ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AS EXPRESSED IN **THE TIMES**, 1919-28

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AS EXPRESSED IN THE TIMES, 1919-28

by

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ABSTRACT

World War I was the first time that female labor had been used on a large scale. By 1918, 1,350,000 women had entered war industries, of whom not more than 150,000 could be accounted for by the normal growth in population. These figures signified a vast social and economic change, which, while its merits could not be questioned during the crisis, came under attack as soon as the war ended and the urge to return to 'normal' as soon as possible became apparent.

In order to trace the pattern of attitudes towards the employment of women during the decade following the Great War, content analysis techniques were applied to all issues of The Times from 1919 to 1928. Attitudes were categorized as to type and further divided as to whether favorable or unfavorable towards the employment of women. Explanations for the fluctuations in attitudes over the decade were sought in sources other than The Times, and related to:

1. The current events of the period.
2. The character of the groups and individuals expressing the attitudes and the specific nature of their reactions: whether purely pragmatic or founded in traditional principles and prejudices.

It was found that of those expressing unfavorable attitudes towards employment of women, 57% were male and 43% female; while of those expressing favorable attitudes, 74% were female and 26% male. Those expressing unfavorable attitudes could be loosely categorized as members of the employing classes, who were at once anxious to return to the status quo extant prior to 1914 with regard to the employment of working-class women,

and determined to prevent an increase of the employment of middle- and upper-class women in the professions. These reactions were based both on the fear of women deserting their traditional role, considered to be their natural one of wife and mother, and the more pragmatic desire to give jobs to unemployed men rather than women. Those expressing favorable attitudes to the employment of women were found to include a hard core of feminists, whose motivations were based firmly on the principle of equality between the sexes, but whose analysis of the problem and solutions to it varied to the extent of causing dissension within their own ranks.

The problem of women's two roles in society, at home and at work was too complex for either set of attitudes, favorable or unfavorable, to dictate future trends. However, by analyzing the types of attitudes expressed and by whom and for what reason, the nature of the problem became more clearly delineated.

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INTRODUCTION

Discussion of the issue of the employment of women was wide ranging during the 1920's, covering women in industry, domestic service and the professions (especially medicine and teaching). Reactions to the issue were numerous because of the unprecedented increase in the use of female labor during the war years. However, unlike the suffrage issue (which had been the major preoccupation of the pre-war years), the question of the employment of women could not be discussed in isolation, nor could any absolute polarization of attitudes on the question take place because of the diversity of the specific issues involved. The importance of a study of attitudes towards the employment of women in the 1920's therefore lies in the ramifications of the issue with regard to the wider question of women's role and position in society as a whole. It can be argued that a study of attitudes towards the issue of women's employment may be justified in that it reveals more about this wider issue than would a study of attitudes expressed on the other issues concerning women, such as the suffrage, because of the range of discussion that took place.

Of the sources of data available for the study, it was decided to concentrate on newspapers.[1] Census data, which provide valuable information on the role of women as reflected by educational achievement, marital status and participation in the labor force, give insufficient indication

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[1] The validity of newspapers as historical sources has been widely vindicated, cf., W. H. Taft, Newspapers as Tools for Historians (Columbia, Mo.: Lucas Bros., 1970), p. 3 and Edward Francis-Williams, The Right to Know (London: Longmans, 1969), p. 1.

as to social attitudes prevalent at the time. Newspapers reflect, as well as influence, public opinion. As the Royal Commission on the Press in England pointed out: "If a newspaper does not reflect the limitations and prejudices of at least a considerable section of the public, it will soon cease to exist, for it will not find buyers."[2] The place of the newspaper in the community and the two-way flow of information and comment that takes place through it makes it a particularly valuable source for opinion, especially in the immediate post-war period when no other competitive form of mass media existed.[3]

The aim of The Times (London) as recorded in 1788, was "to record with fidelity the events which occur."[4] Its reputation was such as to ensure its widespread recognition as "the national paper of England."[5] Thus it provided one of the few forums where an extensive discussion of the issue of the employment of women took place, both favorable and unfavorable attitudes being represented, chiefly in the form of news items, reporting speeches and activities, and letters to the editor. Analysis of

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[2]Cited in Taft, op. cit., p. 12.

[3]As a Briggs gives the number of wireless licenses granted in 1922, the first year of B.B.C. broadcasting, as being 35,744. By 1926, there were 2,178,259 licenses. However, programing was in its infancy and the popularity of the wireless in the mid-1920's still very limited (The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom /3 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1961/; I, 18-19.

[4]The Times, Past, Present and Future (London: Printing House Square, 1932), p. 7.

[5]The History of The Times (4 vols.; London: Printing House Square, 1952, IV, 887.

[6]The Observer, Daily Express, Telegraph and Daily Mail were spot checked for their coverage of the women's employment issue. In all cases

the relative strengths of the attitudes expressed in The Times is not in itself the object of this study. It is not presumed that The Times accurately reflected the strength of various opinions on the question of women's employment. However, its coverage seems sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a guide to the component issues and their exponents or sources, although both of these will need evidence from sources other than The Times in order to illuminate and clarify parts of the debate.

The perspective thus gained is especially valuable in view of the limitations of The Times as a source. The paper reflects the attitudes of only a small part of the population, its circulation being limited,[7] and the bias towards items and editorial comment of special interest to its upper-class readership must be recognized. It is also impossible to determine exactly how far the attitudes expressed are those of The Times itself.

Every item pertaining to women (excluding those appearing in the social columns and crime items, which rarely revealed attitudes) in The Times for the years 1919-28 inclusive was recorded on individual cards. Each case, i.e. each card, was then categorized in a preliminary classifactory code, obtained by reference to the issues under discussion. Table 1 summarizes these results.

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the coverage was found to be less extensive than that of The Times. For example, the Daily Mail carried almost no coverage of attitudes favorable to women's employment, and tended to concentrate only on the domestic service aspect (the paper was spot checked for the years 1919, 1921, 1923, 1925 and 1927).

[7] The History of The Times, op. cit., p. 516, p. 783 and p. 793, gives the following daily circulation figures: for December 1919: 126,296; for December 1920: 114,414; average monthly sale 1922: 184,166; 1923: 187,323 (before the price was raised from 1½ pence to 2 pence, whereupon sales dropped again).

TABLE I

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CASES BETWEEN THE MAJOR ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION, 1919-28

	Women's employment outside the home	%	Women's interests	%	Other items concerning women	%	Total	%
1919	87	44.6	38	19.5	70	35.9	195	100.0
1920	56	27.1	88	42.5	63	30.4	207	100.00
1921	105	24.9	206	48.8	111	26.3	422	100.00
1922	72	17.5	268	65.0	72	17.5	412	100.00
1923	73	32.3	109	48.2	44	19.5	226	100.00
1924	67	20.6	167	51.2	92	28.2	326	100.00
1925	52	18.4	162	57.4	68	24.1	282	100.00
1926	38	13.8	162	58.9	75	27.2	275	100.00
1927	64	19.3	170	51.2	98	29.5	332	100.00
1928	45	26.6	71	42.0	53	31.4	169	100.00
Total	659	23.2	1441	50.6	746	26.2	2846	100.00

The justification for concentration on items concerning the employment of women (rather than on any other issue concerning women during this period) rests firstly on the relatively large number of cases which fall into this category. Table 1 shows that over the period studied (the category of women's interests excepted) the percentage of cases falling into the category of "women's employment outside the home" is only just less than the percentage of all the other cases concerning women (23% as against 26%) and never falls below 13% of the total number of cases in any one year. However, the cases falling into the category of "women's interests" are by far the most numerous.

The predominant number of cases in this category (which accounts for 65% of all cases at its peak in 1922 and apart from the abnormally low number in 1919, never falls below 42%) may be explained by what had become in 1921 an almost daily fashion or household tips column. In 1928 the absolute number (although not the percentage) of cases in this category declined, reflecting the more irregular appearance of the column. While the numerical importance of such a category cannot be ignored, it is not as helpful as other categories for revealing attitudes about women. Its importance is implicit in that its size indicates:

1. that women's interests were being considered sufficiently important to be included in the newspaper,
2. what The Times considered women's interests to be,
3. possibly that women were reading The Times in greater numbers, although this is hard to prove.[8]

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[8] Cynthia White, Women's Magazines 1693-1968 (London: Joseph, 1970), p. 95, notes the sudden increase in the number of women's magazines from

The content of this category and the large number of cases involved makes it unsuitable for a study of attitudes. The whole body of cases may be construed as part of the campaign to persuade women to return to the home, the attractions and virtues of feminity and good housekeeping being extolled, at least by implication. But the very purpose of the columns as a whole defy further, detailed analysis.

Table 2 gives a fuller breakdown of Table 1, showing the categories into which items concerned with issues other than "women's employment" or "women's interests" fell. Fluctuations in the relatively small samples in these other categories are for the most part tied directly to the rising or falling importance of each specific issue with which they were associated. For example, the legal position of women became an important issue in 1925 (39 cases), when discussion was provoked by, and focused on the passing of legislation making the guardianship of infants the equal responsibility of both parents, rather than of the father alone; and also by an act giving pensions to widows with dependent children. Debate on the role of women in politics reached a peak in 1927 because the enfranchisement of women under thirty years of age was imminent. Whilst the controversy that raged in The Times was not as heated or extreme as elsewhere,[9] nonetheless the topic warranted the inclusion of three leading

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1924 onwards, showing that women were beginning to read more. E. A. Smith, A History of the Press (London: Gin and Co., Ltd., 1970), p. 92, also notes that women became part of the mass readership of newspapers only after World War I.

[9]The Daily Mail devoted nine leading editorials to the subject in 1927.

TABLE 2

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CASES AMONGST ALL THE ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION, 1919-28

Category	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	Total
Women's employment outside the home	87	56	105	72	73	67	52	38	64	45	659
Women's interests	38	88	206	268	107	167	162	162	170	71	1439
Legal position of women	12	8	8	13	10	24	39	24	18	7	163
Women and politics	21	16	16	23	11	34	20	18	40	19	218
Women and the home	18	16	39	22	13	19	8	16	22	15	188
Women's social behavior	14	6	17	2	2	8	1	15	1	2	68
Women's education	5	17	31	12	8	7	0	2	17	10	109
Total	195	207	422	412	224	326	282	275	332	169	2844

editorials between the months of April and October[10] and 37 other news items, articles and pieces of correspondence. The controversy over women's education at Oxford was also being waged during this period. In particular, correspondence from interested parties tended to be prolific just before a vote was taken on whether or not women should be accepted as full members of Cambridge University, with the same privileges as men. As might be expected from the distribution of cases shown in Table 2 for the category of "women's education,"[11] such votes were held in 1920, 1921 and 1927.

The remaining two categories ("women and home" and "women's social behavior") do not bear any relation to specific current events. Cases falling under the category of "women and the home" would appear to be virtually dependent on the whim of The Times for their inclusion. Expressions showing concern over the maternal mortality figures and articles advocating better house craft dominated this category. However, it may be noted that when the number of cases in the category "women's interests" was especially large in 1921, the number of cases in the "women and the home" category was also relatively larger (39 cases). Cases falling under the "women and social behavior" category were usually items of correspondence; for example, the 1921 sample (17 cases) was largely composed of a lengthy correspondence on the subject of the morals and manners of the "modern girl."

Thus, as an issue, women's employment was more widely discussed

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[10] The Times, April 11, 1927, p. 15; October 4, 1927, p. 15 and October 7, 1927, p. 15.

[11] Cases involving women's primary and secondary education have been abstracted from this category and included in the discussion of women's employment (see variable 3), because of their direct relevance to it.

than any other topic concerning women, excepting women's interests, the nature of which makes it unsuitable for detailed study. Attitudes towards women's employment were also more wide ranging, and hence more revealing, than attitudes expressed on other topics. These tended to be expressions either for or against a specific issue. However, Table 1 shows that the total number of items on women's employment does decline from 1923 onwards (with an upward trend again evident in 1927). In 1926 the total is particularly low. This may be explained at least in part by the concentration on industrial unrest and unemployment centering on the coal industry, in which women played no visible part.

Because of the importance of the issue of women's employment, further analysis of the cases involved was undertaken (it should be noted that at each step in the analysis a small amount of data was lost because of classificatory problems):

1. Each case was coded for one, or in rare cases, more than one of 12 variables. The variables were split into two groups, those favorable to the issue of women's employment outside the home, and those unfavorable.
2. Each case was coded for the type of source or exponent of the attitude (that is, the individual or group responsible).

In Chapter 1 the results of this statistical analysis covering the whole period, 1919-1928, are tabulated; the sources being divided into three broad categories, feminist, non-feminist female and non-feminist male. The remaining chapters will present a more detailed discussion and explanation of the summary conclusions drawn from the tables presented in the first chapter.

Thus Chapter 2 seeks to explain the prevalence of unfavorable

expressions towards women's employment revealed in Chapter 1 by reference to some social and economic circumstances of the period. Chapter 3 provides an introduction to the sources of unfavorable attitudes and the nature of their response, and Chapter 4 discusses in detail the nature of the unfavorable attitudes expressed. Chapter 5 introduces the sources favorable to women's employment and indicates the principles upon which their responses were founded, and Chapter 6 examines in detail the attitudes favorable to women's employment.

Chapter 7 concludes that while attitudes mitigated against the extension of women's employment during the 1920's, the effects of the discussion are hard to measure because of the complexity of the problem; the nature of which may be identified by objective analysis of the debate, but escaped contemporaries. The issue of women's employment encompassed all the difficulties of women's socio-economic position in society: the limited opportunity for, and the conditions of, her work, and the conflict between her two roles of unpaid wife and mother on the one hand, and as industrial worker on the other.

CHAPTER 1

ATTITUDES AS EXPRESSED IN THE TIMES: THEIR GENERAL CHARACTER

The statistical tables contained in this chapter tabulate favorable and unfavorable attitudes; the sources of these attitudes (whether feminist, non-feminist female or non-feminist male); and cross tabulate the sources with the two types of attitudes. The weight of attitudes was unfavorable, and therefore mitigated against an extension of the employment of women. The relationship of the relative strengths of favorable and unfavorable attitudes to the general social and economic circumstances of the period, and to the motivations and concerns of the sources of the attitudes, are dimensions which are thus opened up for further consideration in later chapters.

Attitudes expressed towards the issue of women's employment fall into two main groups, those unfavorable and those favorable towards the employment of women. The unfavorable attitudes may be divided into two groups of variables:

A. variable 1 -- married women should not work.

variable 2 -- surplus women[1] should emigrate and, if at all possible, marry.

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[1]The term 'surplus' refers to the number by which the female population exceeded the male population.

variable 3 -- the education of women should be limited to domestic subjects.

These three variables assert that women should not work outside the home because that is their proper sphere. The second group:

B. variable 4 -- women are not suitable (by virtue of their character or by reason of male chivalry) for employment.

variable 5 -- women must be treated as a sex (unequal pay and protective legislation are favored).

variable 6 -- women's occupations are clearly defined by tradition.

variable 7 -- there are too many unemployed men for women to work in any but traditionally female occupations.

This second group of unfavorable variables aims to restrict the employment of women to certain areas. Variables 8-11 are favorable to the employment of women:

variable 8 -- women should work to avoid waste of talent.

variable 9 -- the spirit of fairmindedness demands that equality of opportunity be afforded to women with regard to employment.

variable 10 -- married women should be allowed to work.

variable 11 -- women should receive equal treatment at work; equal pay and no protective legislation (a majority of people favorable to women's employment considered protective legislation as a form of opposition to women's work; hence its inclusion here).[2]

Hereafter these two sets of variables (V1-7 and V8-11) are referred to as

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[2]See below, Chapter 6.

unfavorable and favorable groups respectively.

Table 3 shows the total number of unfavorable and favorable attitudes for the period 1919-28. It is immediately clear that throughout the period the unfavorable attitudes towards women's employment were consistently more numerous than the favorable attitudes. Over the whole period 64% (404 attitudes) of the total number of attitudes expressed (634) were unfavorable. Adverse comment on the issue of women's employment was formulated in response to the economic and social conditions of the period, and also in a larger but immeasurable part, to the psychological pressure exerted by traditional ideas as to a woman's proper role.

The sources of the attitudes, unfavorable and favorable together, are shown in Table 4. Each case was coded for the type of source, either feminist, non-feminist female or non-feminist male. A case was coded feminist if the source of the attitude was a person or body wholly involved in work of a feminist nature (i.e. a commitment to advance the political, social and economic position of woman). It so happened that these sources were all women or women's organizations; despite the fact that some men were also favorably disposed towards the extension of the employment of women (e.g. Captain J. W. Hills, M.P.). But not all expressions of female opinion were feminist, hence the category "non-feminist female." This category includes such organizations as the Women's Legion (which only occasionally sympathized with the feminist point of view), public and private individuals, and female advisory committees to the government. The non-feminiat male category includes those who represent the male point of view even though the individual or group might include women. Thus the category must be taken to mean "predominantly male." For example local and central government is included here (excluding of course the all-female

TABLE 3

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES, 1919-28

	Unfavorable Total	Unfavorable %	Favorable Total	Favorable %	Grand Total
1919	51	65.4	27	34.6	78
1920	30	53.6	26	46.4	56
1921	76	73.8	27	26.2	103
1922	39	52.7	35	47.3	74
1923	57	76.0	18	24.0	75
1924	38	58.5	27	41.5	65
1925	23	54.8	19	45.2	42
1926	18	56.3	14	43.8	32
1927	44	71.0	18	29.0	62
1928	28	59.6	19	40.4	47
Total	404	63.7	230	36.3	634

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF ATTITUDES, 1919-28

	Feminist	%	Non-feminist female	%	Non-feminist male	%	Total
1919	6	7.7	25	32.0	47	60.2	78
1920	6	10.7	10	17.9	40	71.4	56
1921	11	10.7	42	40.7	50	48.5	103
1922	8	10.8	39	52.7	27	36.5	74
1923	6	8.2	38	52.0	29	39.7	73
1924	10	15.6	26	40.6	28	43.7	64
1925	3	7.3	26	63.4	12	29.2	41
1926	10	32.3	11	35.5	10	32.3	31
1927	10	16.9	26	44.1	23	38.9	59
1928	7	15.2	19	41.3	20	43.4	46
Total	77	12.3	262	41.9	286	45.7	625

advisory committees) despite the some 798 women councillors[3] and several female M.P.'s.[4] It also includes male professional bodies and trade unions, public and private individuals, and both explicit and implicit statements on the issue made by The Times.[5]

As may be seen from Table 4, females (both feminist and non-feminist) accounted for a greater percentage of attitudes than males (54% as against 46%). However, the only group who might have justifiably been expected to be largely in favor of women's employment (the feminists) accounted for only 12% of the number of attitudes expressed. Of the three categories, the non-feminist males, who might have been expected to be the most unfavorably inclined towards women's employment, accounted for the largest number of attitudes (46%).

However, while most feminists expressed favorable attitudes and most non-feminist males expressed unfavorable attitudes, the non-feminist female group was more equally divided between the two. Cross-tabulation of the sources with the attitudes expressed (Table 5) showed that 90% of feminist attitudes were favorable. Non-feminist male attitudes were almost as strongly inclined to be unfavorable (79%). Sixty-one percent of all non-feminist female attitudes were also unfavorably disposed towards

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[3] The Times, February 5, 1921, p. 10.

[4] They included: Lady Astor 1919-45, Duchess of Atholl 1923-38, Miss M. Bondfield 1923-24, Countess of Iveagh 1927-35, Miss D. Jewson 1923-24, Miss Susan Lawrence 1923-24 and 1926-31, Mrs. M. Phillipson 1923-29, Lady Terrington 1923-24, Ellen Wilkinson 1924-31, Mrs. M. Wintringham 1921-24; see Pamela Brookes, Women at Westminister: An Account of Women in the British Parliament 1918-66 (London: Peter Davies, 1967).

[5] The occasional report, usually on Ascot fashions or a similar item appears in The Times as written "by a woman correspondent." However, editorial opinion may justifiably be held to be male.

TABLE 5

SOURCES OF FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES;
TOTALS FOR THE PERIOD 1919-28

	Feminist		Non-feminist female		Non-feminist male	
		%		%		%
Unfavorable (variables 1-7)	8	10.4	161	61.4	227	79.3
Favorable (variables 8-11)	69	89.6	101	38.5	59	20.6
Total	77	100.0	262	100.0	286	100.0

women's employment. However, Table 6 shows that because of the greater number of non-feminist female attitudes, these formed a relatively greater percentage of the total number of favorable attitudes than did those of feminists (44% as against 30%). The non-feminist male category, being both numerous and strongly unfavorable, accounted for 57% of the total number of unfavorable attitudes, and non-feminist females for 41%.

It may be noted that in each year under consideration unfavorable attitudes outweighed the favorable attitudes towards women's employment, although the proportions of favorable and unfavorable attitudes varied. Table 3 shows that in some years attitudes were strongly opposed to the extension of female employment; for example in 1921 (74% unfavorable), 1923 (76% unfavorable), and 1927 (71% unfavorable). In other years attitudes were relatively strongly in favor of the employment of women, for example in 1922 (47% favorable). However, it would appear from Table 3 that the annual total of unfavorable attitudes showed more variation over time than did the favorable attitudes; the number of unfavorable attitudes ranging from 18 in 1926 to 76 in 1921 and the number of favorable attitudes from 14 in 1926 to 35 in 1922. When the two groups of variable totals are graphed (Graph 1) these fluctuations become more clear.[6] While there appears to be an overall decline in the frequency of both groups, especially between 1924 and 1926, the unfavorable attitudes show the greater variation, peaking sharply in 1921, 1923, and 1927. The positive line peaks quite sharply in 1922, but is altogether more constant. Reasons for these fluctuations can be revealed only by analysis of the individual cases. Expla-

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[6] It was decided to graph the data in percentage form to eliminate the distortion caused by the difference in the numerical size of the two totals.

TABLE 6

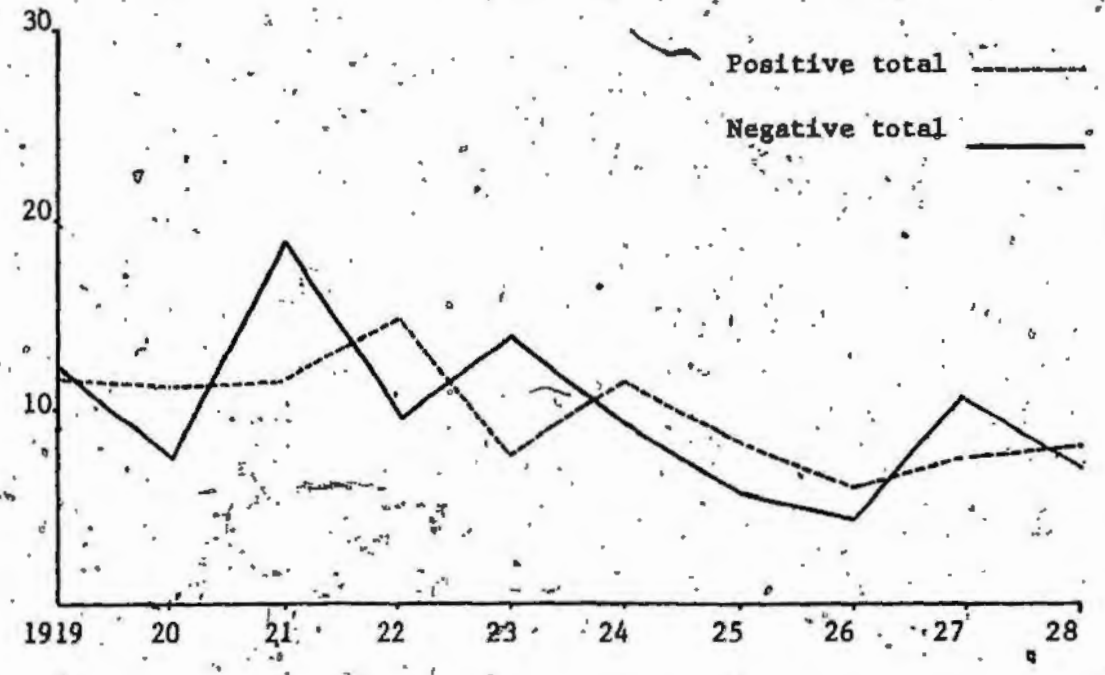
SOURCES OF FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES, 1919-28

A. UNFAVORABLE

	Feminist	%	Non-feminist female	%	Non-feminist male	%	Total
1919	0		13	25.5	38	74.5	51
1920	0		4	13.3	26	86.7	30
1921	1	1.3	29	38.2	46	60.5	76
1922	0		20	51.3	19	48.7	39
1923	1	1.8	31	56.4	23	41.8	55
1924	3	7.9	14	36.8	21	55.3	38
1925	0		12	54.5	10	45.5	22
1926	1	5.9	9	52.9	7	41.2	17
1927	2	4.9	19	46.3	20	48.8	41
1928	0		10	37.0	17	63.0	27
Total	8	2.0	161	40.7	227	57.3	396

B. FAVORABLE

	Feminist	%	Non-feminist female	%	Non-feminist male	%	Total
1919	6	22.2	12	44.4	9	33.3	27
1920	6	23.1	6	23.1	14	53.9	26
1921	10	37.0	13	48.1	4	14.8	27
1922	8	22.9	19	54.3	8	22.9	35
1923	5	27.8	7	38.9	6	33.3	18
1924	7	26.9	12	46.2	7	26.9	26
1925	3	15.8	14	73.7	2	10.5	19
1926	9	64.3	2	14.3	3	21.4	14
1927	8	44.4	7	38.9	3	16.7	18
1928	7	36.8	9	47.4	3	15.8	19
Total	69	30.1	101	44.1	59	25.8	229



GRAPH I

DISTRIBUTION OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES (EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES), 1919-28

Soufce:

	Unfavorable T.	%	Favorable T.	%
1919	51	12.6	27	11.7
1920	30	7.4	26	11.3
1921	76	18.8	27	11.7
1922	39	9.7	35	15.2
1923	57	14.1	18	7.8
1924	38	9.4	27	11.7
1925	23	5.7	19	8.3
1926	18	4.5	14	6.1
1927	44	10.9	18	7.8
1928	28	6.9	19	8.3
	404	100	230	100

nations will be sought in the events of the period, and more especially in the character of the sources and the nature of their reactions (i.e. their attitudes).

Thus, a preponderance of non-feminist male and also a majority of non-feminist female attitudes mitigated against any extension of women's employment beyond the traditional women's fields, during the period 1919-28. How far this was caused by a pragmatic response to issues then current and how far by traditional prejudices and principles regarding the role of women requires further analysis. Those favorably disposed to the employment of women were a smaller group; but it may be anticipated that the core of the group was feminist and thus devoted wholly to the promotion of the interests of women. Their reasoned line of argument might prove to be steadier than that of their opponents and thus more likely to reap long term rewards than the outbursts, however strong, of their antagonists. However, it must be remembered that the traditional prejudices and principles of the latter were the outcome of a desire to preserve their own interests, and hence were unlikely to be easily swept away.

CHAPTER 2

ATTITUDES UNFAVORABLE TO WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE HOME: THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PERIOD

The following general characteristics may be deduced from Table 3. Firstly, that there are many more unfavorable expressions of attitude towards the issue of women's employment than there are favorable ones, although the latter are not insubstantial in actual numbers. Secondly, that there are annual fluctuations in the proportions of favorable and unfavorable expressions. This chapter will provide some explanation of these characteristics by discussing three specific conditions prevalent in the 1920's:

1. The attitudes towards the traditional role of women in society and their effect on women's attitudes towards work outside the home;
2. The general characteristics of women's employment during the 1920's;
3. The relationship between the responses to these (which result in fluctuations in Table 3) and the changes in economic and social circumstances during the period.

It will be seen that there was in fact very little departure from the view that a woman's place was, essentially, in the home. However, despite the effect of this on women's aspirations in the labor force, the number of industrial women workers during the 1920's remained high. This

provided further cause for the expression of unfavorable attitudes, which were based on a superficial analysis of a complex problem and tended to fluctuate according to the immediate changes in the economic and social circumstances.

Outwardly, feminists had cause to be optimistic about the position of women in society during the immediate post-war period. During the war years they had proved themselves to be good citizens, i.e. malleable to the will of the state. Feminist organizations had been amongst the first to offer their services in the war effort. Mrs. Pankhurst, in particular, conducted a vigorous campaign to persuade women to work in the munitions factories. Thus after the war it was decided that women deserved some reward for their loyalty.[1] Government recognition of their services took two forms. In the first instance a number of legal concessions were granted. The demand for the franchise was quickly and easily settled in 1918.[2] Between 1919 and 1921 no less than six other measures directly pertaining to women were passed; the most important of these, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act (1919), opened the professions to women.[3]

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[1]P. Abrams, "The Failure of Social Reform 1918-22," Past and Present, XXIV (1963), 43, claims that women were the only underprivileged group to gain from their participation in the war.

[2]The franchise was granted to property-holding women over thirty years of age. Ironically these were not the women who had worked in the munitions factories.

[3]The other five were: Eligibility of Women Act (enabling women to be M.P.s), 1918; Affiliation Orders (Including Maximum Payment) Act, 1918, which amended the Bastardy Act of 1872; Midwives Amending Act, 1919; the Intestate Moveable Succession (Scotland) Act, 1919, which enlarged a Scottish mother's rights of succession to the intestate moveable estates of her children; Nurses Registration Act, 1919; see M. G. Fawcett, The Women's Victory and After (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1920), pp. 161-70.

This flurry of activity may be contrasted with the three measures of concern to women passed for the whole period 1903-18.[4] Secondly, the government appointed women to such advisory boards as it deemed would interest them, and to which they could contribute, for example those concerning housing and welfare. Such boards tended to be composed of the wives and female relatives of eminent men.

Even middle- and upper-class feminists recognized that such female representation was of an essentially token nature. Eleanor Rathbone, President of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (formerly the National Union of Societies for Women's Suffrage) from 1919-1929, commented on the female committee members thus:

> Neither expert knowledge of the subject in hand, nor possession of the qualities of brain and will which make a really effective member . . . seem usually to be thought necessary in the women nominees. The principle of selection is apt to yield a type of member who is respectable and 'safe' rather than distinguished.[5]

The case of Lady Emmott might be seen as typical. Her first appointment was to the Committee of Inquiry set up by the Home Secretary in 1916 for control of War Charities and was a response to her work in aiding some 80,000 Belgian refugees. From then on her committee career blossomed. In November, 1917 she was appointed to the Advisory Council to the Ministry of Reconstruction; in 1918 she chaired the Women's Advisory Committee which reported on the domestic service problem; in 1919 she joined the Housing

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[4]The contrast lies both in the number and contents of the acts. The acts passed between 1903-18 were: Midwives Act, 1902; Married Women's Property Amendment Act, 1905; Qualification of Women (County and Borough Councils) Act, 1916.

[5]R. Strachey (ed.), Our Freedom and its Results (London: Hogarth Press, 1936), p. 39.

Council of the Ministry of Reconstruction and in 1920 she was appointed to a Local Employment Committee of the Women's Employment Exchange, set up by the Ministry of Labor;[6] her initial committee experience served as her only real qualification for her subsequent appointments.

Thus the limitations of the second type of reward are obvious. The removal of women's legal disabilities theoretically enabled them to pursue whatever career they wished; however, other socio-economic controls were operating to ensure that the traditional sex roles (considered vital for the preservation of society) were maintained.[7] Moreover, it became increasingly obvious that the economic experience of women was the only true indicator of what had or had not been obtained by the vote.[8]

Socio-economic controls can take many forms, ranging from explicit legal statute to informal social pressure.[9] With regard to the employment

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[6]The Emmott Papers, Fawcett Library, London. Lady Emmott was married to Lord Alfred Emmott, M.P. for Oldham between 1899 and 1911.

[7]cf. William O'Neill, The Woman Movement in England and the U.S.A. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969), p. 94 and William Henry Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Economic and Political Roles 1920-1970 (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 10.

[8]Both suffragists and suffragettes had invested their all in the power of the vote to revolutionize women's position in society. Many, such as M. G. Fawcett, first President of the NUSEC and formerly President of the National Union of Societies for Equal Suffrage, were convinced that the vote had done so. Others were puzzled as to why no startling improvement in women's socio-economic position occurred. cf. Winifred Holtby, Women (London: Bodley Head, 1934), p. 6, who quotes the expressions of puzzlement on the part of a friend who found that despite her daughter's qualifications she still experienced job discrimination on the grounds of her sex.

[9]cf. Alice S. Rossi, "Sex Equality: The Beginnings of Ideology," in Towards a Sociology of Women, ed. by Constantina Safilios-Rothschild (Lexington, Mass.: College Publications, 1972).

of women the latter is of the utmost importance. Since the Industrial Revolution women have always worked as wage earners, and yet the belief has always been that women's natural, and indeed proper, role is in the home. Thus there arises a confusion in woman's own mind as to how to organize her work in and outside the home.[10]

It is hard to overemphasize the fundamental belief that it is women's natural task to bear and rear children. Dame Mary Scharlieb, a woman doctor, commented, "There is a popular idea that unmarried women are in some way or another defrauded of a part of their inheritance and are in need of sympathy and commiseration."[11] William Straker, Secretary of the Northumberland Miners Association, referred to marriage as being "according to nature's plan,"[12] in which case the division of labor between women in the home and men working outside the home to provide for them and their children must also have received divine sanction. To deny such a view was, and is, something of a heresy.

The proliferation of women's magazines during this period also served to strengthen the idea that women's true place was in the home.[13]

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[10] cf. A. Myrdal and V. Klein, Women's Two Roles: Home and Work (London: Routledge and Paul, 1956).

[11] Mary Scharlieb, The Bachelor Woman and Her Problems (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929), p. 44.

[12] Quoted in Eleanor F. Rathbone, Family Allowances in the Mining Industry (London: Family Endowment Committee, 1925), p. 4.

[13] Cynthia White, Women's Magazines 1693-1968 (London: Joseph, 1970), pp. 99-100, comments that Women's magazines of the period heralded "the return of the feminine type" and "reinforced the trend back to dear housewifeliness." Such magazines were: Good Housekeeping (1922), Women's Friend (1924), Modern Woman (1925), Woman and Home (1926), Woman's Companion (1927), Woman's Journal (1927), My Home (1928) and Modern Home (1928).

Homemaking was promoted as a science by many of these magazines and by writers of 'domestic anthologies.' In 1926 The Times commented that, "what appears to have happened is that domesticity is becoming an intellectual affectation."[14] The middle- and upper-class housewife could feel virtuous if she made her contribution to the drive for national economy by running her home in the new 'scientific' manner.

Thus many women accepted in principle the role of wife and mother which was promoted on all sides as being the right one. For the sake of their credibility and respectability, nineteenth and twentieth century suffragists and suffragettes claimed the vote at least in part because of their special status as wives and mothers. They dared not question child-rearing as being women's primary occupation.[15] Nor did feminists in the 1920's. Eleanor Rathbone, in her NUSEC presidential address of 1920, saw fit to comment: "Women are the natural custodians of childhood. That at least is part of the traditional role assigned to us by men and one that we have never repudiated."[16] Mary MacArthur, the women's trade union leader, also believed that a woman's first duty was to her home,[17] not that either wanted all women to devote themselves to childrearing only. However, having accepted that the responsibility for rearing children rested with

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[14]Editorial, The Times, January 19, 1926, p. 13.

[15]Vera Brittain, Lady into Woman (London: A. Dakers, 1953), p. 42.

[16]Eleanor F. Rathbone, Milestones: Presidential Addresses at the Annual Council Meetings of the NUSEC (London: NUSEC, 1929), p. 4.

[17]Mary MacArthur, "The Woman Trade Unionist's Point of View," in Women and the Labour Party, ed. by Marion Philips (London: Headley Bros., 1918).

the woman, then the problem of how to accommodate this function in an economic system based on exchange values loomed large.

More extreme views on the subject took the form of denying women any other role but that of wife and mother. A spokesman for the National Association of Schoolmasters claimed that:

> We gladly place her first as a spiritual force we acknowledge and revere her as 'the angelic part of humanity.' We give her superiority in all graces and refinements we are capable of as human beings; we wish her to retain all her winsome womanly ways. . . . This appeal (to women teachers who were pressing for equal pay) goes forth from us to them in no selfish spirit, but out of respect and devotion to our mothers wives sisters and daughters. Our purpose is a sacred one, a real spiritual crusade.[18]

It was strongly believed that the family unit was the base upon which depended the prosperity of the state. R. H. Bell put it thus: "Motherhood posits the home; the home posits the family; the family the community; the community the nation."[19] Healthy children were recognized to be the lifeblood of the nation (fears about the falling birth rate were constantly being expressed during the 1920's)[20] especially in a society so

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[18]Quoted from a NAS pamphlet by Bertrand Russell, "The Virtue of the Oppressed," in Unpopular Essays (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1950), pp. 60-61.

[19]Ralcy Husted Bell, Woman from Bondage to Freedom (London: The Critic and Guide Co., 1921), p. 210.

[20]Noreen Branson and Margot Heinemann, Britain in the 1930's (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 162, note that with small fluctuations there had been a continuous decline in the birth rate for 60 years, in fact ever since the publicity given the trials of Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh in the 1870's for advocacy of birth control. In the 1920's birth control was advocated again by Marie Stopes, who opened her first clinic in 1921. She too was forced by legal action to stop her work. The Times closed its pages to advertisements for her books and in 1924 refused to publish the birth of her son. While birth control was not the exclusive cause of the fall in the birth rate, it was the obvious focus for attack by those concerned about the decline in population.

concerned with eugenics as was that of the inter-war period. Somebody had to bring up these children and ideally this person would be the mother functioning in a stable family situation.

Ironically the very classes (middle and upper) most concerned with preserving the woman's traditional role in the home and with improving the race, were also those in which the family size was smallest. The average family size in England had dropped from 5.71 in 1841, to 2.91 for the years 1925-29. Moreover, the largest families were to be found amongst unskilled laborers (averaging 3.35) and the smallest amongst salaried employees (1.65).[21] It was believed that educated people would have racially superior offspring, and therefore the drop in family size amongst salaried employees was deplored, especially when working-class families continued to be large. This drop in family size became an additional factor enabling middle- and upper-class women especially to seek employment outside the home; a far smaller proportion of their lives being spent in reproduction and childrearing. However, any suggestion that women should broaden their sphere of work met with resistance, because it was seen as a threat to the race when "women of the educated classes are urged by feminist leaders to enter into masculine occupations of every kind rather than to concentrate upon making their own homes more interesting and more racially valuable."[22] It was also seen as an attack on the institution of the family. One contemporary writer commented: "These subtle attacks on the existing form

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[21]Hannah Gavron, The Captive Wife (London: Pelican Books, 1968), p. 27.

[22]Meyrick Booth, Women and Society (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929), p. 206.

of family relations are almost invariably concentrated on the economic status of women."[23]

Several authors of the period realized how the persistance of the belief that a woman's place was in the home devalued women's work effort outside the home. A woman's job was always going to be secondary to her childbearing, childrearing and homemaking functions. The scope of women's employment must therefore be curtailed in large part by the institution of marriage. Women only expected to work until they were married. This "meanwhile attitude" led to a feeling of worthlessness both on the part of women and their employers.[24] Women did not expect equal pay or equal opportunities because, in working, they are merely "filling in time." Thus they were paid less than men and undercut them, causing sex antagonism. In addition, the temporary nature of their work and their low job expectations made it difficult to organize them effectively in trade unions.[25] The Committee on Women's Employment (set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction), recommended, in 1919, that encouragement be given to women to pursue a full industrial career; women needed a new industrial outlook in order for their absorption into the labor force to be successful.[26] As it was

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[23]A. Colquhoun, The Vocation of Women (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1918), p. 321.

[24]H. A. Silverman, The Economics of Social Problems (London: W. B. Clive, 1925), p. 135 and R. Strachey, Careers and Openings for Women: A Survey of Women's Employment and a Guide for Those Seeking Work (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1934), both identify this attitude.

[25]Sylvia Anthony, Women's Place in Industry and Home (London: Routledge and Paul, 1932), p. 54.

[26]Great Britain, Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, Committee on Women's Employment, Report, 1919 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919), p. 21 and pp. 44-45.

women adapted to what was expected of them and tended to occupy dead-end jobs[27] until marriage and beyond, in cases of economic necessity.

Middle- and upper-class women were by far the best placed if they wished to work outside the home after marriage. It was possible for them to delegate their responsibilities of home and children to servants. In the 1920's the numbers of domestic servants dwindled somewhat, but in 1931 there were still 2,129,000 women engaged as personal servants.[28] However, to be a leisured woman was a Victorian ideal that died hard.[29] Moreover, it was considered unseemly to indulge in paid employment.[30] Women who were active outside the home tended to be voluntary workers. It is significant that The Times devoted quite a large number of articles and news items to the efforts of these voluntary workers (56 items in all for the period 1919-28). This reflects the interests of its middle- and upper-class readership. However, a significant number of educated middle- and upper-class women did aspire to work in one of the professions, most of which had been opened to them by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. They met with a socio-economic control given the force of law and designed to

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[27] Thus in the lowest grade of the Civil Service (that of "writing assistant"), women were kept on after the war because the work was considered to be too "mechanical" for men, see Holtby, op. cit., p. 112.

[28] B. R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 61.

[29] Peter N. Stearns, "Working Class Women in Britain 1890-1916," in Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age, ed. by Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), shows that all women during the pre-war period aspired to the Victorian ideal.

[30] Viscountess Rhondda, Leisured Women (London: L. and V. Woolf, 1928), attacks this attitude, which she claimed to be prevalent amongst women of her own class.

reinforce traditional social norms. The "marriage bar" (i.e. compulsory resignation on marriage) affected all female workers in the employ of local authorities (e.g. teachers and doctors), the civil service, and many employees of commercial enterprises.[31]

Thus in the main social convention was effective in ensuring that women put home and children first, supported as it was by an economic system which paid women less than men and employed them in dull, routine jobs. More stringent controls were only necessary in cases when women's aspirations exceeded these bounds.

It is my contention that during the period 1919-28 the changes wrought by the war on the pattern of women's employment gave especial cause for concern with regard to the natural order of family and state. Indeed Masterman[32] was convinced that the whole fabric of society was disintegrating. His concern was not of course primarily with the role of women, but with the acute manifestations of working class discontent and the 'impoverishment' of the middle classes. A later consideration of the specific economic and social conditions during the period will make clear the relationship between these and the fluctuations in response to the issue of the employment of women.

The immediate post-war situation was abnormal. By 1918, 1,350,000 women had entered the war industries, of whom not more than 150,000 could

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[31] Brittain, op. cit., p. 172.

[32] C. F. G. Masterman, England After the War (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922).

be accounted for by normal growth in the population.[33] The Pre-War Practices Act[34] made it inevitable that women in the engineering trades would have to leave their war-time jobs. Yet by April, 1920 only half of the total number of women war workers had in fact left the labor force.[35] As early as 1919 the discontent of unemployed men made itself heard and "women out you go"[36] became the watchword. In the summer of 1920 the economic slump began to make itself felt. It did not end until December, 1922[37] and adversely affected all industrial enterprises, especially the basic industries; while new lighter industry (the work place of large numbers of women of the future) employed as yet only 10% of the total work force.[38] Female unemployment increased rapidly between the summer of 1920 and May, 1921 (the peak, with 784,684 unemployed).[39] However, the propor-

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[33] A. C. Pigou, Aspects of British Economic History 1918-25 (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1947), p. 19.

[34] This was the agreement the government made with the trade unions, whereby women would be excluded from industries where their employment had not been customary prior to the war, when the war ended. The act was in fact extended to cover all new industries. Lieutenant Astbury referred to it as the act "which has driven every woman out of the engineering trade in this country," Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. 129 (1920), p. 1574.

[35] Pigou, op. cit., p. 20.

[36] Rathbone, op. cit., p. 7.

[37] Pigou, op. cit., pp. 5-7, assigns certain labels, indicative of economic conditions, to certain time periods. The following have been adopted and used in the text below: "the boom" (spring 1919 - summer 1920), "the slump" (summer 1920 - the end of 1922), "the doldrums" (December, 1922 - the Wall Street Crash, 1929).

[38] D. H. Aldcroft, The Inter-War Economy: Britain 1919-39 (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 80-81.

[39] Pigou, op. cit., Statistical Appendix, Section 1, Table IX.

tion of females employed in 1921 was smaller than before the war (33.7% as against 35.7%).[40] Furthermore, whilst the census figures for 1931 show that 563,000 more women were employed than in 1921,[41] this represented an 8% decline in women's activity rate,[42] The male activity rate rose by 3% over the same period. Thus it would appear that the weight of attitudes mitigating against women's employment was not without its effect. Nevertheless women were still being employed in large numbers. They had not been forced out of the labor market wholesale.

People expressing unfavorable attitudes towards women's employment through the medium of The Times during the 1920's were influenced by three easily identifiable economic conditions:

1. The changes in women's employment patterns during World War I.
2. The fact that women were still being employed in industry and in offices, and also were entering the professions when the job market was shrinking, men were unemployed and the birth rate was falling.
3. The presence of unemployed women who were drawing unemployment insurance benefits when there was a shortage of domestic servants.

The following quotation from a contemporary writer, who espoused the eugenist concern that women should stay at home for the good of the race,

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[40] Samuel J. Hurwitz, State Intervention in Great Britain: A Study of Economic Control and Social Response, 1914-19 (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 145.

[41] Mitchell and Deane, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

[42] Sheila T. Lewenhak defines women's activity rate as the number of women employed as a percentage of all women of working age. The female activity rate declined from 42.8% in 1921 to 35.1% in 1931. ("Trade Union Membership Among Women and Girls in the U.K., 1920-65" /unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics, 1971/, p. 14, Table 1).

illustrates how these factors were commonly linked together:

> It is, in the first place, needful to break away from the present vicious circle of low wages, cheap female labor, employment of large numbers of married women, unemployed men, high taxes to support the unemployed men, the depression of trade by high taxes, the lowering of wages still further through trade depression, and so on and so on, . . .[43]

The linking of these three made it inevitable that women be held, in part,[44] responsible for the unemployment situation.

To most people the irresponsible "modern girl," or, as she was known in every newspaper of the day except The Times, the "flapper,"[45] was the visible manifestation of what economic independence for women could bring. The flapper, usually a middle-class girl, possessed a good education, held an office job, was single, smoked, wore a minimum of clothing and indulged in all sorts of strenuous activities. She was the living antithesis of the homely woman and was heartily condemned for her lack of regard for her proper duties[46] and her usurpation of the work of unemployed men. In addition, her name was associated with sexual promiscuity. A book published by Judge Ben Lindsay (The Revolt of Modern Youth) detailed the promiscuous habits of such young girls and made a tremendous impact on both

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[43] Booth, op. cit., p. 237.

[44] "In part" because women could not be associated with the major conflicts, in the coal industry for example.

[45] The term was popularized by F. Scott Fitzgerald amongst others (Flappers and Philosophers /N.Y.: Charles Scribners' and Sons, 1920/).

[46] The Women's Leader (organ of the NUSEC), August 3, 1928, commented on the way in which the "modern girl" was always being "called in to fill half a column" in the newspapers of the day.

sides of the Atlantic.[47] The life style of the flapper was a social phenomenon which neatly fitted the popular thesis that the irresponsible attitudes of women were to blame for their employment in a time of depression and social unrest. However, the numbers of flappers were proportionately small[48] and do not in any way account for the large numbers of working women.

It is probable that the cheapness of women's labor was the main cause of their continued employment. This is the conclusion reached by Sylvia Anthony and finds widespread acceptance today.[49] Anthony examined statistics taken from The Twentieth Abstract of Labour Statistics[50] and

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[47] Holtby, op. cit., p. 122.

[48] When the debate raged on the 'Flapper Vote' in 1927, those in favor of the measure were at pains to point out that such irresponsible females composed only about 216,000 of the 5,250,000 women who would be enfranchised. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. 215 (1928), p. 1366.

[49] cf. Marlene Dixon, "Why Women's Liberation - 2," in Female Liberation: History and Current Politics, ed. by Roberta Salper (N.H.: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1972), pp. 184-200.

[50] These figures were:

	Insured Males in 000's	Insured Females in 000's	Insured Men Unemployed %	Insured Women Unemployed %
Dec. 1920			7.1	9.4
June 1921	7,444	2,720	22.3	21.0
June 1922	7,645	2,619	15.9	6.8
June 1923	7,794	2,517	12.0	8.7
June 1924	7,873	2,597	9.7	7.5
June 1925	7,983	2,672	12.8	8.0
June 1926	8,112	2,690	15.2	11.8
June 1927	8,171	2,720	10.0	5.3
June 1928	7,907	2,748	12.1	6.4

Anthony, op. cit., p. 204. Anthony does not make it clear that the above figures are for one month only. If another month is selected then the pattern is slightly different, see 18th Abstract of Labour Statistics, XXIX.1, 1926 and 20th Abstract of Labour Statistics, XXXII.453, 1930-31.

noted that during the immediate post-war dislocation (1919-21) female unemployment figures were proportionately higher than those of men. However, after 1921 the female employment situation was, in fact, better than that of men (Graph 2) and the number of insured women workers increased, whilst that of men decreased. The figures Anthony quoted do not demonstrate this clearly, although it may be ascertained from the data she used that while there were great numbers of unemployed men, women were by no means pushed out of employment to provide them with jobs. It would appear that people expressing unfavorable attitudes towards women's employment were powerless to alter the situation." Anthony's explanation for this was that women receive less pay than men and therefore form a pool of cheap labor, which may be called upon in times of crisis (i.e. wartime) and in periods of economic depression. Other factors must be taken into account for the 1920's. Many women could have entered or re-entered domestic service (an uninsurable occupation), thus diminishing the number of unemployed. However, as Anthony points out,[51] this does not explain the increase in the absolute number of <u>insured</u> women workers during this period. In addition, it could be argued that because the economic slump particularly affected basic industries (for example the coal industry, in which women were not employed), female unemployment figures might be expected to be lower. However, in the textile industry, where large numbers of women were employed, the unemployment rate amongst the female workers was greater than that amongst the male workers[52] (the probable reason being that the textile

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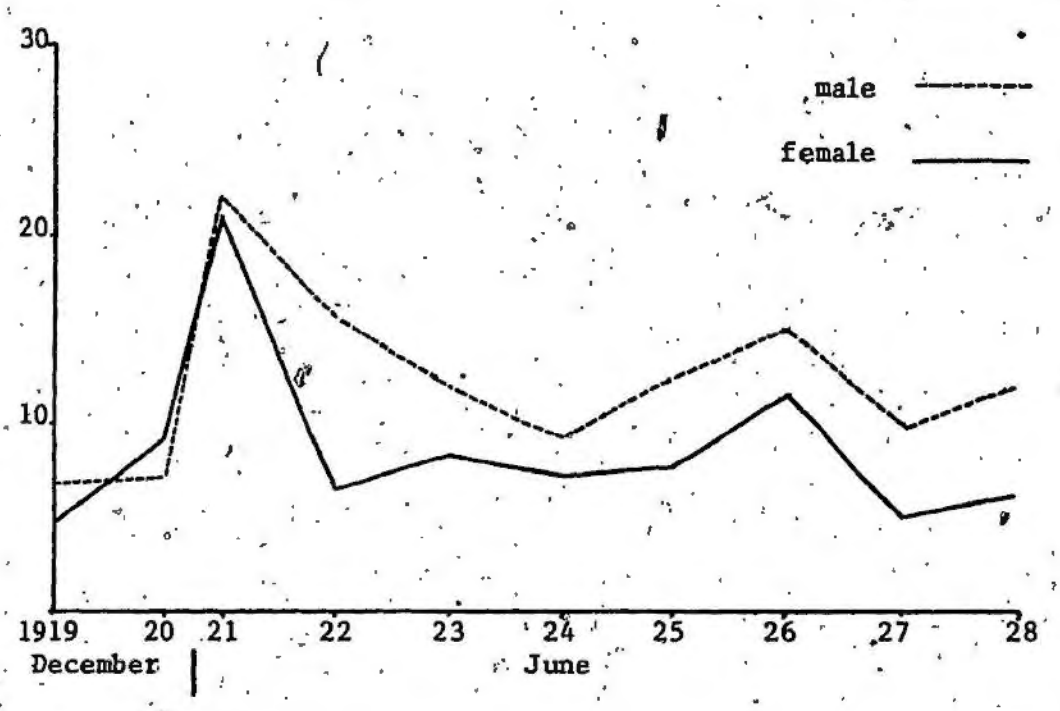
[51] Anthony, <u>loc. cit.</u> (n. 50).

[52] Lewenhak, op. cit., p. 174 and Barbara Wootton, "Unemployment Amongst Women," in <u>Women's Year Book</u> (London, 1924), p. 350, who states that while the percentage of unemployed women was highest in women's industries, actual numbers were highest in mixed industries.



GRAPH 2

PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN UNEMPLOYED
1919-1928

Source: 18th Abstract of Labour Statistics 1926, XXIX.1.
20th Abstract of Labour Statistics 1930-31, XXXII.453.

industry was one of the few industries in which the principle of equal pay for work was effective). Thus the fact that women were allowed to continue working in other fields in increasing numbers cannot be explained other than by reason of their cheapness.

It must also be remembered that women themselves were for the most part reluctant to relinquish their wartime employment. Their capacity for acquiring new skills had surpassed all expectations. In the munitions factories they had composed 90% of the work force making 4.8 (18 pound) shells and were also employed in great numbers on the 6.2 and 8.2 shells.[53] They were better paid than ever before. Dilution agreements had insisted that women doing a man's job be paid a man's rate in order to maintain working standards (women doing women's work received no increase in pay).[54] Medical reports evidenced an improvement in the health of the woman war-worker and her child,[55] and explained this by her better pay (and hence better living standards) and her new-found companionship with other workers, making for a less isolated existence.

Moreover, women's work had been highly praised. The sentiments expressed by the Northcliffe Press ("the women are wonderful") lingered on until about 1920 and tempered the attitudes of those who wished to see women withdraw from any job that could be considered men's work as soon as

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[53] Barbara Drake, Women in the Engineering Trades (London: T.U. Series No. 3, 1912), p. 79.

[54] Hurwitz, op. cit., p. 140 et. seq.

[55] Great Britain, Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Report, 1918 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919), p. 238. In addition, women workers were offered services not normally available, e.g. creche facilities and cheap canteens.

possible. Their efforts had also been recognized by the government in the form of the Franchise Act. Thus women of all classes who had wanted new opportunities were pleased with their new-found status as citizens and with their new opportunities and better conditions in the labor market.

From Table 3 the years 1919-21 may be seen to have been the years in which the issue of women's employment was most frequently discussed. Between these years attitudes favorable towards women's employment hailed the gains that had been made and urged women to assert their rights to the new opportunities that presented themselves and defend them against attack. They were aided in 1919 by a certain amount of public sympathy inspired by their patriotic effort during the war, and in 1920 by public indifference as a result of the economic boom. In 1921 the clamour of ex-service men for jobs reached a peak (1,774,458 men were unemployed in June, 1921) and 74% of all attitudes expressed during that year were unfavorable towards women's employment. In 1923 the number of unemployed women showed an increase (Graph 2) and the government held an inquiry as to why women were not re-entering domestic service. As Table 3 shows, this provoked a largely unfavorable response to women's employment (76% of all cases were unfavorable). The interim year, 1922, shows a relatively greater number of favorable attitudes, despite the economic depression. This may be explained by a correspondence initiated by The Times on "Our Daughter's Future," a sequel to a similar one conducted on "Our Son's Future." The remaining years, 1924-28, characterized by Pigou as the period of "the doldrums," show little fluctuation in the number of attitudes expressed, except in the year 1927, when the debate on the 'flapper vote' (rather than any economic developments) caused an increase in the number of unfavorable attitudes.

It is impossible to assert that the periodic fluctuations in unfavorable and favorable attitudes paralleled economic fluctuations, because attitudes were formed in response to only a partial understanding of the economic situation, i.e. what was immediately apparent. Irrational fears, personal prejudices and the conjunction of other events (e.g. the 'flapper vote') all played their part in shaping attitudes towards the employment of women. The time lag between economic and social conditions being reported in the press and attitudes being formulated also prevents parallels being drawn over time. However, it may be seen that, throughout the period, economic depression, social unrest and changes in social behavior patterns mitigated against the acceptance of the employment of women by the general public. Economic and social conditions provoked a call for the strengthening of the traditional female role; thus a large number of unfavorable attitudes might be expected.

CHAPTER 3

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: THEIR EXPONENTS

Sources expressing attitudes unfavorable to women's employment may all be loosely categorized as belonging to the employing classes. It was the views of these groups and individuals that were reflected in The Times. The bias of The Times itself and the attitudes it expressed (usually in its editorial columns) must also be considered. Table 7 shows that a large number of unfavorable attitudes were expressed by The Times, especially in the early years, 1919-21. The apparent decline in interest after 1921 helps to explain the total decline in the number of attitudes expressed during the period. It would also appear from Table 8 that The Times was definitely unfavorable towards women's employment, thus wider coverage of unfavorable attitudes expressed by others might be expected.

The unfavorable response tended to be sporadic (as shown by Graph 1 in Chapter 1); highly unfavorable years correlating with events then current: the large number of unemployed in 1921, the Domestic Service Inquiry of 1923 and the 'flapper' vote of 1927. Such events acted as catalysts for an outburst of opinion. This chapter will detail the types of sources expressing unfavorable attitudes, especially non-feminist female and non-feminist male sources (see Table 7); feminists accounted for only 2% of the unfavorable attitudes expressed. The chapter will also identify briefly the nature of their response to the events then current.

Cases involving Female Advisory Committees to government were most

TABLE 7

NON-FEMINIST SOURCES EXPRESSING UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES
1919-28

Categories*	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	Total
Govt. -- Female Advisory Committees	3	1	7	2	6	1	1	0	4	0	25
Govt. -- Other govt. bodies including House of Commons	13	6	11	4	7	4	1	3	2	3	54
The Times	19	14	17	3	6	4	1	0	3	0	67
Male groups	3	4	6	4	3	3	0	0	2	1	26
Male individuals, public	3	2	4	6	2	7	5	3	7	9	48
Male individuals, private	0	0	8	2	5	3	3	1	6	4	32
Female groups	7	1	6	8	8	6	2	4	3	3	48
Female individuals, public	2	1	6	4	8	3	4	5	6	4	43
Female individuals, private	1	1	10	6	9	4	5	0	6	3	45
Total	51	30	75	39	54	95	22	16	39	27	388

*Male and female groups include societies, organizations and professional bodies.

TABLE 8

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES EXPRESSED BY THE TIMES, 1919-28

	Favorable Attitudes	Unfavorable Attitudes
1919	4	19
1920	5	14
1921	2	17
1922	2	3
1923	2	6
1924	3	4
1925	1	1
1926	1	0
1927	0	3
1928	0	0
Total	20	67

numerous in 1921 and 1923. In 1921 the Central Committee for Women's Employment was active in the debate over the training of women for domestic service and other traditionally female occupations. In 1923 the committee appointed to look into the domestic service question was prominent. These committees were in the main representative only of the interests of the employing classes. Hutchins made the following comment on the Central Committee for Women's Employment: "Neither its composition nor its method of appointment were such as it would be wise to adopt for an industrial advisory committee."[1] Its members were all upper class women; not one trade union organizer or official sat on it, just as no representative of the interests of domestic servants sat on the domestic service committee.[2]

Female private and public individuals and male private individuals whose attitudes were similarly expressed most frequently in the years 1921, 1923 and 1927 (often in the form of letters to The Times), were also most concerned with the issue of domestic service, and the attitudes expressed were of course those of the mistresses[3] and never the maids.

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[1] B. L. Hutchins, Women in Industry After the War (London: Social Reconstruction Pamphlets, No. III, 1917), p. 15.

[2] The Women's Leader, April 6, 1923, referred to the Committee of Inquiry as being 'packed' with mistresses. Members of the Committee were: Mrs. E. M. Wood (Chairman), Mrs. Harrison Bell, Mrs. E. M. Burgwin, Mrs. Leonora Cohen, Mrs. Furdell, O.B.E., Mrs. R. K. Hannay, O.B.E., J. P., Mrs. G. B. Strachey, O.B.E., J.P., Miss Julia Varley, Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., Miss E. W. Fraser (Sec.). Not all were entirely unsympathetic to the servants point of view. Julia Varley was a member of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations and was signee to their pamphlet published in 1927 advocating protective legislation for women workers.

[3] This was the contemporary term for the employer of servants, obviously derived from 'mistress of the house.'

Male public individuals were also often in a position not only to express unfavorable attitudes, but to initiate action against the extension of the employment of women. For example, Lord Knutsford, as chairman of the Board of Governors of St. Mary's Hospital, was instrumental in closing the hospital to female medical students in 1924.[4] This provoked both supportive and disapproving reactions. In 1928 Kings, Westminster and Charing Cross Hospitals also refused to admit any more women students. People opposed to these actions were essentially powerless to do anything about it.

Government was in a position to dictate events through the tabling of legislation. Bills directly concerned with women's employment were debated (and committees on various aspects of the problem appointed) during this period; for example the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919; the Lead Paint Act, 1926; the Factory Bill, 1926; and the Married Women's (Employment) Bill, 1927. All these were reported in The Times, both under its day-to-day coverage of Parliament and in its news pages, and some of the attitudes expressed by M.P.s were noted. It would seem that the government was particularly responsive to discontent expressed by the employing classes on the issue of the employment of women. The Domestic Service Inquiry of 1923 was prompted by discontent voiced in the newspapers by mistresses. The government was sympathetic to their view and appointed the committee, which was composed entirely of mistresses. The actions of Local Government in upholding the marriage bar imposed on professional

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[4] It may be noted that the dispute over women medical students first started in 1922 and continued in 1924, 1927 and 1928, hence the greater number of attitudes expressed by male, public individuals.

women were also important. Married female doctors and teachers were the main subjects for such attention.

The male group which expressed attitudes most frequently was the National Association of Schoolmasters, formed in 1919 with the specific purpose of fighting against equal pay for women teachers, and to promote the idea of men teachers for boys. Female groups expressing attitudes were more often charitable or voluntary organizations; for example the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women (SOSBW), the Girls Friendly Society or the Young Women's Christian Association.

The occasional feminist source that proved unfavorable towards women's employment (see Table 6 in Chapter 1) was usually either the National Council of Women or a member of the National Federation of Women Workers. Moreover, the issue was always that of 'Protective Legislation,' the implementation of which both favored. As will be discussed later, this issue was a particularly contentious one for feminists, whose organizations divided irrevocably over it.

It has been shown that these sources responded in large numbers to certain events of the period. Underlying their responses were three major themes, which may be identified as; the urge to improve the quality of the race; the desire to return to "normal" as quickly as possible after the war; and pressure for an "economy" campaign (popularly referred to as "anti-waste") in order to set the economy to rights.

Not only was it considered vital in the interests of immediate order and economic stability that women return to their traditional place in the home, but it was felt to be the right and proper solution; opposition could only come from 'unnatural' people. It was asserted that working

women were much more urgently needed in the home,[5] and the "woman movement" was opposed on the grounds that it represented "an attempt to shirk a woman's responsibilities in housework and maternity."[6] However, perfect order (women in the home and men working outside it) could not be achieved because of the one million 'surplus' women in the population. That such a numerical excess of the female population over the male was regarded as a national "tragedy,"[7] must surely be seen as a reflection of the deep-seated belief that it is the natural destiny and desire of all women to marry and have children.[8] These surplus women could not possibly be accommodated into the natural order at home, thus in its crudest form the response was "deport them."[9] Also put in its crudest form, the desire to return to a natural order relegated women to the role of breeders; as early as 1917 Hutchins had predicted that "a crusade under the guise of patriotism for an indiscriminate raising of the birth rate" would follow the war.[10]

The cause of economy could be invoked as a practical reason why

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[5]Editorial, The Times, November 12, 1921, p. 11.

[6]Ibid., April 17, 1922, p. 6; source: anonymous letter.

[7]Ibid., April 12, 1922, p. 8; source: Commissioner Lamb of the Salvation Army.

[8]Ibid., April 29, 1922, p. 7; source: Lady Cohen, who advocated emigration for young women because while "every woman's ideal is to be a wife and mother," not all women could hope to marry in England.

[9]Ibid., April 12, 1924, p. 10; source: report of the Hardwicke Society Debate on the subject "Woman is Spoiling the World for Woman," in the course of which, Mr. G. Frankau advocated the deportation of all 'surplus' women.

[10]Hutchins, op. cit., p. 8.

women should not be permitted to increase either their sphere of activity or their financial rewards. Thus women could not be granted equal pay because "the country could not afford it."[11] Such a sentiment found widespread popular approval. Women's Committees against Waste were numerous.[12] Government and industry were quick to make the most of this popular solution to the nation's difficulties. However, the anti-waste philosophy contradicted the movement to prevent women's employment, because women were cheaper to employ than men. Only occasionally did such a conflict of interests rise to the public notice; for example, in 1921 one woman omnibus conductor was still employed at Newport, despite the Pre-War Practices Act, because: "She knows when to keep her mouth shut and at other times to say 'no' and carries out delicate duties in a very tactful manner." Also, "She is cheap to our department at 50 shillings a week."[13] The need for economy could also be used as a reason for refusing to set up a women's police force or to employ married women, who committed the double crime of taking work away from someone else and giving one family two breadwinners.

Thus it is possible to see the simple solution of economy and the

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[11] The Times, February 19, 1921, p. 6; source: Reginald Wilson replied to Margaret Bondfield's call for equal pay.

[12] These were usually composed of upper-class women. For example, a Housewives Union against Waste was organized (The Times, March 10, p. 13 and October 28, p. 9, 1920). The Women's Guild of Empire condemned strikes as wasteful and marched to the Albert Hall to protest them and demand the instigation of arbitration procedures (The Times, April 14, p. 21 and April 19, p. 17, 1926). The Woman Clerk in its May, 1926 issue, suggested that these "ladies of the Whaddon Hunt who led the procession to the Albert Hall . . . go and work for their living before presuming to show what efforts should be adopted by those who have to work for their living to safeguard their position."

[13] The Times, August 11, 1921, p. 7.

desire to return to normal, with women in the home, working against the interest of the very groups and individuals who promoted them. The Newport bus conductor is a case in point. Principles held as to a woman's proper role in society and the fact that she provides a cheap source of labor have always been in conflict. The next chapter will examine the variables unfavorable towards the employment of women in further detail.[14]

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[14] Variable 5 (that women must be treated as a sex with unequal pay and protective legislation) will be treated in Chapter 6 with its converse, variable 11.

CHAPTER 4

UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES: THE CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THEIR ARGUMENTS

The number of expressions of unfavorable attitudes towards women's employment fluctuated considerably over the decade (Table 9). These attitudes tended to be emotional responses to issues as they arose, and to express at random traditional prejudices and principles as to a woman's role in society rather than rational coherent arguments. The common factor in all the unfavorable attitudes expressed, be it towards working women or professional women, was that a woman's 'natural concerns' and 'place' were considered to be to do with, and in, the home. However, while it was considered desirable to exclude as many middle- and upper-class women as possible (especially married women) from the professions, it was desired only to restrict the employment of working-class women to certain traditional female areas of employment. Domestic service was emphasized as the most suitable of these, not only because it was deemed the most natural form of employment for women, but also because of the post war servant shortage. The greatest number of responses were directed at working women, because the reaction was closely tied to more general fears current amongst the employing classes in the 1920's about the heightened consciousness of labor.

The most extreme attitude was expressed in variable 4: women are not suitable (by reason of their character or male chivalry) for employment

TABLE 9

DISTRIBUTION OF UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES BY VARIABLE

	Variable 1		Variable 2		Variable 3		Variable 4		Variable 5		Variable 6		Variable 7		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1919	3	5.8	4	7.8	1	1.9	7	13.7	5	9.8	14	27.5	17	33.3	51
1920	0	0.0	4	13.3	0	0.0	6	20.0	2	6.7	12	40.0	6	20.0	30
1921	5	6.6	10	13.2	2	2.6	3	3.9	1	1.3	13	17.1	42	55.3	76
1922	3	7.7	13	33.3	1	2.6	9	23.1	2	5.1	5	12.8	6	15.4	39
1923	1	1.8	5	8.8	3	5.3	1	1.8	2	3.5	30	52.6	15	26.3	57
1924	2	5.3	9	23.7	2	5.3	4	10.5	0	0.0	5	13.1	16	42.1	38
1925	0	0.0	3	13.0	1	4.4	5	21.7	0	0.0	9	39.1	5	21.7	23
1926	1	5.6	3	16.7	1	5.6	0	0.0	7	38.9	5	27.8	1	5.6	18
1927	2	4.6	13	29.6	2	4.6	1	2.3	6	13.6	11	25.0	9	20.4	44
1928	1	3.8	5	17.9	4	14.3	3	10.7	2	7.1	5	17.9	8	28.6	28
Total	18	4.5	69	17.1	17	4.2	39	9.7	27	6.7	109	26.9	125	30.9	404

Variable 1 -- married women should not work.

Variable 2 -- surplus women should emigrate and, if at all possible, marry.

Variable 3 -- the education of women should be limited to domestic subjects.

Variable 4 -- women are not suitable (by virtue of their character or by reason of male chivalry) for employment.

Variable 5 -- women must be treated as a sex (unequal pay and protective legislation are favored).

Variable 6 -- women's occupations are clearly defined by tradition.

Variable 7 -- there are too many unemployed men for women to work in any but traditionally female occupations.

(see Table 9). This was tantamount to asserting that women should not work at all, a proposition that deviated from the main drift of the majority of unfavorable expressions. Moreover, this extreme attitude was confined to specific individuals and groups, for example, those prominent in the decision to exclude women from the London training hospitals. Women had been trained during the war in most of the major London training hospitals. This had been necessary because of the shortage of doctors and the women had been "financially useful" to the hospitals in what would have otherwise been a difficult period.[1] In 1921 the hospitals began to close their doors to women again; one of the reasons given was that women's innate modesty made co-education an impossibility. Lord Knutsford of St. Mary's Hospital was the first to put forward this idea which, while it did not question women's competence (but rather praised modesty as a feminine trait), effectively excluded women from the hospital.[2] Other reasons for their exclusion were also given, these being more pragmatic in tone, for example the existence of adequate training facilities for women in their own hospital, The Royal Free.

A similar opinion of the female character was also voiced by the National Association of Schoolmasters, who asserted that "no woman could train a boy in the habits of manliness."[3] The NAS was formed to fight against equal pay for women in the profession, so that more men would be

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[1] The Women's Leader, October 31, 1924, p. 288.

[2] The Times, March 10, p. 8 and March 14, p. 8, 1922.

[3] Ibid., April 18, 1927, p. 16.

encouraged to join it. One of their slogans was "men teachers for boys,"[4] which again was designed to limit the number of female teachers. One of the most effective ways of doing this was to assert women's incapacity (through frailty of constitution) to control and lead boys, and the potentially damaging effects that this would have on the nation in the future. A few individuals expressed similar attitudes; for example, Mr. G. B. Crook of the Law Society declared women to be "entirely unfitted" for the law profession, because their preoccupation was with home and themselves.[5]

Characteristics attributed to the female by the above individuals and groups fit neatly into the image of the domesticated woman, rather than the woman working outside the home. The dichotomy between home and work is brought into sharper focus by variable 1 (that married women should not work). Exponents of this attitude discussed the dismissal of married female teachers and doctors by Local Government authorities. Other cases of dismissal in other professions certainly occurred, but either went unquestioned or the controversy did not reach The Times. Local authorities saw marriage and profesaional employment as mutually exclusive. In 1924 the London County Council made its policy quite explicit when it changed the phrase, "shall resign on marriage" to "the contract shall end on marriage."[6] This was prompted by the refusal of some women to resign.[7]

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[4]National Association of Schoolmasters, The Why and Wherefore of the NAS (London: NAS pamphlet no. 1, n.d.).

[5]The Times, March 29, 1919, p. 4.

[6]Ibid., January 21, 1924, p. 7.

[7]For example, The Times, October 18, 1921, p. 7, contains a report of Dr. Gladys Miall-Smith's refusal to resign. She was employed by the St. Pancras Council.

Despite the small number of attitudes falling under this variable (only 4.5% of the total number of unfavorable attitudes), most of them are of intrinsic importance to the nature of the problem of women's employment. They were mostly articles or letters, rather than short news items.

The existence of the marriage bar legalized the customary separation of women's roles at home and at work and forced the one to take priority over the other. Primarily male sources asserted that "the highest vocation of women would always be that of wife and mother."[8] This was supported by appeals to patriotism: women were "needed more in the home than elsewhere."[9] Such appeals certainly evoked a sympathetic response in the woman who wrote that she was a citizen first and woman worker last, and would therefore stay at home in the interests of her country.[10]

Whilst it was impossible to prove that marriage led to an automatic decrease in the efficiency of every female worker, it was held that "if a woman married and did her duty at home she had no time for anything else."[11] This view was expressed by the Poole Corporation in the course of a legal case in which their right to dismiss a married woman teacher was upheld.[12]

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[8] The Times, October 25, 1924, p. 10; source: Dean Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral, speaking at the Jubilee Dinner of the Royal Free Hospital.

[9] Editorial, The Times, November 12, 1921, p. 11.

[10] Ibid., January 29, 1921, p. 6; source: anonymous letter from "a woman worker."

[11] Ibid., February 17, 1926, p. 11; source: Dame Beatrix Lyal, member of the London County Council (LCC).

[12] Erna Reiss, Rights and Duties of English Women (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1934), p. 235.

Sir James Purves Stewart, a St. Mary's Hospital surgeon, who ardently supported the exclusion of women from the training program also subscribed to this point of view.[13] Furthermore, because home duties must take priority,[14] it could be argued that a woman's professional duties must suffer.[15]

It is difficult to identify which was the predominant fear underlying these arguments; that the woman's job would suffer or that disruption would be caused to her home life. It is possible that neither was central to the thinking of people who sought to prevent the employment of married women. One of the outstanding points with regard to this attitude was that it was held only with respect to professional women. All classes of women were urged to return to the home after the war, but the government never legislated against the employment of married domestic servants and cotton workers, whose families stood to suffer more in the absence of the mother than the families of professional women, who could afford domestic help.

A further fear was that married women were taking away jobs from single women or from ex-service men with families to support. This, coupled with the assertion that married working women were not giving their children the attention they deserved, invested these women with a double sense of guilt.[16] Many women responded sympathetically to the first charge

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[13] The Times, March 28, 1928, p. 12; Sir James commented, "for women matrimony, if effectively carried out, is a whole time job."

[14] Ibid., February 17, 1926, p. 11; source: Dr. Barrie Lambert, member of the LCC.

[15] Ibid., May 23, 1927, p. 10; source: letter from Col. R. G. Turner.

[16] Ibid., April 30, 1919, p. 9; The Times called such women "selfish" and "irresponsible."

and agreed that only women who needed to work should do so.[17] Even some feminists judged that while women's right to work should not be assailed, they should not, in all fairness, exercise that right unless they had to.[18] The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries (AWKS) actively opposed the introduction of the Married Women's (Employment) Bill (which aimed at making marriage bars illegal),[19] because they feared that the employment of married women would lessen the promotion chances of single women.[20]

As well as the fear that married women would deprive others of employment in the professions, there was, on the part of many, a genuine feeling of revulsion at the "travesty" of nature presented by the image of a working mother and, in the last instance, possibly a father at home looking after the baby.[21] To allow women to work might also present "the temptation to remain childless,"[22] a condition which could only do harm to nation and Empire. It was perhaps natural that these fears and concerns should be focused on women of the middle and upper class; the wives of men

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[17] Ibid., September 22, 1921, p. 13; source: letter from "Bread-winning Woman" and April 30, 1922, p. 7; when the point arose in the series of articles which appeared under the general title, "Our Daughters' Future."

[18] The Women's Leader, September 24, 1920.

[19] This bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Sir Robert Newman and was rejected (Parliamentary Debates [Commons], vol. 205, 1927, p. 1175).

[20] The Times, April 30, 1927, p. 12.

[21] Parliamentary Debates (Commons), loc. cit. (n. 19).

[22] Ibid., vol. 120, 1919, p. 347; the comment was made by Sir E. Pollock in the course of the debate on the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Bill.

whose emotions were so disturbed by the thought of their spouses working and whose own personal investment in the status quo was the greatest.

The fact that the total female population exceeded the male by over one million, thus making it impossible for hundreds of thousands of women to marry, posed at least as difficult a problem as the proper role of women after marriage. How could it be decided which women must be trained to support themselves and which must be trained for domesticity? No decision-making mechanism could deal with the problem, so the contention that all women should be trained for some useful work, in the event that they should remain single, gained creedence. A. J. P. Taylor maintains that "the excess of women -- 1 1/5 million in all -- may have provided a practical incentive towards their emancipation, though it was rarely used as an argument."[23] In The Times it was in fact often raised as the reason for educating girls for careers.[24] However, the most commonly advocated solution was not training for a career, but emigration overseas in search of a husband (variable 2).

The emigration solution was actively pursued by a number of women who were as anxious about the future of the Empire and the equal distribution of the sexes within it, as they were about the women concerned.[25] Organizations existed to send out boy settlers as well, the intention being to send out the type of boy who otherwise would stand little chance of

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[23] A. J. P. Taylor, English History 1914-45 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 166.

[24] See below, p. 101.

[25] The Times, June 24, 1919, p. 9; source: the National Birth Rate Commission and February 5, 1920, p. 9; source: Dr. Murray Leslie.

making a good living in England. The societies also favored the 'poor but honest' type of girl. Any immorality was shunned, the concern being to populate the colonies with sturdy, honest men and women whose children would be an asset. The Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women (SOSBW), the main agency for the emigration of women, refused to send out any unmarried mothers; presumably for fear of their deleterious effect on the morals of the new settlements.[26] The SOSBW also boasted that the girls they were sending out were not just working-class girls; some were even from Girton.[27] Margaret Bondfield also spoke of "girls of a superior type going abroad to take up domestic positions."[28]

A million excess women was regarded as a national tragedy and as The Women's Leader pointed out, this was in fact the case because of the lack of opportunities for women in the labor market in England.[29] The Times regarded the narrow sphere of employment open to women as "inevitable."[30] Thus in some measure emigration was seen as virtually the only immediate escape door by those in favor of and those against the employment of women.

However, emigration was not a feasible solution to the problem of 'surplus' women. The average number of emigrants per year (men and women)

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[26]SOSBW, Minutes of the Executive Committee, February 20, 1920, Fawcett Library, London, Records of the SOSBW.

[27]The Times, December 3, 1923, p. 11.

[28]Ibid., March 25, 1924, p. 11.

[29]The Women's Leader, February 27, 1920.

[30]Editorial, The Times, August 25, 1921, p. 9.

had dropped to 130,000 a year, a mere 40% of the pre-war total.[31] The reasons for this drop are numerous and complex,[32] but a major consideration with regard to women was that, just as in England, the main demand overseas was for domestic servants. While ideally a girl emigrated to marry, she had to have some support in the meantime and usually domestic work was the only occupation open to her. Only two of the frequent calls for more female emigrants which appeared in The Times during this period appealed for "educated women," the rest stressed the need for domestic servants.[33] People who advocated this solution hoped that women would ignore the rather depressing job outlook and be attracted by the possible marriage prospects.[34]

With the need for domestic service skills pressing so hard at home and overseas, it was to be expected that there should be a call for more domestic science teaching in the schools.[35] Variable 3, expressing attitudes related to this, is not a large variable numerically (17 cases in all), but it will be seen that it is important because of the close rela-

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[31] Sidney Pollard, The Development of the British Economy, 1914-50 (London: Arnold, Ltd., 1963), p. 281.

[32] They included not only economic factors prevalent in England, but changes of attitude towards emigration and the changing policies of countries receiving emigrants.

[33] The Times, March 30, p. 11, June 18, p. 16, August 27, p. 7, 1920; Sept. 5, 1921, p. 10; April 20, p. 11, 1922; January 22, p. 17; October 26, p. 8, November 8, p. 9, December 3, p. 11, 1923; March 25, p. 11, 1924.

[34] Editorial, The Times, August 25, 1921, p. 9.

[35] Vera Brittain, Women's Work in Modern England (London: Noel Douglas, 1928), p. 31. During 1922-23, Brittain records that 446,409 girls were being taught domestic science in school; during 1924-25, 454,285 girls were receiving such instructions.

tionship it bears to the stress placed upon domestic service as a suitable occupation for women.[36]

Both for the sake of turning out good domestic servants and good mothers, mothercraft and domestic training were considered extremely necessary.[37] The suggestion was also made that such training should be given to girls of all social classes; because even if they were destined to be mistresses rather than maids, "efficient mistresses made good maids."[38] Letters published by The Times in 1928 all suggested that it was wrong for girls' education to 'slavishly' imitate that of boys, because it would fail to prepare them for domestic duties.[39] This reflected the principle that all women should be in the home, either as mistresses or maids. However, upper-class parents would certainly not like the idea of their daughters being domestic servants if they did not marry. Thus many supported feminist aims for career preparation as an insurance policy for their own daughters.

The majority of unfavorable attitudes are expressed under variable 6 (that women's occupations are defined by tradition) and variable 7 (that there are too many unemployed for women to do anything but traditional work). These are closely connected; the attitudes falling under variable 6 stating the principle involved, and the attitudes falling under variable 7

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[36] See below, p. 62 et seq.

[37] The Times, April 27, 1922, p. 9; source: Sir Herbert Morgan asserted that girls must be trained for matrimony, because the country needed wives and mothers more than professional workers.

[38] Ibid., January 12, 1927, p. 8; source: Lady Collins.

[39] Ibid., January 6, 1928, p. 7; source: Dr. McGonigle, M.O.H. and March 24, 1928, p. 15; source: Isabel Wood.

providing the immediate justification for it. It may be seen that between them, these variables account for 58% of the unfavorable attitudes (see Table 9).

Insistence on the part of those expressing unfavorable attitudes that women must leave their wartime jobs began late in 1919 and reached a crescendo in 1921. In September 1919 a leader in The Times called for the "total dismissal" of women in uniform and in offices.[40] In March 1920 the paper observed that the dismissal of women clerks from the Admiralty at the rate of 1,000 a month was "necessary and right."[41] In 1921 Sir William Robertson called the employment of 2,200 women at the War Office a "monstrous injustice."[42] In a defensive reply the War Office pleaded that of 9,160 on its staff, only 1,182 were women, of whom 700 did "women's work" (charing and domestic work); of the other 400, 200 did mechanical jobs which were not particularly suitable for men, and the other 200 were good staff members with three or four years experience in their work.[43] This perhaps indicative of the nature of work which was considered to be the province of women.

In the expression of attitudes falling under variables 6 and 7, there was a strong emotional response to the economic difficulties arising from unemployment. The dismissal of women from industry after the war, their consequent unemployment, and the shortage of domestic servants formed a logical equation in the minds of many. Table 10 shows that 172 out of a

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[40] Editorial, The Times, September 24, 1919, p. 11.

[41] Ibid., March 16, 1920, p. 19.

[42] Ibid., January 20, 1921, p. 7.

[43] Ibid., January 22, 1921, p. 7.

TABLE 10

CASES DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THE DOMESTIC ISSUE, 1919-28

Year	Domestic Service Items	Total v. 6 & v. 7
1919	13	31
1920	7	18
1921	38	55
1922	9	11
1923	44	45
1924	15	21
1925	10	14
1926	6	6
1927	18	20
1928	12	13
Total	172	234

total of 234 expressions in variables 6 and 7 were concerned directly with the issue of domestic service.[44] Attitudes evidencing an ever-increasing desire to force girls back into domestic service reached a peak in 1923, with the Domestic Service Inquiry. The nature of the attitudes expressed was complex. It was thought that large numbers of unemployed women should not be trained at the expense of the taxpayer, when housewives could train servants in their own homes; nor should they be drawing the dole. Attitudes on both these counts hardened considerably during the decade. Moreover, it was felt that girls should be grateful for a domestic training that would well fit them for their natural duties in life.

In order to cope with the large numbers of unemployed women, the Central Committee for Women's Employment was provided in 1920 with a 500,000 pounds government grant (in addition to the 94,330 pounds left over from the wartime Queen's Needlework Guild) to maintain centers for the training of women in a variety of jobs. Horticulture, hairdressing, health, welfare and journalism courses were all started[45] but the main concentration was on domestic service trsining.[46] Many articles and news items appeared in The Times reporting progress and the number of new domestic servants being turned out. In 1921 fears were expressed that the committee would

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[44]This figure includes only direct references to domestic service and does not, for example, include items on the Central Committee for Women's Employment, which was involved with all aspects of training, of which domestic service has only a part.

[45]The Times, October 2, 1920, p. 7.

[46]Great Britain, Office of the Minister of Labour, Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment, Second Interim Report for period ending December 31, 1922 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923), p. 26, records 2,373 women having been trained for occupations other than domestic service and 11,388 in homecraft and homemaker classes.

train women for work in areas other than domestic service, in which there were already men out of work.[47] In May, 1921 the government gave another 150,000 pounds grant to the Committee for Women's Employment; but this time for domestic service training only.[48]

By 1922 the Committee admitted that "the shrinkage of opportunities for women had been felt in greater or lesser degrees in nearly every occupation."[49] Professional women's organizations also admitted that the prospect, for the moment, was bleak.[50] By 1923 the value of training at all was being questioned.[51] In the name of economy many women wished that domestic servants be trained on the job, rather than waste the taxpayer's money by undergoing training in government-sponsored centers.[52] Presumably the prospective servant would also be thereby preserved from acquiring any "ideas" as to conditions of work. It was suggested that if "ladies" could not undertake charity work, then to take a young girl and train her as a

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[47] The Times, March 3, 1921, p. 11; source: letter signed by seven housewives.

[48] Ibid., May 6, 1921, p. 7.

[49] Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment, Report, 1922, op. cit., p. 15.

[50] The Times, April 13, 1922, p. 8; source: Miss C. Haslett, Secretary of the Women's Engineering Society.

[51] Ibid., January 1, 1923, p. 11; source: letter, Florence Walston.

[52] Ibid., June 15, 1923, p. 16; source: Capt. Stanley Abbott of the National Citizen's Union, August 15, 1925, p. 6; source: letter, Hon. Mrs. Livingstone, December 29, 1927, p. 6; source: Mrs. Robert N. Capan, April 7, 1928, p. 8; source: A. G. Bradley.

maid would be a valuable service to the community.[53] Those in favor of training could only argue that whether or not the women trained became domestic servants (many did not),[54] the experience made them better mothers and thereby improved the race.[55] However, the weight of opinion was against even this. In 1927 Ellen Askwith resigned from the Committee on Women's Employment because she considered that the training program for domestic service was indeed a waste of the taxpayer's money.[56] Moreover, government grants to the committee were reduced from 60,000 pounds in 1926 to 40,000 pounds in 1927.[57] By that year such people as Margaret Bondfield[58] and Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., who had opposed the narrowing of training to domestic science only, were put in the position of having to defend it when there was pressure for its abolition. Whilst still complaining that not

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[53] Ibid., October 12, 1925, p. 17; source: anonymous letter.

[54] Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. 205, 1927, p. 574; two-thirds of those who trained actually took posts as servants.

[55] The Times, May 4, 1927, p. 12; source: Winifred Usher, member of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, November 19, 1927, p. 11; source: meeting of the Society for Promoting the Training of Women, December 1, 1927, p. 17; source: Lady V. Milner, December 6, 1927, p. 12; source: Mrs. Sparrow, December 21, 1927, p. 8; source: Association for the Care of Young Girls; February 4, p. 16. and December 14, p. 11, 1927; source: Central Committee for Women's Training and Employment.

[56] Ibid., April 20, 1927, p. 4.

[57] Parliamentary Debates (Commons), loc. cit. (n. 54).

[58] M. A. Hamilton, M. Bondfield (London: Leonard Parsons, 1924), p. 183, shows that Bondfield's views tended to be traditional, as evidenced by her speech at the Independent Labour Party's Summer School at Scarborough in 1924: "I think a very strong indictment can be drawn up against the modern woman in her attitudes toward this important function (homemaking)."

all women were suited to domestic service,[59] Bondfield pleaded for the retention of the scheme on the basis of obvious need; there were always more applicants than places.[60]

The hardening of attitudes towards the training of women was paralleled by an increasing outcry over women receiving the dole.[61] Many readers of The Times were outraged in 1919 by the fact that 550,000 women were drawing out-of-work donation when so many homes were without domestic help.[62] There were reports of women refusing jobs because they would rather take the dole.[63] The Times itself was in the forefront of the protesters. In 1920 when the general employment situation improved, The Times concluded (probably erroneously) that more women must have returned to domestic service, "realizing the value of a roof over their heads and good food and fair conditions, (women) are not scorning to work as they have done."[64] When the situation worsened in 1921, the tone of the paper hardened: "If they refuse employment that lies open to them because it is not exactly to their taste, they ought not to be paid out of the public

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[59] The Times, June 30, 1923, p. 9; Margaret Bondfield commented that "munitions work develops a grip which is fatal to china."

[60] Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. 205, 1927, p. 599.

[61] cf. E. S. Turner, What the Butler Saw (London: Michael Joseph, 1962), who entitles his chapter on the 1920's, "Stop Their Dole."

[62] For example, The Times, March 19, 1919, p. 12; source: Dame Katherine Furse.

[63] For example, The Times, April 8, 1919, p. 10; source: report of a court decision that an unemployed woman be not allowed to refuse a domestic service position at 22 pounds a year.

[64] Ibid., August 25, 1920, p. 7.

purse and so enabled to live a life of idleness."[65] On March 10, 1921 The Times was able to announce the government's decision enabling Labour Exchanges to refuse out-of-work donation to anyone who had been a domestic servant in the past.

However, many mistresses protested the "unnecessary interference"[66] engendered by the Labour Exchanges, which sought to establish the condition of service before placing a servant. The government responded to this new pressure by ordering Labour Exchanges to confine their role to deciding whether or not the applicant for the dole had refused a job offer as a domestic servant.[67] In October, when the unemployment insurance scheme was expanded, domestic servants were excluded, it being thought that unemployment was impossible in their case. The employing classes found the payment of the dole to unemployed women particularly abhorrent. Their outcry on the issue reflected their anger at having to indirectly subsidize these women whom they wished to employ.

Despite government action, the protests continued. Many readers expressed the hope that mistresses "will give a trial to the hundreds of unemployed men who would thankfully take the situations scorned by women,"[68] and continued to express anger that the dole was being paid to a quarter of a million women (in 1922) when an estimated million homes were without

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[65] Editorial, The Times, March 3, 1921, p. 12.

[66] For example, The Times, July 25, p. 10 and July 26, p. 10, 1921.

[67] Ibid., August 13, 1921, p. 8.

[68] For example, The Times, December 17, 1921, p. 6; source: anonymous letter.

servants.[69] The 1923 Inquiry was another government response to such pressure.[70] The Committee of Inquiry was appointed to investigate the abuse of the dole specifically, and other conditions of domestic service as necessary. The committee succeeded in satisfying nobody. It heard evidence from mistresses and maids and concluded that there was insufficient proof of dole abuse. Readers of The Times were more concerned by the fact that the committee publicized the conditions of domestic service and recommended solutions to the problem of the shortage of servants. Because the employers were anxious to preserve absolutely the pre-war conditions of employment, most considered this a dangerous procedure; giving girls elevated ideas of what they should expect of their working conditions, rather than stressing the dignity of the calling and persuading them that it was their natural sphere of employment.[71]

The expressions of 1923 were unusually vehement and numerous. However, domestic service was a controversial issue throughout the period 1919-27 (with the exception of 1926, see Table 10), despite the fact that the larger issue of women's employment declined in numerical importance after 1921. This may be partially explained by the actual changes in domestic employment as revealed in the census figures and as reflected by

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[69]For example, The Times, December 16, 1922, p. 8; source: Mrs. Tate (letter).

[70]The Times was not of course the only source of pressure. The Daily Mail contained 33 items in all on the domestic service issue during 1923, and between April 6 and April 16, 1923, featured a series of articles entitled "Scaldals of the Dole," all involving servants.

[71]The Times, June 18, 1923, p. 13; source: Duke of Rutland, who called the committee "farcical" and October 31, 1923, p. 15; source: J. J. Bisgood, who referred to it as "this unfortunate committee."

the classified advertisements in The Times.[72] Of the 400,000 domestic servants who entered the munitions factories, only 125,000 returned to service;[73] 1,845,000 females were engaged in domestic service in 1921 (32% of the female work force). By 1931 the situation had improved a little from the point of view of the employees, 2,129,000 women were so employed (34% of the female work force).[74] A sample of classified advertisements in The Times for the same month of June throughout 1919-18 shows that the number of 'wanted' advertisements varied considerably in number (see Table 11), but never fell below 150 until 1928 when only 66 advertisements appeared. Further analysis of the months of January and December for this year revealed a progressive decline (74 in January, 38 in December). Presumably, the servant shortage ceased to be so severe in 1928. However, the depression did not set in until 1930, so it is hard to find economic explanations for this. The census confirms that by 1931 some 300,000 more women had been forced back into domestic service. Higher wages may have been influential in attracting women back voluntarily at the end of the decade. Wages for cooks in particular increased dramatically during the 1920's (see Table 12). Or it is possible that the practice of The Times with regard to its advertising pages changed.

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[72] Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), pp. 66-68, gives a broad analysis of the classified advertisements for nurses in The Times for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[73] A. C. Pigou, Aspects of British Economic History 1918-25 (London: MacMillan and Company, Ltd., 1947), p. 19.

[74] B. R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 61. The percentages are derived from Mitchell and Deane's statiatics.

TABLE 11

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR DOMESTIC SERVANTS IN THE TIMES
FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1920-28

Categories of Servants*	June 1920	June 1921	June 1922	June 1923	June 1924	June 1925	June 1926	June 1927	June 1928
Helps and Nurses.	19	32	49	31	15	17	35	29	10
Ladies' Maids and Maids	18	5	11	4	6	3	19	13	4
Lady Housekeepers and Cooks	38	60	121	69	94	52	120	72	2
Governesses and Companions	16	38	48	21	26	15	42	47	23
Parlor Maids and Maids	96	36	31	0	13	16	49	43	9
House, Kitchen and Scullery Maids	43	23	35	18	13	21	39	34	10
Between-Maids and Laundry Maids	50	13	15	8	7	5	10	4	4
Married Couples	28	15	21	7	18	18	42	18	4
Total	308	222	331	158	192	147	356	260	66

*The most important positions were those of Housekeeper, the head of a female establishment of servants; Lady's Maid, the mistress's personal servant; Cook and Nurse. The House Maid was often maid of all work in small establishments and was expected to help in the kitchen, whereas the Parlor Maid was not. The lowliest category was the Between-Maid, who was in fact the servants' servant. (E. S. Turner, What the Butler Saw /London: Michael Joseph, 1962/, pp. 117-140 and p. 285)

TABLE 12

SERVANT WAGES AS INDICATED BY ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE TIMES, 1920-28*

	1920 (pounds)	1928 (pounds)
Nurse	35-50	45-80
General	30-45	35-40
Maid	30-35	50-60
Cook	40-55	50-80
Parlor Maid	35-45	45-60
House Parlor Maid	30-40	40-45
House Maid	25-35	35-50
Kitchen Maid	20-35	35-40

*This table is intended as a guide and does not claim to represent the absolute rise in wages. There was of course substantial variation, in one advertisement in 1927, 100 pounds was offered to a cook.

In order to understand more fully why the issue of domestic service should have aroused such strong feelings, it is necessary to consider two more types of attitude which found frequent expression and were peculiar to the consciousness of class and sexual divisions prevalent during the 1920's. The Times defined the need for domestic servants in 1923 thus: "Domestic service exists of course simply to set those to whom it is rendered free to do work for which they are better fitted than making beds or sweeping floors."[75] If middle- and upper-class women were to continue leading active social lives, doing charitable or even professional work, then help in the house was a necessity.[76] Servants also indicated social status. It had always been acceptable for women whose husbands could afford it to employ at least one domestic servant, usually a cook-general[77] and possibly a nanny to look after the children.[78] The Times saw the big danger of the domestic servant shortage as: "the degradation of the middle-class woman into a mere household drudge when she wants to rear a large family."[79] Complaints about

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[75]Editorial, The Times, June 28, 1923, p. 15.

[76]The middle and upper class house of the 1920's was rarely equipped with any labor-saving devices. Advertisements for vacuum cleaners, for example, were only just beginning to appear in The Times. Brass and silver were needed constant attention and kitchens were usually ill-equipped and far removed from the main body of the house, often situated in the basement.

[77]Cooks were always in great demand (see Table 11), especially if they would also undertake other duties, hence the term 'cook-general.'

[78]This made the argument used by exponents of the attitude expressed in variable 1, that professional women would neglect their children if they worked, all the more ridiculous. Children had always been palmed off on servants.

[79]Editorial, The Times, March 18, 1919, p. 7.

the hardship experienced by the middle classes who had to do without servants were constant.[80] It was believed that domestic service was a "pillar of our social organization"[81] and without it the running of homes could not be accomplished.[82] Thus to many the shortage of servants became not "a mere question of personal comfort, or rather discomfort" but "a question of national interest,"[83] and one of how to avoid a 'C. 3' population.[84]

The personal discomfort of middle- and upper-class men and women and their exaggerated fears for the future of home life and the race, caused many of them to turn in anger on lower-class women for the abandonment of their "natural duties" and for aspirations beyond their station. Middle- and upper-class women reasoned that this class of women should be grateful for the "consideration shown for their happiness and welfare"[85] by mistresses. Servants were being trained for managing homes of their own. Numerous correspondents testified to the fact that domestic service was "an

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[80]Ibid., March 19, 1919, p. 12; source: Dame Katherine Furse and January 5, 1923, p. 6; source: Lily Watson, who wrote of "innumerable homes made wretched" by the lack of domestic servants.

[81]Ibid., April 25, 1923, p. 10; source: Frank Hilder (letter).

[82]Ibid., October 17, 1924, p. 15; source: Emily S. Seaver (letter).

[83]Ibid., October 1, 1925, p. 15; source: Mrs. D. R. Hart (letter).

[84]Ibid., January 19, 1927, p. 10; source: Dora F. Bulwer (letter). The term 'C. 3' population was popularly used to mean a degeneration of the race. Ideally the race should be in 'A. 1', i.e. 'tip-top,' condition.

[85]Editorial, The Times, December 30, 1920, p. 11

excellent training for married life"[86] and the working class homes in which the wife had been "in service" were always the most comfortable and best managed ones.[87] In fact if girls were considered unsuitable for domestic service and given the dole, then logically they should not be allowed to marry.[88]

The justification for the employment of servants was thus to decrease the ranks of the unemployed, to free middle-class women for committee work, to ensure that middle-class women received the help they needed to rear 'A. 1' population, and to train lower-class women in their natural duties for the same reason.[89] Frustration at their apparent impotence to increase the number of domestic servants available, despite government action, led in 1927 to a spate of almost venomous letters decrying the servant class: "The English domestic servant of today is the most ridiculously inefficient thing in the world"[90] and "not only are they appallingly ignorant and unintelligent, but also too conceited to learn."[91] The tone of these letters

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[86] Ibid., August 4, 1921, p. 11; source: appeal by the Mayoress of Kensington, December 20, 1922, p. 11; source: Lady Annette A. Matthews (letter), December 28, 1922, p. 9; source: Capt. Stanley Abbott.

[87] Ibid., April 14, 1928, p. 6; source: C. C. White-Cooper (letter) and April 18, 1928, p. 12; source: Miss C. Keane (letter).

[88] Ibid., April 12, 1924, p. 8; source: Mrs. J. T. Johnson (letter).

[89] R. Lewis and A. Maude, The English Middle Classes (London: Phoenix House, 1949), p. 248, come to similar conclusions about the justification for employing servants, but neglect to mention either the principle involved, i.e. that this was women's 'natural sphere of work,' or the concern for the family and the race that was expressed. The question was more than a class issue.

[90] The Times, December 2, 1921, p. 11; source: anonymous letter.

[91] Ibid., January 17, 1927, p. 8; source: anonymous letter.

makes the class gap obvious. Brittain commented that "there is probably no occupation in which the worker is still so emphatically regarded as having a 'place' and that a very inferior one."[92]

The 1919[93] and 1923 Domestic Service Inquiries received abundant testimony as to poor working conditions. These have been even more dramatically revealed by an earlier survey: long hours on call (6:30 A.M. - 10:00 P.M.) and only one-half day a week off duty, plus alternate Sundays,[94] meant that the pay was in fact poor, even though board and lodging were provided. The hierarchy of servants was rigidly preserved and prevented any effective organization of the workers,[95] a butler would never allow himself to be seen fraternizing with a between-maid; nor a maid from a large staff with a maid from a small staff. Above all the nature of the work and its constant demands on the worker led to a diminution in the status of the domestic servant.[96] The enquiry by the Women's Industrial Council in 1916 reported that servants complained of "neglect on the human side. 'They treat us as machines,' this appears constantly; 'as dogs' occasionally, even 'as reptiles.'"[97] More discomfitting still, the enquiry discovered, was the

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[92]Brittain, op. cit., p. 31.

[93]Great Britain, Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, Women's Advisory Committee on the Domestic Service Problem, Report, 1918 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919).

[94]C. V. Butler, Domestic Service: An Enquiry by the Women's Industrial Council (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1916), p. 49. The enquiry was conducted by means of sending questionnaires to servants and mistresses, quotations from which are included in the text below.

[95]Ibid., p. 93.

[96]Ibid., p. 34.

[97]Ibid., p. 37.

contempt felt for servants by women of their own class. This made girls more ready to enter industry and be in command of their own free time than to put themselves in the poor bargaining position accorded to the domestic worker.

It is significant that both the 1919 and the 1923 Committees of Inquiry, composed largely of mistresses, reached the conclusion that the solution to the servant shortage was to be sought in "more training" in order to raise the status of the work.[98] A letter in The Times suggested that the same end might be achieved if more 'ladies' took to domestic work as they had to nursing.[99] Little notice was taken of the idea of Jessie Stephens[100] that domestic servants should be employed by municipalities to go and help in homes as needed, and that the housewife should pay according to means.[101] This scheme recognized that domestic work was both a specialized and a dignified occupation (as the Committees and correspondents with The Times were at pains to point out) and also that all classes of women were in need of such a service. The need of working-class women, who were trying

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[98] Women's Advisory Committee on the Domestic Service Problem, Report, 1918, op. cit., p. 4, stated that: "In our opinion the present unsatisfactory conditions of the domestic service question is primarily due to lack of adequate facilities for training within the financial reach of the working population." Great Britain, Office of the Minister of Labour, Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Present Conditions as to the Supply of Female Domestic Servants, Report, 1923 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923), p. 10, stated that: "the evidence we have heard leaves no doubt in our minds that the most important question in connection with the solution of the domestic service problem is that of training."

[99] The Times, November 12, 1923, p. 8; source: Mrs. Dott (letter).

[100] The General Secretary of the Domestic and Hotel Worker's Union.

[101] This suggestion was taken up by Mrs. Philip Snowden, What we Want and Why (London: W. Collins and Co., Ltd., 1921), pp. 258-59.

to cope with industrial jobs and homework, was especially great. The idea, however, was rejected by the 1923 Committee on the grounds that private employers objected "to any change in their accustomed procedure."[102] It was argued that the home was a special work place and could not be legislated for as could be the factory.[103]

The insistence on "more training" must be seen as neutral ground on which all could agree without any threat to their own self-interest. It was only a slightly more liberal solution than that proposed by those who would have pressed girls straight into domestic service on leaving school without any training. In itself, trsining did nothing to attack the root problems of domestic service which may be stated as: the conditions of work consequent upon the poor bargaining position of the worker, the status of the worker as a servant rather than an employee, and the status of the worker as defined by the nature of the work.[104]

The real importance of the domestic service issue has been obscured by a parodying of the ridiculous fears of employers, which centered on having either to do without servants or having to employ those who had 'ideas' about the working conditions they were entitled to.[105] The impor-

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[102]Committee to Enquire into the Supply of Female Domestic Servants, Report, 1923, op. cit., p. 33.

[103]Butler, op. cit., separates her consideration of the problem into personal and industrial aspects.

[104]The Times, January 4, 1928, p. 7; source: National Union of Women Teachers commented that "household work is despised because it is women's work."

[105]During the 1920's servants figured largely in music-hall jokes and in cartoons in the daily press and periodicals. Punch was famous for its mistress/maid cartoons. The theme was usually the growing insubordi-

tance of the issue may be measured on three counts:

1. The economic importance of domestic service. Servants were not only status symbols; running even a small suburban house with no labor-saving devices and without a servant meant a large burden for the unpaid housewife. In The Times it was chiefly from the employers of one or two servants only that the vast majority of complaints came. The large staffs of the very rich were not threatened.
2. The domestic servant's own consciousness of her position as a member of a despised and ridiculed group led to a stubborn refusal by some to return to the work and forced improvements in pay and conditions.
3. The attitudes of the employing classes which are the ones recorded in this chapter from The Times reflect a double anger, that of class against class, and anger born of the violation of traditional principles with regard to the role of women and their duties. Because the domestic servant was so despised by all classes and because she lived under the master's roof, the display of rage on the part of the employers was that much greater.

The alarm with which the employing class viewed the apparent deterioration in the social and economic conditions during the 1920's resulted in a retrenchment on their part: a hardening of their traditional prejudices and fears held in regard to labor and to women. They wished to prevent the employment of women, and especially married women, in the professions

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nation and affluence on the part of the maid; for example, in the April 2, 1919 issue, a cartoon showed the maid interviewing the mistress rather than vice-versa, and in the October 22, 1919 issue, the mistress comments on the tiresomeness of her dress fastener, to which the maid replies, "Yes'M, that's why I wouldn't have it myself when I tried it on at the shop the other day."

because they believed them to be incapable of working efficiently, because their competition was feared in a shrinking labor market, and more generally because it was believed that for the good of the race they should stay at home. The strong belief in women's 'natural role' in the home also influenced attitudes expressed towards working women. Here, the desire was not to prevent women working, but to restrict them to traditional female spheres of work, the emphasis being strongly upon the 'natural' occupation of domestic service.

Whilst it is legitimate to trace the attitudes towards both women in the professions and women employed in industry and as domestics, the fact that the nature of the attitudes expressed varies so much in numbers and in tone is a function of the fact that the position of women was seen as a problem to be commented upon on class rather than sex lines. Hence there are many more comments on domestic service than on employment in the professions and the reaction is more extreme.

CHAPTER 5

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: THEIR EXPONENTS

Table 6 showed that favorable attitudes were chiefly expressed by non-feminist female and feminist groups (44% and 30% of all positive attitudes respectively). This chapter will examine these exponents of favorable attitudes, paying special attention to feminist sources. Table 5 showed that non-feminist female groups expressed even more unfavorable attitudes than favorable ones, while the relatively smaller feminist group was almost completely favorable towards the issue of women's employment in the attitudes it expressed. Thus the feminist group must be recognized as the most committed group expressing favorable attitudes. It will be shown that feminists had clearly defined principles which were favorable to women's employment. However, there was disagreement as to the best program of action for the accomplishment of their goals. Even the goals themselves differed in the long term, although there was general agreement on immediate questions of practical politics. While little evidence of the disagreements reached The Times, the divisive elements within the feminist movement will be introduced here because, as will be seen in Chapter 6, they were important in causing the decline in number of feminist expressions of attitude during the 1920's (see Table 6, Chapter 1), and reflect the inadequacy of the feminist analysis of the problem.

The feminist group was the only one to provide a coherent argument in favor of women's employment as well as countering unfavorable arguments

and actions as they arose. Other groups, especially the individual non-feminist females and their organizations, often supported the feminist stand on a single issue without consciously adopting all points of the feminist philosophy. This chapter will indicate the nature and the characteristics of these sources, especially the feminist ones, about which more information is needed than is provided in The Times.

Sources which were coded feminist were all female. Many of the organizations were former suffrage societies which carried on feminist activities after the war under new names; for example the National Union of Societies for Equal Suffrage became the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and the major society affiliated to it, the London Society for Women's Suffrage became the London Society for Women's Service. There organizations had represented the suffragist wing of the suffrage movement; that is, those who were in favor of working for constitutional, non-violent change. The militant suffragette wing, led by the Pankhursts, did not survive the granting of the vote in 1918. Sylvia Pankhurst dedicated herself to the class struggle and the editing of the Worker's Dreadnought;[1] her sister Christabel and her mother Emmeline formed the Women's Party, which in many ways recognized the need for a woman's solution to what were essentially women's problems,[2] especially those concerned with housekeeping and childrearing. However, the party only survived two years

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[1] In 1918 the name of the periodical was changed from Women's Dreadnought to Worker's Dreadnought, reflecting Sylvia's changing interests.

[2] "The Women's Party", (London: Leaflet, 1918), advocated co-operative housekeeping and full creche and nursery facilities for each block of housing. These ideas were elaborated upon in the organ of the party, Britannica.

and devoted itself chiefly to the causes of patriotism and Christabel's own self-glorification.

Thus the body of feminist opinion whose voice made itself heard in the 1920's was that of middle-class women, committed to working through the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), or a similar organization,[3] for objectives realizable in the form of a Parliamentary Act. It was in their Parliamentary skills that their influence lay. They promoted Private Members Bills, organized deputations, memorials and meetings and established contacts in the House of Commons. Notable among these was Major J. W. Hills, M.P., who introduced the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Bill of 1919. The NUSEC itself drafted three bills which reached the statute book in 1925, albeit in slightly altered form; they were the Widow's Pensions Act, the Equal Guardianship of Children Act, and the Maintainance Orders (Minimum Payment) Act. The work of organized feminists was thus the work of an articulate, socially well-connected group of women.[4] Part of their publicity work was necessarily conducted through The Times as the leading national newspaper. Not only did their activities receive the attention of The Times reporters, but the women wrote to the Editor regularly. Thirty-seven percent of the total number of feminist attitudes for the period 1919-28 were expressed in the form of letters to The Times. Of the feminists who wrote more than four letters during the period (twelve

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[3] For example, the Women's Freedom League (a former suffragist society under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence); the Six Point Group, formed in 1921 and the Open Door Council formed in 1927.

[4] The Women's Leader, March 12, 1920: B. L. Hutchins commented that "we are fairly articulate and have a power of expressing ourselves which is much more than proportionate to our numbers."

women in all), four were titled, eight were either M.P.s or married to M.P.s and all but two merited a place in the Ladies' Who's Who of the period.[5]

The class nature of the organized feminist movement is significant on two counts. Firstly, the movement was bound to reflect in large part the class interests of its members. No middle- or upper-class women could envisage the possibility of doing without domestic servants,[6] and as employers, their interests diverged from those of working women. The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries (AWKS) made the significant comment in their magazine The Woman Clerk: "As far as we ourselves are concerned, our link with these bodies (feminist societies) is likely to be looser than has been the case formerly. Equal franchise, our weapon, having been won for us, the rest lies for us to accomplish as workers rather than as women."[7] Despite their influence in Parliamentary circles and the coverage of their activities in The Times, feminist societies were only representative of a minority of middle- and upper-class women. Many women of their own class disagreed with their views and supported those held by the majority of the male ruling class, as evidenced by the fact that 61% of the non-feminist females attitudes (representing 161 cases) were unfavorable towards the issue of women's employment. The feminists

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[5] Ladies' Who's Who (London, 1924). There was also a Women's Who's Who published during the 1920's, but the Ladies' Who's Who was distinguished by the number of titled persons entered in it.

[6] Three members of the NUSEC (Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., Mrs. J. St. Loe Strachey and Miss Julia Varley) served on the committee appointed in 1923 by the Ministry of Labour to enquire into the domestic service issue.

[7] The Woman Clerk, Autumn, 1928.

themselves admitted that their organizations were small[8] and that there was also a certain amount of hostility developing towards women whose fight for the vote was fast becoming considered "unfeminine."[9]

The middle- and upper-class composition of the feminist movement did give rise to concern in the mind of the President of the NUSEC, Eleanor Rathbone who, whilst herself a member of the upper class, saw the dangers of class exclusiveness. In 1921 she complained of the complacency of women of her own class who had "mostly got all they wanted for themselves out of the women's movement when it gave them the vote, the right to stand for Parliament and local authorities, and to enter the learned professions."[10] Many middle-class feminists had wanted the vote and the opportunity to train professionally on an essentially "me too" basis.[11] However, the suffrage issue, which had absorbed all the energies and dominated the thinking of the feminist movement for over fifty years, had had the support of many working-class women,[12] including the female trade union leaders.

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[8] Winifred Holtby, Women (London: Bodley Head, 1934), p. 115.

[9] Ray Strachey (ed.), Our Freedom and Its Results (London: Hogarth Press, 1936), p. 10. Most active feminists of the 1920's had been involved in the struggle for the vote. Younger women had not been involved and were more susceptible to the influence of the new women's magazines than to the remote and unfeminine struggles of the suffragists and suffragettes.

[10] Eleanor F. Rathbone, Milestones: Presidential Addresses (London: NUSEC, 1929), p. 4.

[11] Constance Rover's choice of the Punch cartoon representing the bitterness of the lady's feelings as she watched the working-class man entering the polling station to exercise his vote; is a fair representation of the feelings and motivations of many middle-class feminists (The Punch Book of Women's Rights /South Brunswick, N.J.: A. S. Barnes, 1971/, p. 103).

[12] E. Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement (London: Longmans, 1931), p. 74.

It was Rathbone's hope that the "new feminist" philosophy, of which she was the chief proponent, would again unite the interests of all women.[13] New feminists were all members of the NUSEC and shared exactly the same class background as the other members of that organization and other feminist groups. However, many new feminists were possessed of a more active social conscience than their fellows and had active associations with the burgeoning Labour Party.[14] The philosophy of the new feminist movement and the ways in which it differed from other feminist organizations is not touched upon by The Times, but should be made clear.

The Women's Leader (organ of the NUSEC) defined new feminism as that which demanded that "the whole structure and movement of society shall reflect in a proportionate degree their (women's) experiences, their needs, and their aspirations."[15] New feminists[16] believed that the importance of women's homemaking and childrearing functions to society went unrecognized and unrewarded because they did not fit neatly into an economic system based on exchange values. Maude Royden[17] attested that: "A woman who bore a child or many children, ran a household, and brought up a family fit and

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[13] Rathbone, op. cit., p. 18.

[14] The best examples being Mary Stocks, who became a Labour Peer in 1966 and Margaret Bondfield, Labour M.P. between 1923 and 1924, and 1926 and 1931. Eleanor Rathbone refused party affiliation and sat in Parliament as an Independent, although all her associations were with socialists.

[15] The Women's Leader, July 17, 1925.

[16] New feminism was confined to the NUSEC. Not all members of the NUSEC were new feminists; Eleanor Rathbone, Mary Stocks, K. D. Courtney and Mrs. Hubback were the chief proponents.

[17] Maude Royden was a lay preacher, member of the NUSEC and friend of Rathbone.

virtuous, was still only an arrested man and a perpetual minor, but a woman who can clip tickets in a tramcar is recognized at once as a superwoman -- in other words a man."[18] In other words, only women's childbearing function made them different from men and only a virocentric culture could make this function into an economic handicap.[19] New feminism sought not just to make women's status equal to that of men in all spheres, but to implement a "real" equality[20] and to recognize women's special contribution as mothers or in occupations normally reserved for them only (e.g. nursing or domestic service) as being of equal value to any well-paid male occupation.

Not many feminists accepted this philosophy. The NUSEC was the only organization to adopt it officially, and then only by a narrow majority and that by virtue of Rathbone's Presidency. Others, e.g. the Six Point Group, the Women's Freedom League and the Open Door Council, pursued the traditional equalitarian aims, seeking absolute equality in all spheres between men and women. This philosophy ignored the problems posed by women's maternal function and her position in the institution of marriage.

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[18] Victor Gollancz (ed.), The Making of Women: Oxford Essays in Feminism (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1917), p. 29.

[19] Maude Royden acknowledged her debt to the work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman in formulating this concept of women's position in society (cf. C. P. Gilman, The Man-Made World of Our Androcentric Culture /London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911/).

[20] A NUSEC leaflet, circularized during 1927-28, contained the following appealing analogy: "It is after all a poor kind of equality which Mr. Fox accorded to Mrs. Stork when he invited her to partake on equal terms of refreshment served in a flat saucer specially adapted to the elastic contours of his own flexible tongue. And feminists awoke to the fact that from some aspects our whole social fabric, man-made through generations to suit masculine interests and glorify masculine standards, was in the nature of that incommodious saucer to which Mr. Fox accorded Mrs. Stork equal access."

In 1919 the program adopted by the NUSEC comprised six points:[21] the full extension of the franchise to all women on the same terms as men, with an attempt to increase the number of women M.P.s; equal rights of guardianship over children for both parents; the opening of the legal profession to women; a widow's pension plan; an equal moral standard (reform of the divorce law and laws concerning solicitation and prostitution); and equal pay for equal work. In 1925 the Maintainance Act, Equal Guardianship Act and Widow's Pension Act signalled a degree of success on three of these points. It was then that the new feminist aims of family endowment (family allowances), the distribution of birth control information through government clinics, and support and involvement in the work of the League of Nations, were added. The first of these is important for the issue of women's employment, because it was considered firstly to be a matter of principle that a mother should receive payment for her services in rearing children; and secondly that such a payment sufficient both for mother and children was a necessary pre-requisite for the equal payment of male and female workers. Male workers would no longer be able to use the excuse of a family to support in their demands for higher wages.[22] These new feminist goals gave positive direction to the feminist program and no longer concentrated solely on breaking down barriers and countering unfavorable actions. New feminist philosophy was strong and its program

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[21] M. G. Fawcett, The Women's Victory and After (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1920), p. 161.

[22] Mrs. Sidney Webb argued the case for family allowances on these grounds in her Minority Report to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry (Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Report, 1918 /London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918/, pp. 285-86).

for action evolved out of its principles. This explains why those favorable towards the employment of women did not parry blow for blow with those who were not favorably inclined towards the issue. Whilst feminists opposed the dismissal of married women teachers, for example, on the grounds of principle and because of its current importance, they also put forward constructive ideas on the issue of employment; family endowment was one of these. The London Society for Women's Service ran its own employment agency for women and therefore also had cause to express its views on the basis of its own experiences.

Non-feminist females had no such coherent body of principles and programs on which to act. However, certain groups and individuals agreed with the feminist viewpoint on specific issues; for example, the position of women fired from their jobs immediately after the war evoked their sympathy. One of the most important sets of attitudes expressed by non-feminist females came from trade union women, who often agreed with specific points of feminist policy, e.g. equal pay for equal work and family allowances, but mistrusted the class interests of feminists. Non-feminist male support for the employment of women was similarly confined to specific issues, especially the employment of women in areas such as nursing. The Times was particularly supportive on this issue during 1919 and 1920 (see Table 8, Chapter 3). However, such support hovered precipitously on the border of actually wishing to restrict women to female work areas. The next chapter will show the differences in the position of the two sets of feminist groups and the non-feminist females, by examining the actual expressions contained under each variable. In order that the conflict between these three groups may be seen clearly, variable 5 (that women should be treated as a sex and not granted equal pay and suffer

protective legislation) will be dealt with at the same time as variable 11, its converse.

CHAPTER 6

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES: THE CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THEIR ARGUMENTS

Table 13, which breaks down the cases favorable to women's employment into the actual attitudes expressed, shows a decline in the total number of attitudes over the period. While this may be attributed in part to a decline in popular interest in the subject (as with the unfavorable attitudes), it must be noted that the feminist group had more of a vested interest in putting their view forward than other groups. The reasons for their declining interest must therefore be sought in the nature of the problem itself and the failure to produce any adequate analysis or solutions. This chapter will examine the content of each variable and the relationship between the attitudes expressed and the sources of those attitudes. Not all sources favorable to the employment of women emphasize the same aspects of the problem or offer the same solutions.

As may be seen in Table 13, variable 9 was the most numerous (99 cases). It may be noticed that 59% of the attitudes falling in this category were expressed between 1919 and 1922. There is a twofold reason for this. On the one hand the tone of the attitudes expressed was celebratory of women's gains. As a result of, or in anticipation of, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, many professional societies opened their doors to women.[1] Thus it was possible for supporters of women's employment to point

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[1] Maude I. Crofts, Women Under English Law (London: National Council

TABLE 13

DISTRIBUTION OF FAVORABLE ATTITUDES BY VARIABLE

	Variable 8		Variable 9		Variable 10		Variable 11		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1919	7	25.9	15	55.6	0	0.0	5	18.5	27
1920	8	30.8	13	50.0	0	0.0	5	19.2	26
1921	3	11.1	15	55.6	2	7.4	7	25.9	27
1922	8	22.9	15	42.9	4	11.4	8	22.9	35
1923	2	11.1	9	50.0	5	27.8	2	11.1	18
1924	1	3.7	12	44.4	3	11.1	11	40.7	27
1925	3	15.8	6	31.6	3	15.8	7	36.8	19
1926	1	7.1	2	14.3	0	0.0	11	78.6	14
1927	4	22.2	1	5.6	6	33.3	7	38.9	18
1928	0	0.0	11	57.9	3	15.8	5	26.3	19
Total	37	16.1	99	43.0	26	11.3	68	29.6	230

Variable 8 -- women should work to avoid waste of talent.

Variable 9 -- the spirit of fairmindedness demands that equality of opportunity be afforded to women with regard to employment.

Variable 10 -- married women should be allowed to work.

Variable 11 -- women should receive equal treatment at work; equal pay and no protective legislation.

to such gains as victories for the principle of equality as well as demanding that new advances be made. The Times itself evidenced an optimistic note in 1920, expecting that the sphere of women's employment would be significantly widened in the near future.[2] By 1921 such optimism faded in the face of a growing resentment towards women who continued to work during a period of economic crisis.

As well as celebrating the gains made, there was also concern that such gains should be solidified and the trend continued. To this end the London Society for Women's Service (LSWS) concentrated entirely on the issue of women's employment from 1919 onwards, and opened an agency to help women find work and to compile careers information.[3] By 1920 they had assisted 250,000 women to find work in a variety of fields[4] (in contrast to the limited opportunities afforded by the Central Committee on Women's Employment). Training programs were widely favored as a means of equalizing employment opportunities between men and women. Female labor leaders maintained that it was impossible to force all the out-of-work women into domestic service. In 1923 Margaret Bondfield called for an industrial retaining program for 50,000 women: 240,000 were unemployed and all of them

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of Women, 1925), p. 65, lists these as being: the Inns of Courts, the Law Society, the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Institute of Actuaries, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Society of Naval Architects, the Institute of Bankers, the Auctioneers and Estate Agents Institute, the Land Agents Society, the Surveyors Institute, the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, and the Royal College of Veterinarians.

[2] The Times, June 15, 1920, p. 13.

[3] Ibid., February 5, p. 5; April 15, p. 7; November 4, p. 9; 1919 contained reports of their activities.

[4] Ibid., March 25, 1920, p. 13.

could not possibly be absorbed into domestic service.[5]

In 1922, the year in which attitudes towards women's employment were relatively strongest (35 cases in all), The Times ran a correspondence entitled "Our Daughter's Future."[6] A number of letters invoked the principle of equality to press for equal concern for the training and careers of boys and girls. The correspondence had begun under the title "Our Son's Future," but it was decided shortly thereafter that "what we shall do with our daughters is a question of at least equal urgency."[7] Adequate training for a career was stressed;[8] it being assumed that equal qualifications would confer equal opportunities, just as it had been assumed that equal voting rights would automatically confer equal citizenship. The full complexity of the problem and the depth of the prejudice against the employment of women had yet to be fully exposed.

From the beginning of the period those arguing for the employment of women on the basis of the principle of equality had to adopt a defensive argument in response to the actions and attitudes of their opponents. As

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[5] Ibid., April 26, 1923, p. 9. This view was strongly backed by two periodicals, Out of Work (London), vol. 1, no. 23, 1922 and The Worker's Dreadnought (London), July 7, 1923.

[6] Other papers of the day ran similar correspondences, for example, in 1922, the Daily Express initiated a correspondence under the heading "What shall she be?" and on January 1, 1928, the Daily News started a series of articles under the general heading "Careers for Our Daughters." In addition the Wembley Exhibition (opened in April 1924) sponsored a Women's Exhibition, featuring career information.

[7] The Times, April 11, p. 20, 1922; source: Miss Katherine Tynan.

[8] Ibid., April 17, 1922, p. 11; source: Miriam Croxton (letter) and April 28, 1922, p. 9; source: Josephine Knowles, author of The Upholstered Cage (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), a novel in which she criticized the practice of keeping daughters at home.

early as 1919 women were being dismissed from the engineering trades. The NUSEC voiced both its disapproval of the Pre-War Practices Act[9] and its demands for the admittance of women to skilled trades.[10] The Women's Engineering Society under the Presidency of Lady Parsons was also active in demanding equal opportunity for training.[11] As a group, female engineers stood to lose most by the implementation of the Pre-War Practices Act. They were also excluded from the major engineering union: The Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

The Civil Service also drew the attention of those who wanted equal rights and opportunities for women. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act provided for separate regulations to be made for the Civil Service and the absolute exclusion of women from diplomatic service overseas. In response to this the LSWS exclaimed angrily: "Once again by means of political chicanery the government pledge to women has been put off and in all probability broken."[12] Both the Women's Advisory Committee to the government and the Association of Headmistresses agreed that the Civil Service

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[9] However, The Women's Trade Union Review, no. 110 (July, 1919), considered it unthinkable that the Pre-War Practices Act should not be enforced, and called the delay in passing bill "distressing and dangerous." Although Mary MacArthur, "The Woman Trade Unionist's Point of View" in Women and the Labour Party, ed. by Marion Phillips (London: Headley Bros., 1918), p. 23, did express discontent at the way in which Trade Unions had excluded women in their consultations with the government on the terms of the Act.

[10] The Times, March 6, 1919, p. 13 and June 20, 1919, p. 8; source in both cases: M. G. Fawcett.

[11] Ibid., December 8, 1920, p. 9. The Woman Engineer, organ of the society, was also active in demanding equal opportunities for women (for example, vol. III, no. 1 /December, 1929/).

[12] The Times, August 16, 1919, p. 7.

should be open to men and women on equal terms.[13] The Times was open in its warning to women of the prejudice they would encounter in their efforts to pursue a career in the Civil Service.[14] In 1919 three committees had reported on the status of women in the Service. Lord Haldane's committee recommended equal opportunities for both sexes; Lord Bradbury's committee also recommended that women have equal access to all posts. However, it was the more cautious report of Lord Gladstone that influenced the formulators of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. Lord Gladstone had but limited praise for the work of women in the Civil Service during the war, complaining of their high sickness rate and loss to the Service by reason of marriage. The Whitley Council report of 1920 followed his lead and did not recommend open examination for both sexes. However, it did recommend aggregation, which meant that men and women could be employed on the same tasks in the same room (modesty of an earlier age had demanded that men and women should be physically separated when performing their duties). Aggregation made it harder to pay women less and otherwise restrict their advancement. It was not until 1922 that entrance examinations were opened to both men and women and in 1925 women competed on equal terms with men for administrative grade posts for the first time. Seniority lists were made common for men and women in 1924.[15]

Feminist concern over women's position in the Civil Service tended to concentrate on the upper grades, from which women were barred and, as

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[13] Ibid., June 23, 1919, p. 11 and June 26, 1919, p. 8.

[14] Editorial, The Times, August 6, 1921, p. 9.

[15] Hilda Martindale, Women Servants of the State 1870-1938 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1938), pp. 86-105.

may be seen from the above, they achieved a certain amount of success, although the Royal Commission appointed in 1929 to look into the Civil Service still made no recommendations on either equal pay or the marriage bar.[16] The position of women in the lower grades of the Civil Service was tenuous. Men such as William Robertson wanted them out, hence Louise Creighton's plea for consideration in 1920[17] and the protests of the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries.[18]

Defensive reactions were also forthcoming on the issue of women medical students. In 1921 the hospitals began to close their doors to women again, on the grounds not of the women's incompetency, but because co-education was considered to be somewhat immodest. Many in favor of women's right to equal opportunities were much perturbed. They claimed the right of women to co-education in the best training schools as a basic right and as a necessary pre-requisite to gaining good jobs.[19] Anger was expressed particularly in the case of St. Mary's Hospital, which had raised funds on the basis of its co-educational program.[20] Moreover, it seemed ridiculous that male doctors were allowed to work with female nurses and

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[16] Ibid., p. 170.

[17] The Times, January 16, 1920, p. 8; source: Louise Creighton, who was not an active feminist, but rather a voluntary worker and active member of the Standing Committee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

[18] The Woman Clerk, April 29, 1920.

[19] The Times, October 27, 1924, p. 17; source: Frances Ivens, President of the Medical Women's Federation (letter). In 1929 the Report on the Medical Education of Women, instigated by London University upheld the principle of co-education (The Women's Leader, February 1, 1929).

[20] The Times, October 13, 1924, p. 20; source: Frances Ivens (letter).

patients but not on an equal basis with female colleagues.[21] Charges of immodesty seemed to insult the female character.[22] One anonymous correspondent inferred that men did not want any female competition.[23] However, some women recognized the hopelessness of the position of medical women, for while asserting their right to co-education it was realized that women rarely got equal access to hospital appointments when they graduated. Thus possibly they were better off in an all women's training school, where appointments were given to them and where, therefore, the accusation of wasting their training by not working after graduation could not be leveled at them.[24]

These three instances provide examples of the most concerted efforts to remove female competition from the work force. In the case of female engineers and medical students, those who were against their employment attempted direct action against them. The Civil Service attempted only to forestall change and preserve the status quo. Whilst it is evident that feminist and non-feminist opinion invoked the principle of equal opportunity, feminists tended to throw their weight behind the articulate professional women's associations, such as the Medical Women's Federation, with whom their interests lay, rather than the Association of Women Clerks

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[21] Ibid., March 6, 1922, p. 5; source: Alma Downes-Shaw (letter); March 7, 1922, p. 8; source: Faith Ashford (letter); March 8, 1922, p. 8; source: anonymous letter.

[22] Ibid., March 11, 1922, p. 6; source: Dr. L. D. Parsons (letter).

[23] Ibid., March 6, 1922, p. 5; source: anonymous letter.

[24] Ibid., November 5, 1924, p. 10; source: Dr. May Thorne, Hon. Sec. Royal Free Hospital (letter) and January 24, 1925, p. 11; source: Frances Ivens (letter).

and Secretaries.

Table 13 shows that variable 8 (that women should be employed to avoid waste) accounted for 16% of the total number of favorable attitudes. This argument was used chiefly by feminists and professional women's organizations to try and bolster women's self-image and sense of worth in the face of the restrictions being placed upon their employment.

The argument was effective in countering the call for economy which was used to justify the dismissal of women employed in war time. For example, Lady Parsons was angry with engineering employers "for scrapping all these prospective wealth producers,"[25] especially when of 5,000 firms surveyed by the Women's Industrial League, 764 had employed women during the war and 228 expressed the desire to retain them, but could not by reason of the Pre-War Practices Act.[26]

It was also argued by sources in favor of the employment of women that women's special talents should not be wasted. Women's organizations in particular argued that because of their experience in the home and with children, women were particularly suited to work as J.P.s in Juvenile Courts or as Women Police.[27] This was an interesting inversion of the argument against women's employment, which rested on the premise that women were naturally suited for work in the home and should therefore stay there. It was even argued by Mary S. Allen, commandant of the Women's Auxiliary

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[25] Ibid., July 10, 1919, p. 9.

[26] Ibid., January 17, 1920, p. 7.

[27] Ibid., August 30, 1922, p. 5; source: NUSEC and April 5, 1922, p. 8; source: Wilson Carlile, Hon. Chief Sec. of the Church Army (letter) on women police. July 28, 1920, p. 13, on women J.P.s.

Service,[28] that if the sexes were equal then there was no justification for only men being allowed to deal with female offenders.[29] Much the same argument was used to better effect with regard to the women medical students. The Joint Committee of Women's Organizations argued that women patients, especially pregnant women and their children, preferred the attention of a female physician.[30] Naturally these arguments were potentially limiting; if pursued to the extreme women in both the legal and medical professions would be confined to dealing with women and children only.[31] However, such arguments were used for the purpose of obtaining short-term gains.

A variation of this argument was also used to answer those in favor of deporting surplus women. Eleanor Rathbone argued that unmarried professional women were vitally necessary to help train younger women, particularly in the teaching and nursing professions.[32] Others taking part in

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[28]This service had been introduced during the war. In 1918 Sir Nevil MacReady became the new Commissioner of Police and introduced the Metropolitan Police Women Patrols, the members of which were not sworn in. In 1922, the 'Geddes Axe' threatened the existence of all women police; however, 20 patrols were retained (Mary S. Allen, The Pioneer Policewoman /London: Chatto and Windus, 1925/, p. 133 et. seq.).

[29]The Times, December 11, 1925, p. 20.

[30]Ibid., August 16, 1928, p. 7. L. B. Aldrich-Blake, Dean of the Royal Free Hospital also spoke of "the desire of women patients to consult women doctors" constantly becoming "more evident" (The Times, August 6, 1921, p. 11).

[31]This was realized by some; for example, Louise Creighton, speaking at a conference of women J.P.s, said, "We have got to get away from the idea that we are only here to deal with women and children" (The Times, December 2, 1920, p. 11).

[32]Ibid., September 5, 1921, p. 4.

the "Our Daughter's Future" correspondence were insistent that the fate of girls could not be left to "chance marriage," but that they must be trained for some useful occupation; both for their own security and in order that the responsibility for their welfare should not become a burden on the state.[33] One anonymous writer argued that if women were given an interest and position in the world in the form of a career, then the problem of surplus women would solve itself.[34] Moreover, the nation would no longer be wasting half its human resources.

Feminists and professional women's organizations also realized the futility of urging girls to take up careers, since should they wish to marry, they would be faced with a choice between marriage and their work. The marriage bar applied to almost all professions and hence was of deep concern to feminists who were aspiring to such careers. Thus variable 10 (that married women should be allowed to work), whilst a small variable numerically (26 cases in all) is by its nature, of importance.

Objection to the marriage bar was founded firmly on the principle of the liberty of the individual; her right to work, and right to freedom from governmental interference. The Women's Freedom League considered the marriage bar a manifestation of the "deep rooted hostility to women's moral and mental liberty"[35] and Professor Winifred Cullis (President of the Federation of University Women) expressed the desire on the part of women

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[33] Ibid., April 21, 1922, p. 7; source: Hon. Eleanor M. Plumer, tutor to women students at Kings College and October 7, 1921, p. 13; source: Mary Gaunt.

[34] Ibid., September 20, 1921, p. 12.

[35] Ibid., May 2, 1927, p. 11; source: Women's Freedom League.

to be released "from the disabilities and restrictions imposed by the artifice of man and not by the necessities of nature."[36] The right to work was seen as a basic human right not to be denied women because of their married status; it was up to the individual to decide where she wished to work, in or out of the home. The fight for such a principle was characteristic of the feminist argument. Moreover, governmental interference in the private lives of individuals was resented; "we protest further against this policy because it interferes with the private affairs of the individual in a way which would not be tolerated in the case of men."[37] The government was, by allowing only one breadwinner, determining the amount of money that a family could earn. It was pointed out that if the government was to be at all fair in its policy, it should stop men who married rich wives from working.[38] In sum, it was felt that professional skill was not automatically lessened by the possession of a marriage certificate, and that unless this could be proved to be the case a woman's change in marital status should not affect her employment.[39]

The whole concept of the marriage bar was seen to reflect the view that man should provide and that woman should be in the home. Thus women's organizations and individuals argued that marriage should not be viewed as

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[36] Ibid., January 8, 1927, p. 6; source: Winifred Cullis, President, British Federation of University Women.

[37] Ibid., December 6, 1921, p. 6; source: Medical Women's Federation.

[38] The Women's Leader, March 18, 1917.

[39] The Woman Teacher, October 12, 1923.

"a trade,"[40] with women marrying in order to be supported financially.

It was noticed that marriage only became a condition for resignation in highly paid jobs,[41] and feminist observers equated this with the small number of women achieving top positions in the professions and concluded that: "marriage must not be made, by any rule or custom, a greater disability to women's work than it may in the course of nature become."[42] The marriage bar was doubly unfair in the economic sense, when women teachers were dismissed on marriage and then employed as 'supply teachers' and paid by the day at great saving to the Local Authority.[43]

On February 6, 1922 it was reported in The Times that 45 women's organizations had passed a resolution protesting the dismissal of married women by the authorities. Prominent amongst these were all the feminist groups, the National Union of Women Teachers[44] and the Medical Women's Federation. However, as has been seen, not all women were in agreement with them. Individuals supported the idea that home and children must come

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[40]The term was used by Cicely Hamilton in the title of her book, Marriage as a Trade (Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1911), which condemned women marrying for purely economic reasons. Many women's groups shared this view, for example, the National Council of Women (Report of Annual Meeting, 1921, Fawcett Library, London, Records of the NCW).

[41]Mrs. Philip Snowden, What we Want and Why (London: W. Collins and Co., Ltd., 1921), p. 228.

[42]Reported in Editorial, The Times, April 13, 1922, p. 13.

[43]Ibid., January 4, 1926, p. 15; source: Report of the Women Teacher's Conference.

[44]The National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) repeatedly demanded the right of married women to work at their annual conferences (for example, The Times, January 2, 1926, p. 12 and January 6, 1927, p. 15).

first and the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries opposed the resolution chiefly through fear of unemployment and the loss of the limited rights they already held. Nor does anything in the data gleaned from The Times reveal attitudes towards, and of, married women in industry. The lot of the married industrial worker was a hard one[45] and Trade Union Women were anxious that the energies of these women should not be expended so unnecessarily in performing two jobs, at home and work.[46] Thus while professional women were struggling for the right to work, working women were struggling for the right to choose to stay at home. The clash of viewpoints between these two classes of women is most clearly evidenced by studying variable 11.

Variable 11 (that women should receive equal treatment at work, equal pay and no protective legislation) is not only important because of the numbers of attitudes falling into the category (68 cases); but because these two specific issues (equal pay and protective legislation) are central to the complex question of women's employment outside the home, and moreover bring into direct conflict the interests of women of different classes.

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[45] Allen Hutt, The Condition of the Working Classes in Britain (London: Martin Lawrence, Ltd., 1933), p. 81, gives the maternal mortality rate in Lancashire, "the classical area of female labour," as 5.62 per 1,000, as against 4.58 in other residential areas. Maternity Letters from Working Women (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1916), collected by the Women's Co-Operative Guild, contains 386 letters. In 348 of these are recorded the births of 1,396 live children, 83 still births and 218 miscarriages. Finally, M. L. Eyles provides a vivid picture of the struggles of such undernourished, fatigued women in houses with no hot water, poor light and cramped living quarters (The Woman in the Little House /London: Grant Richards, 1922/).

[46] MacArthur, op. cit., p. 18 and Eyles, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

The call for the immediate implementation of equal pay for equal work came from the two groups who had most to gain from such a move: feminists and professional women. In principle, many industrial women's organizations also agreed with the concept, although as will be seen, they had more pressing issues to deal with, such as cuts in wages and poor working conditions. For them equal pay remained a distant ideal. The Times reported the major stands taken on the issue by feminists and professional women's organizations.[47] The women teachers were in the forefront of the struggle for equal pay. The National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) had been formed to fight for the equal status of women within the profession, just as the NAS had been formed after the war to fight against it. The latter contended that equal pay would mean the taking over of the profession by a band of "jaundiced spinsters," whose presence would be detrimental to the nation's youth. Women outnumbered men in the profession by 78% to 22%. However, the top positions were held almost exclusively by men. The NAS claimed that equal pay for equal work had rendered the teaching profession a female preserve in the U.S.A. On the other hand, as Helena Normanton pointed out, it was argued by men in industry that equal pay would put women out of work because men would naturally be preferred, and hence male teachers should have nothing to fear.[48]

In March 1919 the NUSEC had formally adopted a resolution calling for equal pay, and in March 1921 defined the concept of equal pay as "the

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[47] The Times, August 28, 1922, p. 5; reported in the NUSEC's call for equal pay and January 1, 1925, p. 9; the NUWT's resolution on equal pay.

[48] Helena Normanton, Sex Differentiation in Salary (London: NUWT pamphlet, n.d.), p. 37.

same rate for the job."[49] Such a definition was rendered necessary because of the controversy surrounding the precise meaning of the term. It was argued by some that a woman might perform the same task as a man but not be of equal value to her employer, because after receiving her training she might leave to get married. Or it might be a question of status. As Mary Stocks pointed out, a male footman performing the same tasks as a female parlor maid might well be preferred as an employee because of the social status that accrued to his employer.[50] The claim that women were also less efficient than men because of their higher absence rate, was countered by the argument that poorly paid employees were going to have a poor standard of living, and thus be less resistant to disease.[51] The arguments over equal pay were long and intense. The 1919 Women's Employment Committee concluded on the subject in this way: "We confess that we can find no other working principle" (other than the rate for the job).[52] The minority report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry came to a similar conclusion, although the majority report hesitated over coming down firmly on either side because of the complicated question of the value of women's work.[53]

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[49]Mary D. Stocks, Equal Pay for Equal Work (London: NUSEC pamphlet no. IV, n.d.).

[50]Mary D. Stocks, "Equal Pay for Equal Work" in The Woman's Year Book (London, 1924), pp. 363-65.

[51]Normanton, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

[52]Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, Committee on Women's Employment, Report, 1919 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1919), p. 23.

[53]Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Report, 1918 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918), pp. 186-87.

However, the most powerful argument against equal pay for equal work was the one used so frequently by the NAS: the problem of dependents. It was argued that because men had families to support they deserved more pay. Whilst female labor leaders supported the principle of equal pay (chiefly in order to stop an additional wedge being driven through the Labor ranks and sex being added to class war), they experienced a sense of split loyalties. Working women had low expectations for themselves in regard to wages, and while welcoming a raise in pay, would be loath to do so if it meant a decline in their husbands' wages. There was, as Brittain pointed out, a contrast between "middle class theory and working class anxiety."[54] In the minority report of the War Cabinet Committee, Mrs. Sidney Webb put forward a solution to the apparently insoluable problem of family support. She proposed a scheme of family allowances, concluding that "there seems no alternative -- assuming that the nation wants children -- to some form of state provision."[55]

Over the whole period The Times carried 29 items on the subject of family allowances reaching a peak (13 cases) in 1926 because of the plight of the wives and children of the miners. Evidence in The Times does not bring out either the philosophical questions inherent in the movement for family allowances, or the movement's intrinsic connection with feminism and the desire for equal pay. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, reference must be made to sources other than The Times.

The family endowment movement, as the movement for family allow-

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[54]Vera Brittain, Lady into Woman (London: A. Dakers, 1953), p. 145.

[55]War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Report, 1918, op. cit., p. 255.

ances was called, was started in England by Eleanor Rathbone. She first proposed such a scheme in 1917,[56] subsequent to her firsthand experience of the working of separation allowances (paid to the mother in the father's absence) during the war.[57] As a feminist she was determined to raise the status of mothers and children from that of "male luxuries" to independent economic units, and to make equal pay a real possibility when dependents were provided for by the state.[58] As a humanist,[59] she was particularly concerned with the plight of the children, many of whom were suffering from disease and malnutrition. The Family Endowment Committee was formed at Rathbone's initiative and four of its seven members were active feminists.[60] They envisaged a scheme whereby the mother would be paid for her services in rearing children, and in addition receive sufficient funding for the proper performance of her duties. In other words, allowances were to be paid to the mother both for herself and for each child.[61] Eleanor Rathbone's

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[56]Eleanor F. Rathbone, "The Remuneration of Women's Services," The Economic Journal, March, 1917.

[57]Eleanor F. Rathbone, The Disinherited Family (London: E. Arnold, 1924), pp. 58-61, quotes the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education's reports on the improvement of the health of school children during the period when the allowances were operational, 1916-18. There was, of course, no record kept of any improvement or otherwise in the mother's health.

[58]Eleanor F. Rathbone states this view most strongly in The Ethics and Economics of Family Endowment (London: Social Service Lecture, 1927).

[59]Mary D. Stocks, Eleanor Rathbone (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949), pp. 117-18.

[60]These were, K. D. Courtney, Eleanor Rathbone (Pres.), Mary D. Stocks and Maude Royden.

[61]Mary D. Stocks, The Case for Family Endowment (London: Labour Publishing Co., 1927), p. 10.

research revealed that less than 8.8% of all families had what was considered the "average" number of three children, the number upon which wages were supposedly calculated. Moreover, a much greater percentage of families had over seven children. In addition, 12% of all women had dependents of some sort to provide for.[62] These figures suggested a rational argument in favor of family allowances and leant strength to the argument for their implementation, rather than attempting the impossible task of paying all men a family wage based on their needs.[63]

The proposal for family endowment in its original form and taken to its logical conclusion was a revolutionary one, as a contemporary alarmist critic pointed out, calling the proposal "a stick of social dynamite."[64] A scheme which ideally envisioned the economic independence of women and children made critics fear for the break-up of the family.[65] However, it is unlikely that any of the feminist proponents of the scheme fully comprehended the social changes that would be wrought if it were pushed to its furthest limits. Rathbone's faith in the institution of the family (and in the woman's place within it) was implicit, and her aim was

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[62]Rathbone, The Disinherited Family, p. 16.

[63]The concept of the payment of a "family wage" was of great importance in a society where only the rudiments of a welfare state existed. Therefore, family allowances were, in the 1920's, a necessary pre-requisite for the equal payment of men and women.

[64]Alexander Gray, Family Endowment: A Critical Analysis (London: Ernest Benn, 1927), p. 34 and p. 44.

[65]The Times, July 8, 1926, p. 12; source: M. H. L. Cazalet called family allowances "a menace to the sanctity of marriage and the family," July 15, 1926, p. 12 and June 24, 1926, p. 17; source: M. G. Fawcett expressed the same view.

always to strengthen it by ameliorating the economic position of the wife. She firmly believed that the mother was the best person to look after the child rather than a creche or nursery school.[66] This concept of ideal family life, with the working-class mother at home looking after the children, came very close to acceptance of the traditional view that the home was a woman's proper sphere. In 1917 Maude Royden, in a pamphlet advocating family endowment, considered that one of its advantages would be the withdrawal from the labor market of a large number of married women, who were compelled to seek paid work outside the home through poverty.[67] In this respect it may be seen that new feminist aims were consciously nearer those of trade union women than those of equalitarian feminists. The original scheme for family allowance represented the first attempt to pay the housewife/mother, and thus to solve the problem of women's two roles in society by assigning these functions a monetary value.

The family allowance scheme gained adherents by virtue of the impossibility of achieving a family wage based on the needs of five people (2 adults and 3 children), rather than by the virtue of any feminist principle of paying the mother a salary, or making equal pay possible. By 1927 there were as many schemes for the administration of family allowances as there were shades of political opinion.[68] Rathbone, although the leader

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[66]Eleanor F. Rathbone, Milestones: Presidential Addresses (London: NUSEC, 1929), p. 4 and The Disinherited Family, p. 109.

[67]A. Maude Royden, The National Endowment of Motherhood (London: Women's International League pamphlet, 1917).

[68]For example, H. N. Brailsford, a socialist, wanted a vertical redistribution of wealth and therefore preased for a scheme which taxed the rich to provide family allowances only for the poor ("The State and

of the family endowment movement in England, did not actively pursue the feminist point of view. She was not the only one to compromise her principles for the sake of achieving a measure of relief, however small, in the shortest possible time. Socialists also found it necessary to unite behind Sir William Beveridge's description of family endowment as "a small change in the means by which -- or in the channels through which -- is distributed the national income."[69] When Family Allowances were finally introduced in 1945 it was in the form of a supplementary payment, prompted chiefly by the need to give practical expression to feelings about the value of life which followed the war;[70] as such it by no means met the necessary prerequisite conditions for the implementation of equal pay.

Not all feminists could accept the idea of family allowances. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, President of the National Union of Societies for Equal Suffrage and first President of the NUSEC, held to the Victorian liberal idea that any sort of state support would destroy the work ethic

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Family Allowances" in Six Aspects of Family Allowances: Report of the First Public Conference on Family Allowances, held by the Family Endowment Society, ed. by William Beveridge (London: Family Endowment Society, 1927). S. L. Cohen, however, favored the other extreme, an insurance scheme whereby the people paid for the allowances themselves (Family Income Insurance: A Scheme of Family Endowment by the Method of Insurance /London: P. S. King and Son, 1926/). The Times gave publicity to the French scheme, which worked for a redistribution of income through an industrial pool. This had worked well in the coal industry and interest in it was sparked off by the miner's strike in 1926 (April 26, p. 10 and June 26, p. 15; source: Eleanor Rathbone described the scheme).

[69] William Beveridge, "The Case for Family Allowances" in Six Aspects of Family Allowances, op. cit. (italics mine).

[70] Mrs. Hubback, "Postscript" in The Disinherited Family (1949 edition). After the 1914-18 war, expressions of such feelings had taken the less practical form of the "Baby Week" institution, one week of the year being devoted to publicizing campaigns for the instruction of young mothers in childrearing.

amongst the working classes. More feminists opposed the new feminist stand on protective legislation. Like unequal pay for men and women, protective legislation set working women in a class apart. Traditionally-minded feminists objected not only to regulations prohibiting women's work at night and in dangerous processes, but also to statutory enforcement of maternity leave. They maintained that women should on no account be classed with "young persons," as they were in regard to hours of work, and employment in dangerous processes; every adult woman should be free to decide her place and hours of work and even if she wished to work immediately before and after delivering a child. Feminists distrusted the motives of various trade unions in supporting protective legislation, because they felt that the male-dominated unions were only trying to rid themselves of unwanted female competition. For example, it was complained that women engineers could not be employed on the new rural electrification programs because they were not allowed to work at night.[71] This seemed all the more strange when there was no objection raised to nurses (working in an all-female field) working at night.[72]

The main controversy arose in 1926 over the subject of the Lead Paint Bill, which sought to enforce the recommendations of the International Labour Office,[73] and over the Factory Bill of 1926. The evidence that

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[71] The Times, April 11, 1928, p. 8; source: Miss Caroline Haslett, Secretary of the Women's Engineering Union.

[72] Joan Blainey, The Woman Worker and Restrictive Legislation (London: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1928), p. 32. In 1935 legislation with regard to night work by women was revised (Brittain, op. cit., p. 135).

[73] The International Labour Conference at Washington in 1919 recommended that a woman not work for six weeks before and six weeks after her confinement. It also recommended that no woman be employed at night

women were more susceptible to lead poisoning was a controversial matter.[74] However, most people reasoned that because lead poisoning tended to be a contributory factor in still births and miscarriages, that alone was sufficient reason for banning the employment of women.[75] Equalitarian feminists were outraged that women should be banned from the lucrative lead paint industries, especially from house painting.[76] The NUSEC divided almost equally on the issue and at the 1927 Annual Council Meeting, 11 of the 23 executive members resigned on the issue of the new feminist approach to protective legislation and family allowances. The recalcitrant eleven formed the Open Door Council, which dedicated itself to the removal of all protective legislation. Rathbone and other new feminists agreed that protective legislation should be condemned when it was obviously a ploy of male workers to rid themselves of competition. However, new feminists detected the desire to make women equal to men on men's terms, when equalitarian feminists opposed even compulsory maternity leave. New feminists

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in any public or private undertaking. The conference at Geneva in 1921 recommended that males under eighteen and all females be prevented from working in any painting work or industrial enterprise involving the use of white lead or sulphate of lead (International Labour Office, Draft Conventions and Recommendations Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 19 Sessions, 1919-35 /Geneva: I.L.O., 1936/, pp. 22, 25 and 65).

[74]Blainey, op. cit., p. 35.

[75]E. L. Collis and Major Greenwood, The Health of the Industrial Worker (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1921), p. 33.

[76]The Times, July 31, 1926, p. 8; source: letter signed by Elizabeth Abbott*, Helen A. Archdale, M. G. Fawcett*, Helen Fraser*, Cicely Hamilton, Vera Holmes, E. Knight, Chrystal MacMillan*, F. de G. Merrifield*, Christine M. Murrell, Alison Neilans, Margaret Wynne Nevinson, J.P., Lady Rhondda, June Walker, Monica Whatley*, and August 3, 1926, p. 15: letter signed by Dorothy Balfour of Burleight* (Hon. Sec. NUSEC) and P. Strachey (Sec. of LSWS). *Indicates those executive members of the NUSEC who resigned in 1927.

preferred to accept such legislation as maternity leave, because it forced industry to adapt to women, rather than vice versa. They were inclined to let other types of protective legislation pass too (if it was essentially desirable and if the workers themselves desired it), and then work for its extension to men, if appropriate.[77]

The new feminist attitude to protective legislation was conditioned in part by the Trade Union view; new feminists always tried to be conscious of the attitudes of working women. The Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations was adamant in its support for the hard-earned protective legislation,[78] jealously guarded the concessions they had won, and were eager for their extension. They were quick to call for united stand against "attitudes of outside bodies of women who, in the name of equality, demand the repeal of protective legislation for women which does not apply equally to men."[79] Women's two roles at home and at work drained their reserves of energy and put a premium on the need to reduce hours of labor especially, hence the concern of trade union women with the Factory Bill of 1926. The conflict of class interests is clear. Working women supported both protective legislation and family allowances.

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[77]NUSEC, Minutes of the Executive Committee, November 22, 1927, Fawcett Library, London, Records of the NUSEC.

[78]Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations, Protective Legislation and Women Workers (London: Labor Party pamphlet, 1927). This committee represented the interests and official policies of all organized women, plus the Women's Co-Operative Guild (composed of the wives of working men) and the Railway Women's Guild (composed of the wives of railwaymen).

[79]The Times, September 7, 1927, p. 14.

A majority of middle-class feminists did not.[80] The Times gave prominence to the views of the latter,[81] rather than to new feminists and working women.

Working women's organizations were primarily concerned with trying to stop a deterioration in women's working conditions and pay. In September 1920 the Stabilization of Wages Act ceased to be effective, and, as had been feared, wage cuts followed, for men and women. With regard to women it was the traditional areas of female employment that were especially affected. Margaret Bondfield complained of sweated wages; the Birmingham and Wolverhampton Employers Association lowered female wages from 43 shillings to 35 shillings and 3 pence; London laundries paid only 33 shillings a week and Midland nut and bolt manufacturers, who employed large numbers of women, also made reductions. Even Trade Boards made cuts in their hourly rate for dressmakers.[82] Sympathy for the efforts of industrial and professional women who were trying to maintain their standards of living came from male as well as female sources. The Times frequently expressed sympathy for nurses.[83] The reasons for this may be seen to be twofold and closely allied with the unfavorable attitude of keeping women

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[80] The majority being composed of the eleven executive members of the NUSEC, plus a large but undetermined number of NUSEC rank and file members and the members of all the other feminist societies and organizations.

[81] See also a letter from the Open Door Council (The Times, November 16, 1927, p. 10).

[82] The Times, July 11, 1921, p. 7.

[83] Ibid., Editorial, April 5, p. 13, May 23, p. 8; source: anonymous letter, June 11, p. 9, August 14, p. 7, August 29, p. 13 and December 4, p. 11, 1919; August 26, 1922, p. 9; Editorial, November 21, 1925, p. 13.

in traditional fields of employment. Nurses could not ask for "equal pay" because there were no men in the profession; this was in part the reason for the appalling conditions extant in the profession.[84] In addition, The Times obviously felt that nursing was a 'womanly' occupation and should therefore be encouraged: "nursing stands as a symbol of much that is most heroic and self-sacrificing in woman's nature."[85] In brief, the effort to maintain the rates of pay in women's industries and professions was non-controversial and was therefore widely supported.

Whilst within each socio-economic class women fared badly, by virtue of the marriage bar in the professions or through low pay in industry, there was no unity of interest on the basis of sex. Working-class women actively distrusted middle- and upper-class feminists, and were anxious to keep the ranks of labor united. However, working women's membership in trade unions was small;[86] moreover, they were excluded from many influential unions[87] and their representation on the General Council

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[84]Dr. H. H. Mills complained that trainee nurses were working 70 hours a week (The Times, May 22, 1925, p. 17). In an editorial, The Times also complained of the bad conditions under which nurses worked (November 21, 1925, p. 13).

[85]Editorial, The Times, April 16, 1924, p. 15.

[86]Sheila Lewenhak, "Trade Union Membership Among Women and Girls in the U.K., 1920-65" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics, 1971), p. 14, gives the percentage of women to the total Trade Union membership as 15.15 in 1921 and 16.72 in 1931 (women formed 28% of the labor force in 1921 and 30% in 1931). However, as Margaret Bondfield pointed out, the figure of one million women in trade unions in 1921 was the highest ever reached ("Women's Trade Unions," in the Women's Year Book /London, 1924/, p. 336.

[87]Eighty-seven out 109 mixed unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress accepted women as members in 1921, 41% of the total number of unions (Lewenhak, op. cit., p. 137).

of the TUC was limited to two women.[88] Thus working women were deprived of an effective large-scale pressure group speaking with a united voice. The policy of the new feminists represented a genuine attempt to unite the interests of all women but suffered on two counts. Firstly, the new feminists were all middle-class, liberal women, insufficiently acquainted with the hopes and fears of labor. Secondly, their number was small and they were devoted to working through constitutional means, which involved much painstaking labor behind the scenes by a few individuals, rather than working to gain the support of women's trade unions publicly and openly. Moreover, the needs of working women were not their chief concern; work for the League of Nations and international affairs generally claimed an increasing portion of their time and attention towards the end of the 1920's and more especially in the 1930's.[89] Table 10 shows the decreasing number of attitudes favorable to women's employment expressed in The Times. This probably reflects the feminist concern with other issues and the trade union women's decision to throw in their lot with the male trade unionists.

Despite the differences in opinion between various organizations, feminists had managed to present a coherent argument of their own in favor of women's employment based on the simple principle of "the right to work." When backing various groups, whether the teachers, medical women, engineers or civil servants, the movement was united in the attitudes it expressed. Only when feminists attempted to formulate policies and programs of their

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[88] This was the agreement reached when the constitution was changed in 1920 to accommodate the amalgamation of the Women's Trade Union League with the TUC (Bondfield, loc. cit. /n. 86/).

[89] Eleanor Rathbone's own personal interests in the 1930's and 1940's were centered on the position of women in India.

own, which were not in direct response to actions taken by those unfavorable to women's employment did disagreement and fateful disunity result. Whilst the call for equal pay continued to be raised at regular intervals by the remnants of feminist organizations after 1928, the solution of the problem of the employment of women sunk to the level of the individual rather than the collective.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The initial statistical analyses of attitudes revealed in The Times were taken as indicators, rather than absolute representations of the nature of attitudes expressed on women's employment during the 1920's: the issues involved and the form and manner in which they were discussed by the various exponents. Undoubtedly, attitudes mitigated against the extension of women's employment. Unfavorable attitudes tended to be emotional and exaggerated responses to contemporary events, while favorable attitudes tended to be responses founded more firmly on principle and hence more coherent. However, the complexity of the issue of women's employment and the motivations of the exponents revealed by detailed analysis of the attitudes in The Times, and supplemented by material from other sources, makes it necessary to conclude on two points central to the substance and meaning of the study:

1. The nature of the problem of women's employment.
2. An attempt to measure the effects of the controversy described in the preceding chapters.

Both favorable and unfavorable attitudes expose the problem of women's employment as being a conflict between the woman's role at home and at work; in other words it involves a consideration of women's place in society. Sources of unfavorable attitudes tended to stress the importance of women's "natural duties" as wife, mother and housekeeper. The

special socio-economic conditions of the post-war period threw up a number of highly 'visible' issues, chiefly the high number of unemployed. The sense of crisis actually 'touched the hearth' on two counts; firstly, with the concern for the birth rate (hence the strength of the eugenist movement), and secondly, with the shortage of domestic servants. On these two counts if on no other, the issue of women's employment was translated by exponents of unfavorable attitudes into a threat to the whole way of family life led by the employing classes. The key to their reaction must be sought in their exaggeration of the problem as they saw it. Their concern as a class was to preserve the status quo and to fight each movement for change as it arose. Fear of change in a period of acute economic crisis led to an overwhelming desire for retrenchment and a recall of traditional feelings about women's role, regardless of the contradictions present therein. For as individual employers and as a class, these people were only beginning to benefit from the increased use of cheap female labor for routine tasks in office and factory.

The feminist sources favorable to women's employment made an attempt to redefine the whole problem. A conscious effort was made by the new feminists to define 'equality between the sexes.' Interestingly enough their conclusions were in many ways similar to those of Tawney,[1] that is, that not everyone was of equal ability, but that equal opportunity must be given to each individual to develop her full potential in any field she chose. In practical terms this meant that women must have the choice to work either outside the home or in the home. Radical economic change beyond their comprehension was needed for this to be achieved. The scheme

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[1] R. H. Tawney, Equality (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931).

of family allowances, as originally conceived, would have been a partial solution. It was recognized that the fight for equal pay, for example, was only symptomatic, and that its resolution would not touch the fundamental problem.[2] While this recognition was new and vital, the feminist organizations were but the dying embers of the nineteenth century constitutional suffrage societies. Their exclusive class nature and methods of working rendered both their analysis and solution incomplete.

It is interesting that Tawney did not consider women and their role in society at all in his work on equality; he assumed the desirability of their complete emancipation.[3] But those expressing unfavorable attitudes failed to even recognize the problem of women's two roles, at home and at work, as being one of 'equality.' This explains why the preceding chapters have shown little polarization of attitudes between the two groups. Only issues considered 'symptomatic' by new feminists (for example, equal pay and the marriage bar) provoked direct confrontation, and this was minimal compared to the numerical strength of other variables. Those expressing unfavorable attitudes were only vocal in times of extreme pressure. They never recognized the problem of accommodating women's childrearing and homemaking functions to a society whose economy was based on exchange values.

Once the vastness of the problem is appreciated the relative ineffectiveness of the attitudes of both groups may be seen as inevitable. New feminists could not convince even their fellow feminists of the meaning

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[2] The Englishwoman, vol. XLIII, July-Sept., 1919. This specific point is made by Mary Stocks.

[3] Tawney, op. cit., p. 49.

of the issues at stake, could not reconcile the class problem which impinged upon all their decision making, and in the final event could not offer an effective collective solution. Piecemeal change, such as has been recorded: the eventual removal of the marriage bar and even more recently the movement towards equal pay, did not affect the essential ambiguity of women's position in society, because that problem could not be solved unless it were confronted by both parties.

Thus, it is hoped that the above study will have brought into the open some of the fundamental problems that confronted the people of the 1920's in their discussion of the issue of women's employment.

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