mixed organisation. Women's experience of the NUT, especially before the First World War, showed that its ambiguous identity between trade

union and professional association meant that it could be at the same time both male-dominated and resistant to women's demands and open to female participation and ungendered aims, shifting according to circumstances and the balance of pressures within the organisation. During periods of rapid change and when women were more favourably placed, such as during the war, it was easier to press the idea of common professional aims. In times of uncertainty, men were more likely to attack the threat of women's advance. But single-sex organisations were not necessarily the answer either. The NUWT found itself able to argue for feminist objectives very strongly but was excluded from major influence on government and LEAs by its marginal position. Although the AAM was more centrally placed, it had little success in achieving equality aims between the wars. Yet both the NUWT and the AAM did have an important role to play in developing feminist arguments in the 1920s and 1930s, and also in providing an environment in which some of the tensions of living as a single woman teacher in a society which increasingly valorised marriage as the test of femininity could be resolved, and alternative forms of feminine and professional identity could take shape.

Men teachers found it difficult to contest arguments based on the concept of gender-free professionalism. Feminist teachers gradually succeeded in their 'misreading' and political appropriation of it as an ungendered discourse of equal rights. But since professionalism was also powerfully gendered as masculine by many men, gender antagonism could not be avoided by feminist teachers fighting for equality, whether in single-sex organisations or in the mixed NUT. The professionalism debates show how gender battles take place over meanings as well as resources.

Though this thesis has been written as an intervention into women's history, and the history of feminism, it has also illustrated the importance of the new emphasis on 'gender history' insofar as this puts a new stress on the construction of masculinity. It is still useful to conceptualise the interwar period as one of masculine backlash, but we need to consider more complex readings of what was happening within discourses of masculinity. The 1920s 'masculine backlash' used to be seen as a response of men to their fear of the feminist challenge and perception of women's increasing power. [11] But alongside real (though sometimes temporary) changes in women's and

men's relative positions, the First World War also tested the psychic meanings of masculinity. Part of the reconstruction of masculinity in the 1920s was done by making a contrast with traditional models of femininity. Historians have shown the ways in which, for example, government policy was used to exclude married women from the workforce and benefits system and re-emphasise women's place in the home. But this stress on gender difference was also used to reassert the rights, powers and privileges of masculinity itself. In some instances this was an active process, developed as an anti-feminist device against feminism, not simply a shriek of pain from men on confronting a changed postwar world.

Men teachers experienced a combination of structural changes in the schools (an increase in mixed schools, and more women working in boys' schools in the First World War) which they believed to be at their expense, combined with pressures on their masculine identities as breadwinners and authority figures. In the 1920s and 1930s, when feminine 'difference' was being developed by feminists, anti-feminist men teachers responded with the notion of masculine 'difference' to promote their own interests, and assert their claim to higher pay and the headships of mixed schools. This highlighting of masculinity was made from a position of relative weakness, though, since masculinity is normally the absent subject, with women/ femininity constructed as the 'other'.

Between 1900 and the Second World War, as a consequence of a number of tensions in their lives, women teachers became strongly politicised as feminists. The identities women developed as professional teachers were, in many ways, at odds with dominant social models of femininity, especially regarding the exercise of authority, and in attitudes to marriage and spinsterhood. Yet the strong links between femininity and teaching meant that women teachers had the security to identify the inequalities in their position. These were made especially apparent by the relative lack of sex segregation in the occupation. This raised awareness was also given impetus by the parallel growth of the suffrage movement in the years prior to the First World War. As an occupational group, teachers were unusual in the extent and tenacity of their feminist allegiance, which was exacerbated by the broader gender conflicts of wartime, economic depression and educational reorganisation and continued throughout the

interwar years. Women teachers' persistent strategy of seeking professional equality with men eventually met with some success, aided by the teacher shortages of the 1940s and 1950s, when the marriage bar was abolished and equal pay finally achieved. Personal and political issues informed each other in the complexity of women teachers' lives. Feminist teachers made a significant contribution to the women's movement between 1900 and 1939, and their campaigns remain a lasting inspiration for creative and effective feminist political action.

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APPENDIX OF TABLES

Note to the Tables

The Board of Education published basic figures on numbers of schools and teachers for most of the period 1900-1938, although not for the years of the First World War. Little information on state secondary schools was published until 1908 onwards. In the 1920s and 1930s, more detailed series of statistics were published showing the deployment of elementary school teachers.

Table 1 Total Number of Teachers of All Grades in Public Elementary Schools 1900-1938, England & Wales

Date	Total Teachers				
	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Total
1899-1900	29678	26.0	84308	74.0	113986
1900-01	30478	25.7	88301	74.3	118779
1901-02	30882	25.4	90686	74.6	121568
1902-03	31787	25.0	95159	75.0	126946
1903-04	32897	24.6	100848	75.4	133745
1904-05	33810	24.1	106297	75.9	140107
1905-06	34342	23.7	110457	76.3	144799
1906-07	35166	23.6	114010	76.4	149176
1907-08	36525	23.7	117306	76.3	153831
1908-09	37694	24.1	118665	75.9	156359
1909-10	38810	24.5	119873	75.5	158683
1910-11	40392	25.0	121043	75.0	161435
1911-12	40735	25.2	121104	74.8	161839
1912-13	41293	25.4	121102	74.6	162395
1913-14	41881	25.5	122049	74.5	163930

1919-20	37094	22.7	126205	77.3	163299
1920-21	36418	22.1	128651	77.9	165069
1921-22	37679	22.7	128467	77.3	166146
1922-23	38493	23.9	122545	76.1	161038
1923-24	38861	24.3	120898	75.7	159759
1924-25	39296	24.2	122909	75.8	162205
1925-26	39564	24.4	122506	75.6	162070
1926-27	40086	24.7	122156	75.3	162242
1927-28	40884	25.0	122858	75.0	163742
1928-29	41190	25.3	121751	74.7	162941
1929-30	41585	25.4	121894	74.6	163479
1930-31	42006	25.6	122141	74.4	164147
1931-32	42834	26.0	122074	74.0	164908
1932-33	43859	26.6	121327	73.4	165186
1933-34	44874	27.2	120355	72.8	165229
1934-35	45512	27.6	119225	72.4	164737
1935-36	45865	28.0	117869	72.0	163734
1936-37	46008	28.4	116173	71.6	162181
1937-38	46247	28.7	114657	71.3	160904

Source: Board of Education, Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

*No figures published

Table 2 Number of Teachers Of Various Grades In Public Elementary Schools 1900-1938, England & Wales

Date	Certificated				Uncertificated				Supplementary
	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Female
1899-1900	24556	38.4	39453	61.6	5122	15.8	27343	84.2	17512
1900-01	25122	38.0	40979	62.0	5356	15.4	29317	84.6	18005
1901-02	25570	37.7	42198	62.3	5312	14.7	30900	85.3	17588
1902-03	26305	37.1	44609	62.9	5482	14.4	32709	85.6	17841
1903-04	27286	36.5	47525	63.5	5611	13.8	35158	86.2	18165
1904-05	28280	35.9	50457	64.1	5530	13.1	36816	86.9	19024
1905-06	29414	34.9	54860	65.1	4928	12.1	35821	87.9	19776
1906-07	30415	34.1	58845	65.9	4751	11.7	35881	88.3	19284
1907-08	31205	34.2	59923	65.8	5320	12.0	38946	88.0	18437
1908-09	32026	33.8	62747	66.2	5668	12.8	38714	87.2	17204
1909-10	32805	33.7	64591	66.3	6005	13.2	39550	86.8	15732
1910-11	34255	33.8	67125	66.2	6137	13.4	39510	86.6	14408
1911-12	34904	33.7	68609	66.3	5831	13.1	38632	86.9	13863
1912-13	35990	33.9	70035	66.1	5303	12.4	37590	87.6	13477
1913-14	37226	34.1	71930	65.9	4655	11.2	36752	88.8	13367

1919-20	34435	30.2	79668	69.8	2659	7.4	33113	92.6	13424
1920-21	34241	29.5	81830	70.5	2177	6.1	33281	93.9	13540
1921-22	35460	30.0	82611	70.0	2219	6.3	32958	93.7	12898
1922-23	36430	31.2	80278	68.8	2063	6.3	30819	93.7	11448
1923-24	36886	31.5	80091	68.5	1975	6.1	30210	93.9	10597
1924-25	37162	31.3	81390	68.7	2134	6.3	31593	93.7	9926
1925-26	37406	31.4	81885	68.6	2158	6.4	31644	93.6	8977
1926-27	37825	31.6	81831	68.4	2261	6.7	31591	93.3	8734
1927-28	38775	31.6	83889	68.4	2109	6.4	30666	93.6	8303
1928-29	39153	31.8	84052	68.2	2037	6.4	29906	93.6	7793
1929-30	39618	31.8	84979	68.2	1967	6.3	29418	93.7	7497
1930-31	40121	31.8	86124	68.2	1885	6.2	28747	93.8	7270
1931-32	40963	32.0	87163	68.0	1871	6.3	27895	93.7	7016
1932-33	41917	32.4	87413	67.6	1942	6.7	27201	93.3	6713
1933-34	42979	32.9	87675	67.1	1895	6.7	26389	93.3	6291
1934-35	43675	33.3	87658	66.7	1837	6.7	25610	93.3	5957
1935-36	44159	33.5	87602	66.5	1706	6.5	24621	93.5	5646
1936-37	44484	33.8	87291	66.2	1524	6.1	23641	93.9	5241
1937-38	44882	34.0	87059	66.0	1365	5.7	22693	94.3	4905

Source: Board of Education, Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

* No figures published

Table 3 Secondary Schools on the Grant List 1902-1938, England & Wales

Dates	Number of Schools				Number of Full-time Pupils		
	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1901-2	*	*	*	341	*	*	35730
1902-3	*	*	*	418	*	*	44576
1903-4	*	*	*	482	*	*	52466
1904-5	*	*	*	575	61179	33519	94698
1905-6	*	*	*	689	65994	49694	115688
1906-7	*	*	*	768	*	*	*
1907-8	344	262	237	843	75489	63617	139106
1908-9	371	301	240	912	80923	69871	150794
1909-10	377	317	256	950	84305	72032	156337
1910-11	380	326	265	971	86849	73628	160477
1911-12	383	335	277	995	88973	76597	165570
1912-13	390	339	281	1010	92923	81500	174423
1913-14	397	349	281	1027	99171	88036	187207
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1921-22	464	450	335	1249	*	*	*
1922-23	466	459	339	1264	181791	172374	354165
1923-24	468	460	342	1270	*	*	*
1924-25	468	459	357	1284	183740	168865	352605
1925-26	477	463	361	1301	189657	170846	360503
1926-27	487	467	365	1319	196289	175204	371493
1927-28	491	469	369	1329	199376	178164	377540
1928-29	493	474	374	1341	204347	182646	386993
1929-30	496	480	378	1354	207462	186643	394105
1930-31	500	485	382	1367	217110	194199	411309
1931-32	501	488	390	1379	229045	203016	432061
1932-33	499	487	392	1378	234860	207023	441883
1933-34	498	488	395	1381	238062	210359	448421
1934-35	499	486	395	1380	242376	214407	456783
1935-36	507	491	391	1389	246020	217886	463906
1936-37	511	495	387	1393	246244	220001	466245
1937-38	513	496	389	1398	247389	222614	470003

Source: Board of Education, Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

* No figures published

Table 4 Secondary Schools on the Grant List, England & Wales: Number of Teachers

	Women Heads			Men Heads			Women Assistants			Men Assistants			Totals		
	Graduates	Non-Grad	Total	Graduates	Non-Grad	Total	Graduates	Non-Grad	Total	Graduates	Non-Grad	Total	Women	Men	All Teachers
1908-9	171	128	299	549	59	608	1699	2486	4185	2485	1748	4233	4484	4841	9325
1909-10	186	129	315	578	51	629	1892	2522	4414	2690	1709	4399	4729	5028	9757
1910-11	198	124	322	589	47	636	2072	2502	4574	2889	1598	4487	4896	5123	10019
1911-12	226	105	331	604	43	647	2337	2306	4643	2946	1513	4459	4974	5106	10080
1912-13	240	99	339	616	42	658	2480	2339	4819	3107	1481	4588	5158	5246	10404
1913-14	258	91	349	630	38	668	2633	2395	5028	3308	1471	4779	5377	5447	10824
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1919-20	330	78	408	697	28	725	4615	3957	8572	4358	1974	6332	8980	7057	16037
1920-21	341	95	436	727	25	752	5056	4288	9344	4920	2216	7136	9780	7888	17668
1921-22	354	95	449	748	30	778	5294	4418	9712	5491	2297	7788	10161	8566	18727
1922-23	380	81	461	771	20	791	5288	4073	9361	5739	2133	7872	9822	8663	18485
1923-24	388	73	461	777	20	797	5400	3931	9331	6032	2037	8069	9792	8866	18658
1924-25	402	58	460	794	20	814	5534	3865	9399	6419	1977	8396	9859	9210	19069
1925-26	405	47	452	808	17	825	5802	3665	9467	7004	1892	8896	9919	9721	19640
1926-27	408	50	458	786	18	804	5548	3676	9224	6789	1979	8768	9682	9572	19254
1927-28	415	49	464	816	13	829	6049	3596	9645	7346	1818	9164	10109	9993	20102
1928-29	418	47	465	815	11	826	6219	3581	9800	7634	1789	9423	10265	10249	20514
1929-30	426	43	469	828	7	835	6441	3642	10083	7973	1805	9778	10552	10613	21165
1930-31	431	39	470	837	8	845	6626	3673	10299	8292	1788	10080	10769	10925	21694
1931-32	441	31	472	854	6	860	6906	3629	10535	8664	1762	10426	11007	11286	22293
1932-33	436	30	466	855	7	862	7103	3608	10711	8978	1737	10715	11177	11577	22754
1933-34	444	26	470	861	5	866	7203	3562	10765	9222	1701	10923	11235	11789	23024
1934-35	449	22	471	860	7	867	7359	3545	10904	9509	1674	11183	11375	12050	23425
1935-36	452	21	473	864	6	870	7546	3583	11129	9869	1662	11531	11602	12401	24003
1936-37	455	20	475	865	5	870	7649	3648	11297	10138	1671	11809	11772	12679	24451
1937-38	462	18	480	878	8	886	7876	3701	11577	10408	1688	12096	12057	12982	25039

Source: Board of Education, Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

* No figures published

Table 5 Membership of the National Union of Teachers 1900-29

Date	Men Members	as % of cert. men teachers	Women Members	as % of cert. women teachers	Total Members	Women as % of total members
1900	23157	94.3	20458	51.8	43615	46.9
1901	24145	96.1	21008	51.3	45153	46.5
1902	25297	98.9	22029	52.2	47326	46.5
1903	*	*	*	*	50650	*
1904	26594	97.5	27413	57.7	54007	50.8
1905	27510	97.3	30076	59.6	57586	52.2
1906	28282	96.2	32656	59.5	60938	53.6
1907	28750	94.5	33411	56.8	62161	53.7
1908	29473	94.4	34986	58.4	64459	54.3
1909	30088	93.9	37524	58.9	67612	55.5
1910	30693	93.6	38380	59.4	69073	55.6
1911	31440	91.8	40960	61.0	72400	56.6
1912	33287	95.4	44799	65.3	78086	57.4
1913	36311	*	52093	74.4	88404	58.9
1914	37503	*	53915	75.0	91418	59.0
1915	37826	*	55374	*	93200	59.4
1916	37139	*	56950	*	94089	60.5
1917	36899	*	60452	*	97351	62.1
1918	36802	*	65192	*	101994	63.9
1919	37705	*	75284	*	112989	66.6
		as % of cert. and uncert. men teachers		as % of cert. and uncert. women teachers		
1920	36904	99.5	78536	69.6	115440	68.0
1921	35773	98.2	79804	69.3	115577	69.0
1922	37040	98.3	84750	73.3	121790	69.6
1923	35029	90.9	76306	68.7	111335	68.5
1924	34855	89.7	77173	70.0	112028	68.9
1925	35540	90.4	81655	72.3	117195	69.7
1926	36573		84764		121337	69.9
1927	37332	93.1	87942	77.5	125274	70.2
1928	38275	93.6	92332	80.6	130607	70.7
1929	39399	95.7	95498	83.8	134897	70.8

Source: NUT, Annual Reports for each year.

* No figures available

Table 6 Percentage of Certificated Men Teachers in Charge of Different Types of Class 1921-1938

		1921	1925	1930	1935	1938
Under 11s	Boys	7.5	7.7	15.0	9.8	10.0
	Girls	-	-	-	-	-
	Mixed	0.9	1.1	4.3	6.0	9.0
	Total	8.5	8.8	19.3	15.7	19.0
Both Over & Under 11s	Boys	30.8	28.7	21.8	12.4	10.1
	Girls	0.1	-	-	-	-
	Mixed	8.3	8.8	10.1	10.1	11.7
	Total	39.2	37.5	31.9	22.5	21.7
Over 11s	Boys	38.5	38.1	34.3	42.5	39.0
	Girls	0.2	0.1	-	-	-
	Mixed	13.6	15.5	14.5	19.2	20.2
	Total	52.3	53.7	48.8	61.7	59.2
Total	Boys	76.9	74.5	71.0	64.7	59.1
	Girls	0.3	0.2	0.1	-	-
	Mixed	22.9	25.3	28.9	35.3	40.9
<u>Total Number of Teachers</u>		<u>20309</u>	<u>23302</u>	<u>25684</u>	<u>28978</u>	<u>29678</u>

Source: Calculated from Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education for each year.

Table 7 Percentage of Certificated Women Teachers in Charge of Different Types of Class 1921-1938

		1921	1925	1928	1931	1935	1938
Under 11s	Boys	5.9	5.2	5.2	4.9	3.5	2.8
	Girls	8.2	7.9	8.8	9.3	7.3	6.6
	Mixed	42.0	41.2	45.7	49.3	50.1	54.1
	Total	56.1	54.3	59.7	63.4	61.0	63.5
Both Over & Under 11s	Boys	3.9	3.0	1.7	1.1	0.7	0.4
	Girls	12.4	12.3	9.7	9.0	5.3	4.5
	Mixed	9.8	10.2	8.6	8.6	8.2	7.7
	Total	26.1	25.5	20.1	18.7	14.2	12.5
Over 11s	Boys	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.2
	Girls	13.1	14.8	15.0	13.1	17.2	16.4
	Mixed	4.0	4.7	4.8	4.5	7.2	7.3
	Total	17.9	20.2	20.3	17.9	24.8	23.9
Total	Boys	10.5	8.9	7.4	6.3	4.6	3.4
	Girls	33.7	34.9	33.5	31.3	29.9	27.5
	Mixed	55.8	56.2	59.1	62.4	65.5	69.1
Total Number of Teachers		62096	61588	65520	69348	70803	69943

Source: Calculated from Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education for each year.

Table 8 Number & Qualifications of Head Teachers of Elementary Schools 1902-1938, England & Wales.

Date	Certificated Head Teachers			Uncertificated Head Teachers			Total Head Teachers			
	Men	Women	% Women	Men	Women	% Women	Men	Women	Total	% Women
1902	13662	17364	56.0	29	271	90.3	13691	17635	31326	56.3
1904	13822	17574	56.0	32	279	89.7	13854	17853	31707	56.3
1906	13845	17682	56.1	32	333	91.2	13877	18015	31892	56.5
1908	13831	17691	56.1	30	396	93.0	13861	18087	31948	56.6
1910	13844	17805	56.3	32	386	92.3	13876	18191	32067	56.7
1912	13944	17838	56.1	33	378	92.0	13977	18216	32193	56.6
1914	14004	17891	56.1	38	432	91.9	14042	18323	32365	56.6
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1920	13394	18055	57.4	15	197	92.9	13409	18252	31661	57.6
1923	13113	17720	57.5	36	542	93.8	13149	18262	31411	58.1
1927	12921	17079	56.9	20	648	97.0	12941	17727	30668	57.8
1930	12820	16799	56.7	17	744	97.8	12837	17543	30380	57.7
1933	12627	16529	56.7	14	777	98.2	12641	17306	29947	57.8
1936	12686	16008	55.8	11	766	98.6	12697	16774	29471	56.9
1938	12610	15847	55.7	13	744	98.3	12623	16591	29214	56.8

Source: Board of Education, Annual Reports and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

* No figures published

Table 9 Percentage of Certificated Teachers Who Were Head Teachers
In Public Elementary Schools, 1902-1938, England & Wales.

Date	Men	Women
1902	53.4	41.1
1904	50.7	37.0
1906	47.1	32.2
1908	44.3	29.5
1910	42.2	27.6
1912	39.9	26.0
1914	37.6	24.9
1920	38.9	22.7
1923	36.0	22.1
1927	34.2	20.9
1930	32.4	19.8
1933	30.1	18.9
1936	28.7	14.5
1938	28.1	18.2

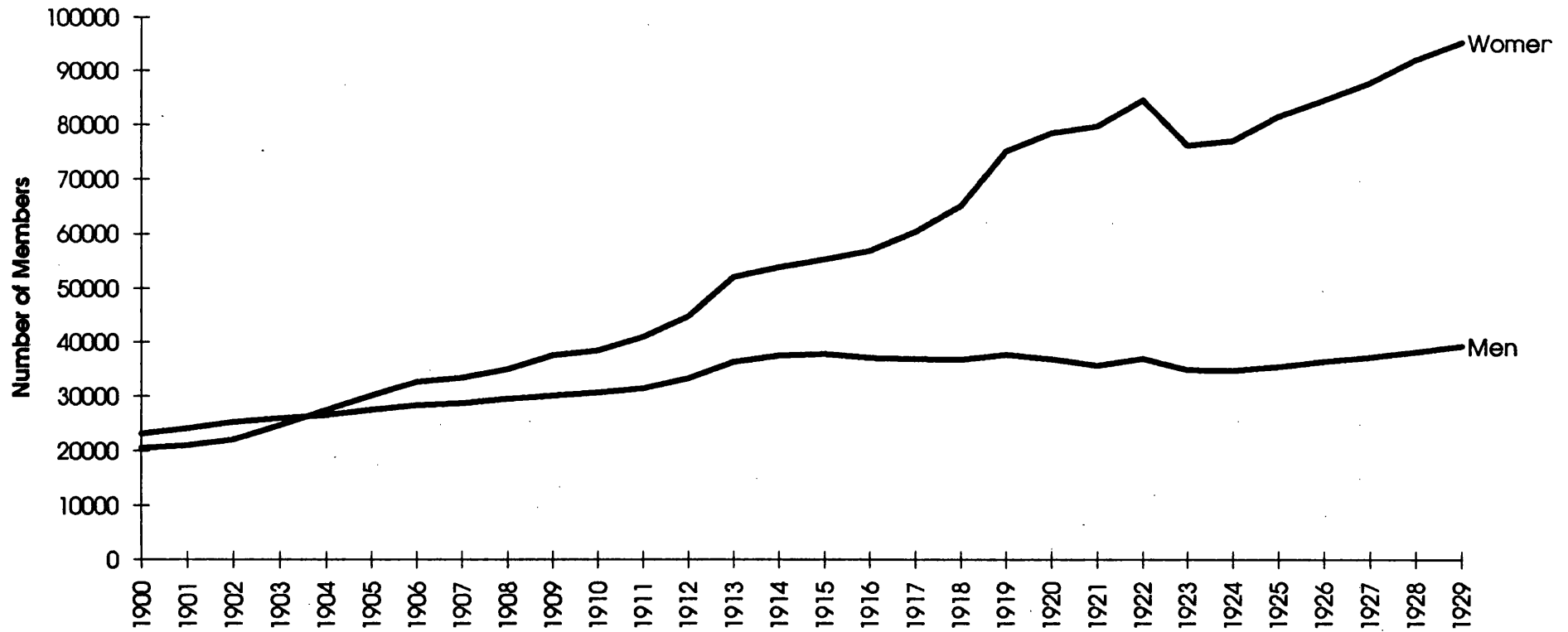
Source: Calculated from Board of Education, Annual Reports
and Statistics of Public Education for each year.

Table 10 Membership of the National Association of Schoolmasters 1920-1940

<u>Date</u>	<u>Membership</u>
1920	over 6000
1923	5100
1927	6173
1928	6561
1929	6800
1930	7023
1931	7610
1932	8595
1934	9405
<u>1940</u>	<u>8629</u>

Source: Membership figures as announced at NAS conferences and reported
in The Times Educational Supplement

Figure 1 NUT Membership 1900-1929: Women & Men



Source: NUT, Annual Reports for each year.

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2. Unpublished Interview and Autobiographical Sources
3. Government Publications
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8. Unpublished Papers

1. ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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NUT Circulars

NUT Propaganda Leaflets

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Parliamentary and Superannuation Committee

Executive Committee

Tenure Committee

Law Committee

b) Records of the National Union of Women Teachers

University of London, Institute of Education Library, London WC1.

Box 8 People

Box 69 Local Government

Box 77 NUSEC

Box 87 Propaganda

Box 93/4 Equal Opportunities

Box 96 Miss Froud

Box 123/4 Miss Phipps

Box 173 Socials

Box 174 London Unit Travel Club

Box 175, 176, 177

Married Women Teachers

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Box 267 Restrictive Legislation

Box 300 Married Women Teachers

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d) Records of The National Association of Schoolmasters

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Ed 11 Elementary Education, General Files

Ed 24 Private Office Papers

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Cabinet Papers

g) Greater London Record Office

London County Council Records

Education Office, Staffing Files:

Married Women Teachers

Employment of Women Teachers in Boys Departments

2. UNPUBLISHED INTERVIEW AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

a) Interviews with Women Teachers

These interviews with retired women teachers were carried out by the author between 1986 and 1989. All names are pseudonyms except where stated.

Mrs Mary Barrett: born 1905, London; after training college worked in elementary schools in London and Surrey.

Mrs Alice Bradshaw: born 1905, South London; after training college worked in elementary schools in London.

Miss Burke: born c.1897, Ireland. University educated; worked in secondary schools in Northern Ireland, Birkenhead and London.

Miss Ruth Drysdale: born 1904, South London; after training college worked in London elementary schools.

Miss May Griffiths: born 1919 in Cheshire; after training college taught in elementary schools in Cheshire.

Mrs Jenny Inchbold: born 1925, Leicester; after university and teacher training worked in a secondary school in Hertfordshire.

Mrs Nan McMillan (real name): born 1905, South London; after training college worked in London elementary schools before the Second World War; NUWT member and President 1939-40.

Mrs Julia Maynard: born 1909, Wales; university educated and trained, elementary school teacher before World War Two in London.

Mrs Nora Platt: born c.1912, Cheshire; after university and teacher training taught in a London secondary school.

Miss Vera Reid: born 1910, London; after university and teacher training taught in secondary schools in South Wales and Birmingham before the war.

Miss Richards: born 1901, Wales; after university and teacher training taught in secondary schools in Wales, Yorkshire and Middlesex.

Miss Sarah Wainwright: born 1914, Lancashire; after university and teacher training taught in secondary schools in Lancashire and Yorkshire before the war.

b) Family Life and Work Before 1918. Oral history collection by Paul and Thea Thompson, at the University of Essex.

No. 21: Mrs Dan, born 1891, Essex. Educated at a pupil-teacher centre, and teacher training college, and subsequently taught in elementary schools in Essex.

No. 143: Mrs Mary Hatch, born 1886, Yorkshire. After teacher training college taught in elementary schools in West Yorkshire and Manchester.

No. 371: Miss Mary Rosser, born 1890, Glamorgan. After university and teacher training taught in South Wales elementary schools.

No. 409: Miss Florence Dart, born 1895, Dorset, where she worked as an elementary school teacher.

c) Mass-Observation Archive. University of Sussex.

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<u>The Times</u>	Selected dates
<u>Times Educational Supplement</u>	1910-1939
<u>Votes for Women</u>	Selected dates
<u>Woman's Leader</u>	Selected dates
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