

## GLASGOW RENT STRIKES 1915: THE STRUGGLE FOR DECENT HOUSING

THE GLASGOW RENT STRIKES, 1915:  
THEIR CONTRIBUTION AND THAT OF JOHN WHEATLY AND PATRICK DOLLAN  
TO  
THE LONGER STRUGGLE FOR DECENT WORKING-CLASS HOUSING

By

Matthew J. McQueen, MB. ChB., PhD., FRCPC, HonFRCPATH.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

©Copyright by Matthew J. McQueen, May 2017

McMaster University MASTER OF ARTS (2017) Hamilton, Ontario (History)

TITLE: The Glasgow Rent Strikes, 1915: their contribution and that of John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan to the longer struggle for decent working-class housing

AUTHOR: Matthew J. McQueen, MB. ChB., PhD. (University of Glasgow)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Stephen Heathorn

NUMBER OF PAGES: ix, 92 + Bibliography (14)

## **LAY ABSTRACT**

Glasgow, with notoriously poor working-class housing, was a major centre in 1915 for British engineering, munitions and shipbuilding industries during the First World War. Women who lived in Glasgow's tenements organised rent strikes and physically resisted rent increases and evictions. They were supported by the Independent Labour Party and the collaborations it developed before and during the war with organisations representing the interests of women and labour. These strikes, the rent agitations in England, and the threat of industrial action in Glasgow, forced the Government to pass the Rent Restrictions Act 1915, which limited rents to pre-war levels. Two former miners, John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan, were leaders in organising this class victory. They recognised the Act's limitations and then worked nationally and municipally in the longer struggle for better working-class housing. Glasgow's systemic anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bigotry did not disappear but played no significant role during the Rent Strike.

## ABSTRACT

From the 1850s Glasgow was a major industrial, commercial and mercantile city, with notoriously poor working-class housing. During the 1915 Rent Strike many women physically resisted rent increases and prevented evictions from the tenements. The strikes ended when the Government passed the Rent Restrictions Act 1915, which returned rents to pre-war levels. This was in response to a political and working-class struggle that challenged the rule of law. Rather than focussing narrowly on the role of the women alone, or on the strike as inspiration for anti-capitalist resistance, the 2015 Centenary seemed opportune to examine why the Rent Strike was successful, its place in the longer struggle for decent housing, the role of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and its leaders, and their collaborations with labour and women's organisations.

From the 1890s the ILP was central to labour's campaign in elections and in fostering political collaboration with many groups representing labour. John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan, former miners, were leaders in strengthening the ILP organisation and its community relations. This collaborative structure supported the women leading the rent resistance in the tenements. It was also the platform for Wheatley and Dollan, nationally and municipally, to continue their life-long work to improve the housing and living standards of working people. Wheatley became Minister of Health in 1924 in Britain's first Labour Government, and Dollan was Lord Provost in Glasgow's first majority Labour Council in 1938.

Glasgow's systemic anti-Irish and anti-Catholic prejudice has, surprisingly, remained unexamined in relation to the Rent Strike. Two historians claimed, without presenting evidence, that bigotry was overcome or briefly transcended. The evidence reviewed here indicated that it did not go away, but that it had no impact on the Rent Strike as it simply offered no stimulus or opportunity to express the existing racist or religious prejudice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people deserve recognition and my thanks for contributing to this Thesis.

For several years the librarians at McMaster University Library, including the Bertrand Russell Archives, have courteously and efficiently provided access to their collections. Manda Vrkljkn, InfoExpress liaison at the Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, demonstrated enthusiasm and great skill in locating and obtaining several sources that were proving difficult to find.

Much of the source material was located in Glasgow and I am indebted to several libraries and to their staff: the Mitchell Library (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Floors) Glasgow City Archives and Parliamentary Papers; the University of Strathclyde, Anderson Library and Special Collections; Carole McCallum and Sean Docherty, Glasgow Caledonia University, Library and Special Collections; Glasgow University Library and Archives; Mary McHugh, Archivist, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow.

Carol Cernile, Administrative Assistant in my Clinical Research Laboratory and Biobank, has provided guidance and corrective help when my word-processing skills have been challenged and their limitations revealed.

My wife, Moira, and my family have been consistently encouraging throughout this venture, and my sister-in-law, Anne Muldoon, willingly suffered domestic disruption and generously provided excellent hospitality during prolonged research in Glasgow.

My thanks must go to the Department of History for accepting my application to pursue a history project, and to Wendy Benedetti, Graduate Administrator, who has responded rapidly and helpfully to my questions and concerns. However, my greatest thanks must be expressed to Professor Stephen Heathorn for his willingness to be my supervisor, for the patience he has exhibited, and for the insightful and detailed advice he has readily provided.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	1	
Chapter 1	Glasgow Rent Strikes of 1915 and their Centenary	2
	How 1915 events were remembered and celebrated in 2014 and 2015	10
	Important people, organisations and issues when the 1915 Rent Strikes are viewed in the larger context of inadequate housing	13
	Wheatley and Dollan: their personal and political lives	17
Chapter 2	Glasgow Housing before and during 1915: History and Politics	25
	The housing problem in Glasgow: history and development	25
	The health effects of poor housing on the working class	31
	ILP collaboration with organisations representing the interests of labour	33
	Glasgow Trades Council	35
	Women’s organisations and women activists	39
	The Presbyterian Churches in Glasgow	42
	Wheatley and Dollan: actions on Glasgow City Council during 1915	44

Chapter 3	Wheatley and Dollan: Housing and Politics after 1915	51
	Wheatley, housing and politics in Glasgow, 1916 to 1922	52
	Wheatley, housing and politics in the House of Commons, 1922 to 1930	56
	Dollan, housing and politics in Glasgow, 1916 to 1938	61
	The significance of Wheatley and Dollan after 1915	63
Chapter 4	Sectarianism, Socialism, Catholicism, and the 1915 Events	65
	Bigotry and discrimination against Catholics and the Irish	65
	Socialism and Catholicism	71
	Was anti-Catholic or anti-Irish bigotry present in the 1915 Rent strike?	76
Chapter 5	Concluding Discussion of the Principal Themes Examined	81
	Bibliography	93



## Abbreviations in Text

<b>BSP</b>	<b>British Socialist Party</b>
<b>CWC</b>	<b>Clyde Workers Committee</b>
<b>CSS</b>	<b>Catholic Socialist Society</b>
<b>GHA</b>	<b>Glasgow Housing Association</b>
<b>GLP</b>	<b>Glasgow Labour Party</b>
<b>GLPHC</b>	<b>Glasgow Labour Party Housing Committee</b>
<b>GTC</b>	<b>Glasgow Trades Council</b>
<b>GWHA</b>	<b>Glasgow Women's Housing Association</b>
<b>GWLL</b>	<b>Glasgow Women's Labour League</b>
<b>ILP</b>	<b>Independent Labour Party</b>
<b>INL</b>	<b>Irish National League</b>
<b>SCWG</b>	<b>Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild</b>
<b>SDF</b>	<b>Socialist Democratic Federation</b>
<b>SLHA</b>	<b>Scottish Labour Housing Association</b>
<b>SLP</b>	<b>Socialist Labour Party</b>
<b>STUC</b>	<b>Scottish Trades Union Congress</b>
<b>UIL</b>	<b>United Irish League</b>
<b>WSPU</b>	<b>Women's Social and Political Union</b>
<b>WWI</b>	<b>First World War</b>

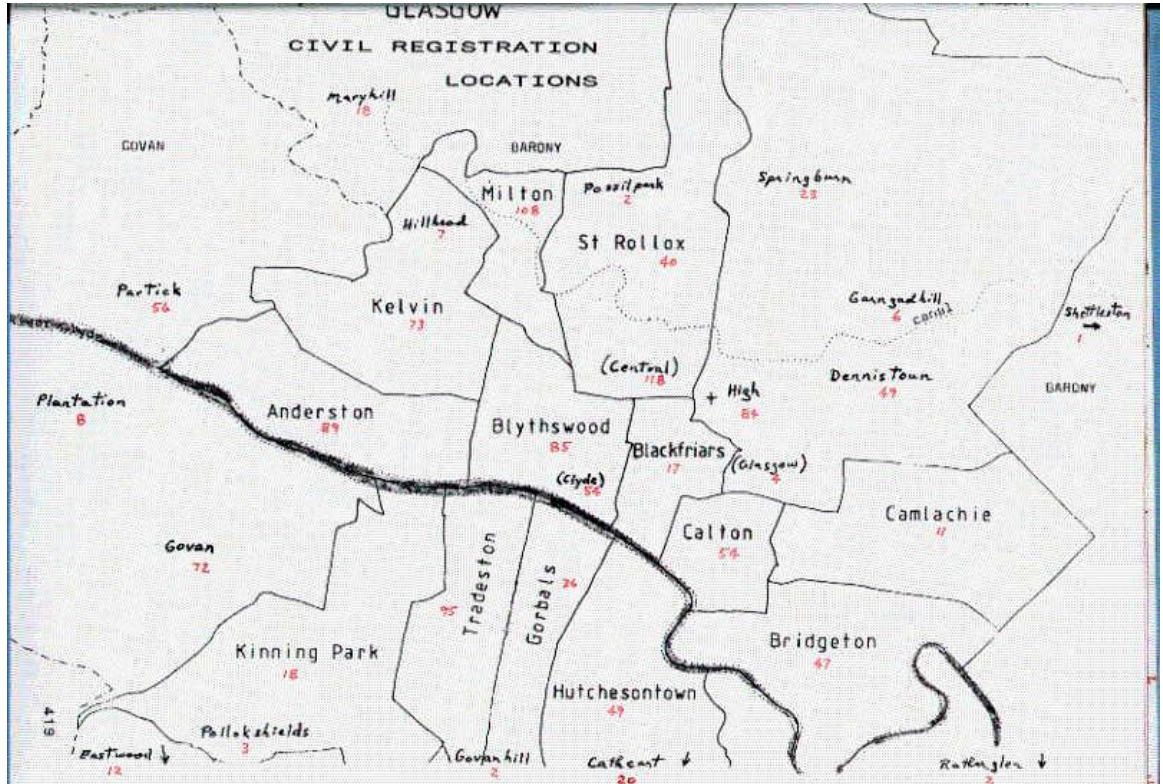


Figure 1: Map of the Districts of Glasgow (<http://web.ncf.ca/cv297/glasdists.jpg>)

## Introduction

In 2015 Scotland's largest city marked 100 years since rent strikes occurred during the First World War (WWI) when Glasgow was a major centre of British engineering, munitions and shipbuilding industries. A Centenary is an opportune time to re-examine what caused the strikes, remember the principal protagonists, or introduce new or neglected people and events. This thesis will argue that the Centennial events failed to recognise the essential and extensive work of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) to coordinate the many groups representing labour and to provide a political voice and a support structure for the Rent strikes. Secondly, the key political and social leadership of John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan in the strikes and in the longer struggle for decent and affordable working-class housing was ignored, leadership that enabled structures through which others acted. Thirdly, it will address the neglected issue of religious bigotry during the Rent strikes.

The first Chapter recounts the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strike using contemporary newspapers. It describes the selection of the three principal subjects for this thesis, and sets the stage for the first two with an introduction to the development and activities of the ILP in Glasgow, the politicisation of housing, and the personal and political histories of Wheatley and Dollan until 1915. Finally, it situates why an examination of prejudice is relevant to the strikes. Chapter two addresses Glasgow's history of poor housing, its impact on health, and how this was affected by industrialisation, immigration, wages, rental costs, and Scottish tenancy and tax laws. The ILP collaborations with labour and women's organisations are demonstrated, as are the actions of Wheatley and Dollan on Glasgow City council during 1915. The third Chapter describes housing and politics in Glasgow from 1916 to 1922. Wheatley, in Parliament from 1922 until his death in 1930 and Dollan on City Council until the 1940s, continued the struggle for working-class housing. Chapter four summarises the extent and duration of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish discrimination in the West of Scotland, and examines the evidence of its presence or absence during the 1915 Rent Strike. Various interpretations of Socialism are recognised, specifically focusing on Wheatley's reconciliation of Socialism with Catholicism, not only personally but towards his goal of moving Irish-Catholic working-class support from the Liberals to Labour. In the final Chapter the three themes are collated, with comment on criticisms of Dollan found in various sources examined during this study.

## Chapter 1

### Glasgow Rent Strikes of 1915 and their Centenary

WWI brought many workers into the shipbuilding and engineering works in Glasgow and the outlying Burghs of Clydebank, Dalmuir, Greenock and Port Glasgow, which all lacked adequate housing. The war-effort demanded more workers to increase industrial production and to satisfy the huge demand for munitions. Working-class families lacked affordable rental housing in Glasgow since 1911 as pre-war construction fell behind demand and rents increased, exacerbated by more workers and even less house-building as the war diverted resources.<sup>1</sup> Landlord-tenant conflict had been high before the war when Glasgow evicted many more tenants for rent arrears or non-payment than other similarly sized cities.<sup>2</sup> But the tension heightened when some landlords tried to evict tenants having difficulty in paying their rents and coping with wartime cost-of-living increases. *Forward*, the ILP weekly newspaper, reported in August, 1914 on the housing shortage and the pressures to force soldiers' families to pay increased rents or face eviction.<sup>3</sup> In January the house-owners' Association proposed 5-10% increases in already high rents.<sup>4</sup> The Glasgow Trades Council (GTC), January 1915, unanimously called on the Government to stop uncontrolled price increases of the "necessities of life", as increased rent, food and coal costs added to the working-class burden.<sup>5</sup> At its first meeting of 1915, Glasgow City Council received letters from the ILP (Glasgow Federation) and its' Dennistoun Branch, asking that it request the Government to prohibit further increase in house rents.<sup>6</sup>

Against this background of tenant discontent the Clydebank Trades and Labour Council in February, 1915, sought GTC support for a demonstration in Clydebank in April to highlight the Burgh's housing difficulties, protest against

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Melling, *Rent Strikes. People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1983), 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> David Englander, *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 208; Ian S. Wood, *John Wheatley* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 36; *Glasgow Herald*, Sept. 11, 1940, Microfilm, Mitchell Library, Glasgow, (MMLG).

<sup>3</sup> *Forward*, Aug. 29, 1914, MMLG.

<sup>4</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Jan. 22, 1914, MMLG.

<sup>5</sup> Glasgow Trades Council Minutes, Jan. to Dec. 1915 (GTC), Jan. 13, 1915. Handwritten Minutes held on microfilm, Special Collections and Archives, Glasgow Caledonia University, Glasgow, (GCU).

<sup>6</sup> Glasgow Corporation Minutes (GCM), 1915, Jan. 21, C1 3.52, 587-588. Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Archives.

increased rents, and demand the establishment of Fair Rents Courts.<sup>7</sup> In February, the Glasgow Women's Housing Association (GWA) organised the first of many meetings to protest the rent increases. To this point all protests employed the legal approaches of meetings, representations and petitions to City Council and to Parliament.<sup>8</sup> The *Glasgow Herald*, the daily newspaper for business, finance, and more affluent citizens, scarcely mentioned the housing situation until the campaign intensified during the spring and summer. A right-wing weekly magazine, *The Bailie*, in February 1915 wrote that landlords had every right to increase rents and tenants had nothing to protest. In March it depicted the landlords as victims of Socialist extremists.<sup>9</sup> Although purportedly topical, humorous and satirical, it attacked and satirised Labour politicians and the working class, not employers and property-owners, and in April it mocked the housing shortage.<sup>10</sup>

Vigorous opposition to the rent increases emerged in Govan in April and May. The Burgh amalgamated with Glasgow in 1912 and experienced several rent increases despite amalgamation assurances of several years of immunity. Pre-war housing concerns produced a Govan Tenants Defence Association. The April and May, 1915, rent increases affected 264 tenement houses near Govan's two major shipyards, Stephens and Fairfields, and the Tenants' Association mobilised to resist them. Thereafter, Glasgow's community newspapers extensively covered housing issues. The weekly *Govan Press* reported housing and other issues on the south side of the river Clyde. In March it reported the petition to Glasgow Council asking Parliament to introduce fair rent or adjustment courts, and that Councillor Ward stated that £100,000, about 5%, had been added to rents in the past month.<sup>11</sup> Councillor Dollan, representing Govan Central, published a letter about the eviction of a soldier's wife who refused to pay her rent one month in advance as the War Office did not pay her in advance.<sup>12</sup> Her husband, Driver H. Johnstone, wrote from France that his wife and one year old baby had been thrown on the street and he was helpless, "I am only a soldier".<sup>13</sup> This South Govan Rent Strike, which spread in June,

---

<sup>7</sup> GTC Minutes, Feb. 15, 1915, (GCU).

<sup>8</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> *The Bailie*, Feb. 3 and March 10, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* April 14, 1915.

<sup>11</sup> *Govan Press*, March 5, 1915, MMLG. This newspaper served Govan, Kinning Park, Plantation, Ibrox, Bellahouston, Dumbreck, South Govan and Craigton. It regularly had 1-2 columns of news from the local Masonic Lodges.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* May 7, 1915.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* May 21, 1915.

was publicised in the *Govan Press* because it was local: eventually 260 of the 264 tenants refused to pay and pledged united resistance.<sup>14</sup> Councillor Dollan's subsequent proposal to Council to regulate the price and distribution of coal was reported, as was Sheriff-substitute Mackenzie's dismissal of two house-eviction cases.<sup>15</sup> Rent strikes spread to the district of Ibrox, meetings were held in Elizabeth Street, and large cards were placed in the "fighters" windows stating "Rent Strike against Increase. We are not removing".<sup>16</sup> The Ibrox strikes spread quickly, exceeding those in Govan. Publicising hardship cases unified the working class and isolated the landlords' Factors as greedy, heartless and unpatriotic. The *Daily Record and News* reported the South Govan strikes and that the two test cases were dismissed in the Small Debt Court, with expenses awarded to the defendants. Its large circulation increased the impact within and beyond Glasgow, highlighting hard cases such as the eviction of a soldier's wife and their nine children.<sup>17</sup>

The weekly *Partick Gazette* served Partick, Whiteinch and Scotstoun, on the north-west side of the Clyde. It reported evictions of soldiers' families, and injustices publicised by local councillors. Councillor Izett represented Partick West, lived there and attended many local functions. He told the Council of a soldier's wife, hounded weekly by the Factor for the rent, who had not received her War Office allowance for eight weeks, and he presented examples of women ordered to leave their houses in 24 hours. He named Councillor Patterson, who disagreed with his statement, as a member of the house-owners Association and that he saw five Partick landlords in the Council Chamber.<sup>18</sup> The impact of individual cases was illustrated by the Wilson family in Partick. John Wilson was a soldier, the army family allowance was delayed and Mrs. Wilson and her six children were evicted. The allowance arrived on the Saturday after her home was emptied.<sup>19</sup> In September the *Partick Gazette* reported that the rent strike involved more than ten local streets and over 100 tenants of Daniel Nicholson, a Partick Factor. Another weekly, the *Partick and Maryhill Press*, served Partick and the more northerly area of Maryhill. It was the only paper that noted that most Partick workers did not enjoy the larger wages of shipyard

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* June 4, 1915.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Aug. 13 and 20, 1915 reported the coal distribution proposals; Aug. 27, reported the Court cases.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Sept. 10, 17, 24, 1915.

<sup>17</sup> *Daily Record and News*, Aug. 27, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>18</sup> *Partick Gazette*, Jan. 30, and March 13, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* March 20, 1915.

workers.<sup>20</sup> It alone noted that Glasgow's housing famine was not unique and reported 250 applicants for a room and kitchen in Newcastle.<sup>21</sup>

Resistance to rent increases spread in the city's industrial areas in the north-east, with accommodation shortages around the Beardmore Forge in Parkhead and the railway locomotive works in Springburn. The McHugh family incident in Shettleston helped to unite Glasgow's working class against the landlords. Michael McHugh, a miner who volunteered early in the war, was seriously wounded in spring 1915 and was hospitalised in France. One son was on sick-leave from the army, another was being trained for the trenches, and at home Mrs. McHugh had five children, two of whom were seriously ill. Her rent was increased at the end of April and her arrears were less than £1. Still the Factor took her to court. Despite her circumstances and the miners' trade union offer to pay the arrears, the Sheriff ordered her evicted in 48 hours. A large and indignant crowd gathered outside her home to prevent the eviction order being delivered. After the initial meeting 500 women volunteered at the Shettleston ILP offices to protect her house with pickets at all times, while others marched to the Factor's house where some damage was reported.<sup>22</sup> To prevent a riot the Glasgow police advised the Sheriff's Officers not to enforce the Warrant.

More rent strikes were reported in June due to shorter lets which allowed rent increases with each new let.<sup>23</sup> The rent agitation spread throughout the summer. By late September strikes were underway in Partick, Cathcart, Ibrox, Bellahouston, Dennistoun, Parkhead, Dalmarnock, Possilpark and Springburn.<sup>24</sup> *Forward* reported that at least 5,000 families were refusing to pay the higher rents.<sup>25</sup> Employers and officials paid more attention to the spreading rent strikes as munitions workers' homes in Parkhead and shipyard workers in Govan and Partick became affected, and the possibility of Government intervention arose.<sup>26</sup> In August there was a rents protest demonstration in Govan. Six shipyard protest meetings were held outside the workers entry and exit gates, aimed for more worker involvement since most confrontations with Factors and eviction notice

---

<sup>20</sup> *Partick and Maryhill Press*, Oct. 31, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 29, 1915.

<sup>22</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 14, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>23</sup> *Forward*, June 26, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>24</sup> *Govan Press*, Sept. 10, 17, 24, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>25</sup> *Forward*, Oct. 2, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>26</sup> *Bulletin and Scots Pictorial*, Sept. 29, 1915, MMLG.

presentations occurred while the men were at work.<sup>27</sup> In September in the Trades Hall GWA office-bearers addressed many women and cards were distributed to be placed in the windows of rent strike houses.<sup>28</sup> When one Factor's agent was sent to return pre-war level payments which the women had mailed to his office, he was bombarded with peasemeal and flour and was "chased from one of the streets by a number of women who upbraided him vociferously".<sup>29</sup>

On October 7, the first large demonstration to the City Chambers was organised. Applauded by thousands along Dumbarton Road, 200 women marched from Maxwell Street in Partick to join rent strikers from throughout Glasgow in St. Enoch Square.<sup>30</sup> More than 1000 women gathered and, with the wives and dependents of soldiers and sailors leading, processed to George Square where a deputation would be received in the City Chambers.<sup>31</sup> The newspapers described a party of boys and girls from Dennistoun carrying banners stating, "While my father is a prisoner in Germany the landlord is attacking our home". The crowd also carried placards, "Our sons are fighting the Prussians we are fighting the Prussians in Partick".<sup>32</sup> The deputation told City Council that although house repair costs had increased, a landlord justification for rent increases, no repairs had been done since the war started, and increased living costs had swallowed up any wage increases.<sup>33</sup> Their case was presented in moderate language by William Reid, a shop steward in the Parkhead Works, but he also suggested that industrial action would be considered if wholesale evictions continued.<sup>34</sup> Newspaper photographs conveyed the size of the protest and the various banners. A popular photograph showed that most women and children were dressed in their best clothes, and as members of the *respectable* working class were determined to impress the public by their smart appearance and orderly progress.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> *Forward*, Aug. 28, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>28</sup> *Partick Gazette*, Sept. 18, 25, 1915, MMLG

<sup>29</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Sept. 29, 1915, MMLG. Peasemeal was a valuable and cheap source of protein made from yellow field peas, roasted then ground into flour. It was commonplace in Scotland but its association with poverty caused it to die out. It has enjoyed a revival since the 1970s due to interest in local and traditional foods.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 9, 1915.

<sup>31</sup> *Daily Record and News*, Sept. 30 and Oct. 7, 1915

<sup>32</sup> *Govan Press*, Oct. 8, 1915, MMLG

<sup>33</sup> *Daily Record and News*, Oct. 8, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>34</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 8, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>35</sup> *Bulletin and Scots Pictorial*, Oct. 8, 1915; *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 8, 1915, MMLG.



The Secretary for Scotland, T. McKinnon Wood, visited Glasgow on October 11, 1915 to enquire into the unrest and to meet the Lord Advocate, Robert Munro MP, and the Chairman and Secretary of the Glasgow Labour Party Housing Committee (GLPHC).<sup>36</sup> On October 12, Councillor Rosslyn Mitchell, a lawyer, defended nine Partick rent strikers in the Small Debts Court. The defence focused on one munitions worker who if evicted would be unable to take time off work and would not get a Clearance Certificate from his employer. The Sheriff adjourned the case against the six munitions workers, but granted ejection warrants against three tenants, that included Andrew Hood, a leader of the Partick strike. The warrant could not be served on Hood as 2000 people from Partick and Govan gathered outside his Thornwood Drive home to oppose any eviction.<sup>37</sup> On October 13, Lloyd George stated in Parliament that there would be an enquiry into the rent increases complaints in Glasgow. A *Glasgow Herald* editorial “*The Rent Problem*”, called for a public enquiry to get a landlord and tenant working arrangement in the interests of “both classes”. It tried to be even-handed but strongly defended the property-owners’ right to recoup their increased costs from tenants as the Government-issued 4½% War Loan had increased bond interest.<sup>38</sup> The Secretary for Scotland announced, October 18, that Lord Hunter and Professor Scott would conduct an official Government enquiry into the “alleged” rent increases.<sup>39</sup>

The Factors’ efforts increased during October and November to push for rent increases and for legal eviction warrants before Government action on house rents. The *Daily Record and News* suggested that they wanted to focus the enquiry Commission on these most recent increases hoping it might ignore the earlier increases.<sup>40</sup> The wives and families of armed forces personnel were still the most vulnerable with at least six cases where they received demands for increased rents.<sup>41</sup> The strikes spread in Finnieston, Maryhill, Kinning Park, Battlefield and Whiteinch.<sup>42</sup> Local women with bells and flour bombs prevented eviction by the Sheriff’s officers. One woman sat in the tenement close with a bell while the rest continued their housework. On sighting the authorities she would ring her bell, work stopped and

---

<sup>36</sup> *Forward*, Oct. 16, 1915, MMLG

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 18, 1915

<sup>38</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 14, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 19, 1915.

<sup>40</sup> *Daily Record and News*, Oct. 23, 2015, MMLG

<sup>41</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 22, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 21, 1915.

the women arrived in force at the alarm site, armed with flour bombs and other missiles to repel the Sheriff's officers. The *Glasgow Herald* recognised the importance of locking out the house-owners rather than being locked out by them.<sup>43</sup> Eviction of an ill widow in Govan was prevented when the Sheriff's Officers were attacked with peasemeal, flour and whiting by a large crowd of women. One woman was arrested but later freed and the arrest Warrant was not enforced.<sup>44</sup> When a woman arrived to occupy a house from which a police constable had been evicted, the hand bell summoned a large crowd of women to the close entrance. The newcomer sought police protection and one of the policemen sent was the earlier evicted constable. As the crowd increased the new tenant saw the futility of proceeding and, followed by many women and children, returned to a friend's house nearby escorted by the constables.<sup>45</sup> By the end of October *Forward* estimated that there were 10,000 rent strikers. Its report of the failed Thornwood Drive evictions stated that shipyard workers would not return to work on Monday if more evictions occurred. *Forward* reported that 1,500 Rutherglen tenants had pledged to pay no rent increase, that there was rent agitation in Dundee, another Scottish industrial city, where carters refused to remove evicted tenants' furniture, and that two of five Glasgow Labour Councillors among the rent strikers were due to be evicted on November 28.<sup>46</sup>

The growing strike situation in Whiteinch and Scotstoun required a separate tenants' strike committee and the number of city districts involved increased.<sup>47</sup> Attitudes hardened, the strikes continued during and after the Hunter and Scott enquiry in late October, and strikers now demanded a return to pre-war rents rather than Fair Rents Tribunals.<sup>48</sup> Bands and pipers were engaged for a demonstration march, November 13, from Whiteinch Public Hall to Thornwood Hill to protest the Court summons served by Nicholson against 18 Partick tenants, 15 of whom were shipyard or munitions workers.<sup>49</sup> *Forward* claimed that committees were being formed in the shipyards and workshops to organise workers against increased rents, and that in mid-November, Glasgow had 25,000 striking tenants, and some 20,000

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 23, 1915.

<sup>44</sup> *Partick Gazette*, Oct. 23 and Oct. 30, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>45</sup> *Partick and Maryhill Press*, Nov. 15, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>46</sup> *Forward*, Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 2015, MMLG.

<sup>47</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 21, 23, 1915, MMLG

<sup>48</sup> *Forward*, Oct. 23, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>49</sup> *Partick Gazette*, Nov. 13, 1915, MMLG.

men in four Clyde shipyards were prepared to strike if the government did not make war-time rent increases illegal.<sup>50</sup> Nicholson's decision to seek eviction and prosecution in the Small Debts Court so that the Sheriff might treat the owed rent as a debt that could be deducted from the men's wages, brought matters to a head.<sup>51</sup> A large crowd accompanied the strikers to the Small Debts Court on November 17 and made it a site of working-class protest. The *Glasgow Herald* reported that Lloyd George on November 16 requested Nicholson's solicitor to drop or postpone the cases while Parliament enacted the proposed legislation. The *Glasgow Herald* reported the defendants' insistence to not postpone the cases, and to use one individual's defence as the test case for the 15 workers.<sup>52</sup> Nicholson refused and on November 17 there was a large procession into the city. The crowd that gathered outside the Court included shipyard and engineering workers who were on strike that day to support the defendants. Before the cases were heard workers representatives made it clear to Sheriff Lee that industrial strife was likely if the cases were not dropped. The prosecution reluctantly dropped the cases.<sup>53</sup> The size of the demonstration, the national publicity given to 20,000 rent strikers, the threat of industrial unrest, and rents unrest in other industrial cities in Britain, all contributed to this victory and forced the Government assurance on November 18 that it would quickly introduce a Rent Restrictions Act.<sup>54</sup> Pressure was continued to ensure that the legislation would restore pre-war rents.<sup>55</sup> Parliament received the legislation on November 25, which did not prevent ejectments being sought in Glasgow's Sheriff Court against Councillors Smith and Kerr for refusal to pay a rent increase. The Bill was at Second Reading so the Court continued the cases for another two weeks, by which time the legislation was passed.<sup>56</sup> All local newspapers covered these events until the legislation was passed shortly before Christmas 1915. The *Partick Gazette* reported that Mrs. Ferguson and the Partick members of the GWhA were "at home" on the previous Wednesday afternoon and that the flour and other commodities gathered to resist the authorities were used to prepare a large dumpling and home-baked scones.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> *Forward*, Nov. 13 and 20, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>51</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 91-94.

<sup>52</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Nov. 18, 1915, MMLG

<sup>53</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 93-94.

<sup>54</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Nov. 19, 1915.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Nov. 25, 1915; *Forward*, Nov. 27, 1915.

<sup>56</sup> *Daily Record and News*, Dec. 4, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>57</sup> *Partick Gazette*, Dec. 25, 1915, MMLG.

## How 1915 Events were remembered and celebrated in 2014-2015

On November 9, 2015 the House of Commons received a motion that recognised the Glasgow Rent Strike Centenary, Mary Barbour as a leading organiser, and her subsequent contributions as a Glasgow Councillor and one of its first women magistrates. The motion commended the *Remember Mary Barbour Association* and its fundraising efforts for a commemorative statue.<sup>58</sup> No other name was associated with the Rent Strikes. The BBC News February 25, 2014, noted the upcoming centenary and named only Mary Barbour.<sup>59</sup> An internet search “Centenary of the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strikes” revealed that two groups dominated any interest and activity marking the centenary. The first was interested in women’s history, particularly women’s roles and Mary Barbour’s leadership. The second comprised left-wing and anarchist groups focused on labour and working-class struggles. No other centennial related events were noted.

The *Remember Mary Barbour Campaign* aimed to commemorate her life and work with a statue in Govan. The only civic reception in Glasgow City Chambers marking the centenary was on March 8, 2015, International Women’s Day, as part of that fund-raising effort.<sup>60</sup> The *Daily Record* reported £25,000 donated towards the total cost of £85,000. *The Scotsman* newspaper featured historian Catriona Burness holding a portrait of Barbour.<sup>61</sup> The accompanying article, *Remembering the Strike*, named Barbour leading the revolt with her *Army*, as Willie Gallacher called it. It stated that while Gallacher and John MacLean are still household names, Barbour and other rent strike leaders are now relatively obscure. It mentioned John Wheatley leading several hundred angry neighbours to protect a soldier’s wife from eviction, but no additional contributions by him or other individuals or organisations.

A former Glasgow MP, Maria Fyfe, chair of the *Remember Mary Barbour Association*, spoke in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, March 28, 2015, about the political impact of the women rent strikers. The Mary Barbour campaign organised an open meeting, funded by the Economic History Society, at Glasgow Women’s Library in Bridgeton, November 27, 2015, to discuss *Women’s role in housing disputes*

---

<sup>58</sup> [www.parliament.uk/edm/2015-16/684](http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2015-16/684)

<sup>59</sup> [www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-26244695](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-26244695)

<sup>60</sup> [www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/campaign-erect-statue-glasgow-rent-52922118](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/campaign-erect-statue-glasgow-rent-52922118)

<sup>61</sup> [www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/insight-remembers-the-glasgow-rent-strikes.1-3712451](http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/insight-remembers-the-glasgow-rent-strikes.1-3712451)

*in Scotland c 1915 to the present.*<sup>62</sup> The *Women's History Scotland* organisation promotes study and research in women's and gender history. It is an academic network, open to interested individuals, promotes publications, holds an annual meeting and post-graduate workshops, and offers an essay prize. On December 24, 2015 it stated that those interested in women's history in Scotland know about Mary Barbour, Helen Crawford and Agnes Dollan, but the general public today know little of them.<sup>63</sup> The journal *Scottish Labour History* published one paper about Mary Barbour in 2015.<sup>64</sup> A play, *Mrs. Barbour's Daughters*, was presented in Glasgow, November 4-7, 2015.<sup>65</sup> Press coverage focused on the role of Mrs. Barbour's Army and the centenary stimulated a desire for greater recognition of the essential role of working-class housewives and the politically active women who inspired their tenement-based resistance to rent increases and to evictions.

*The Glasgow Rent Strike: One Hundred Years On* was an exhibition in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, November 2-28, 2015, organised by the Spirit of Revolt Archive. The archive is in the library and collects material from Glasgow's radical history "from below", including libertarian, socialist and anarchist magazines and leaflets.<sup>66</sup> This exhibition focused on the rent strike as a weapon of protest and emphasised the importance of the striking housewives, MacLean and Gallacher. The documentary, *Red Skirts on Clydeside* (43 min., Sheffield Film Co-operatives, 1984), was regularly screened. It highlighted the women's role and through interviews with and reminiscences from surviving women presented their 1915 contribution in revolutionary terms.<sup>67</sup> An earlier screening of this film was accompanied by a documentary, *You Play your Part* (24 min., 2011), a women's history project in which Govan women reflected on their lives and roles by the Clyde.<sup>68</sup> On November 17, a march to the City Chambers marked the 1915 march to George Square and affirmed the rent strike as a worldwide tool of struggle.

The website, *Clydeside 1915*, aimed to showcase and correct information and events about the centenary. It presented the strikes as a victory for class unity, an

---

<sup>62</sup> <https://remembermarybarbour.wordpress.com/mary-barbour-rent-strike-1915/>

<sup>63</sup> [womenshistoryscotland.org/2015/12/24/centenary-of-glasgow-womens-rent-strikes/](http://womenshistoryscotland.org/2015/12/24/centenary-of-glasgow-womens-rent-strikes/)

<sup>64</sup> C. Burness, "Remember Mary Barbour," *Scottish Labour History* 50 (2015): 81-96.

<sup>65</sup> A.J. Taudevin, *Mrs. Barbour's Daughters*. A Glasgow Rent Strikes Centenary Edition, London: Oberon Books, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> <http://spiritofrevolt.info>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/890164>

<sup>68</sup> Both documentaries screened at the Pearce Institute, Govan on Thursday, June 4, 2015.

inspiration to continue resisting capitalism, imperialism and militarism, and it linked to references supporting the context and historical material it discussed.<sup>69</sup> One proposed project by Neil Gray, Glasgow University, and Sarah Glynn, Edinburgh University, was a co-edited book, not yet published, about the rent strikes. On September 22, 2015 they sought chapter proposals and conference participation to explore new historical interpretations of the strikes and their relevance for contemporary housing questions. They requested interdisciplinary work and from beyond the academy.<sup>70</sup> The contemporary *Living Rent Campaign* used the example of 1915 in their struggle for fair and affordable housing and against abuses of power in private rented housing in 2015. For these activists the 1915 events ought to be remembered in the context of continuing housing activism.<sup>71</sup>

The striking housewives were scarcely recognised in pre-1980s studies and their importance to the rent strike outcome must not be underestimated. The centenary stimulated efforts to remember their individual and collective contributions. No new insights about them or their leaders appeared during the centenary celebrations, but the *Remember Mary Barbour Campaign* highlighted their active roles. The centenary's second theme of ongoing class struggle, women's place in that struggle and lessons for current rental challenges, highlighted that decent and affordable housing remains a major social issue. These themes have relevance, but the strikes at their centenary justify a more inclusive and longer-term analysis. The Rent Restrictions Act 1915 restored pre-WWI rents but did not provide working-class Glasgow with decent housing. The Rent Strikes were a working-class challenge to an unjust, class-based rule-of-law in Glasgow, but portraying them only as a popular and victorious 1915 working-class struggle or Mary Barbour as a 20<sup>th</sup>C Boadicea leading her *Army*, ignores years of work by individuals and organisations. The working-class housewives important on-the-spot leadership role was part of a larger process, not simply a spontaneous movement. The pre-war and wartime ILP activities are vitally important.

---

<sup>69</sup> <http://1915rentstrikes.info/class-war-commemoration-first-world-war-counter-centenary>

<sup>70</sup> In addition to the link from the previous footnote, contact information was provided for Neil Gray ([n.gray@research.gla.ac.uk](mailto:n.gray@research.gla.ac.uk)) and Sarah Glynn ([SarahRGlynn@hotmail.com](mailto:SarahRGlynn@hotmail.com)).

<sup>71</sup> [www.livingrent.org/2015/03/tenants-wont-go-back-a-hundred-years/](http://www.livingrent.org/2015/03/tenants-wont-go-back-a-hundred-years/)

## **Important people, organisations and issues when the 1915 Rent Strikes are viewed in the larger context of inadequate housing**

What was done, and by whom, to make housing a key political issue in 1915 and in post-war elections, and the subsequent challenges to try to improve housing, are key questions. It will be argued that John Wheatley and Patrick Dollan, former coal miners, facilitated and encouraged the 1915 Glasgow Rent Strikes, recognised the outcome as one small step, and throughout their public lives worked for better housing. How they worked with and strengthened community groups, raised the working-class political voice, and built the structure that enabled the rent strikers to get rents restored to 1914 levels will be examined. Time has obscured their roles, but in the pantheon of socialist *Red Clydesiders*, including John MacLean, James Maxton, William Gallacher, David Kirkwood, and Emmanuel Shinwell, none had better or even equal national or local government records than Wheatley and Dollan. Their working-class origins and long-term commitment will be shown through their personal histories, social and political convictions, and careers. Their roles in building-up the ILP, its community relationships and organisation all contributed strongly to the network that strengthened the rent strikers' activities.

From the 1890s the ILP was “the thread of continuity” in labour’s electoral campaign, holding together many fragments of working-class organisation.<sup>72</sup> During and shortly after WWI the ILP was more important in representing Glasgow’s political left than was the Labour party, or other militant or even revolutionary elements.<sup>73</sup> By 1912 Wheatley was the recognised leader of the ILP/Labour group on Glasgow Council. His popularisation and politicisation before WWI of Glasgow’s housing question gave the ILP an immediate interface with working-class women. His housing proposals focused a long-standing ILP housing strategy, popularised it and thereby united the working class in a common cause.<sup>74</sup> It will be argued that the Rent Strike’s success arose from the interconnectedness of many groups involved in housing agitation; labour and women’s organisations, the GTC, housing associations,

---

<sup>72</sup> M.G. Pugh, “Once Proud Burghs: Community and the Politics of Autonomy, Annexation and Assimilation – Govan and Partick, c 1850-1925,” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011), 157. [Gla.ac.uk/2727/1/2011](http://Gla.ac.uk/2727/1/2011).

<sup>73</sup> Joan Smith, “Taking the Leadership of the Labour Movement: the ILP in Glasgow, 1906-14,” in *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932*, edited by Alan McKinlay and R. J. Morris (Manchester University Press, 1991), 56-82.

<sup>74</sup> John Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988), 37-39.

Co-operative Societies, public meetings, shop stewards and workers in engineering and munitions factories. The ILP, having politicised housing in its platform, then located itself within the many related civic activities. The Rent Restrictions Act, outcome of the 1915 events, did not oblige the Government to address Glasgow's underlying housing shortage, so rents agitation continued after the WWI. Wheatley's leadership in Glasgow continued after the rent strikes, further exercised after 1923 in the House of Commons and in significant housing legislation as Health Minister in the 1924 minority Labour Government. Indeed, his management of the housing portfolio was often called the only unquestioned success of that government.<sup>75</sup>

Patrick Dollan was a journalist with *Forward*, the ILP newspaper, and an ILP Councillor for Govan on Glasgow City Council from 1913. He publicised renters' grievances, participated in rent strikes meetings, and in *Forward* portrayed the Factors as heartless and unpatriotic. The Glasgow ILP strength came from an efficient local ward organisation, with its focus on local democracy, and its ability to combine and politicise struggles of importance to working-class people.<sup>76</sup> Dollan helped to organise the local ILP structure. After WWI his efforts contributed to the 1922 election of ten ILP MPs from Glasgow, and subsequently to feeding them material for questions in the House of Commons. His priorities were local housing, health and education and he refused to stand for parliament.<sup>77</sup> He continued to work for an absolute Labour majority on the City Council. After this was achieved he became Glasgow's Lord Provost in 1938.

Another issue to explore in this thesis is whether religious bigotry played any role during the 1915 rent strikes. Of Scottish labour leaders it has been noted that "there still exist large discontinuities in our knowledge in regard to the role of religion in shaping political allegiances".<sup>78</sup> The Catholic and Irish backgrounds of Wheatley and Dollan shaped their political and social allegiances in Presbyterian Scotland. Late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup>C Socialism provoked debate and controversy in British society, within political parties, and in Catholic and Protestant churches. Glasgow acquired a sizeable Catholic population, predominantly Irish, partly due to the 19<sup>th</sup>C industrial

---

<sup>75</sup> John Butt, "Working Class Housing in Glasgow 1900-39," in *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, edited by Iain MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald Ltd., 1978), 161.

<sup>76</sup> Joan Smith, "Labour Tradition - Glasgow and Liverpool," *History Workshop Journal* 17 (1984): 36.

<sup>77</sup> Patrick Dollan, "Autobiography, 1952", 2-3. The Mitchell Library, Glasgow, number 891307, W.D. Kerr Box, unpublished typescript manuscript.

<sup>78</sup> William Knox, Ed. *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-39. A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1984), 15.



revolution's cheap labour demands, but principally in the five years following the 1845 potato blight and famine in Ireland during which about 200,000 Irish moved to Britain, mostly through Liverpool, London and Glasgow.<sup>79</sup> Catholic support for Wheatley and Dollan ranged from strong to bitterly critical, and some Catholics called them empirical Marxists. Wheatley's Catholicism developed in difficult social and economic circumstances that perhaps strengthened his convictions. Despite bitter disputes with some priests and others about Socialism, his faith and adherence apparently never weakened.<sup>80</sup> Dollan argued himself out of his Catholic upbringing and organised religion, certainly by 1912 when he married Agnes Moir, an ILP member from "a fiercely anti-Catholic Orange family". In the 1950s he reconciled with the Catholic Church and Agnes converted to Catholicism.<sup>81</sup> It will be argued that 1915 Glasgow was persistently and strongly anti-Catholic and anti-Irish, Catholic and Irish being viewed as synonymous by the general population.<sup>82</sup> Sectarianism, described as being about attitudes and prejudices that people meet daily "on the streets, in the pubs, behind the hand", and systematic discrimination with regard to employment and education, were rife.<sup>83</sup> Well into the 20<sup>th</sup>C employment notices in newspapers or on walls of businesses might state "No Irish need apply".<sup>84</sup> Examining the opinions and records of various churches, labour and political organisations, local governments and newspaper reports, may make clearer if bigotry was present or even temporarily overcome during the Rent Strikes. This fundamental question in a city in which anti-Irish and anti-Catholic discrimination was embedded does not appear to have been addressed substantively. Neither of Wheatley's biographies nor a Ph.D. thesis about him in 1973, while giving examples of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bigotry in the West of Scotland, addressed this in relation to the rent strikes.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, *The Clydesiders* by Middlemas, Howell's study of Wheatley, and Gallagher's

---

<sup>79</sup> Cecil Woodham Smith, *The Great Hunger. Ireland 1845-9* (London: Four Square, 1964) 32-33; C. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity* (Boulder: Roberts Rhineheart, 1955), 298-305.

<sup>80</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel Carrigan, "Patrick Dollan and the Labour Movement in Glasgow", M.Phil. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014, 28-29. Unique I.D. glathesis: 2014-5640; Dollan, *Autobiography*, 178;

<sup>82</sup> Irene Maver, "The Catholic Community," In *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, Eds. T.M. Devine and R.J. Findley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 272.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Rosie and David McCrone, "The Past is History: Catholics in Modern Scotland," In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, Ed. T.M. Devine (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000), 200.

<sup>84</sup> T. Gallagher, *Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace. Religious Tension in Modern Scotland* ( Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987 ), 28.

<sup>85</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*; John Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988); Samuel Cooper, Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, "John Wheatley: a Study in Labour History", 1973.

work on religious tension in modern Scotland, do not address sectarianism in 1915.<sup>86</sup> Wheatley left no papers to indicate if he experienced bigotry in 1915. Dollan did not mention the Rent strikes in his unpublished autobiography – itself a strange and unexplained omission. An M.Phil thesis about Dollan said nothing about religious tensions in the rent strikes.<sup>87</sup> A digital history of *Red Clydeside*, a substantial source of material and references about the labour movement in Glasgow, contains no documents that refer to religious discrimination.<sup>88</sup> Participants in the events, like Shinwell, McShane and Gallacher, wrote about these events and indicated their awareness of prejudice based on religious difference, but are silent about its presence during the rent agitations.<sup>89</sup> Sean Damer claimed that the Rent Strike briefly transcended three areas which typically split the working class, namely skill, sex and religion. He presented no evidence that religious prejudice was “briefly” transcended.<sup>90</sup> Joseph Melling proposed that rent protests in Ibrox and Parkhead, the locations of Rangers and Celtic football clubs respectively, indicated erosion of sectarian divisions.<sup>91</sup> Despite large numbers of Catholics in some districts and Protestants in others, Glasgow had no ghetto areas dominated by adherents of any particular religion, including the Parkhead and Govan/Ibrox areas hosting its two major football teams. Both areas had the major manufacturing industries, faced similar housing shortages for skilled workers and were responding in similar fashion to rent increases. Very few Catholics could enter the better-paid skilled occupations found in the Parkhead Forge or in the shipyards and engineering works in Govan and Partick. The poorer, unskilled working-class were mainly Catholic, unable to compete for the higher-rent housing that skilled, predominantly Presbyterian, artisans might be able to afford.<sup>92</sup> Rent strikes by skilled Presbyterian workers in Parkhead and Ibrox, probably Rangers supporters, do not indicate that religious differences were

---

<sup>86</sup> Robert Keith Middlemas, *The Clydesiders. A Left Wing Struggle for Parliamentary Power* (London: Hutchinson, 1965); David Howell, *A Lost Left. Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), John Wheatley, 227-280; Gallagher, *Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace*.

<sup>87</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 1952; Daniel Carrigan, “Patrick Dollan and the Labour Movement in Glasgow,” M.Phil. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014, Unique I.D. glathesis: 2014-5640.

<sup>88</sup> Red Clydeside. A Digital History of the Labour Movement in Glasgow 1910-1932. Alan Dawson, Centre for Digital Library Research, University of Strathclyde. (<http://gdl.cdrl.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/>).

<sup>89</sup> E. Shinwell, *The Labour story* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1963); Harry McShane and Joan Smith, *Harry McShane. No Mean Fighter* (London: Pluto Press, 1978); W. Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936).

<sup>90</sup> Sean Damer, “State, Class and Housing: Glasgow 1885-1919,” in *Housing, Social Policy and the State*, Ed. Joseph Melling (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 75.

<sup>91</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 70.

<sup>92</sup> Smith, *Labour Tradition*, 48.

transcended. Did publications about 1915 omit religion because their extensive research found nothing significant, had restricted research failed to reveal relevant information, or was it simply not researched at all?

### **Wheatley and Dollan: their personal and political lives until 1915.**

John Wheatley was born in 1869 in Bonmahon, County Waterford, Ireland the year his family left to work in Scotland. His father was a miner in the North Lanarkshire coalfield.<sup>93</sup> Wheatley never forgot their single-room miner's cottage in Braehead near Baillieston, which was without plumbing and requiring that water be carried 100 yards from the nearest pump, and the lavatory a dry closet some fifty yards from the house. This cramped, poverty-stricken space housed his parents, seven children and often two lodgers. They were active Catholics and John, showing promise at school, was taught and encouraged by a Dutch missionary priest at St. Bridget's parish. At age 12 he began twelve years of working down the mines, while also attending evening education classes in Glasgow at the Athenaeum after the workday which required walking a ten mile return journey.<sup>94</sup> These years shaped his political and social beliefs and his attitude towards unbridled capitalism.

In 1893, at age 24, Wheatley left the mines and although a lifelong alcohol abstainer, worked as a publican, and then with his brother in a grocery shop in Shettleston, an independent Burgh. The shop failed and closed in 1901. He then collected advertising for the *Glasgow Observer*, a newspaper serving Catholics in and around Glasgow.<sup>95</sup> His developing socialism clashed with the paper's proprietors, but his experience there encouraged him to start his own printing and publishing company in 1906. By 1921 the yearly turnover was £71,000. Among its products his firm published newspapers. The best known was the *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 1923-1960, a significant venue for reporting his speeches and political activities until his death, aged 61, in 1930.

Wheatley gained early political experience in the Irish Home Rule movement in the Baillieston branch of the Irish National League (INL). In 1900 the INL merged with the newer United Irish League (UIL) to develop a stronger Home Rule campaign in Ireland, England and Scotland. In Ireland the goal was to redistribute land from a

---

<sup>93</sup> Ian Wood, "Wheatley, John (1869-1930), in William Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, 274-284.

<sup>94</sup> Cooper, "John Wheatley." Thesis (1973), 17-20.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 24-25.

small number of large landowners to the mass of smaller holders, and to transform Irish Parliamentary representation by electing Irish nationalists. The Irish in Scotland focused their political energies on Home Rule for Ireland and worked actively for this through Scotland's more than 90 UIL branches. The UIL encouraged those Irish in Scotland who were eligible to vote to support the Liberals as the only party which might deliver Home Rule. Some Liberal candidates might be lukewarm or even opposed to Home Rule, so UIL support for Liberals was not uncritical. It was breached in Scotland in 1901, well before the UIL executive in 1905 had stated support for Labour candidates who were supporters of Irish Home Rule and who were not running against strongly Home Rule Liberals.<sup>96</sup> Wheatley, UIL Shettleston branch President, 1901-1903, actively fund-raised for the Home Rule cause, and promoted Irish cultural awareness and social activities. The UIL claimed to speak for the Irish electorate in Britain and for defending Catholic interests in Parliament. Support for Liberal candidates solely on their Home Rule credentials could bring the UIL into conflict with other Catholic groups, particularly the clergy and the Catholic Federation, who would organise support against Liberal candidates whose views were detrimental to Catholic education.<sup>97</sup> Wheatley demonstrated that religious differences would not cloud his political goals when he ensured that his Shettleston branch supported the UIL decision to endorse the Labour candidate Robert Smillie, a Protestant of Ulster descent, against anti-Home Rule Tory and Liberal-Imperialist candidates in North-East Lanarkshire in 1901.<sup>98</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup>C the Liberal party was an acceptable ideological home for politically ambitious working-class leaders, many having been brought up to admire Gladstone. Some of the more radical members of Liberal associations adopted them as Liberal or Liberal-supported parliamentary candidates, particularly in mining constituencies. In alliance with trades unions a number of *lib-lab* candidates were elected. The Liberal leaders encouraged this to attract newly-enfranchised individuals in the cities.<sup>99</sup> Keir Hardie, initially a Gladstonian Liberal and working as a trade union organiser in Lanarkshire, did not view the Liberal Party as the forum for advancing working-class issues, possibly influenced by the fact that he, Arthur Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald, had all been rejected as Liberal Candidates. After becoming an MP without Liberal support

---

<sup>96</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 12-14.

<sup>97</sup> [archive.thetablet.co.uk/issues](http://archive.thetablet.co.uk/issues). May 16, 1908, 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 231.

<sup>99</sup> Leon D. Epstein, "British class consciousness and the Labour Party," *Journal of British Studies* 1 (1962): 140.

in the 1888 Mid-Lanark By-election, Hardie helped to found the Scottish Labour Party, which was dissolved one year after the formation of the ILP in 1893 in Bradford. Hardie was the first chairman of the ILP which, while remaining the most active political party for labour in Scotland, quickly affiliated to the Labour Party when it was formed in 1906. The Labour Representation Committee (LRC), the immediate predecessor of the Labour Party, was formed in 1900, and won 29 seats in the 1906 general election. The ILP contributed significantly to the formation of the LRC which had important trade union support. It was now too late for the Liberal Party to represent the working class, and the Labour and Liberal Parties 1906 bargain not to oppose each other's candidates in specified districts simply recognised Labour as an independent party.<sup>100</sup>

How socialism influenced Wheatley and how he reconciled and defended it will be addressed later. No record provided specific details as to when he left the UIL and how he was introduced to the ILP, and when he actually joined is disputed.<sup>101</sup> It seems plausible that his political involvement through the UIL, his 1901 support for the Labour candidate in North-East Lanarkshire, his developing socialism and its compatibility with his Catholic faith, and his personal awareness of the need to improve working-class social conditions, all contributed to his move away from the *lib-lab* alliance towards a party that specifically recognised working-class needs. The ILP, with its Scottish Council and 50 branches was that political party in Scotland. Wheatley's acceptance of the Liberal alliance as necessary for Irish Home Rule had weakened and in the 1906 General Election he was the polling agent for the Labour candidate in North-West Lanarkshire. Shortly after this his letter in the *Glasgow Observer*, 'A Catholic Defence of Socialism', stated that he was a Socialist.<sup>102</sup>

During the 1906 General Election campaign Wheatley was active in the ILP Shettleston Branch, was their unsuccessful Lanark County Council candidate in 1907, and went on to defeat the incumbent Catholic member of the Council by two votes in 1910.<sup>103</sup> On Lanark Council he became expert in housing and working conditions, advocated for the rights and interests of the working class and for greater

---

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 140-141; Gerry Hassan, "The People's Party, Still?," in *The Scottish Labour Party. History, Institutions and Ideas*, edited by Gerry Hassan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>101</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 15-16.

<sup>102</sup> *The Glasgow Observer*, February 24, 1906, MMLG.

<sup>103</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 46.

understanding of social conditions and health.<sup>104</sup> With William Regan, Stephen Pullman, and his brother Patrick, Wheatley founded the Catholic Socialist Society (CSS) in 1906 as an arm of the socialist movement, aimed at Glasgow's Catholic and Irish population. The first meeting supported women's suffrage and the CSS later opposed WWI.<sup>105</sup> Wheatley's first pamphlet, *How the Miners were Robbed* (1907), uncompromisingly rejected exploitative capitalism, followed in 1908 by *Miners, Mines and Misery*, which drew from personal experience and indicted the inhumanity of mining conditions. *The Catholic Working Man* (1909), published under CSS auspices, was one of many factors that swung Irish voters from Liberal to Labour in municipal elections after 1910.<sup>106</sup> Wheatley aimed to increase Labour representation on Glasgow City Council. To advance this by uniting various labour groups, the GTC and the ILP in 1911 jointly formed a committee, the Glasgow Labour Party (GLP), "to control the election policy of the workers of the city".<sup>107</sup> By 1912 this GLP generally controlled the electoral strategy and decisions of the many labour groups. By 1914 it had helped elect 17 City Councillors, including Wheatley as Shettleston's Councillor upon its 1912 incorporation into Glasgow. Wheatley thus became the Council's first Catholic socialist.<sup>108</sup>

From 1846 Glasgow grew by absorbing outlying areas but after the 1870s Parliament rejected such annexation. In 1912 the shipyards building Britain's merchant navy and warships were outside Glasgow, in the independent Burghs of Govan and Partick. Shettleston, inhabited mainly by miners and agricultural workers, was a major coal supplier for Glasgow. Glasgow's boosters desired to retain the title "Second City of the Empire" and its civic authorities argued that the city had deepened the Clyde at great expense, without which there would have been no yards or docks in which the people of Govan and Partick could work, and that the city had extended its tramways system to surrounding burghs as well as supplying them with electricity, gas and water. Expanding the city promised reduced costs for services

---

<sup>104</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 32-33.

<sup>105</sup> Bob Purdie, "Outside the Chapel Door. The Glasgow Catholic Socialist Society 1906-1922," (Thesis submitted for the Ruskin College History Diploma, 1976), 3-4, 22-24. Glasgow Caledonian University Library, special collections. This is the only detailed study that exists of the CSS. The inaugural meeting was in the Albion Halls, Glasgow, in November, 1906.

<sup>106</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 25-26.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes, Glasgow Trades Council, January 1911. Glasgow Caledonian University Archives. All the records of the Minutes, which are handwritten, are on microfilm.

<sup>108</sup> Pugh, "Once Proud Burghs", thesis (2011), 15. This discussed Glasgow's incorporation of Govan and Partick.

and taxes, an integrated industrial plan, and improved services such as libraries and swimming baths. Glasgow's expansion received popular support, and in 1912 Parliament approved annexation of several adjacent areas in addition to Partick, Govan and Shettleston. The expanded boundaries greatly increased Glasgow's working-class population. Facing anti-Socialist resistance from the city's Progressive (*Conservative*) Party, a process was started to prepare a policy platform to consolidate the GLP actions on City Council. Glasgow had developed many municipal services and since 1866 had an Improvement Trust with wide-ranging powers for slum-clearance. By 1912 it had a progressive Public Health department, a Police Department with power to clear overcrowded houses, and municipally it ran water, gas, electricity, tramways, and telephones. The long-standing Liberal majority on Council was reduced by Conservative gains after the Home Rule crisis of 1893 exposed that Glasgow's Protestant Liberal vote was not tied to the orthodox Liberal view of Irish Home Rule. The Liberal majority Council had been relatively sympathetic to proposals and pressure for municipalisation of some services, but significantly never for housing. Suggestions in Britain and abroad that the Glasgow Council was associated with municipal socialism so concerned them that the Lord Provost wrote to *The Times* in 1902, stating that the Council had never considered building working-class houses.<sup>109</sup>

Wheatley was Glasgow's architect of municipal socialism. His evolutionary socialism kept the ILP focus on municipal politics and from 1912 onwards gained him *de facto* leadership of the Labour group on Council and of Glasgow's working class, an alternative leadership to that of John MacLean, despite MacLean's work as a revolutionary propagandist and socialist educator. *Forward*, published since 1906 by the Civic Press, was Glasgow's most widely read Socialist paper. Its editor and proprietor Thomas Johnstone, Wheatley, Dollan as a reporter and assistant editor, and the ILP, employed it to achieve leadership of the developing Glasgow labour movement.<sup>110</sup> Municipalisation took precedence over industrial and land nationalisation and simply extended the earlier actions of the Liberal majority on the City Council. Housing, while central in his thinking and political strategy, was one of many items on which Wheatley worked with the 14 Labour Councillors to craft a unified policy. From February to July 1913 a Labour policy was agreed that would, among others, promote a municipal income tax, establish city laundries to overcome

---

<sup>109</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 35-36. Wood cites *The Times*, Oct. 24, 1902.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, "Labour Tradition," 34-36.

the limited facilities available to many citizens, have the city control coal distribution and make it more affordable, and establish a municipal banking system to free Glasgow from heavy interest charges. Although many individual ILP members were temperance advocates, the Labour policy favoured the municipalisation, rather than abolition, of the sale of alcohol. They also wanted Glasgow to do more construction and repair work through its' own direct labour Works Department. In September 1913, after considerable argument, the Central Labour Party accepted as policy Wheatley's proposal to oppose the city's current housing policy and advocate building new houses before demolishing the *back lands* tenements.<sup>111</sup> Demolition would have left the dispossessed with nowhere to live and would further overcrowd the remaining properties. This was the most contentious section of the overall policy and the Labour group support for Wheatley at its conclusion left him in undisputed leadership of the group on Council.<sup>112</sup> Since 1902 the ILP had argued that house-building should be financed and conducted by local authorities. In his writing and speeches Wheatley had directed attention to Glasgow's terrible housing conditions and how other countries tried to deal with this problem. His most important proposal was to use Glasgow's Tramway Department surplus to tackle the housing question. His cost-analysis demonstrated that this strategy would make available houses and cottages for a lower rent than the current average paid to private owners.<sup>113</sup> Wheatley presented these views in 1913 to the *Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland*, detailed in his pamphlet *Eight Pound Cottages for Glasgow Citizens*. He effectively remained the leader of the GLP from 1913 until 1930.<sup>114</sup> After Wheatley left for London with the other Glasgow MPs in 1922 Dollan became more prominent in Council leadership roles.

Patrick Dollan was born in Baillieston, Lanarkshire on April 3 1885, one of thirteen children of James and Jane (Rooney). His father was a miner and they lived in a single-room miner's cottage.<sup>115</sup> His father's family had left Ireland fifty years earlier to work in Coatbridge, and his mother's family had emigrated during the Irish

---

<sup>111</sup> The back lands were the spaces left between and behind tenements when they were original built, and constructing additional properties in those areas added greatly to congestion and overcrowding.

<sup>112</sup> Cooper, "John Wheatley", thesis (1973), 63. This thesis provides references to the relevant Glasgow Central Labour Party Minutes for Feb. to April, and for Sept. 30, 1913.

<sup>113</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 38-40.

<sup>114</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 53.

<sup>115</sup> Helen Corr and William Knox, "Patrick Dollan (1885-1963)," in William Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, 92-99.



famine.<sup>116</sup> They moved to a room and kitchen when his mother worked in a grocery business and his father got an administrative role in the local colliery. They were Catholics and Dollan, like Wheatley, attended St. Bridget's primary school.<sup>117</sup> He left school age ten, and for one year walked over three miles each way to Shettleston to work twelve hours daily as a rope spinner. He then apprenticed in a grocery store and worked there for one year after it was completed.<sup>118</sup> With his father's agreement, and despite his mother's opposition, he entered the coal mines at age 16 and for eight years he pushed empty and full coal hutches.<sup>119</sup>

The women in Dollan's family were locally active. His grandmother was a voluntary schoolmistress whose education classes advanced Patrick's education and reading. His desire for continuing education was indicated by walking six miles to and from classes three or four nights a week after his working day.<sup>120</sup> During the 1894 Lanarkshire miners' strike his mother organised soup kitchens and food supplies. Dollan emphasised that his fellow miners were more concerned about Irish Home Rule than housing, health or education reforms. They worked Christmas Day with only two official holidays, Glasgow Fair Monday and New Year's Day.<sup>121</sup> Despite some schoolboy skirmishes, on St. Patrick's Day and on Commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne, July 12, Dollan did not recall disputes about religion in his village, perhaps reflecting miners' closeness and shared dangers. After his father died his mother's strongest friend was Mary Ferguson the wife of the Free Church Beedle.<sup>122</sup>

Dollan was active in the labour movement in the early 1900s and became a Socialist influenced by Wheatley and the Rev. F.C. Young, an Episcopal clergyman whom Wheatley had brought into the CSS debate. In 1908 Dollan joined the ILP, and became the Shettleston branch Secretary where Wheatley was Treasurer. He attended evening classes in Shettleston and published poetry and articles about mining.<sup>123</sup> The Wheatley brothers noted his journalistic flair and persuaded him to take a temporary job as a journalist for their religious newspapers. Dollan also wrote regularly for *Forward* which employed him, at age 25, full-time for 25 shillings/week,

---

<sup>116</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 22.

<sup>117</sup> Patrick Dollan, "Memories of 50 Years Ago," *The Mercat Cross* 6 (1953): 108.

<sup>118</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 74-75.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* 156-158.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 168.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* 26-27.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* 60, 29-30.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 68.

and he became assistant editor in 1912.<sup>124</sup> His childhood experience of the poor housing of miners' families and the Glasgow slums with their poverty and ill-health, informed his journalism and his lifelong advocacy for improved working-class housing.<sup>125</sup> The candidate for the Govan ward on Glasgow Council in 1913 withdrew 60 minutes before nominations closed. Dollan was quickly nominated and was elected with a majority of 362.<sup>126</sup> His priorities were local housing, health and education.<sup>127</sup> Until 1922 Dollan remained a full-time journalist, which limited the time he could spend on civic politics.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 41, 46.

<sup>125</sup> *Forward*, Nov. 7, 1908; Jan. 23, 1909; Aug. 5, 1911, MMLG.

<sup>126</sup> *Govan Press*, Nov. 7, 1913, MMLG.

<sup>127</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 72.

<sup>128</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 11 and 19.

## Chapter 2

### Glasgow Housing Before and During 1915: History and Politics

The rent strikes were a powerful working-class response to injustices, skilfully publicised in local newspapers, particularly *Forward* and the *Partick Gazette* run by the ILP-supporting Pilot Press.<sup>129</sup> Wheatley and Dollan through speeches and newspapers portrayed Factors and property owners as heartless and unpatriotic, an anti-landlord strategy that resonated with the Irish and with Scots who had moved into Glasgow from the Highlands and Islands after the land clearances. *Forward's* editor, Vice-President of the Highland Land League (1909), supported this approach.<sup>130</sup> It will be demonstrated that the 1915 strikes arose from the terrible conditions created over many years in Glasgow's privately dominated housing market, with an already chronic housing shortage stressed further by the war-related influx of industrial workers. The 1915 Rent Restrictions Act, though a limited success, rewarded years of work by the ILP which provided "a broad umbrella for autonomous organisations in social and political life."<sup>131</sup> The ILP fostered alliances and interactions of many labour groups and citizens' organisations, provided structure and support for the rent strikers in 1915 and encouraged the tenement-based resistance led by local women activists. The leading women in the Rent Strikes, Mary Barbour, Agnes Dollan and Helen Crawford were active in the Scottish labour movement and in the ILP.<sup>132</sup> Wheatley and Dollan were clearly not solely responsible for the success of the rent strikes, but they had the most consistent long-term involvement in housing reform activism. Their ILP leadership and as labour representatives on Council was critical to the ILP connecting with the working class and providing the framework for effective operations by front-line activists in Glasgow's tenements. This chapter will focus on events until the end of 1915.

#### Development of the housing problem in Glasgow

---

<sup>129</sup> Pugh, "Once Proud Burghs." 298.

<sup>130</sup> Smith, *Labour Tradition*, 35, 48.

<sup>131</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 39.

<sup>132</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, ix-x. This statement is in the "Introduction" by Helen Corr.

Since the 1840s Glasgow had notoriously poor working-class housing. Frederick Engels described the narrow lanes and streets between the houses, the *wynds*, as “a tangle of crime, filth and pestilence in this second city of the Kingdom”.<sup>133</sup> Despite slum-clearance projects in the 1860s and 1870s, Sanitary Inspectors’ reports to the City Clerk of water-soaked basements and bulging walls persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup>C. The market link between housing demand and investors’ return on house-building was critical and by 1907 declining profitability due to stagnant rent levels had stopped all private construction of working-class housing for rent.<sup>134</sup> This shortage developed from 1850 onwards during Britain’s 19<sup>th</sup>C imperial expansion when Glasgow claimed to be the ‘second city of the empire’.<sup>135</sup>

Imperial expansion made Glasgow a major industrial centre with shipbuilding particularly important, but also major engineering and railway locomotive works, and a large mercantile sector. The upper reaches of the Clyde, the major river that flows through Glasgow, were deepened and widened between 1850 and the 1880s. The port received the larger and faster steamships that carried industrial goods from Glasgow and Scotland throughout the world. Glasgow shipyards dominated world shipbuilding between 1870 and 1920, partly by monopolising the British merchant marine market. At the start of WWI, Scotland’s central industrial area, centred on Glasgow, produced half of British marine-engine horsepower, a third of its shipping tonnage, a fifth of the steel, and a third of the railway engines and rolling stock.<sup>136</sup> It was a major supplier of ships for the Navy and of much military material including guns, fuses and shells. By the early 20<sup>th</sup>C, 20% of the Glasgow work-force worked in manufacturing.<sup>137</sup> Yet throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>C and 20<sup>th</sup>C Scotland had lower real wages than other parts of Britain, one factor which initially had attracted iron-makers and shipbuilders to the region. Wage patterns in Britain from 1760 to 1914, showed that in 1760 wages were highest in southeast England, particularly around London, and decreased as the northwards distance from the capital increased. Scottish wages appear to have been low by any standard, and Edinburgh carpenters earned about two-thirds, while those in Aberdeen earned about a half, of the rate in Exeter in

---

<sup>133</sup> Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England (1840)* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, Panther edition, 1984) 72.

<sup>134</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 7.

<sup>135</sup> Sandip Hazareesingh, “Interconnected synchronicities: the production of Bombay and Glasgow as modern Global ports c. 1850-1880”, *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 10-11.

<sup>136</sup> T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 249-250.

<sup>137</sup> Carol Craig, *The Tears that made the Clyde: Well-being in Glasgow* (Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2010), 56-58.

England. By the 1800s Scottish wages were still low but were closer to those of Southern England, a narrowing that continued during the 19<sup>th</sup>C. Working-class wages in Glasgow had not risen commensurate with economic expansion but in Belfast, another significant shipbuilding city, wages compared favourably with other cities in the United Kingdom.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, Belfast had a better housing stock than other British industrial cities. As the last of the major industrial towns to grow, many low-rent houses had been built for working-class families using a tested system of building regulations. The back-to-back houses in industrial cities like Manchester or Leeds, and the multi-occupancy slums of Glasgow or Dublin were mostly avoided.<sup>139</sup>

Liverpool and London experienced influxes of Irish and rural unskilled workers but Glasgow's population growth was probably the most rapid. By the early 1900s it was Europe's fourth largest city and in 1914, with over 700,000 people living within three square miles of Glasgow Cross, this was the most densely populated central area in Europe.<sup>140</sup> Consequently, magnificent municipal and commercial buildings existed relatively close to some of Glasgow's worst slums. Using Board of Trade Survey data from 1904 and 1908 it was estimated that towns as diverse as Burton-on-Trent, Crewe, Derby, Grimsby, Ipswich, Lincoln and Portsmouth had less than 2% overcrowding, whereas other English towns like Gateshead, Jarrow, Newcastle, South Shields and Sunderland suffered 30% overcrowding. These five towns had significant similarities to the principal Scottish cities, with rapid Victorian era expansion driven by the linkage of coal and iron to the steel and shipbuilding industries. By 1911 60% of the South Tyneside housing stock was two-storey terrace properties with direct and separate entrances to the single ground and first floor flats. Two families shared the toilet, wash-house and backyard, whereas in Glasgow tenements 12 or more families entered from the outside via a common entrance (the *close*) and shared limited facilities.<sup>141</sup> London and its suburbs had the worst overcrowding in England at 64.8%. Using the same Board of Trade data and official standard of overcrowding defined as more than two persons per room, 87% of the Scottish and 96.9% of the Glasgow households in the survey were overcrowded. In

---

<sup>138</sup> E.H. Hunt, "Industrialization and Regional Inequality: Wages in Britain, 1760-1914," *Journal of Economic History* 46 (1986), 935-936, 948, 954.

<sup>139</sup> A.C. Hepburn, "Working Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911," *Irish Economic and Social History* 10 (1983): 33-34.

<sup>140</sup> I. Gazeley, A. Newell, P. Scott, "Why was urban overcrowding much more severe in Scotland than in the rest of the British Isles? Evidence from the first (1904) official household expenditure survey," *European Review of Economic History* 15 (2011): 135.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* 146.

Scottish cities average floor space was less than 100 square feet/person, whereas the estimated average was 133, 146 and 145 in Northern England, the Midlands and the rest of England. Even with less space the average weekly room rent in Glasgow was the most expensive at 29.8 pence. The Scottish average was 24 pence, Ireland 17 pence, the North of England 13.6 pence, and the Midlands 12.7 pence. London and its suburbs were closest to Glasgow at 28.8 pence per room, but in 1905, skilled male real wages in Scotland were 87% of those in London.<sup>142</sup> The Board of Trade Surveys' Scottish data were overwhelmingly from households headed by skilled artisans, a best-case scenario drawn from those at the upper levels of industrial wages in Scotland, and not representative of the poorer and unskilled segments of the population. Further caution is necessary because a wage census, such as that of 1886, was based on stated wage rates and not actual earnings. It did not account for overtime worked, frequency of unemployment and other influences on the take-home pay of Scottish workers. From November to February building trades workers, regardless of skill, would have great difficulty finding employment in Scotland due to the wet and cold weather. In the 1906 Wage Census, Scottish shipyard employers deliberately inflated the average earnings of riveters, thus raising doubts around claims that Scotland's shipbuilding industry was high-waged and had caught up with other areas in Britain.<sup>143</sup> Thus, even the best paid Scottish workers received less than other British workers, they had higher rents, and they shared the challenge with the whole Scottish population that food was more expensive than in England. In 1912 an identical basket of food cost 10.2% more in Dundee and 5.7% more in Glasgow than in Manchester.<sup>144</sup>

The early and mid-19<sup>th</sup>C rapid population growth of the major Scottish cities overwhelmed the existing housing stock and although new properties were developed it also stimulated subdivision of existing houses. The higher wage gap between Scotland and the rest of Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>C, contributed to the development in Glasgow of predominantly one- or two-room apartments in tenement buildings.<sup>145</sup> Liverpool experienced an influx of Irish immigrants at a less

---

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 134-137.

<sup>143</sup> W.W. Knox. *A History of the Scottish People* (SCRAN: 2010), Ch.5, 1-10, Poverty, Income and Wealth in Scotland 1840-1940, 7-8. [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk) (SCRAN, Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network, managed since 2008 by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland).

<sup>144</sup> R. Rodger, "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914," in *Perspectives of the Scottish Cities*, Ed. G. Gordon (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985)

<sup>145</sup> Gazeley, "Why was urban overcrowding," 145.

rapid rate than Glasgow. By 1865 Liverpool regulated the space separating the backs of houses in relation to their height, and by 1889 legislation prevented new houses being built in existing courts, which themselves had to be of a fixed width and open at both ends to a public highway, forcing the construction of proper streets rather than courts. By the 1890s Liverpool carefully controlled the space in the front and back of every new house.<sup>146</sup> Lower wages and the booms and slumps of an export dependent manufacturing sector gave Glasgow the double problem of level and regularity of earnings. Between 1891 and 1914 Glasgow's housing property development was dependent on the fluctuating fortunes of the iron and steel and engineering trades.<sup>147</sup> For the 20 years before WWI Treble identified two periods of good trade for Glasgow in engineering and shipbuilding, 1885 to 1902 and 1911 to 1913, and two periods of prolonged crisis. The building trade was active in 1892-3 and some speculative house building continued until 1901. However, the slump in engineering and shipbuilding also occurred in housebuilding during the prolonged economic crises from 1903 to 1905 and 1907 to 1910.<sup>148</sup> From 1903 onwards house building declined with no financial driver to stimulate workers' demand for better housing and a private sector market response. Subdividing existing properties was more profitable for Glasgow landlords.

Additional factors strongly influenced the Glasgow and broader Scottish housing situation. Scotland had a history of powerful landed interests and in Scots Law land conveyancing was feudal. In return for the use of land on which any property was built the landowner continued to receive a substantial annual monetary payment, feu duty.<sup>149</sup> The pressures to maximise profit, and the dominant presence of landed interests in Scotland were illustrated by the repressive acts of Glasgow landlords who ejected thousands of families from their rented homes during the 19<sup>th</sup>C and early 20<sup>th</sup>C.<sup>150</sup> Between 1888 and 1914 landlords were strongly represented on Glasgow Council, one reason why building municipal working-class housing was never considered. The Scottish law of hypothec empowered the house-owner to further humiliate tenants evicted for not paying their rent by confiscating

---

<sup>146</sup> J. N. Tarn, "Housing in Liverpool and Glasgow: the Growth of Town Planning," *The Town Planning Review* 39 (1969): 322.

<sup>147</sup> J.H. Treble, "The Market for Unskilled Male labour in Glasgow 1891-1914," in *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, Ed. I. Macdougall (Edinburgh: Robertson, 1978), 117-118.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* 131-133.

<sup>149</sup> The Scottish Parliament passed the Abolition of Feudal Tenure etc. (Scotland) Act, 2000.

<sup>150</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 9. This is referenced to unpublished work by D. Englander.

their personal possessions. Rent collection was traditionally overseen by Factors, who were individuals or firms with local knowledge and strong trade and professional associations. Through their collection commission many created large firms which owned tenements. Most properties were let for 6 to 12 months, a large financial commitment during uncertain employment, and the city rates were additional to the rent. Only the poorest were rented for one month or less. Warrants of ejectment from the Sheriff's Court were often contested, usually by the more skilled workers, frequently delaying the proceedings, during which time the tenant paid no rent. Lower wages, higher rents, increased cost-of-living, the cyclical nature of housebuilding and shipbuilding employment, rapid growth of the city, a Council with the Lord Provost and one third of the councillors having business interests in private housing and resolutely opposed to municipal housing, and a population influx with the private housing market unable or unwilling to respond, all contributed to Glasgow's housing situation. It has been argued that even with these factors present, the tough tenancy and local tax laws in Scotland principally caused greater overcrowding than in England.<sup>151</sup>

A three-to four-storey tenement was the typical 19<sup>th</sup>C dwelling preferred by landlords and tenants in most Scottish towns and cities. Building regulations required an expensive stone structure for tenements and specific layout demands that increased construction costs, and 12 to 16 families shared a common entrance, the *close*. There were no space requirements stipulated for a growing family, and lavatories, water-supply, or wash-houses for laundry (the *steamy*), were not provided to individual dwellings but for a whole tenement, or at best a whole floor in one building. Rents could be relatively high because of building costs for solid structures that lacked essential facilities. As an important and growing industrial and manufacturing centre, Glasgow routinely required fresh labour, which then required more housing and local transport. Private landlords controlled house-letting, with no municipal housing until after WWI. Most industrialists relied on housebuilders, financial institutions and capital markets to fund construction of tenements for sale to investors to provide rental accommodation for the increasing workforce. Scotland's capital markets were quite efficient. The typical owner was frequently from the lower middle-class and had invested his savings and raised the capital, with the property as security, to purchase it through a 'bond' with limited time repayment

---

<sup>151</sup> Gazeley, "Why was urban overcrowding," 128-129.



of the loan and interest.<sup>152</sup> The *Govan Press* estimated that in 1915 bond mortgage applied to more than 90% of Glasgow's housing.<sup>153</sup> Small and large owners had concerns about interest rate changes or rent stagnation affecting their ability to make bond mortgage payments. Interest rates trended higher after 1900 and Britain increasingly invested overseas, drawing money away from speculative house-building. Unfavourable trade movements increased imported building material costs. Labour and raw materials costs increased 25% between 1905 and 1914, with almost no working-class housing construction in Glasgow by 1914.<sup>154</sup>

Irish Catholic and Ulster Protestant immigration gave Glasgow 'Green' and 'Orange' areas, but without total segregation. Govan and Bridgeton were Protestant strongholds, Gorbals and Garngad strongly Irish Catholic, but all were mixed. There was no evidence that rental letting involved planned discrimination against any particular religious group, or that private landlords were guided by anything other than their investment returns.<sup>155</sup> The better-paid, skilled, mainly Presbyterian workers rented better properties. The lower-paid and the poor, mainly Irish and Catholic, rented the poorer quality and slum properties.<sup>156</sup>

### **The health effects of poor housing on the working class**

At the 1904 Sanitary Institute Congress at Glasgow University, Peter Fyfe, Glasgow's Chief Sanitary Inspector, presented a paper, *What the People Sleep upon*, reporting the bacterial content of bedding materials made from untreated rags, processed by a shredding machine neither disinfected nor cleaned, and produced for Glasgow's working-class. Bacteria levels measured by Dr. Buchanan in four manufacturers' bedding sold in 1904 were higher than that of raw sewage in 1903. Dr. Fyfe noted "it would be manifestly safer to sleep on a bed filled with sewage than on this material". The ILP publicised this illustration of the poverty and appalling living conditions of many of Glasgow's citizens, highlighting how unscrupulous

---

<sup>152</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 8-9.

<sup>153</sup> The *Govan Press*, Nov. 19, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>154</sup> Joseph Melling, The "Introduction" in *Housing, Social policy and the State*, ed. J. Melling (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 14-18. In this Melling discusses the vital functions of housing in a capitalist economy.

<sup>155</sup> Iain Patterson, "Sectarianism and Municipal Housing Allocation in Glasgow," *Scottish Affairs* 39 (2002): 40-43.

<sup>156</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 10.

capitalists exploited the poor. They demanded government action to stop the manufacture and sale of products containing these materials.<sup>157</sup>

Wheatley's 1913 pamphlet, *Eight Pound Cottages for Glasgow Citizens*, presented health and well-being statistics from City Committees. The death rate per 1000 live births for infants below one year in eight working-class electoral districts was: Cowcaddens 126; Gorbals 130; Kinning Park 138; Townhead 145; Mile-end 148; Whitevale 151; Calton 163. Blackfriars with 178 was three to four times higher than the 43 per 1000 in the upper-class district of Kelvinside. In 1912 scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, and diarrhoeal diseases caused 1232 deaths across the city, but none in Kelvinside. The average life-expectancy in Kelvinside was twice that in the healthiest of those eight districts, and almost three times that of Broomielaw, another working-class district. Wheatley also reported that in 1912 tuberculosis caused 1545 deaths in Glasgow, only eight of these in Kelvinside which had only 24 of the city's 2565 respiratory diseases deaths that year.<sup>158</sup>

Social reformers linked housing to the poor health prospects of those who lived in Glasgow's working-class districts. In 1913 the Town Clerk estimated that 40,000 people lived in "uninhabitable houses" and that in "congested areas" many houses were structurally so poor that they should be demolished. Despite lax enforcement of statutes and bye-laws out of fear that this would further increase homelessness, the Sanitary Inspector reported to landlords more than 20,000 "nuisances" annually in their properties.<sup>159</sup> In 1915 Glasgow had 41,354 one-room houses, which amounted to 19.49% of the city's 212,223 houses, and only 7.12% of these had a separate W.C., while the rest shared common closets. About 63% of the population lived in one- or two-room houses, with overcrowding much greater than

---

<sup>157</sup> Glasgow Digital Library, <http://gdl.cdli.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/>. The collection, Red Clydeside, provides access to copies of over 200 original source materials from several local sources, which entailed reviewing over 2000 primary source materials. It was established in 2004. The Face page of the cited research paper and the table of Bacterial analyses are displayed on the site.

<sup>158</sup> The 1913 edition of Wheatley's pamphlet is Document 24, in Mitchell Library Special Collections PA12/19, *Working Class Protest in the West of Scotland 1820-1914*. A special Collection for Schools, W. Hamish Fraser, Dept. of History, Univ. of Strathclyde, and Alison Grey, Educ. Officer, Strathclyde Regional Archives.

<sup>159</sup> John Butt, "Working Class Housing in Glasgow 1900-1939," in *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, ed. Iain MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald Ltd, 1978), 144. A "nuisance" was anything deemed by the sanitary inspector as injurious or obnoxious to the inhabitants.

in England's industrial cities.<sup>160</sup> Glasgow's slums achieved densities of up to 700 persons per acre. Mary Laird of the Women's Labour League testified to *The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland* (1918), from her own experience of the one-room dwelling, that at times of births, deaths and sickness proper care could not be given, and the dead lay among the living until burial. She stated that in such crowded conditions in families containing boys and girls moral decencies were difficult, if not impossible, to observe. The Commissioners report concluded: "Life in one room is incompatible with family decency; it is incapable of affording conditions for a healthy or moral family life; it involves an overwhelming burden on the occupants; it is marked by a higher disease-rate, a higher general death-rate, a higher infantile death-rate, and a higher tuberculosis death-rate." They proposed the demolition of all single-ends and that no more should be built. The majority agreed with Wheatley's argument that the high cost of land in Glasgow and the high free-enterprise building costs produced unaffordable rents for many wage earners, so the state must accept responsibility for housing the working class.<sup>161</sup>

### **ILP collaboration with organisations representing the interests of labour**

The ILP role in 1915 was described as organising the rent strikers in local groups, under the umbrella of a general committee but encouraging district autonomy.<sup>162</sup> The Glasgow ILP prioritised municipal politics, but ILP members were not remote from industrial issues and struggles. Some held office in the Glasgow and Govan Trades Councils, or in craft trades unions, or organised unskilled workers and workshop committees.<sup>163</sup> Their individual influence in trades unions was greater than the members of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and the British Socialist Party (BSP). They created links across many groups involved in housing agitation, including labour and women's organisations, skilled trades, housing associations, the GTC, co-operative societies, representations from public meetings, shop stewards and

---

<sup>160</sup> Catriona M.M. Macdonald, *Whaur Extremes Meet. Scotland's Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), 124.

<sup>161</sup> Butt, "Working Class Housing," 151-153.

<sup>162</sup> Joseph Melling, "Work, culture and Politics on 'Red Clydeside', the ILP during the First World War," in *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from foundation to disintegration*, eds. Alan McKinley and R.J. Morris (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 114.

<sup>163</sup> Smith, *Labour Tradition*, 37.

workers in engineering and munitions factories. Co-operative societies were valued because they were close to daily working-class life. Dollan's *History of the Kinning Park Co-operative Society Limited* (1923), discussed its role in ensuring food supply equity and in combating and protecting against profiteering during WWI. Its decision to freeze its house rents may have triggered South Govan's first Rent Strike. Members who rented from other landlords knew that the Society had not increased rents, so they refused to pay the 3s/1d monthly increase and defied eviction.<sup>164</sup> The ILP also involved itself in the equitable availability and affordability of food and wartime price inflation in general, building additional points of contact with working-class women. The housing associations that promoted and worked for Wheatley's ILP housing proposals contributed further to organisational growth.<sup>165</sup> Militant Socialists outside the ILP, who disagreed with Wheatley's gradualist socialism, recognised his housing leadership, as did ordinary citizens. Glasgow members of the revolutionary Social Democratic Federation (SDF) spread propaganda for council houses and MacLean's Pollockshaws branch organised a housing council to maintain pressure on landlords. Throughout 1915 MacLean included housing propaganda when he regularly spoke outside factory and shipyard gates and at mass meetings.<sup>166</sup> Individual ILP members linked with ward committees and labour representation committees, including the militant shop stewards CWC, whose meetings were attended by many ILP members. The ILP branches did not divide on religious grounds which possibly strengthened their strong community links.<sup>167</sup>

The distinction between the CWC and the ILP actions during the events of 1915 is important. Individual links to the militant CWC did not mean that the ILP, the largest socialist organisation, was significantly involved in the militant shop stewards movement. Only two CWC central committee leaders, James Messer and David Kirkwood, were ILP members.<sup>168</sup> On the other hand Gallacher claimed that it had been the CWC that led the Rent Strike.<sup>169</sup> However, his claim for the militant Left was discredited by records that showed that not one of the factories he listed had

---

<sup>164</sup> Patrick Dollan, *Jubilee History of the Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd.*, (Glasgow: Kinning Park Co-op. Society Ltd., 1923), 92-93, located in Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, Sp Coll Broady C12.

<sup>165</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 5-8.

<sup>166</sup> Damer, *State, Class and Housing*, 89-90, 94.

<sup>167</sup> Gallagher, *Glasgow*, 101.

<sup>168</sup> James Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), 120-121.

<sup>169</sup> Gallacher, *Revolt*, 54-55.

gone on strike.<sup>170</sup> The threat of CWC industrial action contributed to the National Government's decision to introduce the Rent Restrictions Act. However, political unrest and possible industrial action in Glasgow and elsewhere in Britain against the growth of the Government's power over labour through the Treasury Agreements and the Munitions Act were separate from the longer housing struggle and the 1915 Rent Strikes themselves. Industrial action was proposed against evictions and rent increases only when munitions and shipyard workers' houses were threatened in August and September 1915. The Factors possibly targeted higher-paid workers for rent increases at that time on the assumption that they were able to pay.<sup>171</sup> But as we shall see, the ILP had been working to help organise resistance to rent increases much earlier than this.

### ***Glasgow Trades Council and ILP collaboration***

The GTC was formed in 1858 as an association of labour unions. It included delegates representing 30 trade societies by April 1861, with approximately two-thirds of Glasgow's organised trades and 113 affiliated unions under its umbrella by 1885.<sup>172</sup> In the early 1860s it could not stimulate enthusiasm for parliamentary reform among its unions, and as late as 1889 the Lib-Lab element among the unions blocked the GTC from affiliating to the Scottish Labour Party. After 1893 the Scottish Labour Party and the ILP assumed the goal of independent political activity, but a small yet significant resistance to socialism and to the ILP persisted within the GTC.<sup>173</sup> The mainly poor, Irish Catholic labourers who built the Glasgow docks, then worked in them, had successfully unionised. Their initial Irish Home Rule focus and their common cultural and social situation produced politically able leaders who led their unionisation and developed good working relations with the GTC.<sup>174</sup> Scotland favoured small, independent unions that formed federations and were supported by Trades Councils. Glasgow had frequent trades' demarcation disputes. Unions were small and weak as different skilled workers' hierarchies fought to maintain wage differentials between the trades, and particularly between skilled and semi-skilled or

---

<sup>170</sup> Hinton, *The First Shop*, 125-127.

<sup>171</sup> Alastair Reid, "Glasgow Socialism," *Social History* 11 (1986): 94-95.

<sup>172</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, "Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland," in *Essays in Scottish Labour History. A Tribute to W.H. Marwick*, Ed I. MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978), 3-6.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* 15, 17-18, 21-22.

<sup>174</sup> William Kenefick, "An Historiographical and comparative survey of Dock Labour c 1889 to 1920 and the neglect of Port Glasgow," *Scottish Labour History Society* 31 (1996), 59-60.

unskilled workers.<sup>175</sup> Through dealing with industrial legislation and disputes, and their related political questions, the GTC reflected the mood and hopes of the factory-floor workers. By 1898 an ILP and GTC alliance had ten ILP members elected to the 75 seat City Council and these “Stalwarts” relentlessly pursued municipalisation policies.<sup>176</sup> By 1906 the GTC was one of Britain’s most powerful Trades Councils and up to 400 local trades and industries representatives attended its weekly meetings on local and national issues. Emmanuel Shinwell, an ILP member, became vice-president in 1909 and wanted to increase the GTC’s significance by promoting industrial unity and helping unions to become more politically active and powerful.<sup>177</sup> In 1911 the ILP with GTC support created the GLP to unite the city’s working-class organisations and to support approved candidates during elections.<sup>178</sup>

In 1912, with GLP support, Wheatley was elected to represent Shettleston in the newly enlarged City Council. His intent was to lead Glasgow’s socialist movement by highlighting the health inequities and higher death rates in children and adults living in working-class areas compared with those in the middle-class and wealthy areas. He favoured working-class cottages, the purchase and upgrading of tenements by the city, and advocated a Municipal Bank to free Glasgow from heavy interest charges. Labour was less successful than it expected in this election and increased its representation by two, for a total of 14 Councillors. The need for better local organisation and greater effort to gain the Irish vote was identified.<sup>179</sup> However, the GTC praised Wheatley for his election success.<sup>180</sup> Control of his Shettleston ILP organisation probably helped, as did the electors’ recognition of his achievements, promise keeping and regular reporting to them while on Lanarkshire Council. As a Councillor he argued for fair wages, defended striking railway workers claims in 1911, and supported low-paid workers during 1912 and 1913 when the inability of wages to match cost-of-living increases produced many strikes in Britain. These positions further increased his credibility among local workers’ leaders, many of whom were SLP and not ILP supporters.<sup>181</sup> The GLP adoption of his housing

---

<sup>175</sup>Craig, *The Tears*, 100-101.

<sup>176</sup> Damer, *State, Class and Housing*, 84.

<sup>177</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 41-43.

<sup>178</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 33.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* 34-35.

<sup>180</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Nov. 7, 1912.

<sup>181</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 29-30, 40-41.

proposal as a major policy issue recognised his leadership of Glasgow's Labour movement.<sup>182</sup>

To increase working-class unity in the housing cause, Wheatley and GLP members Andrew McBride and John Taylor, attended a GTC meeting in the City Halls in January 1914. McBride, a Wheatley protégé, member of the ILP Bridgeton branch, and a member of the CSS, had demonstrated great organising ability in helping to establish the GLPHC in 1913. With representatives from every labour organisation in Glasgow, its task was to work for the implementation of Wheatley's cottage scheme. This committee actively supported the organisation and thereby the effectiveness of the 1915 rent strikers.<sup>183</sup> The ILP provided the rent strikers with organisational structure, and ILP men and women as leaders.<sup>184</sup> At the January 1914 meeting of the GTC, Wheatley sought support to protest the house-owners Association burdening tenants with excess rates and 5-10% increases in existing high rents; to ask City Council to provide houses for its citizens using the Tramways surplus or any other source of an interest-free loan as the building Capital; and to petition City Council to support these requests. These received unanimous support. Shinwell was one of the two GTC members elected to take it to City Council.<sup>185</sup> After this meeting the GHA was quickly formed, with representation from the Women's Labour League, the GLP, the GTC and ILP Councillors. To connect and strengthen working-class housing action the goal was to establish a GHA branch in each local Ward to organise tenants against increased rents and to support Wheatley's cottage scheme outlined in his 1913 pamphlet *Eight-Pound Cottages for Glasgow Citizens*.<sup>186</sup> He detailed his proposal to build 1000 cottages, fifteen per acre, at a cost of £260 each, which included all land, roads and sewage, with an annual rent of £8, which was less than the average paid at that time to private house-owners. The rent included capital cost repayment over 60 years. The capital was to be an interest-free loan from the Tramway Department surplus, which Wheatley considered an asset owned by Glasgow citizens.<sup>187</sup> In March, 1914 *Forward* issued an appeal for volunteers willing to be trained to spread the £8 Cottages message throughout Glasgow.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* 37.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* 38; Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 40; Butt, *Working-Class Housing*, 147.

<sup>184</sup> Smith, *Labour Tradition*, 37.

<sup>185</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Jan. 22, 1914, MMLG.

<sup>186</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 38-40.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* 37; Wood, *Wheatley*, 41; Footnotes 28 and 51.

<sup>188</sup> *Forward*, March 29, 1914.

On January 4, 1915, 420 delegates at the ILP Housing Conference in St. Mungo's Halls, organised to generate further support for the £8 scheme, heard the financial details from Wheatley.<sup>189</sup> In February the GLPHC was officially linked to the GTC to help organise tenants against increased rents and to agitate for municipal housing supported by the tramways surplus and state grants.<sup>190</sup> The GTC resolved that the Government stop the uncontrolled increase in the cost of the "necessities of life".<sup>191</sup> It sent a letter to Unions and their branches to support this call to the Government, supported a planned May Day Demonstration, and on February 3 joined in a protest to the City Council against price increases.<sup>192</sup> The GTC considered a letter from Clydebank Trades and Labour Council for speakers for an April 10 demonstration against increased rents and to pass resolutions for fair rents courts to be established. The GTC agreed to name speakers after they had received their own report in March, and to send a representative to the first meeting of the Demonstration Committee in Clydebank.<sup>193</sup> On May 12 Shinwell moved that they should help the GLPHC to rouse public opinion against increased rents and insist that the Corporation build workmen's cottages.<sup>194</sup> A GLPHC recommendation was accepted that the GTC should not currently promote a housing demonstration as under present circumstances it was unlikely to succeed.<sup>195</sup> The rents issue was next raised in September when the GTC adopted a resolution from the Workers War Emergency Committee protesting a decision that those in receipt of Relief would not have their rents paid.<sup>196</sup> The City Council sent a notice that the GTC Deputation against increased rents would be received on October 7, on which occasion it met with the Council's standard procedural stalling tactic.<sup>197</sup> The GTC was notified that the GLPHC would hold a demonstration in City Hall on October 29 in support of rent strikers. The GTC heard from the Cathcart House Rent Committee that a local factor had notified 44 tenants of rent increases. Their resistance solidarity was broken when one of them, a trade union member, discovered that another trade unionist from outside the group had taken over his house at the higher rent. The GTC

---

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.* Jan. 9, 1915.

<sup>190</sup> Melling, *State, Class and Housing*, 92.

<sup>191</sup> Glasgow Trades Council Minutes (Jan. to Dec. 1915), Jan. 13, 1915. These handwritten Minutes, held on microfilm, are in Special Collections and Archives, Glasgow Caledonia University, Glasgow.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* Jan. 20, 1915.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* Feb. 17, 1915.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* May 12, 1915.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* June 9, 1915.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* Sept. 15, 1915.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 6, 1915.



condemned this action and resolved unanimously that no trade unionist should take an evicted tenant's house.<sup>198</sup>

The ILP and GTC collaboration strengthened cohesion among labour groups around the rent strike goals. The ILP connected the daily concerns of increased costs of rents, food and heating, but recognised that strategically it was easier to protest against rents. Industrial unrest and different views of socialism persisted but their potential divisiveness never affected the housing protests. The sources examined presented no evidence that Wheatley, Dollan, McBride or the ILP tried to directly control or dominate the groups they recruited into the struggle.

### ***Collaboration of the ILP with women's organizations and women activists***

Socialist political parties and trades unions had poor records towards women and women's issues before 1915. Unions perceived women as threatening male dominance in the labour market. The Union of Shop Assistants, for example, was worried about the replacement of men by women because "temporary expedients have a nasty [k]nack of becoming permanent features".<sup>199</sup> The ILP compared more favourably to other British and European socialist groups on women's issues, perhaps because women's issues complemented the ILP's general political agenda. The ILP had noted the Glasgow Women's Labour League (GWLL) political message that in two thirds of Glasgow's municipal wards women had the voting numbers to improve the ILP fortunes.<sup>200</sup> The GWLL represented the better-paid working class and its President, Mary Laird, was a local rent strike leader. Laird and Barbour obtained from the Harland and Wolff shipyard Managing Director in Govan an assurance in June 1915 that the company had no plans to bring in additional workers to take over evicted strikers houses, and that the company was "very pleased to hear that the tenants of the Govan district purpose refusing to pay these increased rents".<sup>201</sup>

The ILP valued Co-operative Societies because the members represented the daily lives of working-class women and provided leaders like Mary Barbour and Agnes Dollan. Barbour was active in the Kinning Park branch of the Scottish and Co-

---

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* Oct. 27, 1915.

<sup>199</sup> *Forward*, February 20, 1915.

<sup>200</sup> Annemarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland 1919-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 39, 41-43.

<sup>201</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 65; 'purpose' is the word used in the quotation i.e. having a purpose, plan or design.

operative Women's Guild (SCWG) where she obtained a political education, and joined the ILP. During the rent strikes she organised tenement committees to prevent eviction and repel the Sheriff's Officers. When a Govan woman was misinformed that the other tenants had paid and she was persuaded to pay the rent increase, Barbour got Govan shipyard workers to leave work and go to the Factor's office. They demanded that the money be returned. On seeing the thousands of workers with their faces black from work, the Factor complied. Women voluntarily helped Barbour with her housework to enable her to devote herself fully to help them.<sup>202</sup> She was prominent in the November 17, 1915 demonstration, one of the largest ever in Glasgow, when thousands of women (*Mrs. Barbour's Army*), shipyard and engineering workers gathered at the Sheriff Courts, pressing the Government to push through the 1915 Rent Restrictions Act.<sup>203</sup> Barbour was a founder of the Women's Peace Crusade in Glasgow in June 1916. In 1920 she was the first woman elected as a Labour Councillor and later became one of Glasgow's first women magistrates.<sup>204</sup>

Agnes Dollan (Moir), 1887-1966, was one of eleven children in a strongly Presbyterian and Orange family in Springburn. Family poverty obliged her to start factory work age 11, later becoming a telephone operator. As a teenager she was involved in the GWLL to improve working conditions and wages for women. Although a Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) member she did not adopt the Pankhursts militant tactics even though she supported them. In the early 1900s she joined the Glasgow Socialist Sunday School, indicating her belief in socialism and rejection of her strong Protestant upbringing. She joined the ILP in 1905, met Patrick Dollan in 1911, and they were married in 1912. Both were firm pacifists. As one of a small group of anti-war protestors in Glasgow she helped Helen Crawford to organise anti-war demonstrations. Her son was born in 1913 and at age 12 he regularly attended Socialist Sunday School meetings. There is clear evidence of their estrangement from Catholic and Protestant churches. She was Treasurer of the GWA and a leader in the anti-rents campaign and her gifts as a speaker and

---

<sup>202</sup> Catriona Burgess, remembermarybarbour.com. Dr. Burgess provides information about various tributes to Mary Barbour, with plans and progress to erect her statue in Govan.

<sup>203</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 61-62; Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 92-95.

<sup>204</sup> Audrey Canning, "Barbour (née Rough), Mary 1875-1958", the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition, 2006, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101054393>; Morag Cross, "Mary Barbour", in [Firstworldwarglasgow.co.uk/index.aspx/articleid=11384](http://www.firstworldwarglasgow.co.uk/index.aspx/articleid=11384). This extensive account has references and also acknowledges Dr. Burgess.

organiser were recognised. She was active in the SCWG and continued in politics post-war.<sup>205</sup>

Kinning Park Co-operative Society women established the SCWG in 1892. By 1913 with 157 branches and 12,420 members it was the most important organisation for Scottish working-class women before WW1.<sup>206</sup> Its branches modelled roles for women as wives and mothers, and emphasised their place in the home, with topics like cooking, dress-making, and fund-raising for convalescent homes. They were also interested in schooling and, importantly, it was run by and for housewives. It provided a forum in which to develop leadership roles, a basis for political involvement, and helped to weaken barriers to women's participation in the labour movement. From 1893 it advocated for women's suffrage, consistently passed supportive resolutions at annual conferences, but remained with the constitutionalists in the movement and opposed violence. It supported minimum wage regulation and encouraged the development of co-operative housing for rent.<sup>207</sup> In the early 1900s, unlike its English counterpart, it affiliated to the Labour Party and campaigned vigorously in the 1910 election. By 1912 its educational efforts encompassed wider political and social issues such as Poor Law Legislation, Municipal and School Board work, Labour Exchanges, and sweated labour, although domestic lectures such as "Flannelette and its dangers" were also presented. The SCWG worked to get its members elected on to important committees of the co-operative movement. By 1911 there were eight on the boards of management and 14 on education committees.<sup>208</sup> Most women activists in the labour movement before the Rent Strikes were Guild members.<sup>209</sup>

Recognising women's key role in housing issues the GLPHC in collaboration with the GWLL, early in 1914 established the GWHA with sections across Glasgow. Helen Crawford, a leading member, stated that the strongest sections were in Govan

---

<sup>205</sup> H. Corr and W. Knox, "Agnes Dollan" in Ed. Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, 89-90; Helen Corr, "Dollan, Agnes Johnstone, Lady Dollan, 1877-1966", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54395>.

<sup>206</sup> C.M.M. Macdonald, "A different Commonwealth: the co-operative movement in Scotland," in *The Co-operative Model in Practice. International Perspectives*, edited by Diarmuid McDonnell and Elizabeth Macknight. This is a Co-operative Education Trust (CETS) Resource (Published with the support of the Scottish Government and the Economic and Social Research Council, 2012), 8.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>208</sup> Eleanor J. Gordon, "Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850-1914," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1985), 251-256. <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4883/>.

<sup>209</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 172-173; Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 541.

and Partick. A militant suffragist, she left the WSPU because Emily Pankhurst and much of its leadership became strongly pro-war. Crawford started to organise Scottish women against the war and joined the ILP in late 1914. As the GWhA Secretary she helped to organise the rent strikes campaign and to raise local popular support.<sup>210</sup> The GWhA formed the tenement and area committees that emerged after the April and May 1915 rent increases provoked the first rent strike in Govan near the shipyards. Crawford recognised the assistance and advice given by Wheatley and other ILP members.<sup>211</sup> Dollan and others spoke at the Govan GWhA public meeting at the Cressy Hall on May 21, 1915 to respond to the local rent increases. Tenants were mobilised, local women's committees formed, thousands of protest cards stating "RENT STRIKE. WE ARE NOT REMOVING" and various protest notices were printed and distributed, and street and back-court meetings were organised. The enforced collectivity of the tenement became the basis of resistance.<sup>212</sup> Local mobilisation was crucial, assisted by the links previously forged between working-class groups. Housing, not industrial issues or voting rights, unified working-class women to confront and even assault male authority figures, vital for the rent strike to succeed. The skills and organising experience of the SCWG, the housewives' involvement, and ILP collaboration, were present in the public meetings and demonstrations, and in the kitchen and *close* committees.<sup>213</sup> Through June and July the ILP leaders such as Wheatley, Dollan, Denny, Taylor and McBride, in the press and at public meetings denounced the landlords and encouraged and supported the tenants' activities. On Council they attacked the propertied interests and called for municipal housing programmes. In the later stages when industrial workers became involved, they joined in the call for intervention from the National Government.<sup>214</sup>

### ***Collaboration of the ILP with the Presbyterian Churches in Glasgow***

To extend community involvement in the housing agitation, a GLPHC deputation presented the working-class housing issues to the Presbytery of Glasgow of the Church of Scotland, on February 24, 1915. The Presbytery asked their Business

---

<sup>210</sup> Red Clydeside (<http://gdl.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/>) ['People', Helen Crawford,] Michael Byres 2002; Crawford, Helen 1877-1954', Oxford Dict. Nat. Biography, online edition, 2006. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref/odnb/40301>.

<sup>211</sup> Damer, *State, Class and Housing*, 91-92.

<sup>212</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 64-65.

<sup>213</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 175.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.* 66.

Committee to nominate a Housing Question Committee to consider these issues, to request the Church's seven District Committees to consider these and report back with recommendations.<sup>215</sup> These reports and that from the Committee Convenor were reviewed in June, 1915 at the Presbytery Conference. The Eastern District reported "A very great number of houses unfit for human habitation. Back lands very bad."<sup>216</sup> The Tron Parish Church in the Central District reported good housing conditions but St Peter's in the same area found them unsatisfactory and inadequate. Similar variation was reported from the Western District. The Eastern District complained, which the record stated doubtless applied to all districts, that landlords "go on raising rents unreasonably and wrongly and that there should be fair rents fixed by a statutory authority for houses as well as for crofts". A housing shortage following the influx of war-industry workers was noted by the South-Western District. All districts reported "highly difficult to impossible to get people living in slum dwellings to attend church". Important support for the provision of public housing was present and the Presbytery noted that with private enterprise absent, the City of Glasgow must build the accommodation for the very poor. After considerable discussion the Presbytery stated that the aim was to collect facts for future action and that the labour shortage and the high cost of building materials made this a bad time to pressure the City Council to build houses for the poorer classes. It noted that among the difficulties in securing the best results was the influx of the Irish and the fact that many slum dwellers were Roman Catholics. The Presbytery decided to wait for the formal report from its own Committee.<sup>217</sup> That report in September recognised the serious situation but the Committee was instructed to hold the *Scheme of Housing* until after the war, but to continue to watch over the housing issue.<sup>218</sup>

The United Free Church of Scotland, Presbytery of Glasgow, had two housing issues entries. In February 1915, Wheatley and Alston from the GLPHC attended the Presbytery and stated their views about the housing problem. The Presbytery

---

<sup>215</sup> Church of Scotland, *Presbytery of Glasgow of the Church of Scotland*, Nov. 11, 1914-March 28, 1916, Minutes of Feb. 24, 1915, 23, in Special Collections, CH2/171/29, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>216</sup> The term, *Back lands*, refers to additional property constructed in the areas left between tenements when they were first built. This contributed to gross overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions.

<sup>217</sup> Church of Scotland, *Presbytery Minutes*, June 16, 1915, 259-262.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.* Sept. 29, 1915, 81.

remitted the issues and suggestions to the Public Questions Committee.<sup>219</sup> In September the Presbytery received and discussed the Committee's report on the Housing Problem. Because of the war they could not recommend any active steps but strongly recommended that their members and the Church generally, interest themselves in housing as it "pertains directly to the religious, moral and physical health and order of the whole community".<sup>220</sup>

The two major Presbyterian churches took no direct action from these approaches by Wheatley and the GLPHC. However, ILP involvement of these churches early in 1915 and receiving reports from city parishes, which otherwise might not have happened, highlighted the severity of the housing problem and ensured that ministers and elders were well-informed. While unlikely to be involved in direct action on the housing question, the fact that Presbyterian leaders understood the current situation improved the likelihood that they would reflect the concerns and support expressed in the Presbytery meetings rather than criticise or oppose the housing protests.

### **Wheatley and Dollan: actions on Glasgow City Council during 1915**

Wheatley and Dollan participated in and provided leadership for the 1915 Rent Strikes through strengthening and organising the ILP, developing housing and other social policy platforms, creating committees and links between different working-class groups, attending meetings, giving speeches, and writing pamphlets and newspaper articles. They also brought cost-of-living and housing issues to City Council and worked to try to remedy these problems and to achieve socialism through established democratic processes. Wheatley attended all, and Dollan 32, of the Council's 34 meetings during 1915. The Minutes record their vigorous and regular Committee participation. Wheatley's business success brought financial independence and he devoted more time to Council business than could many of the other ILP Councillors. As their leader he was very involved in developing Labour's policy platform and highlighted housing, a key ILP policy since 1901, by challenging with his alternatives to private building.<sup>221</sup> Inside and outside of Council his approach

---

<sup>219</sup> United Free Church of Scotland, *Records of the Presbytery of Glasgow*, Nov. 10, 1914 – Dec. 14, 1915, Minutes of Feb. 9, 1915, 515, in Special Collections, CH3/146/47, Mitchell Library, Glasgow. Ministers and Elders from all the United Free Churches in Glasgow attended these meetings monthly.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* Sept. 14, 1915, 612.

<sup>221</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 38-41.

to socialism was gradualist, with no evidence that he was willing to exploit industrial unrest to further Labour's advance. Wheatley supported the ILP's anti-war stance and was one of two Glasgow Councillors who opposed Britain's 1914 declaration of war.<sup>222</sup>

At the January, 1915 Council meeting, letters from the ILP (Glasgow Federation) and its' Dennistoun Branch, asked the Council to petition the government to take over the food and coal supply and shipping, and for an "Order in Council" prohibiting house rents being increased.<sup>223</sup> Procedural motions, a recurring and frustrating tactic of the business, legal, property and building interests who formed the Council majority, delayed this until the February 15 meeting.<sup>224</sup> More letters and supportive resolutions came from Falkirk Town Council, the National League of the Blind (Glasgow Branch), several Co-operative societies, ward committees, Societies representing several skilled trades, and Women's organisations, which further illustrated the links between the socialist Councillors and the community. Nevertheless the amendments gutted the intent of the original motion.<sup>225</sup> Similarly, when Wheatley supported the Govan Tenants' Defence Association and the Govan Labour Party and moved, on March 4, to prevent rent increases, this was rejected in favour of an amendment "petitioning Parliament" to make enquiries and to take protective measures they considered in the best interests of the tenants.<sup>226</sup> Wheatley argued that almost all the houses facing rent increases had been constructed long before the increased building materials costs and interest rates that the landlords claimed were burdens on them. *Forward* reported these Council activities which provided valuable ILP propaganda.<sup>227</sup> To show the practicability of their housing plans, Wheatley and Dollan supported proposals for the city to acquire land and to build houses at the most reasonable rents possible.<sup>228</sup> Wheatley regularly asked questions about reported examples of inadequate, unsafe, and unfit housing.<sup>229</sup> His opponents stalled even this by voting to defer for further

---

<sup>222</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 76.

<sup>223</sup> City Council meetings recorded as, Glasgow Corporation Minutes (GCM), 1915, Jan. 8 – April 15, C1 3.52, 545-1335, in the Mitchell Library Archives. This ref. is GCM, Jan. 21, C1 3.52, 587-588.

<sup>224</sup> T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London: Collins, 1986), 51.

<sup>225</sup> GCM, Feb. 15, C1 3.52, 697-699.

<sup>226</sup> GCM, March 4, C1 3.52, 939-940.

<sup>227</sup> *Forward*, March 13, 1915.

<sup>228</sup> GCM, March 18, 1039, April 1, 1114.

<sup>229</sup> GCM, March 4, C1 3.52, 940, 1148, 1265, and GCM, May 20, C1 3.53, 1526.

consideration his requests for statistics.<sup>230</sup> When the Local Government Board proposed to move a large number of workers into Glasgow, Charlton and Wheatley moved an amendment that Council should first instruct the Town Clerk to ask for the Board's evidence supporting their assertion that existing housing was adequate for them. Wheatley knew the accommodation was inadequate but he wanted the data for the Labour Housing Committee.<sup>231</sup>

Housing was not the only cost-of-living issue pursued by Wheatley and Dollan. Twice they failed to block Council from withholding a three shilling/week increase in Tramways Department carters' wages.<sup>232</sup> Dollan could not get Council to support the Plantation Ward Committee's request that City Council petition the Government to grant old-age pensioners a one shilling/week increase.<sup>233</sup> Due to increased fuel costs Dollan gave notice of a motion for a special committee to report on the advisability of starting a municipal coal supply to sell coal at cost.<sup>234</sup> This proposal, supported by the Govan and District Trades Council, the GWA, various workers' Societies, the Govan Labour Representative Committee and the South Govan Branch of the ILP, was rejected by Council.<sup>235</sup> Dollan reported in *Forward* that failure to accept the Labour proposal to delay a new coal contract until the Government set prices meant that Glasgow paid increases of five shillings and three pence/ton to eight shillings/ton. Yet the new government-regulated maximum price increased by only four shillings/ton.<sup>236</sup> Another motion in August by Dollan that the Board of Trade should regulate coal prices to protect small consumers against inflated prices during the coming winter was remitted to a special committee for consideration and report, with Dollan as the Convenor and Wheatley a member of the committee.<sup>237</sup> On September 23 this committee recommended a similar arrangement with Glasgow coal merchants as the one achieved in London, namely a fixed sum charged by merchants beyond the cost of the coal delivered at the railway depot or siding. Council sent this recommendation back to the committee for further study.<sup>238</sup> In November, Dollan tried to re-introduce the motion he had presented in January that

---

<sup>230</sup> GCM, Aug. 19, C1 3.53, 2090.

<sup>231</sup> GCM, Oct. 14, C1 3.53, 2486-2487.

<sup>232</sup> GCM, Feb. 18, C1 3.52, 1039, and GCM, March 11, C1 3.52, 950.

<sup>233</sup> GCM, April 29, C1 3.53, 1336.

<sup>234</sup> GCM, April 15, C1 3.52, 1213.

<sup>235</sup> GCM, Aug. 19, C1 3.53, 2090.

<sup>236</sup> *Forward*, August 7, 1915.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* Aug. 12, 2082.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* Sept. 23, 2394, and 2407-2411.



Council require the Government to take over and regulate fuel supply, production and distribution. The motion was amended and referred back to a committee.<sup>239</sup>

On June 21, 1915 as the rent agitation increased Wheatley requested Council to let him submit a motion concerning the granting of warrants of ejection against soldiers' families. His telegram to Lord Kitchener urging the War Office to prevent soldiers' families being evicted, had received an evasive answer.<sup>240</sup> The incident that prompted these actions was detailed in his letter, *Eviction of a Soldier's Wife and Family at Shettleston*, and was also described in the earlier newspaper account of the Rent Strike.<sup>241</sup> Wheatley wrote about Mrs. McHugh's eviction, "in the long line of cruel, crushing, insulting treatment to which the capitalist-class have subjected the working class, nothing could be found to compare with their conduct in refusing the commonest shelter to the helpless children" of those who had placed their lives in the service of the nation at a time of crisis.<sup>242</sup> Wheatley accompanied her to the Sheriff Court on the day of the hearing. His letter described the humiliations faced by the women summoned to that court. He expected that the small sum involved and the miners' union promise to pay the arrears, would lead to a stay of eviction, but it was ordered in 48 hours. Wheatley called a protest meeting on the evening before the eviction, dissuaded the large crowd from attacking the landlord's home, but encouraged the women to organise for this fight against eviction stating "this is pre-eminently a fight for a poor woman and poor women should undertake it."<sup>243</sup> He recognised and encouraged the value of their direct action as an integral part of the concerted rent agitation. Wheatley's motion to make such warrants illegal was not accepted but via amendments Council remitted it to the Magistrates' Committee for enquiry, consideration and report, which then referred it to a special sub-committee.<sup>244</sup> Reports of proposed evictions and protest meetings addressed by local politicians highlighted how local networking and personal contact promoted collective action. *Forward* reported that Wheatley's actions caused almost 5,000

---

<sup>239</sup> GCM, Nov. 12, C1 3.54, 147-148.

<sup>240</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 56-57; *Forward*, June 19, 1915.

<sup>241</sup> Red Clydeside, <http://gdl.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/>, showing Wheatley's letter, *Forward*, June 12, 1915.

<sup>242</sup> *Forward*, June 12, 1915.

<sup>243</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, June 12, 2015.

<sup>244</sup> GCM, June 21, C1 3.53, 1711.

people to attend on the day set for Mrs. McHugh's eviction which was prevented, then abandoned to maintain peace.<sup>245</sup>

On June 17, 1915, Council rejected a Labour motion to establish Fair Rent or Adjustment Courts.<sup>246</sup> Public meetings in Parkhead, Partick, South Govan and Ibrox adopted resolutions against house rent increases, and submitted them to Council with a request for it to receive a deputation of the affected tenants. The deputation on October 7 asked Council to petition the government to freeze rents during the war. The Chairman assured them their recommendations would be carefully considered. The deputation withdrew and the Council rudely ignored the assurance and defeated the motion to consider their representations.<sup>247</sup> Council then instructed that the letters from the Secretaries of the Ward Committees of Cowlairst, Townhead, and Ibrox, plus one from David Kirkwood representing the shop stewards and workers of the Parkhead Forge Ordnance department, should be on the agenda for their next meeting. Kirkwood's letter, printed in *Forward*, drew attention to the poor housing conditions in the Eastern district, the urgent need for more housing for the increased numbers of workers, property owners profiteering, and raised the possibility of industrial action if workers who did not pay their rent were evicted.<sup>248</sup> In Parliament on October 13, Lloyd George, Minister for Munitions, announced an enquiry into the complaints about rent increases in Glasgow.<sup>249</sup> Despite Wheatley's effort to get more specific action, Council seized this opportunity and instructed the Town Clerk to forward the letters and representations to the Enquiry Commissioner.<sup>250</sup> Publication of Council's constant rejection or stalling throughout 1915 of proposals by Wheatley, Dollan and others, indicated that City Council would not advance the housing question, and possibly contributed to the increased unrest and rent strikes in the autumn. Throughout this time Wheatley continued to advise many of the rent-strike committees and tenants' associations.<sup>251</sup>

Following Lloyd George's statement in Parliament the Government appointed the Hon. Lord Hunter and Dr. W. R. Scott, Economics Professor at Glasgow University,

---

<sup>245</sup> *Forward*, June 19, 1915.

<sup>246</sup> GCM, June 17, C1 3.53, 1718.

<sup>247</sup> GCM, Oct. 7, C1 3.53, 2474.

<sup>248</sup> Red Clydeside website presents a copy of Kirkwood's letter dated Oct. 3, and which was published in *Forward*, Oct. 9, 1915.

<sup>249</sup> I.S. Wood, *John Wheatley, the Irish*, 59.

<sup>250</sup> GCM, Oct. 14, C1 3.53, 2484-2485.

<sup>251</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 73-74 ; Wood, *John Wheatley*, 57.

to investigate the alleged rent increases in small dwelling-houses in industrial Scotland. The Enquiry opened in Glasgow, October 26 with an estimated 20,000 tenants on strike, large protest meetings in different areas of the city, and widespread demand for restoration of pre-war rent levels. The Hunter Commission spent seven days in Glasgow and took testimony from 20 witnesses. On November 2 it went to Dundee and interviewed nine witnesses, and on November 3 it was in Aberdeen with six witnesses.<sup>252</sup> Andrew McBride, Chairman of the GLPHC, testified to the Commission that the current agitation was in the better working-class districts where the objections to rent increases were not based on poverty but were grounded in principle. The housing agitation was not coming from the slum districts of Calton, Bridgeton, Mile-end and Anderston, but even there with 100 to 120 year old houses, rents were higher relatively than those paid 120 years ago, and the two-room, and room and kitchen houses being discussed were inadequate for a man, his wife and four or five children.<sup>253</sup> Wheatley detailed rent increases.<sup>254</sup> He attacked bondholders and landlords war-profiteering, and argued that everyone above the working class aimed to transfer his share of the war's burden on to their shoulders.<sup>255</sup> The bondholders' impact on housing, using the City Chamberlain's data, was that interest claimed 50% of every rent collected in Glasgow.<sup>256</sup> Andrew Hood, from the Partick Tenants Association, recounted the eviction of a soldier's wife, and rent increases higher than the wage increases achieved by munitions workers, one of the few groups that had achieved a significant wage increase. Like Wheatley, he argued that their wage increase came from imposed overtime.<sup>257</sup> Wheatley and McBride emphasised that Factors and landlords must share the sacrifices with the workers.<sup>258</sup> They all presented their evidence in class terms. Their case for municipal housing was supported by Local Government Board civil servants who gave valuable evidence

---

<sup>252</sup> *Report of Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland 'To Enquire into the circumstances connected with the alleged Recent Increases in the Rental of Small Dwelling-Houses in Industrial Districts in Scotland, 1915'*. Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors and others, Session 11, Nov. 1914-27, Jan. 1916, Vol. XXXV, Summary 2-8, Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee with appendices and Index, 1-15.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.* Answers in response to Questions (q) 586, q589, q596.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* see q907-q924.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* see q933, q934, and q940.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* see q995. Wheatley's evidence is on pp 37-39.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* see q1007-1008, q1029-1031, q962.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* see q1013-1014, q1041-1043, Hood's evidence is on pp 39-42.

that private enterprise had built no new working-class housing for almost seven years, with no likelihood of doing so in the near future.<sup>259</sup>

Rent strikes continued through October and November 1915 as the Factors pushed for rent increases and for legal warrants to evict non-paying tenants. By November 30 an estimated 25,000 tenants were on strike in Glasgow. The march to the Sheriff Court, November 17, contributed to the Government's announcement and passing of the Rent and Mortgage Interest Restriction Bill 1915, which restored rents to their August 1914 level.<sup>260</sup>

This chapter has shown that the 1915 Rent Strike originated in Glasgow's long-standing housing problem. Rapid industrialisation, large-scale Irish immigration, lower real wages, higher living costs, and trade cycles that affected the iron, steel and engineering industries, impacted housing availability. The high construction costs and a private house-building industry that favoured subdivision of properties and building in the back-courts, served to create population densities greater than those in comparable industrial areas in England. Poor housing increased working-class morbidity and mortality and Wheatley's pamphlets publicised such statistics. The rent-strike movement's strength and success came from many years of collaboration between the ILP, the working class and labour organisations. It was not an isolated action by some Glasgow housewives, but their tactics and courage contributed greatly to the outcome. Different groups in the labour movement, many opposed to Wheatley's parliamentary approach, recognised his policies, leadership and organisation. Wheatley and Dollan were active for several years before WWI with speeches, meetings, newspaper articles, and writing pamphlets. They advised and supported tenants' resistance, brought many issues to City Council and represented working-class needs during 1915. Their Council attendance was exemplary and the Minutes record their regular and active participation in many committees.<sup>261</sup>

---

<sup>259</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 58.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

<sup>261</sup> The Glasgow Corporation Minutes (GCM) and its Committees and Sub-Committees, 1915, Jan. 8-April 15, C1 3.52, pp 545-1335; April 29-Oct. 21, C1 3.53, pp 1336-2737; Nov. 5-Dec. 23, C1 3.54, pp 3-504. Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Archives. These revealed that Wheatley Chaired the Health Committee Sub-Committee on Prevention of Tuberculosis; was a member of the Committees on Health, Tramways, General Finance, City Improvements, Cleansing, Housing, Public Baths and Wash-Houses; served on the Sub-Committees on Hospitals, Infant Mortality, Tramways Works and Stores, Properties, Collection and Disposal of City Refuse; Convened a special Committee to inquire into 'the causes of the increased cost of material required by the various departments of the Corporation;

## Chapter 3

### Wheatley and Dollan: Housing and Politics after 1915

The Rent and Mortgage Interest Restriction Act 1915, was a significant working-class victory that removed the Rent Strike notices from the Glasgow tenements.<sup>262</sup> Damer argued that the 1915 gains were the culmination in Glasgow of at least 30 years of a national *class* struggle over housing. Glasgow's rent-strikers threatened the war effort and forced the government's hand nationally.<sup>263</sup> The ILP worked for years in that struggle, and as policy maker, speaker, writer, adviser and Councillor, Wheatley helped to organise much of the ILP campaign. After 1915 Wheatley, Dollan and the ILP continued to rouse public support for social and cost-of-living issues under the affordable housing banner. In the face of general price increases and sugar and potatoes shortages they challenged Council with proposals for food depots to ensure equitable food distribution.<sup>264</sup> Wheatley continued to support soldiers and sailors families when he attacked their financial payments as being below the Parish Council subsistence level.<sup>265</sup> As President of the National Association for the Protection of Soldiers and Sailors Dependents, he mobilised strong support from women and the allowances were increased to subsistence level in January 1917.<sup>266</sup> This continued focus on housing and other important working-class issues, the growing anti-war feeling as casualties mounted and as the conscription age was made 18 years, contributed to increased ILP support. Wheatley had publicly opposed, and the ILP had never strongly supported the war. He recognised the need for a well-organised political power base and he attracted

---

special Sub-Committees on Robroyston and Knightswood Hospitals, Road improvements, Regulation of the Price of Coal, War-time Rent-Free Garden Plots, and Proposed Acquisition of land around Hogganfield Loch. He was elected Court-Houses Commissioner, membership of the Visiting Committee of Barlinnie Prison, The Committee of Management of the Roman Catholic Industrial School of Glasgow, and the Committee of Management of the Roman Catholic Reformatory School. The Minutes showed that Dollan served on the Committees on Parks, Galleries and Gardens, Tramways, Electricity, Glasgow Building Regulations Acts 1900 and 1908, the Corporation Fire Fund, Public Baths and Wash-Houses; Sub-Committees on Art Galleries and Museums, Tramways Finance, Electricity Finance, Recreation and Open Spaces, Govan Local District; Special Committees on Proposed Municipal Cemetery, Collection of Rates, Charges and Assessments, and a Proposed Printing and Stationery Department.

<sup>262</sup> *Govan Press*, Dec. 3, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>263</sup> Damer, "State, Class and Housing," 75.

<sup>264</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Sept. 16, 1916 and March 2-3, 1917, MMLG.

<sup>265</sup> *Forward*, Aug. 26, 1916, MMLG.

<sup>266</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Oct. 18, 1916, MMLG; Hannan, *The life of John Wheatley*, 61-62.

colleagues with organisation and administration skills, collaborated with them and was comfortable with them holding senior ILP positions. Reagan, Scanlon, and Wheatley's brother Patrick were on the ILP executive and Dollan was the Glasgow ILP President by the end of WWI. Wheatley chaired his own ILP branch but never held a senior position in the Glasgow ILP and even stepped down in favour of Reagan as Chairman of the CSS in early 1917. Continued ILP activism added ten new Glasgow branches by 1917.<sup>267</sup>

### **Wheatley, housing and politics in Glasgow, 1916 to 1922**

In December 1915 Wheatley was the *de facto* leader of the Labour Councillors, a departure from their policy of awarding this solely on seniority. His housing focus did not diminish after the 1915 Rent Strike. In January 1916, he became President of the Scottish Labour Housing Association (SLHA), and with McBride aimed to increase national support for the Labour programme. Dollan, Crawford, Kirkwood, Maxton, and even militant Shop Stewards in the CWC recognised his leadership.<sup>268</sup> His willingness to assist the CWC showed his sympathy for those resisting state coercion but without supporting their priorities or weakening his commitment to the parliamentary path to Socialism.<sup>269</sup> Wheatley and Dollan recognised the limitations of the 1915 Act. It did not create rent courts to adjudicate what was a fair rent in existing housing, any rent increases collected during the war were non-returnable, and the Scots Law status of house-owners and Factors was unchanged. Large-scale evictions for non-payment of earlier rents and misconduct continued throughout WW1. The Government had no legal obligations to address the underlying housing problem and had no commitment to a public housing policy. The Act killed private house-building for rent to the working class. Investors would not risk capital with restricted rents, high interest rates for borrowers, increased building and maintenance costs, higher building standards, and rising rates and government taxes. Industrial securities or the War Loan stock were attractive, not mortgages and housing.<sup>270</sup> The Royal Commission on Housing in Scotland, begun in 1912, was suspended at the start of WWI, but resumed in 1916. It reported in 1917 that Scottish housing conditions were atrocious and their further deterioration since

---

<sup>267</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 63-64; *Forward*, Feb. 17, 1917, MMLG.

<sup>268</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 49-51.

<sup>269</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 238-239.

<sup>270</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 102; Melling, "Clydeside Housing", 151; Melling, "Introduction", 23.

1914 was contributing to the industrial unrest. It concluded, as did the Committee of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest, that state-intervention was the only remedy.<sup>271</sup>

To achieve state intervention in housing and other social issues, Wheatley increasingly believed that democratic control of conventional political institutions required both national and local advancement of Socialist initiatives.<sup>272</sup> In the 1918 General Election, with GLP and Glasgow ILP Federation support, he stood in the new Shettleston constituency, followed Labour's platform of a peace treaty of reconciliation rather than punishment, withdrawal from Russia, freedom for Ireland and India, the land for the people, a capital levy and industrial democracy, and called for interest-free loans from government to enable local authorities to address the housing shortage. Wheatley lost by only 74 votes and the ILP won only two of their 15 contested seats.<sup>273</sup> Their votes total was good by pre-war standards but they had expected to win more seats. This failure of the parliamentary approach, advocated by Wheatley and the ILP, strengthened the labour militants and the emphasis shifted to industrial rather than political action, with an engineering workers strike in January 1919. The Glasgow District Committee of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), supported by the revived CWC, was more militant than the ASE leaders and demanded a 40 hour work week. Their Friday, January 31 rally in George Square was surrounded by lines of police and mounted police who charged after a tramcar was prevented from moving. The Riot Act was read. Members of a strikers' deputation, inside the City Chamber awaiting the government's reply to their demands, ran out upon hearing the noise and were arrested. Although Wheatley doubted the efficacy of the strike tactics he was in the City Chambers and he assisted Kirkwood who had been knocked unconscious by a police baton. Wheatley organised support and defence for those arrested. Anger had subsided by Saturday but soldiers from regiments not recruited from Glasgow guarded the public buildings overnight, mounted machine guns in the City Chambers, established barbed wire protection, parked six tanks in the meat market, and in full battle order patrolled the main streets. The strike's failure strengthened Wheatley's opposition to industrial rather than political and electoral action. With the militants broken the emphasis returned again to political action.<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>271</sup> Damer, "State, Class and Housing", 102; Melling, "Clydeside Housing", 151.

<sup>272</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 239-241.

<sup>273</sup> Wood, *Wheatley*, 72-73, 75; Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 87.

<sup>274</sup> Wood, *Wheatley*, 76-78; Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 90-96.

Pressed by the whole housing movement, with official reports that indicated an essential role for the state, and against a background of stagnation and industrial unrest in Britain, the Government introduced the Addison Act, 1919. For the first time the Exchequer would subsidise local authorities to build houses. The Act stated that revenue from a rate increase must be exhausted before any subsidy could be obtained, that the local authorities must submit their proposals to the Local Government Board within three months of the Act being passed, and proposed a three year time limit from submission to implementation and seven years for completion.<sup>275</sup> Immediate consequences of the passing of the Act included building costs increases due to possible labour and materials shortages, rising interest rates and collusion among builders to prevent price competition for public contracts. Already bricks had risen in price from 25 to 70 shillings/1000 and cement from 38 to 107 shillings/ton between 1914 and 1919.<sup>276</sup> Wheatley thought the Act promised little for Glasgow, and additionally that there was no major shortage of building materials, that an army of unemployed received £30 million in unemployment benefits, and that returning the soldiers from Ireland and Russia would eliminate labour shortage.<sup>277</sup>

Wheatley lobbied the Scottish Department of the Ministry of Labour to support employment schemes in Glasgow and continued his pre-war strategy to provide homes and thus jobs in the depressed building industry. As Chair of key committees he helped Labour to press City Council and the Coalition Government over their housing and employment complacency. By November 1919 the Government admitted its housing policy had failed, blamed labour and material shortages and introduced a new scheme that subsidised builders rather than local authorities.<sup>278</sup> This failed to attract private builders and in 1921 only 1409 working-class houses were being built in Glasgow. Wheatley chaired a Special Meeting of the SLHA in January 1920, and reminded the delegates that since WW1 ended more car garages than houses had been built in Glasgow. By 1921 the Addison Act contributed only 4,500 of Glasgow's required 57,000 dwellings.<sup>279</sup>

---

<sup>275</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 76-77.

<sup>276</sup> Butt, *Working Class Housing*, 154-155.

<sup>277</sup> *Glasgow Evening Times*, Aug. 23, 1919, MMLG. From 1919 Wheatley campaigned against using the British Military in Ireland and British involvement in Russia's civil war. (Wood, *Wheatley*, 79-80).

<sup>278</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 77.

<sup>279</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 108.



In 1920 the Coalition Government introduced a Bill to permit landlords to increase net rental rates by 15%, plus another 25% where the landlord was responsible for repairs, the reality for most working-class housing in Glasgow. In May, 1920 Wheatley called upon the SLHA delegates to organise a no-rent campaign, stating that this new Rent Act ignored security of tenure, did not help the poor, and that, “Ever since the end of the war we have lived in a land of robbers.”<sup>280</sup> In *The New Rent Act - A Reply to the Rent Raisers*, he wrote that in 18 months Glasgow rents had increased 30% and unemployment had reached 100,000 men, that rents were part of a bitter cost-of-living struggle and that refusal to obey the law was justified on the grounds that the people had not authorised the MPs to pass such a law.<sup>281</sup> These rent strikes were stronger where skilled shipyard and engineering workers lived. Wheatley encouraged the working class to break the law when threatened with eviction.<sup>282</sup> The *No Rent Increase Covenant* had 30,000 signatures, the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) supported rallies and strike action, and ILP branches were closely involved with rent-strike committees. Nevertheless, the strikes failed due to rising unemployment, fear of homelessness, limited industrial action support and uneven support from tenants, particularly the unskilled in poorer areas. However, they produced several Sheriff Court judgements against rent increases under the 1920 Act.<sup>283</sup> Rent unrest was also present in Cambuslang, Greenock, Port Glasgow, and Paisley, as unemployment climbed higher after 1921.<sup>284</sup> By 1922 there were almost 20,000 Clydebanks tenants on strike.<sup>285</sup>

The failed rent strike did not lessen the appeal of housing and cost-of-living issues. Wheatley, Dollan and the ILP fought the November 1920 municipal elections under that banner. Ward boundary changes resulted in the city’s increased number of council seats all being contested. Labour won 45 of the 111 seats, helped by Dollan having strengthened the local ILP organisation.<sup>286</sup> This success formalised Wheatley’s leadership of the Labour Councillors. The enlarged Labour representation, post-war unemployment, the housing problems Wheatley kept prominent in Glasgow politics, provision of free milk for nursing mothers and children

---

<sup>280</sup> *Forward*, May 29, 1920, MMLG.

<sup>281</sup> John Wheatley, *The New Rent Act - A Reply to the Rent Raisers* (Glasgow, 1920) 4, 8-9.

<sup>282</sup> James D. Young, *The Rousing of the Working Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 201.

<sup>283</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 85.

<sup>284</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 109.

<sup>285</sup> Joseph Melling, “Clydeside Housing and the Evolution of Rent Control, 1900-1939,” in *Housing, Social Policy and the State*, ed. Joseph Melling (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 155.

<sup>286</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 101-102.

under five years, and opposition to the Prince of Wales receiving the Freedom of Glasgow, produced clashes and disruption in the Council. Maintaining group discipline was challenging as Wheatley and his Labour colleagues exhibited anger against the complacent Council majority. His ten years on Council taught him how to use procedural rules and committee work to publicise and promote socialist causes.<sup>287</sup>

### **Wheatley, housing and politics in the House of Commons, 1922 to 1930**

The Coalition Government collapsed October 19, 1922, Lloyd George resigned and Bonar Law called an election for which the Labour Party was unprepared. However, Dollan was an excellent local ILP organiser, speaker and writer. Wheatley's organising and debating skills moved him centrally in the Glasgow campaign. He kept the housing issue foremost, warning that Liberals or Tories, in government separately or as a new coalition, might legislate to reverse the legal verdicts that any tenant must have notice to quit before a rent increase could be legally imposed. John Scanlon said, in Glasgow "the Labour Party's official programme was largely ignored, and the election fought on a series of leaflets and manifestos drafted mainly by Wheatley". The ILP paid the election costs of 10 of the 12 seats Labour fought in Glasgow.<sup>288</sup> Wheatley, age 53, was one of 10 Socialist MPs elected from Glasgow's 15 constituencies. Dollan's local organisational work was acknowledged at the farewell dinner before the ILP MPs took the night train to London.<sup>289</sup> Glasgow Conservatives called the results, "more like the voice of Bolshevik Russia or of Sinn Fein Ireland than of Glasgow."<sup>290</sup>

Wheatley orchestrated the Glasgow MPs maiden speeches and questions, calling Westminster "the best broadcasting station in the world, which could be used for socialist propaganda more effectively than any other agency". In the 1922-23 Parliament he was more biting and critical than when he patiently addressed local issues on city councils which he believed required a slow build-up of working-class support for socialist ideas. However, the departure for London with thousands cheering and over 100,000 people in St. Enoch's Square convinced him they were not

---

<sup>287</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 86-89.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* 89-92. His source for the Scanlon quote was; J. Scanlon, *Decline and Fall of the Labour Party* (London: Peter Davies, 1932), 29.

<sup>289</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 111.

<sup>290</sup> Gordon Brown, *Maxton* (Edinburgh: Fontana/Collins, 1988), 11.

cheering their MPs but their Socialism and were ready to respond to a bold Socialist lead.<sup>291</sup> Four days later he made his maiden speech, November 23, 1922 in the Debate on the King's Address to Parliament. He stated that the government had neither the heart nor the will to address the social problems of the working class, and that the capitalist system had totally failed two thirds of Glasgow's citizens. The wages and thus the purchasing power of British working people had been reduced by \$500,000,000 per year, a market greater than the total European market in 1920. He rejected the Tory policy that private enterprise could solve the housing problem or would even build affordable houses for working people. He commented on the capitalist system, "the longer you defend it, the more oppression and the more misery, poverty, degradation and death you will impose on the British people".<sup>292</sup> In a Housing (Unemployment) debate, Nov. 29, he attacked house-building profiteering, telling how Lord Newlands paid Glasgow no tax on 10 acres of land for 40 years, calling it valueless waste-land. When Glasgow wanted to build huts for soldiers on it, Newlands demanded £2,500 per acre for land facing the street and £714 per acre for the rest.<sup>293</sup>

In many Parliamentary interventions Wheatley demonstrated his housing expertise, and highlighted the under-consumption caused by unemployment. During 1923 Dollan sent the Clydeside MPs information for 15 Question Time interventions each week about Glasgow grievances.<sup>294</sup> The Labour front bench asked Wheatley to move rejection of Neville Chamberlain's Housing Bill at second reading, April 24, 1923. Chamberlain proposed limited subsidies to private and public builders with terms that favoured private developers.<sup>295</sup> Wheatley criticised its limitations, the small size of the dwellings, the inadequate local authority subsidy, and how private enterprise increased construction costs.<sup>296</sup> Chamberlain was, "stereotyping poverty in housing for half a century and he is giving Parliamentary acceptance to the

---

<sup>291</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 94-95. His source was John Paton in *New Leader*, May 16, 1930.

<sup>292</sup> John Wheatley. Parliamentary Contributions, HC Deb 23 November 1922 Vol 159 cc 44-166. Wheatley's speech cc 97-101. These are produced from digitised editions of Commons and Lords Hansard,

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com?people/mr-john-wheatley-1>.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid*. HC Deb 29 Nov. 1922 Vol 159 cc 775-847. Wheatley cc 826-836. It is worth noting that in that first, short session from Nov. 23 – Dec. 12 (19 days) 1922, Hansard recorded that Wheatley made 50 interventions and received 2 written answers to questions. Housing was the subject on which he spoke most often.

<sup>294</sup> Brown, *Maxton*, 126.

<sup>295</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 99.

<sup>296</sup> Housing etc. (No 2 Bill), HC Deb 24 April 1923 Vol 163 cc 303-420, Wheatley cc 327-335.

permanence of class distinctions”.<sup>297</sup> Wheatley’s powerful performance, reflecting his early years of overcrowding in one room, marked him for future responsibility. The Labour opposition could neither block the bill nor achieve significant amendments.<sup>298</sup>

The Glasgow MPs frequently caused disturbances and criticised their opponents using language that drew points of order, then reprimands from the Speaker. During debate on the Scottish Health Estimates, June 27, 1923, Maxton, whose wife had recently died after their young son’s long illness, called Sir Frederick Banbury, MP for the City of London, a murderer for supporting reduction in those Estimates. This charge was repeated by Wheatley, Stephen and Buchanan, so all four were suspended.<sup>299</sup> Wheatley regularly and actively attended Parliament, and with Dollan was elected to the ILP’s National Administrative Council. However, he continued to address weekend meetings in his Shettleston constituency.<sup>300</sup> In Glasgow’s City Hall, July 1923, Wheatley explained the suspension incident and stated that they “were protesting against the slaughter of the children of the poor whose lives were estimated by their commercial value to the rich.” He also attacked government spokesmen who claimed that climatic differences from England accounted for Scotland’s high child mortality, and noted, using district mortality statistics that Kelvinside’s climate must be much superior to the poorer areas of Glasgow.<sup>301</sup>

Baldwin’s conversion to trade protection split the Coalition Government and as a result this Parliament ended, October 25, 1923. In the subsequent election all the Clydesiders were re-elected, while nationally, Conservatives won 258 seats, Labour 191 and Liberals 158. On January 21, 1924 Labour and 148 Liberals voted to topple Baldwin’s government. Ramsay Macdonald saw the King the next day and formed the first Labour government.<sup>302</sup> Earlier, on December 15, Wheatley had stated that if Baldwin could be toppled Labour should claim office without a Liberal coalition or compromise.<sup>303</sup> On January 22, Wheatley refused, backed by the Clydeside MPs, MacDonald’s offer of the position of Parliamentary Under-Secretary

---

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.* Wheatley, c 335.

<sup>298</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 101.

<sup>299</sup> Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 107.

<sup>300</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 112, 114.

<sup>301</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, July, 9, 1923, MMLG.

<sup>302</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 132-133, 139.

<sup>303</sup> *Forward*, Dec. 15, 1923. MMLG.

at the Health Ministry, but that same day accepted the office of Health Minister in the minority Labour government, with co-ordinating power over health and housing policy.<sup>304</sup> Butt described Wheatley as the only unquestioned success of the 1924 Labour Government, the Liberal MP Charles Masterman called him the one conspicuous success in the new Parliament, another Liberal, Rayner, praised him, while his adversary Joynson Hicks, called him “a great man, a great Parliamentarian”.<sup>305</sup> Many leading Labour figures regarded him highly. Herbert Morrison called him an excellent Minister of Health who had outmatched the Conservatives in the debate on the District Auditor’s Surcharges against the Poplar Borough Council.<sup>306</sup> Wheatley controlled the House in that debate and to Labour’s delight demolished the Opposition with a great speech of solidly and logically presented facts.<sup>307</sup> Snowden, Asquith and Beatrice Webb greatly praised his performance.<sup>308</sup>

Shinwell described the 1924 Housing Act as the best legislation from Macdonald’s minority Labour Government, and a triumph for Wheatley that enabled local authorities to build government subsidised houses and to let them at controlled rents.<sup>309</sup> Wheatley identified the building industry shortages of material and skilled workmen, got employers and organised labour working together to produce growth of the industry, and moved the complex Bill through parliament with lucidity, attention to detail and compromise, drawing praise from a major Liberal opponent.<sup>310</sup> Although not radical it represented Wheatley’s administrative realism from Glasgow Council.<sup>311</sup> Unfortunately, the Building Materials Bill to monitor the supply and price of building materials did not reach the Statute Book before the Labour Government resigned October 29, 1924 after losing a crucial vote following a Conservative-Liberal alliance. The Wheatley Act enabled great progress in house building until the Conservatives ended its subsidies in 1934. Nearly 42% of houses built in Glasgow between 1919 and 1939 with Government financial aid came under

---

<sup>304</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 119. Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 117-118.

<sup>305</sup> Butt, *Working Class Housing*, 161; Wood, *John Wheatley*, 139; Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, 134.

<sup>306</sup> Herbert Morrison, *An Autobiography* (London: Odham’s Press, 1960), 100-101.

<sup>307</sup> Wheatley, Poplar Order HC Deb 26 Feb. 1924 Vol 170, cc 319-433. Wheatley cc 337-350.

<sup>308</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 125.

<sup>309</sup> Shinwell, *The Labour Story*, 121.

<sup>310</sup> Housing Bill, HC Deb 25 July Vol 176 cc 1639-1728. Masterman cc 1703-1704.

<sup>311</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 258-259.

its terms.<sup>312</sup> Before 1914 Glasgow Council built 1% of the housing but between the wars it built 71% and subsidised a further 13%.<sup>313</sup> Wheatley called housing reform “the Red Cross work of the class struggle”.<sup>314</sup> Even in office he was perhaps disillusioned with the Government’s lack of achievement. Scanlon recalled that Wheatley thought that capitalism’s defects could not be remedied “in a Government composed of men who did not believe in Socialism”.<sup>315</sup> Wheatley’s national route to Socialism did not lessen his desire to defend working-class interests, although increasingly disillusioned about the Labour Party’s ability to provide decisive leadership.<sup>316</sup> He opposed Free Trade, argued for increased working-class purchasing power, and a more rapid and comprehensive socialisation of industry. He advocated strongly for the protection of British living standards against cheap competition, an economic nationalism not well received in the ILP.<sup>317</sup> For Wheatley the working class and class politics were essential to any socialist strategy.<sup>318</sup> The weakness of the Left, its reluctance to upset electoral calculations for success, and his doubts about achieving Socialism under Macdonald’s Labour Party, left Wheatley very isolated by June 1929. He did not dilute his radical politics, remained estranged from the Labour Party leadership, was not offered office in the 1929 Government, criticised its expectations about employment, and found that his criticisms caused him to lose influence. His health declined and he died suddenly in 1930, aged 61. Fittingly, his last Parliamentary contribution was on housing with an impassioned plea to not see the slum-dweller as an inferior type of humanity. He criticised many MPs failure to appreciate how awful it was to live in a slum.<sup>319</sup> Eighteen months after Wheatley died many within the Labour Party rejected Macdonald’s leadership and the results of financial orthodoxy, bringing down the second Labour minority government.<sup>320</sup>

---

<sup>312</sup> Butt, *Working Class Housing*, 162.

<sup>313</sup> Miles Horsey, *Tenement Towers: Glasgow Working Class Housing 1890-1990* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: 1990), 12.

<sup>314</sup> Wood, *John Wheatley*, 145.

<sup>315</sup> Scanlon, *Decline and Fall*, 72-73.

<sup>316</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 262-264.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* 267-269, 275.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* 276-277.

<sup>319</sup> Housing (No 2) Bill, HC Deb 08 April 1930 Vol 237 cc 1999-2059. Wheatley cc 2013-2020. Hansard recorded that Wheatley made 1771 contributions in his 9 year Parliamentary career.

<sup>320</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 278-280.

## Dollan, housing and politics in Glasgow, 1916 to 1938

Dollan was a conscientious objector from 1914: *Forward* reported both Wheatley and Dollan speaking at an anti-war rally at Glasgow Green a few days after war was declared.<sup>321</sup> The Home Office scheme in Wakefield Prison for conscientious objectors limited Dollan's role in the labour movement during 1916-17. During Glasgow's 1919 labour strike he produced daily the lively, widely read *Strike Bulletin* that sold 20,000 copies on the day after "Bloody Friday".<sup>322</sup> He increasingly organised Glasgow's Labour Party, contributing to the election in 1920 of 45 Labour Councillors and ten ILP MPs.<sup>323</sup> He regularly contacted his parliamentary colleagues and described Wheatley as the *Director General of Westminster Operations* who planned the anti-Government attacks, not allowing them to forget the poverty, slums and hunger in Glasgow.<sup>324</sup> Dollan shared their political policies but, like Shinwell, wanted ILP amalgamation with the Labour Party, while maintaining a specific area of ILP action within it. He did not support Maxton, Wheatley and other Clydesiders challenging the Labour Party Leadership and party unity, increasingly from 1927 as they sought greater commitment to Left-wing politics.<sup>325</sup> In the Glasgow and Scottish ILP Federations he opposed charismatic left-wing MPs like Maxton, and some perceived Dollan as obstructing labour movement radicalisation.<sup>326</sup> His involvement in rent issues and in reforming housing conditions was life-long, "to save the little ones from shame". Moralistic and socially-conservative views for some but seldom challenged then as many working-class people shared them. He was appointed to the Commission of Enquiry, January 1925, to examine the Clydebank rent strike.<sup>327</sup> His 1925 pamphlet *The Clyde Rent War* showed that rents were still excessive relative to income and the accommodation supplied. He exposed the "legal terrorism" of Factors taking all tenants in arrears, regardless of circumstance, to the Eviction Court, where the Court costs fell on the tenants. Houses were overcrowded, with one W.C. for every five families, normal repairs were not done, so there was broken plaster,

---

<sup>321</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 50-53. *Forward*, Aug. 15, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>322</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 93, 95. Bloody Friday was the name Dollan gave to the riot in George Square.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.* 101-102.

<sup>324</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 25.

<sup>325</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 141, 214, 216-220.

<sup>326</sup> McShane, *Harry McShane*, 110.

<sup>327</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 33-34, 44.

decayed stairs, windows broken for months, and the walls of the closes were filthy with dirt and last painted pre-war. Many Factors coerced financial premiums from new tenants, desperate due to the housing shortage.<sup>328</sup>

The ILP demise began when it disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932 to create a united working class movement to quickly achieve a socialist commonwealth, falling from 16,000 to 4,000 members by 1935.<sup>329</sup> Largely due to Dollan's organisation the Labour Party won control of Glasgow in the 1933 municipal election, one of the earliest socialist administrated British cities.<sup>330</sup> The 10 ILP Council members were militantly undisciplined but Labour needed their votes to maintain its Council majority. Dollan had many verbal battles with them until Labour gained its own overall majority in 1938, with Dollan as the Provost, which anomalously for a socialist carried the title, Lord Provost.<sup>331</sup> The Council Moderates started Glasgow's major council-house building programme under the 1925 Wheatley Act. Labour were still a minority which kept agitating about Glasgow's housing problems. The 1933 Labour Council, with 80,000 names on the housing waiting-list, was faced with the National Government's Housing Act 1933 which cut housing expenditure in Scotland by reducing subsidies, ending them in 1935 except for slum clearance. The pace of building slowed as the subsidies were reduced and overcrowding increased. Further rates increases, already large by the standards of the time, were the only way Glasgow could supply more working-class houses. To keep rates down there had to be economic rents, beyond the means of the poor with the greatest need. The 1938 Housing Act included more generous subsidies to tackle the housing problem, a goal frustrated by WWII. Glasgow's inadequate and overcrowded housing would continue to be a challenge until late in the 20<sup>th</sup>C, with many mistakes and wrong steps in meeting the challenge.<sup>332</sup>

---

<sup>328</sup> P.J. Dollan, *The Clyde Rent War* (Glasgow: Scottish Council of the ILP, Civic Press, 1925), 12-16, Glasgow University Library, Special Collections (Sp Coll Broady A59), relates to 1921 onwards but specifically to 1925.

<sup>329</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 269-273.

<sup>330</sup> Gallagher, *Scottish Catholics*, 31-32.

<sup>331</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 274-275. Dollan was Lord Provost (like a Lord Mayor in England) 1938-1941.

<sup>332</sup> Butt, *Working-Class Housing*, 162-165.



## **The significance of Wheatley and Dollan after 1915**

They recognised the Rent Restrictions Act as a victory, but one that solved none of Glasgow's fundamental housing problems. The Act ended any private enterprise, market-driven answers for the provision of working-class rental housing. As practical, democratic, socialist politicians, and driven by a genuine desire to improve the lives of the working class, they continued after 1915 and throughout their political careers to pursue and promote the need for a local authority and central government supported approach to the provision of affordable housing. After 1915 they continued to organise and strengthen the ILP as a party with coherent policies on housing and other social issues to attract and retain the working-class vote, and that would be capable of achieving power democratically. Wheatley remained a strong supporter of local authority provision of municipal housing but with financial and legislative support from the central government. Wheatley was truly the leader of the Labour group in Glasgow but also had an important role in retaining solidarity between the ILP and various labour groups whose militant views did not fit well with the ILP parliamentary approach, but whose support was important for electoral success.

The ILP steadily improved its representation on City Council and after 1922 Dollan became more prominent as a leader and an organiser. He achieved the goal of leading the Labour group with an absolute socialist majority on Glasgow City Council in 1938. The strong ILP political organisation contributed to Wheatley and nine ILP colleagues winning ten of Glasgow's parliamentary seats in 1922. Housing, unemployment and health were the consistent themes of Wheatley's powerfully expressed interventions in Parliament, which left no doubts as to his views on complacent capitalism in Britain. Wheatley and the Clydeside MPs appear to have forced MacDonald to appoint Wheatley as Health Minister in the 1924 minority Labour Government, one of only two MPs from the Labour left wing to receive a senior post. In the first six of the short nine months life of the first Labour Government, Wheatley skilfully guided his Housing Bill through Parliament. While it did not solve the housing shortage problem it enabled great progress in house-building until the Conservative Government abolished its subsidies in 1934. Most of the Clydeside MPs distrusted MacDonald and other Labour leaders' willingness to seek compromise and watered-down policies, although Shinwell in Parliament and

Dollan in Glasgow both sought greater integration of the ILP with the Labour Party. After the fall of the first Labour Government, Wheatley maintained his more radical policies and although remaining on the Labour Opposition Front Bench from 1924 to 1926, he became estranged from the Labour Party leadership, and was not offered any post in MacDonald's Cabinet in the 1929 second minority Labour government. From 1924 to 1930 he continued to make powerful interventions in Parliament, but by the time of his sudden death in 1930 he was in the political wilderness with a few of his ILP colleagues.

## Chapter 4

### Sectarianism, Socialism, Catholicism, and 1915 Events

#### Societal bigotry and discrimination against Catholics and the Irish

In 1778 Glasgow had 20 Catholics, below 0.05% of its population, and celebrating Mass was forbidden until 1782. The 1778 Relief Act reversed the Penal laws against Catholics in England and Wales. A similar measure for Scotland in 1779 provoked rioting in Glasgow and was dropped until 1793 when the government hoped to recruit Catholics to fight against revolutionary France. In 1801 Catholics were allowed to become Town Councillors and the 1828 National Catholic Emancipation Act removed constraints that still applied to the private and public lives of Catholics. In the 1790s Glasgow had 39 Catholics and 43 anti-Catholic societies, strong hostility towards a small religious group that presented no social or economic threat to the Presbyterian citizens.<sup>333</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup>C industrial revolution demanded cheap labour and between 1820 and 1831 Irish immigration increased Glasgow's Catholic population from 10,000 to 27,000. Protestant opposition delayed the restoration of a Catholic Church hierarchy until 1878.<sup>334</sup> The minority Protestant Irish immigrants fitted more easily into Scotland. They joined the Orange Order, the Freemasons, became *respectable* Presbyterians and had better access to education, features that regulated entry into the skilled trades. Irish Catholics initially constituted the poorer and unskilled working class. Work availability attracted Irish Catholic immigrants to Glasgow and the west-central industrial and mining regions rather than to the essentially rural rest of Scotland.<sup>335</sup> From 1728 onwards Ireland suffered 24 potato crop failures. In the five years after the 1845 potato blight more than 1,000,000 Irish died from

---

<sup>333</sup> Callum Graham Brown, "Religion and the Development of an Urban Society: Glasgow 1780-1914," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, Vol.1, 1981), 91-94, 97.

<sup>334</sup> Callum G. Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland* (London: Methuen, 1987), 45-46; Colm Brogan, *The Glasgow Story* (London: Muller, 1954), 183.

<sup>335</sup> Anthony Ross, "Development of the Scottish Catholic Community 1878-1978," in *Modern Scottish Catholicism 1878-1978*, Ed. David McRoberts (Glasgow: Burns, 1979), 30-31; Scott C. Styles, "The Non-sectarian Culture of North-East Scotland," in *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, Ed. T.M. Devine (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000), 115-117; Gallagher, *The Uneasy Peace*, 1-8.

starvation, 800,000 emigrated to North America, and 200,000 to Britain, principally through Liverpool, London and Glasgow.<sup>336</sup>

Waves of immigrants fleeing the Irish Famine, the threats of typhus and dysentery, and the pressures on the industrial towns and cities of central Scotland reduced any earlier willingness to absorb the newcomers. The Irish were associated with the threatening aspects of the emerging industrialisation. Pre-existing hostility towards Catholics and racial attitudes towards the Irish were strengthened by large numbers of Irish Catholics willing to work long hours for lower wages in unskilled jobs, potentially lowering wages for all Scottish workers. The Calvinist Church of Scotland held that flawed character caused poverty and poor living conditions. Worldly success rewarded the good Christian lives of the elect who were saved and the damned had shown their inherent worthlessness by their miserable lives.<sup>337</sup> Famine was seen as a punishment for a nation unable to look after itself, stereotyping *colonial* Irish as an *immigrant* and lesser group within the United Kingdom, who threatened disease, crime and degradation, also Catholic and therefore unfit for modern society.<sup>338</sup> Identifying poverty with inferiority and Roman Catholicism gave respectable, Protestant, Scottish artisans, who in the expanding economy of the 1850s and 1860s could afford accommodation outside the wynds, a sense of superiority from the lower masses. Their material skills and the accompanying public recognition arose from Anglo-Saxon and Reformation qualities and values. This distinctiveness later challenged the Scottish labour movement.<sup>339</sup> Irish Protestants often held skilled occupations, belonged to the Orange Order, opposed Irish Home-rule, and after 1870 were allied with the Conservatives and the politics of Empire and loyalism. The Conservatives won the 1874 election and the Grand Master of the Orange Lodge stated, July 12, “a good solid Conservative government (*cheers*)” has replaced “a mixty-maxy government of Churchmen, Ritualists, Quakers, Jews, Infidels, Papists”.<sup>340</sup> The Catholic Church was identified with a poor, underprivileged and unskilled segment of Scottish society. Its priests

---

<sup>336</sup> Smith, *The Great Hunger*, 32-33; C. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity* (Boulder: Roberts Rineheart, 1995), 289-305.

<sup>337</sup> Craig, *The Tears*, 81.

<sup>338</sup> Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 291.

<sup>339</sup> John F. McCaffrey, “Reactions in Scotland to the Irish Famine,” in *Scottish Christianity in the Modern World*, Eds. Stuart J. Brown and George Newlands (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2000), 158-161, 173-174.

<sup>340</sup> Ian G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924: Politics, elections and Issues* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), 119, 123.

were the only 19<sup>th</sup>C Scottish clergy who lived like the working classes, which probably strengthened their position in the Irish immigrant community.<sup>341</sup>

Catholic and Episcopal Schools were excluded from the education system established by The Education (Scotland) Act 1872, which took control of public education from the Presbyterian religious institutions and gave it to locally elected School Boards. At that time there was much mutual suspicion between the state and a Catholic community that recently had obtained some freedom of religious expression. The hierarchy feared that the new state-funded Board schools would remain Presbyterian, which was indeed the reality for a long time.<sup>342</sup> Catholic schooling, already inadequate before 1872 due to the absence of state funding, was further disadvantaged by the continued lack of financial support because of the Catholic hierarchy's refusal to hand over the church-built schools to a *de facto* Presbyterian school system. Inadequate schooling was one of several factors why Irish Catholics in the West of Scotland were restricted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>C labour market.<sup>343</sup> Without state support the Catholic education costs were borne by the Church and the poorest segment of Scottish society was taxed through the rates for the national system and had voluntarily to pay for Catholic schools, which inevitably lacked resources.<sup>344</sup> Voting in local School Board elections would have been dominated by the Protestant majority. Before the 1918 Representation of the People Act, inability to meet property qualification prevented more than 50% of adult Irishmen from voting, and this may have contributed to a lack of trust in voting for Boards.<sup>345</sup> With little opportunity for Catholics to participate in local politics, many parishes formed various Catholic Associations in the 1870s in order to have a voice.<sup>346</sup>

Anti-Catholic and anti-Irish prejudice could not rest on the lie that they were less patriotic during WWI. In the first three months Irish Catholics, 3.7% of the

---

<sup>341</sup> A. L. Drummond, J. Bullock, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1874* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew's Press, 1974), 74.

<sup>342</sup> F.J. O'Hagan and R.A. Davis, "Forging the compact of church and state in the development of Catholic education in late nineteenth-century Scotland," *The Innes Review* 58 (2007): 78-79.

<sup>343</sup> W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 142.

<sup>344</sup> Michael Fry, *Patronage and Principle: A Political History of Modern Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), 139-140.

<sup>345</sup> W. Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, 30.

<sup>346</sup> John McCaffrey, "Roman Catholics in Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* XXI (1938): 291.

population, contributed 16.4% of Scotland's 82,957 volunteers. The parish Rolls of Honour told the story, and six Catholic soldiers from Glasgow received the Victoria Cross.<sup>347</sup> *The Glasgow Observer's* Obituary columns were filled with the names of first and second generation immigrant Irish volunteers.<sup>348</sup> Nevertheless, the Church of Scotland's official magazine, *Life and Work*, denounced in 1918 the Roman Catholic Church as, "the enemy of Great Britain and the friend, more or less avowed, of Germany".<sup>349</sup>

During WWI Bishop McCarthy of Galloway proposed that the Catholic community's sacrifices deserved the same liberties as the rest of the population, particularly in education.<sup>350</sup> The 1918 Education (Scotland) Act improved the availability and accessibility of Catholic schools, enabling some ambitious young people to qualify for higher education. However, it took many years to replace inadequate school-buildings, reduce class-sizes and broaden the post-elementary base. The Catholic and Irish educational disadvantage was still large when Wheatley died in 1930, when 10.86% of State pupils but only 3.74% of Catholic students received secondary education.<sup>351</sup> Prejudice in the professions made it easier for professionally qualified Catholics to work in England or abroad, except where they served Scottish Catholics as a doctor or lawyer.<sup>352</sup> Glasgow University, founded 1451, was the most working-class Scottish University. From 1860 to 1910 working-class males increased from 18.6% to 24% of the student body with no increase from the mostly Irish-Catholic unskilled or semi-skilled segments.<sup>353</sup> In 1880 from 250,000 Glasgow Catholics only six attended the University; five studied Medicine and one studied law.<sup>354</sup> In 1967 Glasgow University had 700 Catholic undergraduates. By

---

<sup>347</sup> Elaine McFarland, "'How the Irish paid their debt': Irish Catholics in Scotland and Voluntary Enlistment, August 1914-July 1915," *The Scottish Historical Review* 82 (2003):261-266; *The Glasgow Observer*, Oct. 21, Dec. 26, 1914 and April 19, 1985, MMLG.

<sup>348</sup> Ian S. Wood, "John Wheatley, the Irish and the Labour Movement in Scotland," *Innes Review* 31 (1980): 80.

<sup>349</sup> *Life and Work*, June (1918): 80.

<sup>350</sup> McFarland, "How the Irish," 279.

<sup>351</sup> J.H. Treble, "The Working of the 1918 Education Act in Glasgow Archdiocese," *Innes Review* 31 (1980): 41.

<sup>352</sup> Gallagher, *The Uneasy Peace*, 103-104, 113.

<sup>353</sup> Smout, *A Century*, 224.

<sup>354</sup> McRoberts, *Modern Scottish Catholicism*, Introduction, 11.

1974 there were around 2000, with over 90% the first in their families to receive tertiary education, suggesting a previously unmet need.<sup>355</sup>

Shared war experiences did not remove barriers of prejudice. Scottish Catholics, mostly descendants of Irish immigrants, faced routine job discrimination.<sup>356</sup> Catholics post-war still read newspaper job advertisements that stated they were not welcome to apply.<sup>357</sup> Anti-Catholic employment discrimination and hostility came from middle- and working-class Presbyterians. For example, Mitchell's Tobacco Work and Templeton's Carpet factory employed only Protestants.<sup>358</sup> Foremen in engineering works and shipyards hired and fired, which reinforced employment discrimination as skilled engineering occupations were filled by Protestants, Scots and Irish. From the 1860s when skilled shipyard workmen arrived from Belfast some shipyards preferred to employ Freemasons or Orange Order members. Springburn and Partick had the largest Orange concentrations in Glasgow, reflected in the highest degree of anti-Catholic feeling. The Coatbridge ASE branch met in the Orange Hall and had no Catholic member until 1931.<sup>359</sup> The Belfast shipbuilding firm Harland and Wolff brought over many workers to establish its Govan shipyard in 1912, and no Catholic was employed there.<sup>360</sup> Harry McShane stated, without providing evidence, that in 1912 Catholic shipyard workers were dumped in the river and others murdered to ensure that Protestant workers filled all the jobs.<sup>361</sup> This may reflect a contemporary mythology as it is not mentioned in any other accounts of that time. But it was the case that by 1913-14 Britain had over 400 Orange Order branches, and more than a quarter were in Glasgow with the largest there having 15,000 members. Ulster Protestants got higher status jobs in the railways and Catholics were permanently excluded from the best jobs.<sup>362</sup>

Job discrimination slowly decreased after WWII, as Scottish firms and industries were taken over by foreign companies.<sup>363</sup> Nevertheless, employment bias, applied by asking applicants to name the schools they attended, continued late into

---

<sup>355</sup> Joseph Devine, "a Lanarkshire Perspective on Bigotry in Scottish Society," in *Scotland's Shame*, Devine, 103.

<sup>356</sup> Devine, *Scotland's Shame*, 7.

<sup>357</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, 200.

<sup>358</sup> Hughes, *Gender*, 72.

<sup>359</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, 142.

<sup>360</sup> Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 504-506.

<sup>361</sup> McShane, *McShane*, 79, 261.

<sup>362</sup> Carol Craig, *the Tears*, 102.

<sup>363</sup> S. Bruce, "Comparing Scotland and Northern Ireland," in Devine, *Scotland's Shame*, 140.

the 20<sup>th</sup>C. It was effectively and diversely applied, from one large factory tool room where fewer than ten of the 300 employees were Catholics, to occupations such as banking, printing, the fire service, and quantity surveying among others.<sup>364</sup> Arnold Kemp, the *Glasgow Herald* editor, 1981-1995, was furtively tested by his employers for “reliable Protestantism”.<sup>365</sup> The 1999 Edinburgh Festival lecture, *Scotland’s Shame*, by James McMillan, Scotland’s internationally acclaimed composer, stated that bigotry and visceral anti-Catholicism still disfigured Scotland’s academic world, professions, politics and media. This generated many letters of support and opposition.<sup>366</sup> It stimulated an academic collection of essays that stated that Scotland needed a lively and serious discussion of this neglected subject.<sup>367</sup> This thesis cannot comprehensively review Scottish or West of Scotland anti-Catholic prejudice. However, as a minority, Catholics experienced prejudice and discrimination in employment and education, which continued through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as their numbers increased after industrialisation.

The prejudice was also racist. The Established and United Free Churches demanded Irish immigration controls to protect the “Scots race” and nation.<sup>368</sup> A General Assembly report, May 29 1923, asked the government to prevent Irish immigration, although it was already low and had slowed since the late 19<sup>th</sup>C. In 1911, 6.73% of Scotland’s population were Irish-born compared with 18.7% in 1851.<sup>369</sup> The report said of Irish Catholics: “they cannot be assimilated and absorbed into the Scottish race. They remain a people by themselves, segregated by their race.... inevitably dividing Scotland, racially, socially and ecclesiastically.” It emphasised that economic pressure by the Irish race compelled Scottish youth to emigrate to America and the Dominions.<sup>370</sup> From 1922 until 1938 the Church and Nation Committee campaigned to reduce the Catholic population, preferably by disenfranchisement and forcible repatriation to the Irish Free State.<sup>371</sup> In short, late-19<sup>th</sup>C and early-20<sup>th</sup>C Scotland reproduced a racist and defamatory image of the

---

<sup>364</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, 283-284; Gallagher, *The Uneasy Peace*, 251-252.

<sup>365</sup> J. M. Bradley, “Sectarianism and Catholic Schools,” in Bradley, *Celtic Minded* 3, 143.

<sup>366</sup> Devine, *Scotland’s Shame*, 7-8.

<sup>367</sup> T.M. Devine, “Then and Now: Catholics in Scotland 1950-2000,” in Devine, *Scotland’s Shame*, 269.

<sup>368</sup> Brown, *The Social History of Religion*, 194, 201-202.

<sup>369</sup> Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 171.

<sup>370</sup> “Report of the Committee to Consider the Overtures on Irish Immigration and the Education (Scotland) Act 1918,” in *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland*, (1923), 756.

<sup>371</sup> Stewart J. Brown, “‘Outside the Covenant’: A Need to be Different?” in *Scotland’s Shame*, Devine, 160.



Irish.<sup>372</sup> It reflected 19<sup>th</sup>C scientific racism and ascribed deterministic cultural characteristics that included intemperance, improvidence, crime and sexual deviance.<sup>373</sup>

## Socialism and Catholicism

Wheatley and Dollan embraced Socialism, a term with meanings and beliefs that varied between countries. In the 1880s to 1890s the working classes showed little interest in socialism, the majority of *old unionists* resembled Liberals and declared how much they disliked “socialistic programmes”.<sup>374</sup> Baillieston miners were Liberals and generally believed that socialists were atheists or agnostics bent upon destroying churches, homes and everything the miners held dear.<sup>375</sup> British socialist pioneers were Christian socialists grounded in Britain’s own radical tradition and many criticised doctrinaire Marxian socialism. Marxian and anti-Christian elements had limited penetration into the British working-class movement early in the 20<sup>th</sup>C despite the efforts of H.M.Hyndman’s SDF. One of Hyndman’s lectures was: ‘*The Four Internationals: the Jews, the Catholics, the Monarchs, the Socialists*’ in which only the Socialists were favourably treated.<sup>376</sup> This was hardly likely to have much appeal amongst Scottish workers given the persistent strength of their religious identities.

In the 19<sup>th</sup>C and today, anyone criticising industrial capitalism, however mildly, might be labelled ‘socialist’ without that term ever being clearly defined. In the later 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup>C many Catholics saw it in the context of a radical and socialist-inspired French government that expelled religious orders in 1901 and closed church schools, identifying continental socialism with anti-clericalism, abolition of private property and revolution.<sup>377</sup> As British socialism developed it interacted with various European understandings of socialism but most 19<sup>th</sup>C British socialists drew upon the country’s own radical tradition and Christian Socialists, who accepted the social concerns and activities of the Established and Nonconformist

---

<sup>372</sup> Robert Miles and Lesley Muirhead, *Racism in Scotland: a matter for further investigation* (Scottish Government Yearbook, 1986), 113, 120.

<sup>373</sup> A. Dewar Gibb, *Scotland in Eclipse* (London: Humphrey Toulmin, 1930), 55-57.

<sup>374</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, “Glasgow Working Class Politics,” in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750-1914*, Ed. R.A. Cage (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 39; Shinwell, *The Labour Story*, 39.

<sup>375</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 72.

<sup>376</sup> Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924* (The Royal Historical Society: the Boydell Press, 1998) 9, 37, 67.

<sup>377</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 230-231.

churches, were prominent. Many early trade union leaders learned the art of public speaking and committee work in Nonconformist chapels.<sup>378</sup> There were Christian socialists for whom socialism was the practice of Christianity, secular Socialists for whom it would be a deliverance from all religions towards a secular system, and neutral Socialists who wanted to keep these belief systems apart. These groups devoted time and energy to disagreeing with one another.<sup>379</sup> Labour movement socialism in Britain was “extremely vague”, although committed to “a fundamental structural change in the economy”.<sup>380</sup> Keir Hardie indicted class war yet said he followed Marx; but this was a respectable Marx created by Hardie himself, and would probably have been unrecognisable to Engels. The Labour movement and working-class organisations long argued how to define socialism, how to present it consistent with British nationalism, character, history and political traditions, and how it was to be introduced and at what pace.<sup>381</sup>

Wheatley’s socialism should be understood in the context of Catholic social teaching and its development in response to social changes. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup>C the Catholic Church was examining how its social theory should develop to address the social and economic problems of the new industrialisation, and to respond to the activities and programmes of early socialists. In 1849, Baron Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, first asserted in his cathedral in response to Marx and Engels *Communist Manifesto*, what would become embodied in the Church’s social teachings. Later, in *Christianity and the Labour Question*, 1864, he stated, “All other classes of society enjoy security. Why should the working-classes alone be deprived of it?” In 1869 he reported to the German Bishops *On the care of the Church for Factory-workers, Journeymen, Apprentices and Servant-girls*. His criticism of capitalism’s excesses and his argument that promotion of workers’ rights needed social legislation contributed to the later social encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII. Count Albert de Mun, 1841-1914, while a prisoner during the Franco-Prussian War accepted this social thinking, introduced it to France and as a Deputy advocated for improvement in the workers’ lot through labour legislation. A Swiss Catholic, Gaspard Decurtins, in 1889 promoted an international agreement on labour

---

<sup>378</sup> J.M. Cleary, *Catholic Social action in Britain 1909-1959* (Oxford: Catholic Social Guild, 1961), 13-14, 19.

<sup>379</sup> Sheridan Gilley, “Catholics and Socialists in Scotland, 1900-1930,” in *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, Eds. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Barnes and Noble Books, 1989), 213.

<sup>380</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), 142.

<sup>381</sup> Ward, *Red Flag*, 5, 49.

legislation, a forerunner of the International Labour Organisation at Geneva. Another Swiss, Cardinal Mermillod, 1824-1892, established at Fribourg the International Union of Social Studies and much of its discussions entered the social encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII.<sup>382</sup> These illustrate progressive lay and ecclesiastical contributions to social theory, but it is equally clear that in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup>C the Catholic Church, like society, internally reflected various opinions about justice and workers' rights in the new industrial age. Nevertheless, the evolution of Catholic Social Teaching was authoritatively presented in the 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (The Condition of the Working Classes). In the introduction Leo XIII spoke of, "the enormous fortunes of some few individuals and the utter poverty of the masses". In section three he wrote "a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than slavery itself".<sup>383</sup> Additional encyclicals amplified his social doctrine. His successor from 1903 to 1914, Pope Pius X, stated that all Catholic social workers should follow those principles. His 1905 encyclical, *On Christian Social Action*, introduced the phrase *Catholic Action*, and emphasised the Catholic laity's leadership role.<sup>384</sup>

British Catholics were less active than European Catholics or English Protestants in developing social thought in the 19<sup>th</sup>C. With Catholics less than 5% of the population the Catholic hierarchy, suppressed until 1850, was challenged to meet the spiritual and educational needs of thousands of nearly destitute Irish driven by famine into the poorest areas of Britain's industrial cities. Bishop Bagshawe, Nottingham (1829-1915), made the first English contribution to Catholic social doctrine through his 1885 collection of pastoral letters, *Mercy and Justice to the Poor, the True Political Economy*. They expressed the doctrine and many of the words used later in *Rerum Novarum*.<sup>385</sup> Cardinal Manning's work in London challenged British Catholic thinking about social rights and also contributed to the ideas in *Rerum Novarum* of social justice for the poor. He defended the right of the starving to steal, supported trade unions and the regulation of working conditions in factories.<sup>386</sup> In 1872 he supported the Agricultural Labourers Union and its Methodist lay-preacher leader. In 1889 he helped to resolve the London dock-strike led by Ben Tillett. Manning tackled immediate problems, such as building schools

---

<sup>382</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Social Action*, 15-17.

<sup>383</sup> Leo XIII Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Novarum*, Acta Leonis xiii, 11, 1892, 97-114, in Vatican Library.

<sup>384</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Social Action*, 17-18. The instruction to Catholic social workers was in 1903.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* 20-21.

<sup>386</sup> Gilley, *Catholics and Socialists*, 213.

rather than a cathedral, committee work on housing, and distress relief during the hard 1887-88 winter.<sup>387</sup> An establishment Anglican Archdeacon before becoming a Catholic, his views were clear: “everything, therefore, that afflicts the human suffering and state of the people, it is the duty of every civilised man to note and tend, much more of every Christian man, and above all of every Catholic man and women, and emphatically of every priest and bishop”.<sup>388</sup>

Wheatley argued that the Catholic Church had always leaned more to Socialism or Collectivism, and to equality than to individualism and inequality. Historically, he suggested, it was the rich, not the poor, that attacked the church. Francesco Nitti’s book, *Catholic Socialism*, in its 1895 English translation, clearly influenced him.<sup>389</sup> Wheatley’s pamphlet, *Socialism for Christians*, was circulated in the villages around Baillieston by Dollan and the Episcopal minister the Rev. F.C. Young.<sup>390</sup> Dollan also believed that socialism was based on Christian ethical and moral principles, and not on materialism.<sup>391</sup> The ILP had developed from the Ethical Socialism movement which drew from Christianity and used biblical imagery. Its Labour Churches, Socialist Sunday schools, tracts, preaching the socialist gospel to convert the working class, gave Ethical Socialism the trappings of its own religion. However, acceptance of Christian ethics did not mean acceptance of the Christian revelation. In practice the ILP concentrated, nationally and municipally, on daily life issues.<sup>392</sup>

With his grounding in Catholic social teaching, Wheatley worked to show Irish Catholics that evolutionary socialism was consistent with Church teaching and that their political future was thus with Labour. He debated Catholic traditionalists and Marxists to show that practical socialism did not mean that devout Catholics had to sacrifice their religious beliefs.<sup>393</sup> For Wheatley and for many Catholics the Socialism condemned in *Rerum Novarum*, exemplified by Aveling, Kautsky and Kropotkin, was revolutionary, anti-religious, and sought the abolition of all private property. For

---

<sup>387</sup> Georgiana Putnam McEntee, *The Social Catholic Movement in Great Britain* (New York: the Macmillan Company, 1927), 15-55. Chapter 1 is a well-documented source of his social reform work.

<sup>388</sup> Cleary, *Catholic Social Action*, 21-22.

<sup>389</sup> Sheridan Gilley, *Catholics and Socialists*, 219-220. Nitti’s argument was consistent with Wheatley’s reading of Emerson, Hardy, Meredith and Tolstoy. Wheatley drew from a Christianity that was wider than his Catholic confession.

<sup>390</sup> Dollan, *Autobiography*, 194.

<sup>391</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 155. *The Scotsman*, July 25, 1950.

<sup>392</sup> Purdie, *Outside the Chapel Door*, 4-5.

<sup>393</sup> Gordon Brown, *Maxton* (Edinburgh: Collins/Fontana, 1988), 14.

Wheatley there was no clear indication that the gradualist, non-violent, not irreligious forms of British and other socialisms were being condemned.<sup>394</sup> On declaring in 1906 that he was a Socialist Wheatley disavowed the anti-religious Socialism condemned by the Church: the socialism of Jaurès in France, Ferri in Italy, Vandervelde in Belgium, Marx and Bebel in Germany, and the SDF and the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Nevertheless, many Catholics still thought that all Socialism had been condemned by the Pope and Wheatley experienced the stresses that this created. The Catholicism and Socialism debate between Wheatley and his critics continued until 1910 in the *Glasgow Observer*.<sup>395</sup> The Church had asserted that social problems were within its domain of morals and religion. For Wheatley this did not imply that the Church had claimed massive political authority, but others, without clear evidence, did subscribe to this interpretation.<sup>396</sup> Some priests criticised and others supported Wheatley in the 1907-8 debates about socialism. The CSS stated that many Socialist leaders were professing Christians, unlike some leaders of the Liberal and Tory parties.<sup>397</sup> From August 1911 *Catholic Notes* regularly presented Wheatley's ideas and publicised the CSS in *Forward*.<sup>398</sup> The 1906 election of many Labour MPs was welcomed by Archbishop Maguire who acknowledged that with Irish-Catholic votes the Labour Party would eventually supersede the Liberals. In the Albert Hall, London, before 8000 men attending the 1908 Eucharistic Congress Maguire said, "the working men will rule the world", while admonishing them not to abuse their power.<sup>399</sup> Glasgow's Archbishop never criticised Wheatley publicly and made several radical pronouncements of his own, but he convened a Diocesan committee on Socialism in November, 1908. Its report described Wheatley and the CSS as malcontent Catholics who threatened Catholicism and should be dealt with cautiously, although no action against Wheatley or direct opposition to Socialism was recommended.<sup>400</sup> Between 1906 and 1912 Wheatley faced open hostility from his parish priest at St. Mark's, Carntyne, who called his socialism a bad influence on young Catholics. In 1912 another priest, Fr. Andrew O'Brien in St. Paul's, Shettleston,

---

<sup>394</sup> Cooper, *John Wheatley*, 31-32.

<sup>395</sup> Tom Gallagher, "Scottish Catholics and the British Left," *The Innes Review* 34 (1983), 18.

<sup>396</sup> Gilley, *Catholics and Socialists*, 213-214, 219.

<sup>397</sup> Purdie, *Outside the Chapel Door*, 11.

<sup>398</sup> J.J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow, 1896-1936. Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 67.

<sup>399</sup> Gilley, *Catholics and Socialists*, 227.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.* 229. Wood, *John Wheatley*, 25.

with Wheatley and his wife present, denounced Wheatley and socialism from the pulpit. Wheatley did not react during Mass but published a measured yet sharply critical response in *Forward*. This so angered some Shettleston Catholics that an ILP meeting was attacked and Wheatley's effigy was burned outside his house. His calm demeanour facing the crowd outside his home, and his attending Mass with his wife next Sunday without incident, enhanced his reputation.<sup>401</sup> The Archbishop's secretary politely rebuffed a parish deputation complaining about Wheatley. The varied Catholic responses in Glasgow to Socialism challenge any attempt to label it as instinctive and reactionary. Reviewing the controversies of the time Gilley notes Fr. O'Brien's action and that he found no evidence that supported the modern view that in 1906 Socialism was widely denounced in the parish churches. Unfortunately, Gilley did not detail how widespread or systematic was his search on this issue.<sup>402</sup> Fr. O'Brien used his own money and the Church Building Fund to feed unemployed miners and their families.<sup>403</sup> The Church and the labour movement struggled to define and interpret socialism in different contexts. Wheatley faced lifelong opposition to his socialism, left-wing views and Catholicism from people of many political and religious persuasions.

### **Was Anti- Catholic or Anti-Irish bigotry present in the 1915 Rent Strikes?**

The Minutes and records of the City, labour, political and religious organisations revealed no indication that religious bigotry was part of Glasgow's 1915 rent agitations. The Presbytery of Glasgow of the United Free Church of Scotland did not approve and deplored, as violating the principles of Protestantism, that the British Government had recognised the Vatican by sending a special envoy to represent British interests in Rome, did not want this to be continued and decided against a public protest because this was wartime.<sup>404</sup> However, such anti-Catholicism did not feature in Church records and reports that mentioned the 1915 rent strikes. The Deacon's Court records for the United Free High Church in Partick, an active rent strikes area, did not mention social issues or rent strikes, neither did the Minute Book of the Session for the United Free Church, Partick, from November 1914 through

---

<sup>401</sup> *Forward*, June 29, 2012, MMLG; Wood, *John Wheatley*, 30-31.

<sup>402</sup> Gilley, *Catholics and Socialists*, 213-214.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.* 229-233.

<sup>404</sup> Records of the United Free Church, Presbytery of Glasgow, Feb. 9, 1915, 515.

1915.<sup>405</sup> Another Partick Church, Dowanvale United Free Church, had nothing relevant in the Minute Book of the Session, December 9, 1914 to January 21, 1916 or in the Deacon's Court Book from December 9, 1914 to January 5, 1916.<sup>406</sup> The Great Hamilton Street United Church, in central Glasgow, was silent on social issues and its official history, 1819 to 1919, did not mention the rents agitation.<sup>407</sup> The Monthly Records and the Minister's letters for 1915 from the Caledonia Road United Free Church were silent on rent strikes, housing or other social issues, as was the Minute Book for the Session of the Copeland Road United Free Church. This was surprising since both these churches served the militant strike areas of Ibrox and Govan.<sup>408</sup> None of the 1915 monthly issues of the Church of Scotland Magazine, *Life and Work*, referred to social issues in working-class Glasgow. The only reference to Catholicism approved of the Pope encouraging the wide circulation and reading of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>409</sup>

The Catholic newspaper, *Glasgow Observer*, during 1915 reported anti-Catholic activity: *No Popery* leaflets were delivered to households along with the gas accounts; an article in the Free Church Monthly Record that Belgium's sufferings were the well-earned effect of God's vengeance on account of their "Popery and Ungodliness"; insulting sentiments towards Catholics and Irishness expressed at a Motherwell recruitment meeting by an Orange Order member; and a poster in London in the 11<sup>th</sup> Irish Fusiliers recruiting office, apparently on War Office instructions, requesting "Men only of the Protestant Faith".<sup>410</sup> The many reports it contained indicated the newspaper's interest in the rent agitations but none indicated that anti-Catholic activities marred the strikes. This was further confirmed

---

<sup>405</sup> *Deacon's Court*, United Free High Church, Partick, CH3/1252/17, Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and *Minute Book of the Session*, The United Free Church, Partick, CH3/1252/17. Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>406</sup> Dowanvale United Free Church, Partick: *Minute Book of the Session*, CH3/1251/3, and *Deacon's Court Book*, CH3/1251/6, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>407</sup> Rev. W.J. Cooper, *A Century of Congregational Life: Being the History of the Great Hamilton Street United Free Church Glasgow 1819-1919* (Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1919). TD 1705/2, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>408</sup> Caledonia Road United Free Church, *Monthly Record*, TD 1703; Copeland Road United Free Church, *Minute Book for the Session*, CH3/646/4. Mitchell library, Glasgow.

<sup>409</sup> *Life and Work: The Church of Scotland Magazine and Mission Record*, xxxvii, Jan.-Dec., 1915, 260, 344. Glasgow University Library, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor.

<sup>410</sup> *Glasgow Observer*, Feb. 6, 27 and July 3, 17, 1915, MMLG.

by a search of the Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow that did not reveal any reports, letters or minutes that related to the 1915 Rent Strike.<sup>411</sup>

The 1915 and 1916 ILP Annual Conferences Reports expressed cost-of-living concerns due to food and coal price increases and that these contributed to workers' unrest. Both reports called for government control of the supply and prices of the necessities of life. The April, 1916 report discussed rising rents and labour discontent in Glasgow, and the impact this and other rent agitation had on the Act to fix rent and mortgage rates hurriedly passed just before Christmas, 1915.<sup>412</sup> Neither report suggested religious controversy during Glasgow's rent strikes.

The STUC Annual Report, issued in 1916 for 1915, stated that government should control the increased cost of living, that the Glasgow rent agitation had forced the Government to introduce legislation to curb landlord greed, and that the doubling of the cost of coal had unfairly impacted the poorest classes.<sup>413</sup> Its Parliamentary Committee opposed profiteering, compulsory military service and the Coalition Government's proposal to directly tax wages. No report indicated religious intolerance during the rent strikes.<sup>414</sup>

Furthermore, none of the books or journal articles reviewed for this thesis indicated anti-Irish or anti-Catholic prejudice in actions specifically related to Glasgow's 1915 Rent Strike. The daily or weekly issues of the listed national and community newspapers and magazines provided an extensive and contemporary guide as to what was happening in Glasgow. All their 1915 issues were carefully examined for their coverage of the rent strikes. These many and varied sources reported no acts linked to religious or racist bigotry in the 1915 Rent Strike.<sup>415</sup> Neither did they support Damer's claim for a temporary transcendence of

---

<sup>411</sup> The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow: Archives.

[www.scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk/Archives/tabid/67/default.aspx](http://www.scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk/Archives/tabid/67/default.aspx).

<sup>412</sup> *Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the ILP*, Norwich, April, 1915, 14, 34-35 105; *Report of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ILP*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 24-25, 1916, Report of the National Administrative Council, 18, Archives, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland.

<sup>413</sup> *Scottish Trades Union Congress: Annual Report 1916*, 30, 40, 43, Archives and Special Collections, Glasgow Caledonian University.

<sup>414</sup> *Minutes of the Parliamentary Committee of the Scottish Trades Union Congress 1914-1920*, Aug. 25, 1915

<sup>415</sup> *Govan Press, Forward, Glasgow Observer, Partick Gazette, Partick and Maryhill Press, Glasgow Weekly Mail and Record, Bulletin and Scots Pictorial, Glasgow Herald, Daily Record, The Bailie, Life and Work*, MMLG.



prejudice.<sup>416</sup> Religious discrimination was applied in Scotland by the predominantly Protestant society against a poorer Catholic and Irish minority, who lacked the education, social position and power even to consider reverse discrimination. The Rent Strikes never brought this relatively powerless minority into any competition for the houses or jobs occupied by the skilled Protestant workers. There was no record of sympathy or solidarity strikes in the poorer housing areas inhabited by the Catholic population. Anti-landlordism and cost-of-living challenges were present for all the working class, but particularly so for the poor and also for unskilled workers who were less likely to be receiving increased wartime wages. However, there were no specifically Catholic, Irish, education or employment issues identified as integral to the rent strikes and which the minority community might promote either to advance their interests, or consciously to transcend in solidarity with the predominantly Protestant rent strikers. Conversely, the absence of such issues meant that Protestant rent strikers were not challenged by their own anti-Catholic or anti-Irish prejudices, so there was nothing for them to transcend. The incidents Wheatley, Dollan and the ILP skilfully publicised focused on the blatant attempts by the Factors against the sick, the elderly, and the families of men serving in the armed forces.

Wheatley found incompatibility between Christian principles and capitalism. His decisive question was, “Are you for or against poverty?”<sup>417</sup> Nonconformist Christians contributed to the British Labour movement through their pioneering work in reconciling radical social action with their Christian convictions, religion shaped their political allegiances. Wheatley’s challenge was to reconcile socialism with traditional Catholic principles, personally and for the generally poor Irish Catholic working class who experienced discrimination in Presbyterian Scotland. In this task many Catholics opposed him. He also wanted to show that “The Socialist or Labour party will have nothing to gain by ruling Ireland”. Wheatley advocated for the ILP as the best means to achieve working-class advancement, and that any commitment to Labour was not limited to Irish or Catholic issues but that it must be non-sectarian involvement in the struggles of all the working class.<sup>418</sup> His own adherence to these political principles, the working-class interests underpinning the ILP policies he promoted, his unwavering adherence to Catholicism and his constant expression of its compatibility with socialism, gradually persuaded the Catholic Irish in Scotland to

---

<sup>416</sup> Damer, *State, Class and Housing*, 75. This same reference is cited in footnote 90.

<sup>417</sup> Howell, *A Lost Left*, 236, a quotation from Wheatley’s pamphlet, *The Catholic Working Man* (1909), 32.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.* 234, 237.

embrace the labour Party.<sup>419</sup> A loyalty they retained throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>C, even though by the early 1920s that community in Scotland defined itself as Catholic rather than as Irish.<sup>420</sup>

---

<sup>419</sup> Gilley and Swift, *Irish in Britain*, 7.

<sup>420</sup> Gallacher, *Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace*, 94-98.

## Chapter 5

### Concluding Discussion of the Principal Themes Examined

The events marking the 2015 centenary of Glasgow's 1915 rent strikes highlighted Mary Barbour as a leader of working-class women, the rent strikers as inspiration for current struggles against capitalism, but no comprehensive understanding of the strikes was proposed. The ILP efforts before, during and after 1915, and its' role as the "thread of continuity" that linked disparate working-class organisations in a *class* campaign for local and national electoral success was ignored. This thesis has presented the ILP as central to the campaign's organisation and success, and two former miners, Wheatley and Dollan, as key activists in a complex interaction of labour groups and individuals. They strengthened the ILP organisation, its' influence in local and national politics, and its relationships with Trades Councils, trades unions, working-class women, the cooperative movement and churches. They united Glasgow's working class under a housing banner and through the ILP branches, housing committees, local defence committees and networks, helped to organise and support the rent strikers' local actions, public meetings and protest marches. Knowing that the Rent Restrictions Act could not improve poor and overcrowded housing, they worked locally and nationally to remedy this.

Scotland's industrialists exemplified the Victorian ethic of the older dominant male who controlled the business, and they shared with the Scottish landed aristocracy a ferocity that arose from the expectation of obedience to their commands.<sup>421</sup> Glasgow employers generally were strongly anti-union, although they created strong employer alliances.<sup>422</sup> Scotland was a low-wage economy compared with the average British wage, a 19<sup>th</sup>C economic advantage for Glasgow employers. In 1872 the U.S. Congress was told that the Clyde's worldwide shipbuilding success was principally due to "the abundance of skilled workmen and the low wages paid to them".<sup>423</sup> The rent struggle targeted Glasgow landlords and the factoring system, both powerfully represented on City Council. The Glasgow Property Owners and Factors Association was a ruthless, patriarchal cartel based on surveillance and social

---

<sup>421</sup> Craig, *The Tears*, 89. Magnates like Colville, Baird, Yarrow, Tennant, Lorimer, Elder, Pearce, Neilson, and Beardmore were middle-aged or older autocrats whose decisions were passed down for implementation.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.* 100.

<sup>423</sup> Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 261.

control. Supported by Scotland's property laws it managed property and people solely in the interests of the property-owning class.<sup>424</sup> Their heavy-handed actions in 1915 against vulnerable tenants, including soldiers' families, provoked local reactions. Wheatley and Dollan skilfully publicised these actions in the City Council, speeches, pamphlets, letters and newspaper articles that portrayed the Factors as heartless and unpatriotic, additionally appealing to the Highland Scots and immigrant Irish anti-landlordism. In 1913 and 1914 there were 3,148 and 3,763 Court Citations for eviction, and successes increased from 484 in 1913 to 738 in 1914.<sup>425</sup> The strike actions culminated a landlord and working-class tenant struggle that originated before the war.<sup>426</sup> Housing issues, promoted by Wheatley as the ILP's most consistent tactic, united the working class more firmly than did the struggle over labour dilution in factories, in which skilled workers defended their privileged position against unskilled and female workers.<sup>427</sup>

The Rent Strikes and the resulting Rent and Mortgages Restrictions Act were a *class* victory for organised labour that made possible Addison's 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act. In the late 19<sup>th</sup>C and early 20<sup>th</sup>C it was clear countrywide that the private sector would not solve the problem of working-class housing, reinforced in Local Government Board officials' evidence to Glasgow's 1915 Hunter Commission. Militancy developed slowly, it was a revolutionary step but not a revolution, and all protests were legal until the April and May 1915 rent increases provoked the Govan rent strikes. It was a *mass* action involving tenants, reformist-parliamentary and revolutionary socialists, who understood and expressed the struggle in *class* terms. The ILP political growth and organisation, the linkage with Trades Councils, cooperative societies and women's groups, the many local housing groups it helped to form and organise, and its individual members within the trades unions, provided the groundwork for the mass movement. Wheatley's leadership here was recognised by his ILP colleagues on Glasgow Council and also by militants who did not share his reformist parliamentary socialism. Dollan ably organised the local ILP structure and did this for Labour throughout his political career. Councillor Dollan was closely involved with Govan activities and he challenged Council with cost-of-living issues. As a journalist for *Forward* he roused public opinion by presenting the strikers' and

---

<sup>424</sup> Sean Damer, "'Engineers of the Human Machine': The social Practice of Council Housing Management in Glasgow, 1835-1938," *Urban Studies* 37 (2000): 2009, 2014-2015.

<sup>425</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Sept. 11, 1914, MMLG.

<sup>426</sup> Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 208.

<sup>427</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 75, 103-106.

ILP perspectives. Despite tensions from their varied individual adherence to socialism, the Clydeside socialists were a compact, predominantly working-class group. Through a rents campaign, united with the tenants, they sought to end inaction and stalling by local councils and the Westminster Parliament.<sup>428</sup> They coordinated a militant, political struggle against the landlords and the system that supported them, a popular and successful protest against the rule of law. This, not a militant shop stewards or industrial worker led political action, brought “the workers as a class into direct conflict with the possessing class as a class”.<sup>429</sup> Coincidental with the rent agitation the militant CWC organised a series of strikes against the March 1915 Treasury Agreements to replace skilled workers in the war production industries with lower-paid unskilled workers. When CWC members were arrested or deported elsewhere in Scotland, Wheatley organised their personal and legal support. The CWC Defence Committee recognised him as a trustee and treasurer of their Defence and Maintenance Fund, indicating respect and trust from militant socialists who opposed Wheatley’s parliamentary socialism.<sup>430</sup> Neither Wheatley nor Dollan supported the war or industrial action but they combined rent increases, cost-of-living, and the working-class human misery that Wheatley emphasised in his pamphlets and in Council, as a struggle against the system that created all this.<sup>431</sup> It was a conflict between the working class and one segment of the possessing class, the Factors and house-owners, not to overthrow them or seize their property but simply to obtain justice. Nevertheless, it threatened the landlords’ power and the state’s legitimacy.<sup>432</sup>

The Centenary commemoration highlighted the contributions of the housewives, the front-line soldiers who developed their own tactics against the Sheriff’s officers. However, they were not isolated or spontaneously operating groups with one prominent leader, but were part of a larger movement supported by local housing and rent strike committees, with ILP women as prominent leaders. Working-class women were not only leaders within the ILP they were clearly on-the-spot leaders while Wheatley and Dollan were the institutional leaders. Many women

---

<sup>428</sup> Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 214-215.

<sup>429</sup> Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards*, 279.

<sup>430</sup> Letter from John Wheatley to Mr. A.F. Arnott, from 41, Robertson Street, Glasgow March 4, 1918, Mitchell Library, Glasgow, TD956/7/8. In the letter he provides Comrade Arnott with the names of the trustees and an audited statement of the expenditures, and stated that this had also been published in *Forward*.

<sup>431</sup> Melling, “Housing,” 75, 103-106.

<sup>432</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 113

signed up at the local ILP office as pickets to prevent evictions. Wheatley encouraged them to take this poor women's fight into their own hands. The GLHA Chairman, Andrew McBride, a close colleague of Wheatley, made great efforts to recruit women's representatives as equals.<sup>433</sup> The GWA highlighted the claims of class above those of women and changed the name to the Glasgow Workers Housing Association.<sup>434</sup> Fenner Brockway commented that the English ILP concentrated on peace, while the Scottish ILP concentrated on the class struggle.<sup>435</sup> The ILP was always torn between its utopian social vision and its commitment to the immediate working-class needs. The Scottish ILP opted for the latter.<sup>436</sup> This conviction underpinned Wheatley's strategy as a Lanarkshire and Glasgow Councillor, as a Shettleston MP, and as Minister of Health with responsibility for Housing in the first minority Labour Government. Under Wheatley's *de facto* leadership the Glasgow ILP tolerated diversity. It provided a framework for working-class men and women to form effective political alliances, with no evidence that the ILP controlled or dominated those groups.<sup>437</sup> Gordon Brown, a former British Labour Prime Minister, noted the importance of the ILP organisation and of Wheatley's leadership in the rent strikes.<sup>438</sup>

Rent unrest in many parts of England and Wales contributed strongly to the passing of the Rent Restrictions Act, 1915.<sup>439</sup> However, the Act destroyed the free market in working-class urban rental housing, did not create Rent Courts to adjudicate fair rents or return money that had been paid for increased rent, left intact the Scots Law which gave Factors and landlords great power, and did not commit the Government to build working-class housing or remedy overcrowded and unhealthy houses. Wheatley and Dollan understood this, and throughout WWI regularly presented Glasgow Council with housing, food scarcity, and cost-of-living issues. Wheatley became President of a National Association for the Protection of Soldiers and Sailors Dependents to help them to get increased allowances. By the 1918 General Election Dollan had established another ten Glasgow ILP branches and

---

<sup>433</sup> *Forward*, March 4, 1915, MMLG.

<sup>434</sup> Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 302.

<sup>435</sup> F. Brockway, *Inside the Left* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1942), 53. He was editor of the other ILP newspaper, the *Labour Leader*, and was jailed because he opposed conscription.

<sup>436</sup> S. Pierson, *Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), XII.

<sup>437</sup> J. Foster, "Strike-Action and Working Class Politics on Clydeside 1914-1919," *International Review of Social History* 35 (1983): 37, 68, 70.

<sup>438</sup> Brown, *Maxton*, 60.

<sup>439</sup> Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 208.

Wheatley was the ILP parliamentary candidate for Shettleston. The ILP substantially increased its national vote, but won only two of the 15 seats it contested and Wheatley lost by just 74 votes. After WWI Wheatley was elected Chair of the SLHA and he continued to press Council, the Coalition government, and the Scottish Department of the Ministry of Labour, to provide houses and employment. The Addison Act 1919, a breakthrough in providing state subsidy for local authority house-building, was a response to continued countrywide pressure and official reports stating the essential role of the state in building houses. The Act did not work and at the end of 1919 it was amended to favour subsidies to private builders, who again failed to deliver. By 1921 it had contributed only 4,500 of Glasgow's required 57,000 dwellings and unsuccessful rent strikes occurred after a 1920 Act allowed rent increases. Housing continued to be a powerful political issue. Wheatley's focus on this, allied with rising unemployment and Dollan's continued ILP organisation, saw socialists gain 45 of the 111 seats in Glasgow's 1920 Council elections, eight of them by women active in the labour movement.<sup>440</sup> One step towards Wheatley's goal of a majority socialist Council, that enabled him to place more of the Labour group as members or Chairs of major committees.

In the 1922 General Election after the Coalition Government collapsed, continuing housing discontent, rising unemployment, ILP attention to these issues under Wheatley's leadership, Dollan's party organisation, and Wheatley convincing many Irish-Catholics to support Labour, enabled Wheatley and nine ILP candidates to be elected in ten of Glasgow's Parliamentary constituencies.

The Clydesiders challenged Parliament in the 1922-23 Session to deal with unemployment, poor housing and poverty issues. Their questions were bolstered by regular information from Dollan. As their leader Wheatley frequently intervened on housing inadequacies, how private enterprise inflated building materials' prices, and the under-consumption caused by unemployment. His attacks could be both emotional and biting. However, when moving Labour's formal opposition to the second reading of Chamberlain's Bill that would protect property owners from repaying rents wrongfully obtained from tenants and make subsidies more favourable to the private sector, Wheatley demonstrated that he could effectively

---

<sup>440</sup> Annemarie Hughes, "Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c. 1919-1932," *Women's History Review* 14 (2005): 11.

present a statistically detailed critique of the Bill.<sup>441</sup> This performance and his vigorous involvement during his first session in Parliament contributed to his appointment as Health Minister in MacDonald's first minority Labour administration. His 1924 Housing (Financial Provisions) Bill stimulated house-building in Glasgow and throughout Britain at a pace not previously seen, with a record 273,000 houses completed in 1927. Around 500,000 council houses were built under the terms of the Act. Wheatley never believed that his Act alone could solve the housing problem. The Conservatives weakened it when they reduced its subsidies in 1928, although they were restored by the Labour government in 1929. Wheatley was dead when the National Government repealed the Act in 1932. Wheatley's 1924 Act was not accompanied by his Building Materials Bill because MacDonald's Labour Government was defeated, so there was no clear mechanism to prevent overcharging of local authorities for building supplies. This overcharging contributed to rents affordable only to the better-off artisans and excluded lower-paid workers. The strong Labour minority on Glasgow Council was able to bring pressure to bear to build planned low-density housing estates with garden city elements in Knightswood, Mosspark and Carntyne under the terms of Wheatley's Act.<sup>442</sup>

From 1920 to 1932 Dollan chaired the ILP Scottish section and from 1922 to 1925 led Glasgow's Labour Councillors, 24% of whom were women.<sup>443</sup> From 1927 onwards he resisted those Clydeside MPs within the ILP who wanted more rapid achievement of the socialist commonwealth and who increasingly opposed the Labour Party leadership. Dollan, like Shinwell, sought greater unity of the Labour movement.<sup>444</sup> Within three years of disaffiliating in 1932 from the Labour Party the ILP membership fell from 16,000 to 4,000.<sup>445</sup> When the ILP disaffiliated Dollan was expelled, so he founded and organised the Scottish Socialist Party, which immediately affiliated to the Labour Party.<sup>446</sup> In the 1933 Glasgow Council elections, as Labour's financial spokesman, Dollan attacked inadequate slum clearance and the proposed public assistance cutbacks. He pushed Council to build more houses, schools, and hospitals, making greater use of Glasgow's Direct Labour Department. In 1934 Labour won 54 Council seats and, although five short of an overall majority,

---

<sup>441</sup> Wood, *Wheatley*, 96-101.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.* 130-144. Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 153.

<sup>443</sup> Hughes, *Fragmented Feminists*, 11.

<sup>444</sup> Middlemas, *The Clydesiders*, 141, 214, 216-220.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.* 269-273.

<sup>446</sup> James Jupp, *The Radical Left in Britain: 1931-1941* (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 47.



Dollan successfully proposed the establishment of a Municipal Savings Bank. In 1935 Dollan nominated John Stewart as the first Labour Provost of Glasgow.<sup>447</sup> In November 1938 Dollan became Provost (1938-41) and the *Glasgow Herald* noted that the socialist movement's progress in Glasgow's politics in the last 20 years owed much to his energy and ability.<sup>448</sup>

After he retired from city politics Dollan, consistent with his 40 years of work to improve working-class living conditions, in 1947 became the first Chairman of the East Kilbride Development Corporation, established under the New Towns Act 1946. This Development Corporation, which Glasgow Council had opposed, acknowledged that Glasgow alone could not solve its housing problems.<sup>449</sup> When he retired in 1948 as Chairman of the Development Board, praised by Tory and Labour MPs, East Kilbride's initial population had grown to 21,000. This population occupied high-quality, principally low-medium density cottage-style houses in the spirit of Wheatley's '£8 Cottage' scheme, a planned community with employment, shops, recreation, social, educational and medical facilities. This success contrasted with the massive high-rise, high-density housing estates with no social facilities that Glasgow Council initiated within its city limits, and which created social problems that haunted Glasgow until the late 20<sup>th</sup>C when many of those high-rise buildings were demolished.<sup>450</sup> Although less vigorously anti-establishment later in life, Dollan's working-class and Labour Party loyalties were life-long. Labour activists and the Govan electorate supported him for 33 years on City Council.<sup>451</sup> His *Manchester Guardian* obituary called him "a champion of the poor, the underprivileged, and the oppressed".<sup>452</sup>

Unlike many Scottish Labour movement leaders of that time Dollan lacks a substantial biography. Carrigan's 2014 University of Glasgow thesis is the only substantial examination of his life and career. Dollan has attracted critics.<sup>453</sup> One criticism, unsubstantiated, was that by opposing Wheatley and Maxton's growing

---

<sup>447</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 111-117.

<sup>448</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Nov. 3, 1938, MMLG.

<sup>449</sup> Roger Smith, "The Origins of Scottish New Towns Policy and the founding of East Kilbride," *Public Administration* 52 (1974): 144-145.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.* 151-159.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.* 115-117, 129.

<sup>452</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 31, 1960.

<sup>453</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 113-120; Sean Damer, *Glasgow: Going for a Song* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 154; Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), 192.

disenchantment with the Labour Party at ILP meetings, Dollan sowed seeds of disillusionment and obstructed the conversion of the labour movement to a more militant socialism. Gallacher claimed that trade-union leaders and Labour politicians like Dollan thwarted Clydeside's revolutionary potential during and just after WWI.<sup>454</sup> There was the added implication that he was a class traitor.<sup>455</sup> Dollan, at the 1925 Scottish ILP Conference labelled the Communists a disruptive influence and helped to keep them distant from the ILP. It was suggested he was anti-Communist because he was Catholic, which, in fact, he no longer was, and thus ideologically opposed to left-wing movements. Dollan disagreed in tactics and strategy with Wheatley and Maxton, but all three were reformists and democrats for whom the Marxist understanding of class struggle did not start to address workers' immediate needs.<sup>456</sup> Dollan's unpublished autobiography exhibited no rancour towards his Glasgow ILP colleagues.<sup>457</sup> Criticism that ignored Dollan's contributions towards changing Labour into a reasonably efficient and competitive party may reflect the schism that developed between the visions of rival socialist groups following their experiences of two minority Labour governments.<sup>458</sup>

A second criticism described Dollan as a machine politician, an intolerant and controlling *Tammany Hall Boss* on Council.<sup>459</sup> Damer asserted that in the 1920s, "the Irish political machine, now known locally as the Murphia, took its people into the Labour party. This machine was oiled and greased by Wheatley's hand-reared boy Paddy Dolan by now an ILP Councillor and local politician of consummate skill".<sup>460</sup> Dollan was called an unemotional, Catholic, "party machine" man.<sup>461</sup> Dollan and his father were both born in Scotland, yet Irish ethnicity was added, "the impact of the Irish Roman Catholic community on the development of Labour [resulted in] a well-

---

<sup>454</sup> Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*, 24. Gallacher was a founding member of the Communist Party of Gt.Br.

<sup>455</sup> William Knox, *James Maxton* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 105. McShane, *Harry McShane*, 110.

<sup>456</sup> Brown, *Maxton*, 312-314.

<sup>457</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*. No evidence in this thesis of any vindictiveness. Neither was there in Dollan's autobiography cited earlier, in the *Weekly Scotsman*, June 30, 1960, in Glasgow University Library, Sp Coll Broady C55, nor in a Glasgow University collection of newspaper cuttings about Dollan, Sp Coll Broady D1-2.

<sup>458</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 121.

<sup>459</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 114

<sup>460</sup> Damer, *Glasgow*, 154.

<sup>461</sup> Smout, *A Century*, 274; Craig, *The Tears*, 215, 220.

drilled machine”.<sup>462</sup> Irish “machine” politics were labelled a “corrupting” influence.<sup>463</sup> One 1963 obituary noted that Dollan had “an Irishman’s facility for taking [*charges of inconsistency*] in his stride”.<sup>464</sup> There was no evidence in these references that Dollan used patronage, corruption or political chicanery, or that there was a Catholic or ‘Murphia’ conspiracy in Glasgow’s municipal politics during his years on Council. Dollan was Labour leader for only seven of those 33 years, three between 1922 and 1925, and four of the 16 years between 1933 and 1949 when Labour held power in Glasgow Council.<sup>465</sup> In 1935 Labour still lacked an absolute majority, even including the ILP Councillors, who were not subject to Labour Party control. The anti-socialist *Bailie* magazine weakened the ‘machine’ politics assertion when it described the 1935 Council as the “biggest collection of individualists in Scotland”.<sup>466</sup> The Progressive (Tory) leader in Council emphasised that Dollan was not tainted with allegations of corruption.<sup>467</sup> Catholics had minimal power within the Labour Party between the wars. In the early 1930s six, and in 1938 ten, of Glasgow’s 116 Councillors were Catholics.<sup>468</sup> A Catholic party-machine was myth and the idea of a homogeneous Irish and hence Catholic vote with major effects on voting outcomes has been shown to be exaggerated.<sup>469</sup> Writers who linked Dollan with Catholicism could readily access the evidence that he rejected Catholicism and was secularist from at least 1911, before he had political influence, until the 1950s when he was more than four years out of Labour politics. Furthermore, in 1917 both Dollans instructed that their son should be excluded from any school religious instruction, the first student so exempted.<sup>470</sup> The socialist movement attracted people from all religious denominations, and included atheists and agnostics.<sup>471</sup> It was unclear why criticism of Dollan emphasised religion and ethnicity, never employed against Communists like Gallagher or McShane, who were baptised

---

<sup>462</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 25.

<sup>463</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, 127.

<sup>464</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Jan. 31, 1963, MMLG.

<sup>465</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 109-111.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>467</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, Oct. 31, 1941, MMLG.

<sup>468</sup> Hutchison, *Scottish Politics*, 58; Gallagher, *The Uneasy Peace*, 203; *Catholic Herald*, Nov. 25, 1938, MMLG.

<sup>469</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 20, expands on this in a footnote, Ch. 3; Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 160.

<sup>470</sup> Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders*, 89, 94; Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 131-132.

<sup>471</sup> Craig, *The Tears*, 208.

Catholics of Irish descent. Carrigan concluded that Dollan was frequently an individualist and a political maverick, not the hallmarks of a machine politician.<sup>472</sup>

This thesis addressed the neglected question of anti-Catholic expression in the 1915 Rent Strike. Glasgow was demonstrably anti-Catholic before, during and long after 1915, with systematic employment and education discrimination. No sources disputed that the skilled, better-paid, relatively better-housed workers were predominantly Protestant, while the unskilled workers and the poor, in which Catholics were over-represented, lived in Glasgow's poorer housing or in its slums.<sup>473</sup> Damer provided no investigatory evidence to support his statement that religious prejudice was briefly transcended in 1915. Melling inferred that rent strikers in Ibrox, the home of the Protestant supported Rangers F.C, and also in Parkhead the home of the Catholic supported Celtic F.C., indicated worker solidarity and erosion of sectarian divisions. Melling's inference was unfounded as Glasgow had no overwhelmingly Protestant or Catholic areas, and Ibrox and Parkhead both housed skilled Protestant engineering workers. Catholics also had limited access to the prerequisite apprenticeships for engineering jobs. The GLPHC Chairman told the Hunter Commission that the rent agitation was in the better working-class districts among the better-paid, who were objecting on principle to the rent increases. In Govan and Partick, resistance came quickly from the families of the skilled, mainly Protestant, workers in the engineering works.<sup>474</sup> The 1915 Rent Strikers were not from poorer areas like Anderston, Mile-end, Calton and Bridgeton, which had housing unfit for human habitation, or from the slum-dwellers of Cowcaddens. The strikers were "affluent groups of tenants" who included artisans, foremen, draughtsmen and clerical workers, groups that excluded the Irish and Catholics.<sup>475</sup> Andrew Hood, editor of the *Partick Gazette* and a leader of the Partick rent strikers, told the Hunter Commission that the shipyard workers involved could have afforded to pay higher rents but that they were objecting to rampant profiteering. There are no records of each rent striker's religious affiliation, but the Hunter Commission evidence, the skilled occupations of the strikers, the absence of strikes in Glasgow's slums or poorer areas, and the photographs from protest marches of the 'respectable' working class, provide credible evidence that the rent strikers mostly represented the Protestant community. The evidence does not support the claims by

---

<sup>472</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 169.

<sup>473</sup> Craig, *The Tears*, 192.

<sup>474</sup> Englander, *Landlord and Tenant*, 185.

<sup>475</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, 58.

Melling and Damer that prejudice was eroded or actively transcended by the 1915 Rent Strike.

In conclusion, the ILP's key role in the 1915 Rent Strike has been demonstrated and by promoting collaboration and networking between different working-class groups it gave people hope. This working-class struggle recognised and promoted an essential practical and leadership role for working-class women. The ILP branches were not strongholds of any religious persuasion and individual members bridged social groups.<sup>476</sup> Wheatley's leadership focussed the ILP on political goals that resonated with Glasgow's working class and he gained their respect as a socialist committed to achieving improvement in their lives. Dollan manifested the same lifelong desire. Both men contributed significantly to the political and social cohesion that made the Rent Strike successful, but recognised the limitations of this success and continued to work for decent working-class housing. They did more municipally and nationally than any of their Glasgow colleagues to advance this cause. The Clydesiders were Socialists whose personal and painful experiences had formed and developed their understanding of class and 'class struggle' but not in the Marxist revolutionary tradition. Their Socialism was collectivist and emphasised social justice and the dignity of the person at work and at home – not for the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>477</sup> Wheatley and Dollan, like the mainstream British Left, retained a gradualist and reform perspective that involved the class collaboration that Lenin bitterly attacked.<sup>478</sup> Wheatley never supported Marxism but in McShane's opinion he was more Marxist than some who claimed to be.<sup>479</sup> Shinwell, who acknowledged Wheatley as the leader of the Labour Group in Glasgow Council, quoted from an attack Wheatley made on the Tories in the House of Commons: "If there is one set of humbugs in the world, if there is one group of unadulterated hypocrites, it is the British ruling class...I do not believe in your honesty at all. You are either knaves or fools...You are the greatest enemies of the human race: I can see no hope for this country unless we can get the people to

---

<sup>476</sup> Craig, *The Tears*, 195.

<sup>477</sup> Carrigan, *Patrick Dollan*, 26.

<sup>478</sup> Ward, *Red Flag*, 4, 51.

<sup>479</sup> McShane, *Harry McShane*, 25, 27. A disillusioned McShane left the Communist Party in 1954.

overthrow your system”.<sup>480</sup> Nevertheless, Wheatley accepted that real change lay through the parliamentary process and that it would not happen overnight.<sup>481</sup>

Neither rent strikes nor shared sacrifices during WWI eroded anti-Catholic and anti-Irish intolerance in Presbyterian Scotland. Catholics could not afford the houses involved in the rent strikes. Social and economic discrimination ensured that the Rent Strike involved mainly Protestant skilled workers, so neither they nor society were challenged to transcend their religious prejudices. Carrigan’s thesis allowed an examination of 1980s criticism of Dollan, criticism that did not fault his rent strike work but focused on his later career. The late 20<sup>th</sup>C, unsubstantiated criticism of Dollan echoed earlier anti-Irish and anti-Catholic prejudices. In reconciling his Socialism with his Catholicism, Wheatley experienced controversy with clergy, lay Catholics, Tory-Orange detractors, and with other socialists some of whom might have had their own unshakeable faith that Catholicism was essentially anti-socialist. Leon Trotsky in one of his many reflections ridiculing the moderation and religious affiliation of British labour leaders stated: “John Wheatley, former Minister of Health in Macdonald’s Cabinet, is regarded as almost extreme left. None the less, Wheatley is not only a Socialist, but also a Catholic. To put it more correctly, he is first of all a Catholic, and only afterwards a socialist”, and “for this ‘left-winger’ Socialist policy is directed by personal morality, and personal morality by religion.”<sup>482</sup> The ridicule would almost certainly have been lost on Wheatley who saw no incompatibility in his personal morality, Catholicism and Socialism.

---

<sup>480</sup> Shinwell, *The Labour Story*, 110, 115.

<sup>481</sup> Cooper, *John Wheatley*, 113.

<sup>482</sup> L. Trotsky, *Where is Britain Going?* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926), 41-42.

## *Bibliography*

### **Archives**

#### **Glasgow Caledonian University Archives and Special Collections:**

Glasgow Trades Council Minutes. On microfilm

Scottish Trades' Union Congress. *Annual Report*, 1916

Scottish Trades Union Congress, *Minutes of the Parliamentary Committee*, 1914-1920

#### **Glasgow Mitchell Library:**

Archives of Libertarian-Socialist and Anarchist History

Caledonia Road United Free Church, Ibrox, Glasgow, *Monthly Record*. Special Collections

Church of Scotland, Minutes of the *Presbytery of Glasgow of the Church of Scotland*. Special Collections

Cooper, Rev. W.J. *A Century of Congregational Life. Being the History of the Great Hamilton Street United Free Church of Glasgow 1819-1919*. Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1919. Special Collections

Copeland Road United Free Church, Govan, Glasgow, *Minute Book for the Session*. Special Collections

Dowanvale United Free Church, Partick, Glasgow, *Minute Book of the Session and Deacon's Court Book*. Special Collections

Fraser, Hamish and Gray, Alison. *Working Class Protest in the West of Scotland, 1820-1914*, A special collection for Schools. Special Collections

Glasgow Corporation Minutes of Council Meetings and Committees

Wheatley, John. *The New Rent Act – a Reply to the Rent Raisers*, Glasgow 1920. Special Collections

Letter, John Wheatley to A.F. Arnott, March 14, 1918. Special Collections

Newspapers and Periodicals: on microfilm, originals if required

Church of Scotland, *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland*, 1923, 750-763.

The United Free Church, Partick, Glasgow, *Minute Book of the Session*. Special Collections

United Free Church of Scotland, *Records of the Presbytery of Glasgow*. Special Collections

United Free High Church, Partick, Glasgow, *Deacon's Court*. Special Collections

**Glasgow University Archives:**

Dollan, Patrick. *Jubilee History of the Kinning Park Co-operative society Ltd*. Special Collections, Broady

Dollan, Patrick. *The Clyde Rent War*. Glasgow: Scottish Council of the ILP, Civic Press, 1925. Special Collections, Broady

Newspaper Collections about Patrick Dollan. Special Collections, Broady

**Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow:**

[www.scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk/Archives/tabid/67/default.aspx](http://www.scottishcatholicarchives.org.uk/Archives/tabid/67/default.aspx).

**Strathclyde University Archives:**

*Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the ILP*, Norwich, 1915

*Report of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ILP*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1916

**Vatican Library:**

Papal Encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII, 1892.  
[www.vatican.va/offices/papal\\_docs\\_list.html](http://www.vatican.va/offices/papal_docs_list.html).



## **Government Publications**

### **Non-Parliamentary Publications:**

Miles, Robert and Muirhead, Lesley. *Racism in Scotland: a matter for further investigation*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government Yearbook, 1986

### **Parliamentary Debates:**

John Wheatley. *Parliamentary Contributions*, Produced from digitised editions of Commons and Lords *Hansard*. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-john-wheatley-1>.

### **Parliamentary Papers:**

*Report of Committee appointed by the Secretary for Scotland 'To Enquire into the circumstances connected with the alleged Recent Increases in the Rental of Small Dwelling-Houses in Scotland. 1915'*, Session 11 Nov. 1914 – 27 Jan. 1916, Vol. XXXV. Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

## **Newspapers and Periodicals**

In Mitchell Library unless alternative source indicated

*Bulletin and Scots Pictorial*

*Daily Record and News*

*Forward*

*Glasgow Evening Times*

*Glasgow Herald*

*Glasgow Weekly Mail and Record*

*Glasgow Observer*

*Govan Press*

*Life and Work. The Church of Scotland Magazine and Mission Record.* (Glasgow University Library)

*London Times*

*Manchester Guardian*

*Partick Gazette*

*Partick and Maryhill Press*

*The Bailie*

*The Scotsman*

*The Tablet* (March 6, 1915. [Archive.thetablet.co.uk/issues](http://Archive.thetablet.co.uk/issues), see 'Topics of the Day'.)

*Weekly Scotsman* (June 30, 1960. Glasgow University, Special collections, Broady.)

## **Books**

Brockway, Fenner. *Inside the Left. Thirty years of Platform, Press, Prison, and Parliament.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1942.

Brogan, Colm. *The Glasgow Story.* London: Muller, 1954.

Brown, Callum G. *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730.* London: Methuen, 1987.

Brown, Gordon. *Maxton.* Edinburgh: Fontana/Collins, 1988.

Cameron, Ewen A. *Impaled Upon a Thistle. Scotland since 1880.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Cleary, J.M. *Catholic Social Action in Britain 1909-1959.* Oxford: Catholic Social Guild, 1961.

Craig, Carol. *The Tears that made the Clyde. Well-being in Glasgow*. Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2010.

Damer, Sean. *Glasgow: Going for a Song*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990.

Devine, T. M. *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*. London: Penguin Books, 1999.

Dollan, Patrick. *Jubilee History of the Kinning Park Co-operative Society Ltd*. Glasgow: Kinning Park Co-op. Society Ltd., 1923.

Drummond, A.L. and Bullock, J. *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1874*. Edinburgh, St. Andrew's Press, 1974.

Engels, Frederick. *The Condition of the Working Class in England (1840)*. Chicago: Academy Chicago, Panther Edition, 1984.

Englander, David. *Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Fry, Michael. *Patronage and Principle. A Political History of Modern Scotland*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987.

Gallacher, W. *Revolt on the Clyde*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936.

Gallagher, Tom. *Glasgow. The Uneasy Peace. Religious Tension in Modern Scotland, 1819-1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.

Gibb, Andrew Dewar, *Scotland in Eclipse*. London: Humphrey Toulmin, 1930.

Hannan, John. *The Life of John Wheatley*. Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988.

Hinton, James. *The First Shop Stewards Movement*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Industry and Empire. An Economic History of Britain since 1750*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

Horsey, Miles. *Tenement Towers. Glasgow Working Class Housing 1890-1990*. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1990.

Howell, David. *A Lost Left. Three Studies in Socialism and Nationalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Hughes, Annemarie. *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Hutchison, Ian G.C. *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924: Politics, Elections and Issues*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986.

Hutchison, Ian G.C. *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001.

Jupp, James. *The Radical Left in Britain: 1931-1941*. London: Frank Cass, 1982.

Kinealy, C. *This Great Calamity. The Irish Famine, 1845-52*. Boulder: Roberts Rineheart, 1995.

Knox, William, ed. *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-1939. A Biographical Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1984.

Knox, William. *James Maxton*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.

Knox, W.W. *Industrial Nation. Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

MacDonald, Catriona M.M. *Whaur Extremes Meet. Scotland's Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009.

Maver, Irene. *Glasgow*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Melling, Joseph. *Rent Strikes. People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916*. Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1983.

McEntee, Georgiana Putnam. *The Social Catholic Movement in Great Britain*. New York: Macmillan, 1927.

McLean, Iain. *The Legend of Red Clydeside*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1999.

McShane, Harry and Smith, Joan. *No Mean Fighter*. London: Pluto Press, 1978.

Middlemas, Robert Keith. *The Clydesiders. A left Wing Struggle for Parliamentary Power*. London: Hutchinson, 1965.

Morrison, Herbert, *An Autobiography*. London: Odhams Press Ltd, 1960.

Pierson, Stanley. *Marxism and the Origin of British Socialism. The Struggle for a New Consciousness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.

Scanlon, J. *Decline and fall of the Labour Party*, London: Peter Davies, 1932.

Shinwell, Emmanuel. *The Labour Story*. London: Macdonald and Co., 1963.

Smith, Cecil Woodham. *The Great Hunger. Ireland, 1845-9*. London: Four Square, 1964.

Smout, T.C. *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950*. London: Collins, 1986.

Smyth, J.J. *Labour in Glasgow, 1896-1936. Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism*. East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000.

Taudevin, A.G. *Mrs. Barbour's Daughters*. London: Oberon Books, 2015.

Trotsky, Leon. *Where is Britain Going?* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926.

Ward, Paul. *Red Flag and Union Jack. Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924*. London: The Royal Historical Society, The Boydell Press, 1998.

Wood, Ian S. *John Wheatley*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Young, James D. *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class*. London: Croom Helm, 1979.

### **Articles in Edited Books**

Aspinwall, Bernard. "Faith of our Fathers Living still...The Time Warp or Woof!" In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 105-114. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Bradley, Joseph M. "Catholic Distinctiveness: a Need to be Different." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 159-174. Edinburgh and London, Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Bradley, Joseph M. "The Great Irish Hunger, Celtic FC and Celtic Supporters." In *Celtic Minded 3: essays on religion, politics, society, identity – and football*, edited by Joseph M. Bradley, 9-50. Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2009.

Bradley, Joseph M. "'Sectarianism' and Catholic Schools." In *Celtic Minded 3*. 239-260. 2009.

Brown, Stewart J. "Presbyterians and Catholics in Twentieth Century Scotland." In *Scottish Christianity in the Modern World*, edited by Stewart J. Brown and George Newlands, 255-281. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2001.

Bruce, Steve. "Comparing Scotland and Northern Ireland." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 135-142. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Butt, John. "Working-Class Housing in Glasgow, 1900-1939." In *Essays in Scottish Labour History. A Tribute to W.H. Marwick*, edited by Iain MacDougall, 143-169. Edinburgh: John Donald Ltd., 1978.

Corr, Helen and Knox, William. "Patrick Dollan (1885-1963)." In *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-1939. A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by William Knox, 92-99. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1984.

Damer, Sean. "State, Class and Housing: Glasgow 1885-1919." In *Housing, Social Policy and the State*, edited by Joseph Melling, 73-112. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

Devine, Joseph. "A Lanarkshire Perspective on Bigotry in Scottish Society." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 99-103. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Devine, T.M. "Preface." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 7-8. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Devine, T.M. "Then and Now. Catholics in Scotland 1950-2000." In *Scotland's Shame?* 261-263. 2000.

Fraser, W. Hamish. "Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland." In *Essays in Scottish Labour History: A Tribute to W.H. Marwick*, edited by I. MacDougall, 3-6. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978.

Gilley, Sheridan. "Catholics and Socialists in Scotland." In *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, edited by Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, 212-238. Savage: Barnes and Noble Books, 1989.

Hassan, Gerry. "The People's Party, Still?" In *The Scottish Labour Party. History, Institutions, and Ideas*, edited by Gerry Hassan, 1-16. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

Hutchison, I.G.C. "Glasgow working Class Politics." In *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750-1914*, edited by R.A. Cage, 98-141. London: Croom Helm, 1987.

Macdonald, C.M.M. "A Different Commonwealth: the Co-operative Movement in Scotland." In *The Co-operative Model in Practice. International Perspectives*, edited by Diarmid McDonnell and Elizabeth Macknight, 5-18. Edinburgh: Co-operative Education Trust, 2012.

Maver, Irene. "The Catholic Community." In *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, edited by T.M. Devine and R.J. Findley, 269-284. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

McCaffrey, John F. "Reactions in Scotland to the Irish Famine." In *Scottish Christianity in the Modern World*, edited by Stuart J. Brown and George Newlands, 155-175. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2001.

McRoberts, David. "Introduction." In *Modern Scottish Catholicism 1878-1978*, edited by David McRoberts, 3-28. Burns: Glasgow, 1979.

Melling, Joseph. "Introduction." In *Housing, Social Policy and the State*, edited by Joseph Melling, 9-36. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

Melling, Joseph. "Clydeside Housing and the Evolution of State Rent Control, 1900-1939." In *Housing, Social Policy and the State*, edited by Joseph Melling, 139-167. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

Melling, Joseph. "Work, Culture and Politics on 'Red Clydeside': the ILP during the First World War." In *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from foundation to disintegration*, edited by Alan McKinley and R.J. Morris, 83-122. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

Rodger, R. "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914." In *Perspectives of the Scottish Cities*, edited by G. Gordon, 25-63. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985.

Rosie, Michael and McCrone, David. "The Past is History: Catholics in Modern Scotland." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 199-217. Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Ross, Anthony. "Development of the Scottish Catholic Community 1878-1978." In *Modern Scottish Catholicism 1878-1978*, edited by David McRoberts, 30-55. Glasgow: Burns, 1979.

Smith, Joan. "Taking the Leadership of the Labour Movement: the ILP in Glasgow, 1906-14." In *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from Foundation to Disintegration*, edited by Alan McKinley and R J Morris, 56-82. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

Styles, Scott C. "The Non-sectarian Culture of North-East Scotland." In *Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, edited by T.M. Devine, 115-123. Edinburgh and London, Mainstream Publishing, 2000.

Treble, J.H. "The Market for Unskilled Male Labour in Glasgow. 1891-1914." In *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, edited by I. Macdougall, 115-142. Edinburgh: Robertson, 1978.

### **Journal Articles**

Brown, Stewart J. "'Outside the Covenant': The Scottish Presbyterian Churches and Irish Immigration 1922-38." *The Innes Review* XLII (1991): 46-67.

Burness, Catriona. "Remember Mary Barbour." *Scottish Labour History* 50 (2015): 81-96

Damer, Sean. "'Engineers of the Human Machine': the Social Practice of Council Housing Management in Glasgow, 1895-1939." *Urban Studies* 37 (2000): 2007-2026.



Dollan, Patrick. "Memories of 50 Years." *Mercat Cross* 6 (1953): 108-109.

Epstein, Leon D. "British Class Consciousness and the Labour Party." *Journal of British Studies* 1 (1962): 136-150.

Foster, John. "Strike-Action and Working-Class Politics on Clydeside 1914-1919." *International Review of Social History* 35 (1990): 33-70.

Gallagher, Tom. "Scottish Catholics and the British Left." *The Innes Review* 34 (1983): 17-42.

Gazeley I, Newell A, and Scott, P. "Why was urban overcrowding much more severe in Scotland than in the rest of the British Isles? Evidence from the first (1904) official household expenditure survey." *European Review of Economic History* 15 (2011): 127-151.

Hazareesingh, Sandip. "Interconnected Synchronicities: the production of Bombay and Glasgow as modern global ports c.1850-1880." *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009): 7-31.

Hepburn, A.C. "Working Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911." *Irish Economic and Social History* 10 (1983): 33-50.

Hughes, Annemarie. "Frightened Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c. 1919-1932." *Women's History Review* 14 (2005): 7-32.

Hunt, E.H. "Industrialization and Regional Inequality: Wages in Britain, 1760-1914." *Journal of Economic History* 46 (1986): 935-966.

Kenefick, William. "An historiographical and Comparative Survey of Dock Labour c 1889 to 1920 and the Neglect of the Port of Glasgow." *Scottish Labour History Society* 31 (1996): 51-71.

McCaffrey, John. "Roman Catholics in Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* XXI (1983): 275-300.

McFarland, Elaine. "'How the Irish Paid their Debt': Irish Catholics in Scotland and Voluntary Enlistment, August 1914-July 1915." *The Scottish Historical Review* 82 (2003): 261-284.

O'Hagan, F.J. "Forging the compact of Church and State in the development of Catholic Education in late nineteenth-century Scotland." *The Innes Review* 58 (2007): 72-94.

Patterson, Iain. "Sectarianism and Municipal Housing Allocation in Glasgow." *Scottish Affairs* 39 (2002): 39-53.

Reid, Alistair. "Glasgow Socialism." *Social History* 11 (1986): 89-97.

Smith, Joan. "Labour Tradition – Glasgow and Liverpool." *History Workshop Journal* 17 (1984): 32-56.

Smith, Roger. "The Origins of Scottish New Town Policy and the founding of East Kilbride." *Public Administration* 52 (1974): 143-159.

Tarn, J.N. "Housing in Liverpool and Glasgow: the Growth of Town Planning." *The Town Planning Review* 39 (1969): 319-334.

Treble, J.H. "The Working of the 1918 Education Act in Glasgow Archdiocese." *The Innes Review* 31 (1980): 27-44.

Wood, Ian S. "John Wheatley, the Irish and the Labour movement in Scotland." *The Innes Review* 31 (1980): 71-85.

## **Theses**

Brown, Callum Graham. "Religion and the Development of an Urban Society: Glasgow 1780-1914." Vol. 1. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1981.

Carrigan, Daniel. "Patrick Dollan and the Labour Movement in Glasgow." M.Phil. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2014.

Cooper, Samuel. "John Wheatley: a Study in Labour History." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1973.

Gordon, Eleanor. "Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland, 1850-1914." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1985.

Pugh, M.G. "Once Proud Burghs: Community and the Politics of Autonomy, Annexation and Assimilation – Govan and Partick, c 1850-1925." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011.

Purdie, Bob. "Outside the Chapel Door. The Glasgow Catholic Socialist Society 1906-1922." Ruskin College, 1976.

### **Unpublished Documents**

Dollan, Patrick. "Autobiography" Manuscript (typed, 206 pages): 1952.

### **Internet Sources**

Burgess, Catriona. *Mary Barbour*. remembermarybarbour.com

Canning, Audrey. '*Barbour (née Rough), Mary 1875-1958*', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition, 2006.

Clydeside 1915. <http://1915rentstrikes.info/class-war-commemoration-first-world-war-counter-centenary>.

Corr, Helen. '*Crawfurd (née Jack), Helen 1877-1954*', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition, 2006.

Corr, Helen. 'Dollan (née Moir) Agnes Johnston, Lady Dollan, 1877-1966". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edition, 2004.

Cross, Morag. *Mary Barbour*.  
firstworldwarglasgow.co.uk/index.aspx/articleid=11384.

Crawfurd, Helen. Red Clydeside website, 'People', Michael Byres, 2002.

Dawson, Alan. Red Clydeside. A Digital history of the Labour Movement in Glasgow 1910-1932. Centre for Digital Library Research, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. <http://gdl.cdrlr.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/>.

Knox, W.W. A History of the Scottish People. Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network. SCRAN, [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk).

Living Rent Campaign. [www.livingrent.org](http://www.livingrent.org).

Red Skirts on Clydeside. Film. <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/890164>.

Spirit of Revolt Archives of Dissent, [www.spiritofrevolt.info](http://www.spiritofrevolt.info). ['links', Glasgow Working Class history at Strugglepedia, Helen Crawford. Posted by Joseph Couzin].

Women's History. [womenshistoryscotland.org/2015/12/24centenary-of-glasgow-womens-rentstrikes/](http://womenshistoryscotland.org/2015/12/24centenary-of-glasgow-womens-rentstrikes/).