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The Impact of the Second World War on Women in Belfast and Dublin: An Oral History

Volume I of II

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The Impact of the Second World War on Women in Belfast and Dublin: An Oral History

Volume I of II

Mary Muldowney

Submitted for the Ph.D. degree to the Department of Modern History, University of Dublin, Trinity College

October 2005

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Introductory Summary

Much recent research into the experiences of women in wartime has been based on the practice of oral history, which has opened up avenues of exploration not facilitated by using only documentary sources. Although there has been little specific research on the impact of the Second World War on women in Ireland, an omission that it is hoped this thesis will begin to redress, there has been an increasing awareness of the need to include women as a separate category in the examination of history. The evidence of a female centred approach to the history of the Second World War demonstrates the extent to which the traditional view of men as combatants and women as the symbols of the 'home front' - the protective focus for which the war was being fought - dominated the integration into the war effort of the social policies of the Allied governments. The thesis questions whether this traditional view of women (which was reflected in the domestic role assigned to Irish women in the inter-war years) was changed in any way by the impact of the Second World War on the two Irish states. By examining the experiences of a small group of women, from a city at war and a city that was neutral, in terms of the priorities identified by the women in their interviews, it answers a range of questions about the impact of that world war on the economic and social status of women in Irish society. The women's memories of the period are compared to other sources, including contemporary observations by government officials and other commentators, with particular reference to the wartime diaries of a female Mass-Observation diarist who documented her experiences in Belfast during the years 1939 to 1941.

In the first chapter, there is an outline of recent research into the social and economic standing of women in the inter-war period in Ireland, Britain, France, and the United States. This is followed by an analysis of the status of women in Western countries during the Second World War in an effort to provide a model for comparison with the experience of Irish women. The reasons why Belfast and Dublin were chosen as the focus of the research project are explained in greater detail, as are the methodological approach and the issues that emerged in the course of the oral history interviews that form the basis of the primary research. In the second chapter, the impact of war on urban communities is examined. The third chapter considers the family and the educational backgrounds of the women who took part in the project, comparing their recollections with contemporary and secondary accounts of official

policies and the extent to which they impacted on the employment and other life choices of women. The fourth chapter deals with the question of work opportunities in England, particularly those that arose because of the demands of the British war effort. This chapter includes the testimony of Irish women who chose to work in England during the period, despite the dangers of the war situation. The fifth chapter looks at housing policy and provision in Northern Ireland and Éire and questions to what extent the war made a difference to the capacity of the women to make homes for themselves and their families. The sixth chapter concerns the issue of women's health in wartime, examining the priorities governing the provision of health services in both Belfast and Dublin together with the extent to which the war impacted on healthcare. Finally, the concluding chapter considers whether the impact of the Second World War on the economic and social status of women in Belfast and Dublin, as described in the interviews, is consistent with the evidence of contemporary observers and the experience of women in other countries revealed in international research.

The conclusion suggests that even gradual change in women's position in society can have an effect on the attitudes and expectations of individual women. The women who took part in the research project did not focus on the rights of women as a social category and they did not actively fight for social change. They did, however, grasp whatever opportunities did come their way, including those created by the Second World War, and in doing this they helped to erode the legal and social barriers that had been erected around them. There were few legislative or social changes to women's status during the Second World War years and neither the Northern Irish government nor the government of Éire paid any more attention in the immediate post-war years to the rights and status of women than they had in the period between the two world wars. Nevertheless, this thesis concludes that subjectively the war did have an impact on the lives of the women who were interviewed, even if it was not reproduced in a neatly packaged set of memories that supported or undermined theoretical speculation about the nature of its effect.

Acknowledgements

Professor David Fitzpatrick, as supervisor of this dissertation, provided inspiration, extensive knowledge and advice in the course of this research. Professor Eunan O'Halpin also contributed significantly to its development and his constructive criticism and suggestions were very much appreciated. Suggestions on an earlier version from Professor Mary Daly were invaluable and helped me to construct a coherent interpretation of the wide ranging material that resulted from my research.

My debt to the women who shared their stories and their time with me is incalculable, and I hope I have at least done justice to their strength, good humour and zest for life in my analysis of their interviews. I am grateful also to the various people who acted as recruiters and gave me introductions to a number of women, even though not all of them decided to take part in the project. This dissertation has been a long time in gestation, not least because my life and time, like those of the women who gave interviews, had many conflicting demands that had to be reconciled.

The staff members in Trinity College Library were always courteous and helpful, as were their fellow librarians and archivists in the National Library and the National Archives in Dublin and the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast. The archivists in the Irish Labour History Museum and the Guinness Archives in St. James's Gate in Dublin deserve special thanks. The staff in the Mass-Observation archive in the University of Sussex were invariably friendly and helpful. Sandra McAvoy generously shared information about Moya Woodside with me.

Sheila and Paddy Condron offered practical help at a difficult time in the course of the research and the benefits of a valued friendship. My mother and my two sisters have my admiration for their considerable abilities and my thanks for their support. Oisín and Siân kept the faith and made me proud of being their mother. Last, but never least, Alan patiently proofread, gave editorial advice and asked important questions. The love and laughter were a bonus.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Were Irish women, in both Northern Ireland and Éire[1], subject to institutional discrimination regarding employment, social welfare and equality of opportunity as were women in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States in the years before the Second World War? To what extent was the war's impact on them differentiated by the fact that Northern Ireland was actively at war, while Éire remained neutral? Did the war have an effect on all aspects of their lives - on their domestic responsibilities as well as their paid employment? This thesis will attempt to answer these questions about the impact of the Second World War on the economic and social status of women in Belfast and Dublin by considering the recollections of a group of women[2] who lived in those cities during the war years. Their memories of the period will be compared to other sources, including contemporary observations by government officials and other commentators, with particular reference to the wartime diaries of a female Mass-Observation diarist who documented her experiences in Belfast during the years 1939 to 1941[3].

The focus for this project emerged from an interest in the growing body of research into the wartime lives of women in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States and how the war impacted on them. The absence of similar work for the Emergency period in Éire prompted an exploration of the questions that might be asked if such an investigation were to be undertaken here. Two of the most important of these questions encompassed the difference between women living in rural or urban areas and between women who were full-time 'women of the house'[4] and those who were engaged in paid employment. As the first question would require more resources than were available to me at the time, the decision was made to focus on

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[1] Éire was the name used to refer to the Twenty Six Counties of southern Ireland after 1937. Prior to that date, the territory was known as the Irish Free State. The territory of the Twenty Six Counties will be described as 'Éire' or simply 'Ireland' throughout this thesis, whereas the six northern counties that remained in the United Kingdom will always be referred to as 'Northern Ireland'.

[2] Short biographies of the interviewees are presented in Appendix 1(1), together with an introduction to the Mass-Observation organisation.

[3] Moya Woodside kept a diary for the Mass-Observation Archive from March 1940 to November 1941. A short biographical note is included in Appendix 1(1).

[4] This phrase is used by Caitriona Clear to replace the term 'housewife' in describing women who worked full-time in the home in *Women of the House, Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922-1961*. Irish Academic Press, 2000.

urban women and in particular, on their paid employment. Aspects of their domestic lives would also be considered, because the international research suggested that wartime conditions were very disruptive in this regard, for reasons that will be examined. In the course of my research, I was made aware of Alison Morrow's doctoral thesis on *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*[5], which explores the impact of the war on women's paid and unpaid work during the years from 1920 to 1950. I had extended my original project to include Belfast and I decided to make a comparison between Belfast and Dublin the focus of my research, whereas Morrow alludes to Belfast but only in passing, as part of her analysis of Northern Ireland as a whole. Although it was at a very late stage of my research that I read Morrow's thesis, I found that the two projects complement each other, not least because she also used oral history interviews as a research tool.

According to many accounts of women's experience in the years before the First World War and in the interwar years to 1939, in both Europe (including Ireland and Great Britain) and North America, there was an increasing emphasis on married women's primary function as childbearers and domestic managers. The experience of women in the First World War was an exception, in that women were needed to join the workforce in the same way as they were in the Second World War. Women were recruited to 'male' areas like engineering and munitions because of the huge labour shortage created by the conscription of men into the armed forces. However, when the war ended in 1918, women were expected to return to the home so that men could take up their jobs again.[6] The discussion of women's experience in the interwar years in this thesis will be based on research which focussed on women's role within the family and the changes in that role which derived from evolution in both individual and social expectations of the family unit.[7] The research suggested that from the first decades of the twentieth century married women, in particular, spent less time in

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[5] *Alison Morrow. Women and Work in Northern Ireland 1920-1950.* Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Ulster at Coleraine, 1995.

[6] G. Braybon and P. Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars.* Pandora Press, London, 1987.

[7] Particularly useful in this regard are Caitriona Clear, *Women of the House. Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922-1961.*; Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890-1940.* Blackwell, 1984; Joanna Bourke, *Working Class cultures in Britain 1890-1960. Gender, class and ethnicity.* Routledge, London, 1993; Jane Lewis. *Labour and Love: Women's experience of Home and Family 1850-1940.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986; Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott (Eds.), *Women, Work and Family.* Holt, Reinhart and Winston, London, 1978.

wage-earning activities as their domestic responsibilities became more time-consuming, again with the important exception of the years 1914 to 1918. Those women who sought paid employment did so to improve the standard of living of their families rather than for personal fulfilment. Opportunities for work were restricted, as many employers claimed that because women were expected to choose marriage and child-bearing as their long-term commitment, they did not merit investment in education or training, and could be consigned to part-time, often low paid and low status jobs. Sylvia Walby argues that labour market forces play a stronger role than family or home influences in determining women's labour market position. It is because of this that their participation in the workplace is less than men's, rather than because they have made choices based on personal and cultural values.[8] The extent to which women acted through freedom of choice or in response to patriarchal closure of the labour market is difficult to judge as the two processes seem to have been happening simultaneously in the inter-war period.

In Éire, the de Valera government's attitude to women working outside the home was outlined in the 1937 Constitution, which firmly stressed the role of women as the nation's homemakers and child bearers[9] although the debate about women's economic status was effectively sidelined by the introduction of the Conditions of Employment Act in 1936. Section 16 of the Act gave the Minister for Industry and Commerce the power to prohibit women from industrial work or to fix a proportion of women workers in industrial employment, "after consultation with representatives of employers interested in such forms of industrial work and with representatives of workers so interested". The predominantly male trade union leadership had lobbied for the exclusion of women from areas of employment where their lower wages were perceived as posing a danger to the conditions of male employees. Consultation with them, as the representatives of the "workers so interested", was unlikely to be focussed on defending the employment rights of women workers. Nevertheless, women were active in the workforce on both sides of the Border, while they

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[8] Sylvia Walby. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1995.

[9] "In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home." (Article 41.2(1) of Bunreacht na hÉireann, the Constitution of Ireland)

continued to play the domestic role assigned to them by official policy and social consensus.

The identification of women with the domestic sphere and the impact of this familial ideology on women's employment outside the home had to be reconciled by the governments of the Allied forces with the necessity to recruit women into the mainstream labour force during the Second World War. In Britain and other belligerent nations, governments desperately needed women to do war work but were hampered by a reluctance to force women (particularly married women) to leave their 'traditional' place in the home. These competing political priorities inspired some very complex manoeuvring to overcome the potential conflict between the urgent need for female labour and the recognition that after the war it would probably be desirable to persuade women to relinquish their place in the workforce. However, given that women had quietly acquiesced in their removal from the jobs they had undertaken in the First World War, it is not likely that any great difficulty was expected and in the event, there were no widespread protests.

In this chapter, there will be an outline of recent research into the social and economic standing of women in the inter-war period in Ireland, Britain, France, and the United States, including a brief summary of the legal standing of women in both Irish states as it was when the war commenced in 1939 and as it continued throughout the war years. This will be followed by an analysis of the status of women in Western countries during the Second World War in an effort to provide a model for comparison with the experience of Irish women. The reasons why Belfast and Dublin were chosen as the focus of the research project will be explained in greater detail, as will the methodological approach and the issues that emerged in the course of the oral history interviews that form the basis of the primary research. There will be a short justification of the use of oral history as a technique for analysing the impact of a disturbing communal experience on a group of individuals who played an almost exclusively private role in the events of the war. Finally, there will be a review of the interviewee selection process, including an explanation of the apparent randomness of the subject group.

In the second chapter, the impact of war on urban communities will be examined. The issues identified in the reviews of existing literature will be used to contextualise the experience of Belfast, which was the capital city of a belligerent state, albeit as an element of the political construct of the United Kingdom. This will be followed by a reflection on the impact of the war on Dublin, as the capital city of a neutral state, examining to what extent the economy and society were forced to adapt to the wartime conditions, even at a remove. The next chapter will consider the family and the educational backgrounds of the women who took part in the project, comparing their recollections with contemporary and secondary accounts of official policies and the extent to which they impacted on the employment and other life choices of women. This will be linked to an examination of the question of paid work, presenting an overview of the economic conditions in both Irish states before and during the war years and analysing the extent to which women's employment was affected by the wartime situation. Women's pay will also be considered, both in terms of comparison with male rates of pay and in the context of adequacy to cover the cost of rent, food, and other necessities, especially in the light of wartime rises in the cost of living. The following chapter will deal with the question of work opportunities in England, particularly those that arose because of the demands of the British war effort. This chapter will include the testimony of Irish women who chose to work in England during the period, despite the dangers of the war situation. The fifth chapter will look at housing policy and provision in Northern Ireland and Éire and will question to what extent the war made a difference to the capacity of the women to make homes for themselves and their families. The penultimate chapter will concern the issue of women's health in wartime, examining the priorities governing the provision of health services in both Belfast and Dublin together with the extent to which the war impacted on healthcare. Finally, the concluding chapter will consider whether the impact of the Second World War on the economic and social status of women in Belfast and Dublin, as described in the interviews, is consistent with the evidence of contemporary observers and the experience of women in other countries revealed in international research.

I Western women in the inter-war period

The twentieth century was a time of progress for women, commencing with the liberation supposedly brought about by women's involvement in war work during

the First World War, and continuing with the extension of the franchise to women in most Western countries, through to a similar opening up of formerly male-only employment during the Second World War[10]. Arthur Marwick was one of the foremost proponents of the claim that the total wars of the first half of the twentieth century were agents of social change, particularly for women, but recent research has challenged his view, particularly the work of Penny Summerfield.[11] Later developments, such as the freedom from unwanted pregnancy (and the consequences for women's employment) offered by the mass availability of the contraceptive pill in the 1960s are outside the time frame of this discussion, but the increase in opportunities for women in Western countries created by the possibility of controlling their fertility was limited by the social policies of governments that still perceived female citizens in a primarily domestic role.

Although Ireland was primarily a rural society in the late nineteenth century and remained so until long after the partition of the State in 1922[12], the relationship between housewifery and rising living standards in Ireland was consistent with trends in women's work in Britain, even outside rural areas. Increased prosperity in working-class households in the twentieth century was partly due to improved housekeeping techniques made possible by the extra time the women spent at home. The mothers could raise living standards, not by bringing in additional money, but by producing themselves the goods and services that were increasingly considered necessary to the well being of the family. This was reflected by the popularity of domestic education classes in the 1920s and 1930s where the emphasis of the lessons

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[10] A. Marwick, *The Deluge. British Society and the First World War*. The Bodley Head, London, 1965; Braybon and Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*; A. Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*. Macmillan, London, 1974.

[11] P. Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict*, Croon Helm, London, 1984;; H. Smith, *Britain in the Second World War*, Manchester University Press, 1966; H. Smith, "The effect of the war on the status of women" in H. Smith (Ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, Manchester University Press, 1986; Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.

[12] A Cabinet Committee of the British Government, set up in 1919 to consider the Irish Question in the aftermath of the First World War, recommended the establishment of two Home Rule parliaments, one in Belfast for the six north-eastern counties and another in Dublin for the remaining twenty-six counties. The Bill giving effect to these recommendations was enacted in December 1920, as the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The Act never came into force in the Irish Free State or Éire, being superceded by the Anglo-Irish Treaty that ended the War of Independence in 1921, but it formed the constitution of Northern Ireland for the next fifty years.

was on the ideal of 'hearth and home' for women.[13] The appeal of the classes was largely due to the manner in which they maximised the contribution of women who had chosen domestic work as a way of life. Nevertheless, the recognition that women had and would continue to have a place in the industrial workforce (however low paid or low status it might be) was evident in the widespread attention paid to protective legislation for women workers which was an item on the agenda of most international women's congresses in the 1920s and early 1930s[14]. The International Labour Organisation gave gender-specific legislation a prominent place in its programme of demands as early as its inaugural conference in 1920. It provided an influential platform for debating the economic role of women, with members in fifty-five states, including both the victorious and the defeated belligerents of the First World War. The debate about protective legislation that was carried on into the early 1930s was conducted within the assumption of the importance of women's domestic role.[15]

Many women did not seek self-fulfilment because they saw little distinction between their own good and that of their families.[16] This identification of women with their families may have been to the detriment of the women in that they had to deal with increased expectations of their domestic role while the male 'breadwinners' may not have been earning enough to allow them to give up paid work altogether.[17] The women of the poorest families suffered most from the combination of increased domestic responsibilities with decreased employment opportunities. These women had little control over where and how they worked. They needed to be close to home and were not in a position to bargain for better wages. Married women who had to get paid work generally sought jobs as casual labourers and devised their own short-term employment strategies, often by taking on badly paid factory outwork which they could do in their own homes. A survey of the health and home life of working

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[13] Caitríona Clear. 'No feminine mystique: Popular advice to women of the house in Ireland, 1922-1954' in Maryanne Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd (Eds.)., *Women and Irish History, Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain*. Wolfhound Press, Dublin, 1997, pp. 189-206.

[14] Mary E. Daly, "Fanatacism and Excess" or "The Defence of Just Causes": the International Labour Organisation and Women's Protective Legislation in the Interwar Years" in Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (Eds.). *Chattel, Servant or Citizen. Women's Status in Church, State and Society.* Historical Studies XIX, Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, 1995, pp. 215-227.

[15] Mary Daly points out that while the preoccupation with protective legislation for women workers might be seen as reinforcing patriarchal attitudes, it can equally be interpreted as indicating a cohesive effort on the part of the working-class family as a whole to improve overall working conditions.

[16] Roberts, *An Oral History of Working-Class Women*; Lewis, *Labour and Love*.

[17] Margaret Mitchell. "The effects of unemployment on the Social Conditions of Women and Children in the 1930s." in *History Workshop 19*, Oxford University, Spring 1985.

class wives in Britain, conducted in the 1930s, found overwhelming evidence that the conditions of life of the 1,250 working-class mothers questioned were such as to make it impossible to maintain their pre-marriage standard of health and well-being unless their family incomes were significantly increased.[18] While individual responses to this situation would have varied, it seems that the majority of women believed that their destiny was to get married and they continued to believe that their primary commitment should be to home and family.

Young women in working-class families had traditionally worked to supplement the family income until they had families of their own. However, in the early decades of the twentieth century these young women experienced a growing autonomy, being allowed to keep and control a significant portion of their wages. They spent more of their money on clothes and entertainment, in contrast to their mothers, whose, earnings, if any, were used for the benefit of the family.[19] When these young women married, they usually returned to financial dependence [on their husbands] but also assumed authority in their role as household managers. Young couples often settled near their families and became active participants in family networks, particularly in the relationship between mothers and daughters. Extended family relationships assumed greater importance when children were born, regardless of whether the young mother was working outside the home or not.[20]

The belief that childbirth should take place within marriage remained strong during the first half of the twentieth century. Decisions about reproduction were made within a patriarchal structure and a woman's wish to remain childless, or even the method she used to limit the number of births she wanted to experience, often conflicted with the public perception of a woman's supposed maternal nature[21]. The social stigma associated with pregnancy outside marriage was evident in the British Poor Law system of relief in the nineteenth century and by the inter-war years of the twentieth century, social welfare payments for dependents and the allocation of public

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[18] Margery Spring Rice, *Working-Class Wives. Their health and conditions*. [London, 1939.] Re-printed, Virago, London, 1981.
[19] Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work and Family*.
[20] Diana Gittens, "Marital Status, Work and Kinship, 1850-1930" in *Labour and Love*, pp. 249-267.
[21] Nadine Lefaucheur (translated by Arthur Goldhammer), "Maternity, Family and the State" in Françoise Thébaud (Ed.), *A History of Women. Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, pp. 433-452.

housing reflected the preference for 'respectable' families.[22] Although women had a great deal to gain by using birth control, the means to do so were not readily available, despite the fact that in the inter-war years the risks of maternal mortality rose with every birth, even with the increased preference for the assistance of medical professionals such as midwives, rather than local 'handywomen'.[23]

Traditional areas of women's employment contracted during this period. There was a lower demand for domestic servants, partly because of the higher wages expected for this work after the First World War and partly because the changing nature of housework no longer necessitated the full-time, live-in service which had previously given occupation to so many women. The middle-class ideal of the two-parent family with gender-specific roles was propagated in official policies. That women subscribed so widely to their identification with a primarily domestic function was as much a means of negotiating power, as it was a retreat from the public sphere. They could earn respect in their role as household managers and arbiters of family and neighbourhood standards from which they were excluded in the world of work.[24] Government intervention in terms of subsidising families was minimal, aiming only to help the very poor to survive, such as widows and orphans who could not subsist as a man's dependants.

The ideology of female domesticity that was propagated throughout Britain, Europe, and the United States of America in the 1930s was reinforced in the Irish Free State and Éire by the potent influence exercised over society by the Catholic Church. Catholic social teaching was equally accepted by legislators and the public and used to justify and institutionalise inequalities of gender,[25] which were also strengthened by the introduction of several measures that had the effect of curtailing the public role of

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[22] Barbara Brooks, "Women and Reproduction, 1860-1936" in *Labour and Love*, pp. 149-171.
[23] This term is quoted in Clear, *Women of the House* and was widely used in rural Ireland to describe uncertified midwives who assisted at births. In Roberts' research in the North of England there are many references to 'wise women' or women known in neighbourhoods for their willingness and ability to help women in labour who could not afford the services of a doctor, with similar evidence of women active in this regard emerging from the work of Nancy Cott, particularly in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1987.
[24] Roberts, *An Oral History of Working-Class Women.*
[25] Terence Brown. Ireland. *A Social and Cultural History, 1923-1985*. Fontana Press, London, 1985; Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society,. Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000; Tom Inglis. *Moral Monopoly: The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society*, Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1987; James Kelly and Daragh Keogh. *A History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin,* Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000.

women. These included the public service marriage bar, which was implemented in 1932 and the Conditions of Employment Act that became law in 1936. The Constitution of 1937 established the family as the fundamental basis of Irish society and women's natural sphere was emphasised as being in the home, although no mention was made of the right to payment for a woman's work in the home. In Northern Ireland, a marriage bar for women also operated in public service employment, but this was relaxed during the war when women's labour was needed, although it was not removed completely, thereby safeguarding its continuance after the war.[26]

The 1937 Constitution marked the most notable departure of the law of Éire from its northern counterpart, in its adoption of contemporary Roman Catholic social teaching in particular and its provisions regarding the family, including a formal ban on divorce. The 1922 Free State Constitution granted the right to vote to women over twenty-one years of age and guaranteed them equal citizenship rights with men. The 1937 Constitution departed significantly from that model in terms of women's rights in assigning a specific place for them (in the home) that was thereby biologically determined, since no reference was made to a man's 'natural role' as a citizen. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act was effectively the Constitution of Northern Ireland between 1921 and 1972. While it gave the Parliament of Northern Ireland the power to make laws for the 'peace, order and good government' of the province, this was qualified by the reservation to the Westminster Parliament of power relating to matters of concern to the United Kingdom as a whole.

The growth of the Catholic Church in nineteenth century Ireland accompanied the growth in population that began towards the end of the eighteenth century. The development of the Catholic Church went hand in hand with attempts to improve the standard of living by ending the practice of sub-division by ensuring that one son would inherit the land. This entailed the need for postponed marriage, permanent celibacy for some family members and widespread emigration.[27] The Church's role in

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[26] Both the Corporation of Belfast and the Northern Irish Civil Service operated a marriage for female clerical staff. During the war, it was decided to consider each case 'on its merits' and women were still forced to resign on marriage but could be re-employed on a temporary basis while the need for them lasted.

[27] Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society*.

underpinning these measures by propagating rules on sexual morality also protected its growing influence by assigning the role of monitor of these regulations to priests and bishops who had daily contact with the laity. As the power of the Church developed, especially over women, the position of the family unit as the link between the Church and individual Catholics was strengthened. The secular manifestation of that power was implicit in the formal recognition of this link that resulted in Article 41 of the 1937 Constitution. Catholic teaching on sexuality, and in particular on birth control, was very influential on medical practice, particularly in the area of obstetrics and gynaecology.[28]

The question of divorce pointed to the different directions taken by the Northern and Southern legal systems when implementing social legislation that would have a particular impact on women. By 1939, despite previous hostility by the Protestant churches in the North, the Divorce Act of 1937 had been extended to Northern Ireland. However, because of the considerable expense involved in the court proceedings, measures were introduced to make divorce accessible to people who could not afford the legal fees, with provisions to include Northern Ireland in their scope. As Moya Woodside pointed out, the Poor Persons Divorce Act was not introduced in Northern Ireland until after the end of the war, with consequent hardship for some people:

> The Poor Persons Divorce Act has not yet been adopted (as was suggested) in Ulster. I interviewed a tearful and unhappy woman whose husband had given grounds, both of desertion and of adultery for divorce; but as she obviously hadn't the necessary £50, and no way of raising this sum, I had to tell her she couldn't get a divorce. Separation, maintenance, yes; but no divorce. And in this case there was another man who wanted to marry her, yet for lack of cash she must remain neither wife nor widow. (20th August 1941)

The legislation was modelled on the Scottish system of divorce and was intended to avoid discrimination according to the sex of the petitioner.[29] This was in contrast to the southern state, where opposition to divorce from the Catholic Church and Catholic politicians hardened conspicuously after Partition. The provisions of the 1937 Constitution concerning women's role in the state were consistent with a

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[28] Ruth Barrington. *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900-1970*. Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1987; Jacqueline Morrissey, *Catholic Ethics and Irish Medicine*, Dublin City University 2000, unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Clear, *Women of the House*.

[29] David Fitzpatrick, "Divorce and Separation in Modern Irish History", in *Past and Present 1987*, No. 114, pp. 172-196, p.187.

determination to imbue the institutions of the state with a Catholic ethos, which had been manifested as clearly by Cosgrave and the Cumann na nGaedhael government as it was by de Valera and Fianna Fáil.

Segregation on religious lines was an intrinsic element of Northern Irish society in the early years of the twentieth century, mainly because the political identification of Unionism was associated with the defence of Protestant values. Following the partition of Ireland in 1922, Northern Ireland's civil servants were almost invariably Protestants, although they maintained a scrupulous impartiality in the administration of the province and they 'acted as a brake upon the more daring experiments in discrimination perpetrated by parliamentarians and local politicians'.[30] The Protestant churches did not exert the same levels of gender-based social control in Northern Ireland[31] as did the Catholic Church in the South, except on the issue of education[32]. Laws enacted by the Westminster Parliament, rather than by the Government of Northern Ireland at Stormont, shaped women's legal and economic status, although Protestant churchmen maintained hostility to the introduction of divorce until 1939. Apart from this, there were no changes in social legislation directly affecting the position of women as a result of the influence of any religious or extra-parliamentary groups, although it is also the case that there does not seem to have been any campaigning in the area in the inter-war years on issues related to women's status.

The emphasis on women's domestic role identified above suggested that women's paid work was problematic, a subversion of their 'natural' function. Not the least difficulty with this viewpoint is that it assumed that all women were married, with family responsibilities, and that their paid employment would be temporary. It

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[30] David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands 1912-1939*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 154.
[31] In terms of more generalised social control, the Protestant ethos was manifested in the very strict regulation of the sale of liquor and the maintenance of rigid Sabbatarian legislation.
[32] Although the 1930 Education Act was intended to be religiously neutral, when its provisions were taken in conjunction with some of those in the 1925 Education Act, they had the effect of creating two school systems, one of which was almost exclusively Protestant and funded by the Northern Ireland Government while the second, a voluntary system which was either Protestant or Catholic, received only a percentage of their funding from public sources and made up the difference themselves. (Patrick Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances. Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-1939*, Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1979 and Donald Harman Akenson, *Education and enmity: the control of schooling in Northern Ireland 1920-50*. Queen's University of Belfast Institute of Irish Studies Publications, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1973.

ignored the existence of single or widowed women who had no male earner to depend on or of women who chose to take paid employment outside the home for their personal fulfilment. Home and workplace were seen as separate spheres and the best means of keeping women in their appropriate categories was to ensure that the workplace was less attractive to them than the home. This could be achieved in several ways, not least by maintaining gender specific wage rates that discriminated against women workers, and by the insistence in social policy on the pre-eminence of the family unit over the rights of the individual woman. Nineteenth century political economists generally held the notion that men's wages had to be sufficient for the support of a family, in order to allow a woman's 'necessary attendance on the children'. The children were essential to the reproduction of the workforce so this was essentially a pragmatic view of a sexual division of labour.[33] It is one that combined easily in the twentieth century with the Roman Catholic ethos that informed the 1937 Constitution of Ireland and did not challenge the absolute determination to maintain the Union that motivated the social policy of the Northern Ireland government.

Social welfare services developed slowly during the first half of the twentieth century, in both jurisdictions. In the Irish Free State and Éire, innovations included the introduction of Unemployment Assistance in 1933, a Widows' and Orphans' Pension Scheme in 1935 and a universal scheme of Children's Allowances in 1944. When the Department of Social Welfare was established in January 1947, it made payments from two broad categories: social assistance and social insurance. Prior to the acceptance of the need for social welfare that was recognised by the creation of the new Department, social thinking in Éire in regard to income provision could be summarised by the directive principles of social policy contained in Article 45 of the 1937 Constitution (see Appendix 1(3)), which in turn were in keeping with papal encyclicals of the time that stressed the independence of the family unit and the breadwinner from the State. Article 41(1) of the Constitution assigned a domestic role to women that the State undertook to support by removing the necessity for paid employment outside the home. This provision reflected Fianna Fáil policy during the

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[33] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*. Quoted in Joan Scott, "The Woman Worker" in Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot (Eds.) *A History of Women in the West. Vol. IV Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War.* Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 1993, pp. 399-426.

1930s and 1940s, which was to discourage married women from working outside the home while school attendance and employment legislation limited the possibility of children working.[34] The establishment of Children's Allowances during the Emergency is therefore not as remarkable as it might seem in a period of economic privation as it did provide a way of supporting poor families who had been particularly hard hit by wartime inflation. It was also a measure that was very popular with Fianna Fáil's target voters – small farmers and the working class.[35] The payment of a Children's Allowance supplemented rather than superseded the family wage and was thus in accordance with Catholic social thinking, and significantly, the payment was made to the father of the family.

Although social welfare provision in Northern Ireland generally mirrored that in Britain, the social context in which the legislation operated was significantly different. The desire for parity with Britain was part of the general Unionist aim of maintaining integration with the mainland but it was administered locally and parity in the sense of equality was not achieved until after the changes recommended by the Beveridge Report in 1942 were implemented. Family Allowances were not introduced until 1945 and although they were paid to the mother, they did not commence until there was a second child and they did not include wives' benefits.[36] Allowances paid to the wives of servicemen lasted strictly for the period of service and rates of payment frequently left women in debt. The Stormont government seems to have been particularly concerned about the disproportionate benefit of family allowances on the Catholic minority, because of their higher birth rate.[37]

While the status of women as citizens in both Northern Ireland and Éire was technically equal to that of men, in practical terms they occupied an inferior position because of a legal system that institutionalised inequality in both the public and private spheres of their lives. Women's representative groups in the south did

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[34] Mel Cousins, "The Introduction of Children's Allowances in Ireland, 1939-1944" in *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. XXVI, 1999, pp. 35 – 53.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[36] Penny Summerfield, "Women and War in the Twentieth Century" in June Purvis (Ed.), *Women's History. Britain, 1850-1945*, UCL Press, University College London, 1995, pp. 307 – 332.
[37] Brian Barton, "Northern Ireland: the impact of war, 1939-1945" in Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts (Eds.), *Ireland and the Second World War. Politics, Society and Remembrance*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000, pp. 47-75.

campaign throughout the 1930s and 1940s for equal citizenship.[38] While there is no evidence of similar groups at work in the North, this is probably because there was no specific legal definition of a woman's place like that in Bunreacht na hÉireann and campaigning tended to be focussed on improving the quality of daily lives rather than on more abstract concepts like equality. Some efforts were made to foment debate about women's role in society but it is not surprising that this tended to be a minority pursuit, given the difficulties caused by the wartime conditions. It should also be noted that the majority of women in both states did not challenge the identification of themselves as homemakers and mothers.

II Women in the Second World War

Most of the recent conventional and oral histories of women's experiences during the two world wars of the twentieth century contradict the widely propagated association of women with peace, as the non-combatant focus of the warrior male's protective impetus. It is obvious that in the conduct of wars by the Western Allied governments[39], that while this image was useful as a propaganda weapon, the same governments worked hard to achieve a balance between maintaining the image and at the same time enlisting the 'weaker sex' in both the armed forces and in war work. As Penny Summerfield described it, recruitment of women 'upset the wartime gender contract, in which women watched, waited and wept while men fought.'[40] The distinction between combatant and non-combatant roles became fluid, because the position of the front line was not fixed, due to air attack and the threat of invasion. Nevertheless, women who aspired to don uniform, as the outer symbol of their more active role, met resistance in many forms, not least from public figures who argued against provision of military clothing for women in the auxiliary forces because it would be perceived to undermine their 'femininity'.

Many families objected to their daughters joining the services because they feared the women would be labelled 'immoral' and some women in the services were

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[38] Caitriona Beaumont, "Women, Citizenship and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922-1948" in *Women's History Review*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1997, pp. 563 – 585.
[39] The majority of references will be to the United Kingdom and the United States because these countries are the subjects of most of the research that will be cited in this chapter.
[40] Penny Summerfield, *'My Dress for an Army Uniform': Gender Instabilities in the Two World Wars.* An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lancaster, 30th April 1997.

discriminated against because their commanders shared this fear.[41] However, it was the determination of governments to maintain the *status quo* in relation to gender roles that had the greatest influence on policy concerning the status of women who joined the armed forces. Despite this, the war created opportunities for women to travel and experience the sharper side of life that would have been unthinkable in peacetime, given the strength of social conventions. For the majority of women, however, the changes in the employment of women represented continuity with pre-war trends. In Britain, for example, neither the Women's Consultative Committee nor the Ministry of Labour to which they were advisers seemed very concerned that women would abandon their families for war work. They assumed that everyone shared their basic respect for the conventional role of women in the home. This coloured their attitude to the provision of child-care, one of the most essential services necessary to ensure full participation of women in the workforce.[42]

The belief that war can be liberating for women appeared during the First World War and similar claims were made quite early in the Second. It was used as an incentive in national recruitment campaigns to encourage women to join the armed forces or to volunteer for civilian war work. It was also an argument used by feminists anxious to see women's potential as war workers being properly utilised and even more importantly to them, being properly credited.[43] However, another viewpoint is that while women were enabled to escape from gender-defined roles, they were also forced back into the home as soon as the war ended and their contribution was no longer required by the state. Dorothy Sheridan points to the fact that the debate has tended to ignore the extent to which women themselves made deliberate and informed choices about how they contributed to the war effort and that their experiences were far from homogenous. Particularly for those women who joined the armed forces, they could see themselves as very different beings from the image of fragile souls being defended by their men folk. For the governments that were trying to exploit women's capabilities, there was always a tension between that need and the deeply held beliefs that women's real destiny was as wives and mothers.

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[41] Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945;* Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-45*. Princeton, 1978.
[42] Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*. Croon Helm, London, 1984.
[43] Dorothy Sheridan, "Ambivalent Memories: Women in the 1939-45 War in Britain" in *Oral History*, Vol. 18, No.1, Spring 1990, pp. 32-39.

Sonya Rose's recent work on national identity and citizenship[44] suggests that the symbolic equation of home and family with stability and order suggests why there was so much attention paid to the roles of women during the war. Women on the 'home front' were identified as the 'Second Line' of defence and it was argued that women's obligation to their families was also an obligation to the nation.[45] The national community was portrayed as a family, with a gendered structure of authority and a sexual division of labour. In the later years of the war, prescriptive articles in women's magazines and the national press urged women to think about preparing themselves for the return of their husbands, not least in curbing their new found sense of independence by way of reassuring husbands that they were the authority figures in the family, regardless of how well their wives had coped with their absence.

Part-time and shift working was introduced on a wide scale in order to mobilise women while not interfering with their continued domestic responsibilities. The fact that part-time work was offered to women alone reinforced the stereotypical view of women as casual workers who merely supplemented the family income. Part-time and shift work had the additional advantage for employers that it reduced their wage bills while increasing productivity. Appeals were made to the patriotic sense of women in the belligerent nations in enlisting them for war work while the war effort in these countries was also assisted significantly by the willingness of women to co-operate with government policies on rationing and price and wage controls which often made their lives more difficult.

Women workers often faced resistance from their male co-workers, who were concerned that the influx of women to war industries represented a dilution of their skills[46], particularly in engineering works and other areas from which women had traditionally been excluded.[47] Women were perceived as a 'cheap' replacement for

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[44] Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945.*
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 136–138.
[46] Engineering and shipbuilding were especially vulnerable to skill dilution, when jobs that were previously carried out by craftsmen were broken down into their component parts and carried out by a number of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Women could be brought into the workforce quickly by this process because less time was required for training but it also meant that claims for equal pay could be denied on the grounds that there was no parity with the work that skilled men had performed.
[47] Caroline Lang, *Keep Smiling Through. Women in the Second World War.* University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1989.

skilled male labour so that the potentially transformative effect of a broader range of employment opportunities was diminished by the fact that women workers did not receive equal pay to the men they were replacing and by the constant emphasis on the temporary nature of their involvement in the workforce. Concerns about the wartime assault on gender roles were shared by some women, whose personal testimony to Penny Summerfield recounted how they had used the war as an opportunity to assert their 'conventional femininity' by stressing their maintenance of the 'home front' as their contribution to the war effort.[48]

Despite women's proven ability to work as hard as men, to organise themselves and their families in difficult and dangerous conditions and generally to cope with the hardships of war at least as well as men, the enduring image of women's role during the Second World War was as the inspiration for warriors, the keepers of the 'flame of humanity'[49]. In Britain, both Mass-Observation and the Wartime Social Survey collected evidence showing that large groups of women wanted to go on with their wartime jobs and that many other women resented the fact that their decisions were dependant on the conditions of work in the post-war world. Regardless of these views, however, both surveys reported that an overwhelming majority of women saw marriage and family as their post-war destination. The expectation that marriage, home and dependency were the appropriate conditions for women not only survived the challenge of the war, but were also throughout the war major determinants of policy towards women.[50]

Surveys of popular opinion in countries other than Britain also showed negative images of women war workers, whose patriotism was held up to question because of the perceived gains that individual women were making from the collective struggle. In the United States, women benefited from the economic boom created by the war, following the widespread unemployment and particular discrimination against women that had been a feature of the Depression in the 1930s.

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[48] Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing women's wartime lives. Discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998 and *'My Dress for an Army Uniform': Gender Instabilities in the Two World Wars.*

[49] Richard Von Weizäcker, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, speaking in May 1985 on the 40th anniversary of the German surrender, quoted in Colin and Eileen Townsend, *War Wives. A Second World War Anthology*. Grafton Books, 1989, p. xi.

[50] Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, p. 190.

This was particularly intense in white-collar jobs where women had traditionally found employment, such as primary school teaching and clerical work in banks and insurance companies.[51] In 1937, a survey conducted by the Department of Labour found that women generally worked in occupations and industries that were predominantly female and they earned substantially lower wages than men. In 1940, of the twenty seven per cent of all women over fourteen who were in the labour force, about one-fifth was unemployed.[52] During the war, the female labour force grew by almost half, to a total of twenty million women.[53] While the percentage of women in the total labour force was proportionately less than that in Britain, in the war years both countries saw an increase in the numbers of women employed outside the home. In the United States, the wartime recruitment of women, which occurred between March 1940 and July 1944, was over six million, nearly thirty one per cent of the total female workforce aged between fourteen and sixty-five. This compared to an additional two and a half million women recruited in Britain between June 1939 and June 1944, just under thirty two percent of the total female workforce of the same ages, of whom one and three quarter million were employed in industry, agriculture, commerce, and the public service.[54]

During the war, the public discussion of women's work was conducted within a framework that assumed a need for limitation on social change. Thus, it was emphasised that women would only be replacing male workers for the duration of the war and that they would do so because of their domestic responsibilities, which required that they continue to care for their families but that new methods of doing so might be necessary because of the extraordinary circumstances. Women were therefore not abandoning their femininity but were in fact operating within traditional boundaries. Wartime recruitment posters underlined this by showing glamorous women at work in factories, impeccably groomed with cheerful smiles on their faces.

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[51] Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s*. Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1982.
[52] Mary M. Schweitzer, "World War II and Female Labour Force Participation Rates" in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 40, No. 1, March 1980, pp. 89-95.
[53] *Ibid.*,, p. 90.
[54] International Labour Office, *The War and Women's Employment. The Experience of Britain and the United States*. I.L.O., Montreal, 1946, p.276.

In both the United Kingdom and the United States, the typical working week for women was forty-eight hours, with one day off. Petrol rationing meant that public transport was crowded as private cars became impossible to service and this meant that more time was spent getting to and from work. Scarcities of food and other commodities meant that shopping was more difficult and almost impossible for women who could not get to stores until late in the evenings, when they were either closed or had sold out of produce. The sexual division of household labour was not disturbed by the war and the fact that many men were away from home meant that the majority of mothers were left with sole responsibility for childcare. Many women worked because they needed the money[55], despite the difficulties of combining paid employment with domestic duties. Between April 1940 and March 1944, the number of married women gainfully employed in the United States increased by two million, so that they represented seventy two per cent of the total increase of women in the workforce.[56]

In 1942, the U.S. National War Labour Board established that the same pay rates should be paid to women workers when the work they did was the same or substantially the same as work done by men. However, union contracts containing inequitable pay rates were allowed to remain in force and pay scales for jobs traditionally performed by women were not changed. Unequal pay was also allowed in some cases where men's jobs were classified as 'heavy' and women's jobs as 'light'. However, the disparity between the average earnings of men and women workers did narrow during the war years, primarily because of the increased demand for women workers and the wider occupational distribution created by the recruitment of men to the armed forces.[57]

Government propaganda offices working closely with established media outlets fostered the image of women as homemakers and mothers who were prepared to leave their homes because of the national emergency, however reluctantly. In the

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[55] Survey undertaken by the U.S. Department of Labour Women's Bureau, 'Women Workers in Ten War Production Areas and their Postwar Employment Plans', Bulletin 209, Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1946 quoted in Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter. Class, Gender and Propaganda during World War II.* University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1984.
[56] Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations and the status of women during World War II.* Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1981, p.5.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

United States, the Office of War Information worked in tandem with newspaper and magazine editors to weave the specific demands of the labour market into stories and advertising.[58] The connection between civilian labour and soldier welfare could be underscored by portraying romances between hardworking women and admiring men in uniform, while support for the various fund-raising and welfare drives was also mobilised by this means. Advertising reinforced the image of women war workers as the tough and resilient guardians of the home front, so that women could be enlisted in the war effort by a paradoxical appeal to traditional perceptions of their function and strength in the context of an active role in the war effort, rather than as the passive objects of male military defences.

In Britain, the Ministry of Information had a similar influence on the contents of newspaper columns and magazines that were aimed at women readers and advertisers combined exhortations to duty with conventional blandishments to buy their products. Typical advertisements assumed that women would be playing an active role in the war effort, whether in the forces or on the home front, and referred to that role in approving terms while linking the women's patriotic impulses to the advertiser's product, as in the following example:

> Yet it is your duty these days to be beautiful because beauty inspires happiness and cheerfulness in yourself and others. … With Icilma you go on the job looking as charming and radiant in uniform as you do in your best party frock.[59]

A similar idea formed the basis for a special supplement to the Daily Mail, on *Woman and Beauty*, which was issued in December 1939. The message on the front page of the supplement was unambiguous:

> You're doing a man-size job, BUT men still love femininity … and above all the world still wants BEAUTY.[60]

In conscripting women for war work, Britain went further than any of the other Allied nations, but generally the employment of women represented a development of peacetime trends rather than an overturning of social mores and gender relations. Some of the lighter industries, like the textile mills in Northern

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[58] Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*.
[59] Advertisement for Icilma Beauty Aids, Daily Herald, December 1939. (Mass-Observation Archives, Advertising and War Themes, Box 1/B [359].)
[60] *Ibid.*

England, had long relied on women for half or more of their labour force. In mid-1943, the proportion of the nation's women aged between fifteen and sixty who were in the forces, munitions work, or essential war industries was about double that in 1918 at the corresponding stage of the previous war. Nearly three million married women and widows were employed, as compared with a million and a quarter before the war. It was calculated that, among those aged between eighteen and forty, nine single women out of ten were in the forces or in industry while eight married women out of ten were similarly occupied. Many other women were in part-time employment, many of them in improvised offices and workshops that took the work to those who could not leave their own homes for long, because of childcare or other family responsibilities. It was estimated, however, that if peacetime trends had continued without the intervention of the war, about six and three quarter million women would have had jobs outside the home in 1943. Since the official estimate of those employed stood at around seven and a half million, the number of extra women who were working was no more than three quarters of a million.[61]

In the United States, the government did not intervene in the provision of childcare or day nurseries for the mothers who worked outside the home, mainly because of a reluctance to suggest that the requirement for women workers was anything other than temporary.[62] Although initially equally reluctant, the British government began a programme of expansion in the provision of day nurseries from 1941 onwards and by 1943 there were some 1,450 such nurseries available through local authorities, with places for 65,000 children.[63] In 1942, the Standing Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations held a conference on wartime nurseries at which a resolution was passed declaring that the care and supervision of children of employed mothers was a national responsibility. They protested against the Ministry of Health circular, which had been circulated to local authorities in December 1941, which recommended that most of the children must be cared for by means of private arrangements made by the mothers, suggesting that the government

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[61] Angus Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-45*. Pimlico, London, 1992, p. 331.
[62] Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond.*
[63] Calder, *The People's War*, p. 389.

was trying to evade previous promises that the children of mothers volunteering for war work would be properly looked after.[64]

It would seem that both men and women who were called upon to fulfil a role as responsible citizens in the war effort of the belligerent nations were expected to do so within existing constructions of gender roles and social expectations. Wartime is one of the key areas in society in which separate gender roles are clearly delineated, and in the Second World War women were still firmly associated with nurturing and supporting the military role of men, but were definitely not expected to cross the gender boundaries by engaging in combat. The recruitment of women into traditionally male areas of work, especially in industries directly connected to combat such as munitions and heavy engineering, was often perceived as transgressing society's boundaries. Although membership of the armed forces, work in industry and work on the land gave many women a relative social freedom and higher earning power compared with the pre-war years, they did not cause fundamental changes in social policy as regards the general position of women in the Allied nations in the immediate post-war years.

Research into various aspects of the lives of Irish women has been a growing area of scholarship in recent years and is producing a body of work that compares very favourably with similar research in other countries. However, no specific work has been done on the experiences of Irish women in the Second World War years, although their presence in some general studies provides valuable information about their lives in that period.[65] Although it focuses mainly on the late 1950s and early 1960s and on whole families rather than individual members of them, Alexander Humphreys' *New Dubliners* offers a useful examination of the changes that take place in the process of urbanisation.[66] The author studied twenty-nine Catholic families, who were all first generation urbanites, the children of immigrants from rural Ireland, who were born, raised and lived their married lives in Dublin. A case study of the Dunn family, parents John and Joan and their five living children, was used to illustrate the life cycle of a 'typical artisan family'. Humphreys posed three basic

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[64] Mass-Observation Archives, Day Nurseries file, Box 1[245].
[65] Recent research will be quoted in the relevant thematic chapters that follow this introduction.
[66] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966.

questions about the impact on family organisation of the move from what he identifies as 'rural stability' to the rapidly changing community in the city. In the transition from the rural to the urban community, what in family life remains the same? What changes and what is the new pattern of family life as a whole? What are the particularly crucial areas in the environment and in the family itself where change starts, and how do changes in these areas account for changes in other spheres of family life?[67] While these questions are too specific to family organisation in post-war Dublin for the answers to be of more than general interest for the focus of this research project, Humphreys' approach does offer a useful guide to the kinds of issues that might be raised, given the necessity for a shift in the terms of reference. Where his investigation and findings are relevant to the examination of the oral testimony cited in this dissertation, as in the 'case study' he conducted into the family's history in the 1940s, this will be noted, together with other pertinent secondary works, as indicated above.

A much more recent publication, rather ambitiously claiming to present the 'Irish experience during the Second World War'[68], includes only two women in the seventeen oral history interviews on which it is based. One of the women joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the war, after a short period spent working for the American Red Cross in Portadown and the other woman worked in a bank in Dublin. While the interviews are interesting, the main focus of the analysis is on the author's perception of the benefits to Éire of the policy of neutrality. A more useful source is Diarmuid Ferriter's recent survey of the history of Ireland in the twentieth century[69], which sets out to incorporate many of the hitherto marginalised and disadvantaged cohorts of Irish society (including women). While there are flaws in this book, which will be alluded to where appropriate, it is valuable for the attention it pays to women as a significant element in Irish society, where other general surveys have tended to work as if male and female experience was synonymous.

There are limitations on the information about Irish women workers that can be gleaned from Census returns and other official sources, but it is possible at least to

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[67] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[68] Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *The Irish Experience During the Second World War. An Oral History.* Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 2004.
[69] Diarmuid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000.* Profile Books, London, 2004.

attempt a statistical analysis of their paid work from that information, whereas little or nothing about their unpaid domestic work was officially recorded. The opportunity to test how a group of women defined themselves in terms of paid work (whether they saw themselves primarily as 'workers' or as women who happened to have done paid work but who described their occupations in relation to the men in their lives i.e. as 'wives', 'mothers', or 'daughters') seemed likely to provide some insight into the extent that women in mid-century Ireland accepted the gendered division of labour that justified their poor conditions. Involvement in paid work during both world wars was presented as a liberating opportunity for women in countries other than Ireland, even if it was on a temporary basis, although that perception conformed to the view of women as primarily functioning away from the workplace. By choosing to focus on women who had been in paid employment during the Second World War years, the extent to which that liberating process might have operated in Ireland (North and South) could be analysed and compared to the experience of women in other countries where the 'equalising' in the workplace proved to be expediently short-lived. However, having embarked on the interviews that would form the core of the research, it became apparent that the women who shared their experiences with me also had a wealth of valuable information about aspects of their lives other than their employment. This realisation changed the focus of the project from an exploration of how the employment of women workers had changed (or not) during the Second World War to an investigation of the general impact of the war on women who lived in Belfast and Dublin at the time, in terms of both their paid work and their domestic lives.

Belfast and Dublin seemed to be obvious choices wherein to seek out potential participants in the research. In the immediate pre-war years, the populations of the two cities were very close in number, with a total of 438,000 in Belfast in the 1937 Census[70] and 468,000 in Dublin in the 1936 Census[71]. As the major cities and seats of government of Northern Ireland and Éire respectively they were also the largest centres of employment opportunities, particularly for women. It would seem that the quality of everyday life in Belfast and Dublin during the 1939 - 1945 period would

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[70] Government of Northern Ireland, *Census of Population of Northern Ireland 1937. Belfast County Borough*, HMSO, July 1938.
[71] Department of Industry and Commerce, *Census of Population 1936 Vol. I.* Government Stationery Office, No. 2913, Dublin, 1938.

have been different for the inhabitants of the two cities because of the disparity in the level of national involvement in the war, although one of the aims of this research is to question whether women's experience reflected this divergence. It is not an issue that seems to have concerned either officialdom or contemporary commentators or indeed, historians writing about the war. As noted above, women's activities during the 'Emergency' did not appear to have been of interest to the writers of Irish history, in contrast to the many recent works on women's experiences during the Second World War that have been written in other countries.[72]

Northern Irish women seem to have been similarly absent from official accounts of the war, although some of their recollections have been used in recent publications[73]. Accounts of the Second World War in Northern Ireland focus primarily on administrative and military questions[74], although here again, Diarmuid Ferriter has attempted to redress that imbalance and to include 'ordinary people' in the record. There are glimpses of women working in factories and shops, running their homes and looking after their families, but the post-war reconstruction policies, which would have had the most immediate effects on women's lives, have not yet been examined with specific questions about their impact on women or disadvantaged groups in general. Women in Northern Ireland were significant beneficiaries of the welfare state but they were certainly not encouraged to become involved in its administration although there has been no investigation to date of why that was the case.

If gender inequality was not considered to be a matter of concern until many years after the war, political and sectarian division as a dimension in the experience of Northern Ireland must be borne in mind when comparing Belfast and Dublin, including the possibility that this was something that intruded into life in both cities,

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[72] It is worth noting, however, that Margaret Ward's contention in *Putting Women into Irish History* that women have been ignored in the writing of Irish history is no longer true. (Margaret Ward, *Putting Women into Irish History*. Attic Press, Dublin, 1991.

[73] Brian Barton, *The Blitz. Belfast in the War Years*, Blackstaff, Belfast, 1989 and *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*, Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 1995; James Doherty, *Post 381. The Memoirs of a Belfast Air Raid Warden*, Friar's Bush Press, Belfast, 1989; Paul Hamilton, *Up the Shankill*, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1979 and Mary Pat Kelly, *Home Away from Home. The Yanks in Ireland*. Appletree Press, Belfast, 1994; Richard Doherty, *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War*. Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1999.

[74] John Blake, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*, HMSO, Belfast, 1956; Robert Fisk, *In Time of War, Ireland, Ulster and the price of neutrality 1939-45*, Paladin, London, 1987.

albeit at different levels. The determination of the majority of Unionist politicians to maintain the *status quo* following the Government of Ireland Act meant that religious differences assumed particular importance in both national and local administration. The measures taken to reinforce the position of the loyalist community ranged across a variety of social services, from education to health to employment and housing, but it was in the latter area that the sectarian divide was most obvious, in the physical separation of the two communities that resulted from it.

III Using the oral history approach

Some of the most useful research on the experiences of women during the Second World War in Britain, Europe, and the United States was based on oral history interviews with women who lived through the war years. Oral history is at the same time a means of constructing life histories (particularly of people who had never committed much to writing); of researching the 'facts' essential to historical assessment of a period or event; of working on the functioning of memory and of understanding the dynamic between the historian and his or her source. Rather than being a problem for the oral historian, the wider perspective given by varying recollections of events or periods of time contributes to an understanding of the individual and collective versions of the past that are active in the present. Paul Thompson's *The Voice of the Past* provides a comprehensive look at the historiography, the theory, and the practice of oral history[75]. His recommendations on methodology largely informed my approach to the interviews that form the core of this research, although experience helped me to refine my interviewing technique, as outlined below.

Many of the classic sources for social historians, such as the census, registers of birth, marriage, and death, are themselves based on contemporary interviews. Social statistics no more represent absolute facts than newspaper reports, private letters, or published biographies. Like the material in recorded interviews, they all represent, either from individual standpoints or aggregated, the 'social perception' of facts and are all, in addition, subject to social pressure from the context in which they are obtained. With these forms of evidence, what we receive is social meaning, and it

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[75] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*. Oxford University Press, 1988.

is this that must be evaluated[76]. The memory process depends on individual comprehension and whether the informant is really interested in the question being asked. It is also likely that the older the informant, the greater is the likelihood that memory will have been altered by changes in values and perceptions, subsequent to the time and events that are being discussed. In Alistair Thomson's study of a group of men who were members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, the author argued that the 'distortions' of memory were more likely to a resource than a problem, "because the process of remembering could be a key to understanding the ways in which certain individual and collective versions of the past are active in the present".[77]

The interviewer must have an interest in and respect for the informant as an individual and be able to show sympathy and understanding for their point of view. Many practitioners stress that the interview is a social relationship, with its own conventions of discourse.[78] It represents a contract between the interviewer and the informant, in which the interviewee should be confident that the interviewer would always honour his or her confidence. Feminist historians and sociologists have found that while men and women speak the same language, they use it differently, and therefore their life histories must be listened to and interpreted using different methods.[79] This is not to suggest that only a female historian could share the kind of complicity with her informant that would lead to the narrowing of the distance between interviewer and interviewee but I have found that the more intimate, conversational tone which women frequently adopt when talking to each other is the most appropriate and worked best in the interviews.[80] Many women are not used to speaking publicly and older women, in particular, will have grown up in an

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[76] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[77] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories. Living with the Legend.* Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 228.
[78] Thompson's *The Voice of the Past* is the most comprehensive guide to the theory and practice of oral history, but other useful and purpose-written manuals are Roberta Blaikie and Glenn Telfer, *Way to the Past*. Community Service Volunteers, Glasgow, 1988; David Henige, *Oral Historiography*, Longman, London, 1982; Anthony Buckley, *Collecting Oral History*, Ulster Folk Museum, 1987; Robert Perks, *Talking about the Past*. Blackmore Press, London, 1992.
[79] Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating our Pasts. The social construction of oral history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992; Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, "The life story approach to the study of internal migration" in *Oral History* Vol. 7 No.1, 1979, pp. 26-32; Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Ducher, "Narrative Structures, Social Models and Symbolic Representation in the Life Story" in Gluck and Patai (Eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, Routledge, New York, 1991, pp. 77-92.
[80] Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview techniques and analyses" in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, pp. 11-26.

environment where women's speech was devalued and their public discourse rarely encouraged.

The decision to base my research on ordinary[81] women was made for several reasons. Their experiences have generally been omitted from the writing of history, and their 'worm's eye' perspective is a necessary counterweight to the views of witnesses whose approach to the recollection of their experiences has been formulated with an audience in mind. This point was underlined in one of the interviews, with a woman who had been a shop steward and who continues to be a representative of retired trade union members. Marie's replies were often very short and at times even monosyllabic but in conversation after the interview, she said that although she had been aware of how reserved her responses to my questions had been, she found it impossible to overcome the habit of watching what she said when she was talking 'officially', which is what she felt she was doing when speaking with the tape recorder running. Her conversation was much more expansive and informative when she was talking informally with me over a cup of tea, following the taped interview. Another interviewee, Ita, who had achieved a very senior position in the Civil Service was very fluent in her replies to my questions, but it was clear that her experience in the public domain had given her the confidence to be quite definite about what she was willing to reveal and how to frame her replies. There was also the likelihood that women who have formerly had reason to tell their life stories may lack spontaneity in their recollections as frequent re-telling of a story tends to shape it towards an expected response. This was particularly apparent in the interview with Jean, who had previously taken part in research on the Belfast Blitz and had concentrated her memories on that aspect of the war to such an extent that she became confused when I attempted to find out about less easily identifiable ways in which the war might have impacted on her life.

The opportunity provided by oral history practice for historians to access the experiences of so-called ordinary people, who did not generally appear in official records and documentary sources, is particularly valuable for women's history

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[81] By this, I mean women whose lives were lived in the private sphere and whose activities were not formally chronicled other than in personal correspondence or the files of the business concerns where they were employed. The term 'ordinary' is by no means derogatory and is intended to describe women who did not come to widespread public notice.

because they have committed much less to the written form than men. The presumption of gender neutrality that might be inferred from a scrutiny of official documents must be undermined by the recognition that in the years 1939 to 1945, there were no senior female authority figures in any of the governments or civil services of Ireland, Britain, Europe or the United States who might be empowered to write such documents and so the perspective that governs such reporting is essentially masculine.

Social roles and the constant interplay between the individual and society that shapes everyone in one form or another structure the memories of both men and women. In this regard, research into the emigrant experiences of Irish women has produced some very valuable scholarship in recent years (reference to this will be made in detail in the chapter on working in England). The practice of oral history has featured prominently in this exploration and in this regard, the work of Sharon Lambert[82] illustrates the extent to which interviews can open up previously closed avenues of research. She notes the extent to which most writing on the emigrant experience is based on the lives of men, particularly in the context of Irish memoirs on the subject. The impact that emigration had on people's lives, and particularly their relationships with the families they left behind, have been left out of the study of the Irish emigrant experience. The themes of her book were identified from the priority accorded to them by the women in their interviews.

Although memory is not based on an individual's gender, but varies according to the events of the individual's life, in consequence of this it becomes sexualised. Until relatively recently, this gender division of roles has had a largely negative impact on the writing of history because it contributed to the invisibility of women, who were not considered to have played a significant part in the shaping of events. This is especially true of women who worked outside their homes, because the workplace was designated as a masculine sphere in which definitions of class issues were based on the perception of the male worker as breadwinner. Women were not fully accepted as belonging to the labour movement because their involvement was considered to be secondary to their primary role in the domestic world. Productivity

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[82] Sharon Lambert, *Irish Women in Lancashire. 1922-1960: Their Story*. Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 2001.

was equated with masculinity and fecundity with femininity and the problems of women workers were seen in the context of their involvement in a world in which they had only a peripheral part to play. Labour history concentrated mainly on the protagonists in the class struggle, the trade union rank and file membership and leaders and their struggles to achieve better working conditions. Women workers were not seen as central to that struggle. Their sexually differentiated wage scales were a source of anxiety to male workers only because they were concerned that hard-won conditions would be undermined by competition from women.

The question of whether the transcript should be given to the interviewee for evaluation and correction is discussed by several historians, but Katherine Borland's description of the difficult situation in which she found herself when she used her grandmother's narration of a significant event in her youth to draw conclusions with which her grandmother violently disagreed[83] was most useful in framing a question that should be answered before embarking on an interview with any person, whether female or male.

> How might we present our work in a way that grants the speaking woman interpretative respect, without relinquishing our responsibility to provide our own interpretation of her experience?[84]

My response would be that there must be some level of collaboration with the people whose life histories we are interpreting, but that we must also be aware that every historical source derived from human perception is subjective. We can challenge that subjectivity when we review and discuss the interview transcript with the interviewee and if he or she is adamant that a particular story or memory is not to be included in the historian's interpretation of the material, that decision must be respected. Once that transaction has been completed and permission granted for the use of the transcript, it is then the historian's responsibility to analyse the information in the interview as vigorously as any other historical source and cross check it with documentary or other evidence.

IV The interviews

The women who took part in this project were self-selected to the extent that

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[83] Katherine Borland, "That's not what I said." Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, pp. 63-75.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

they were informed about the nature of the research in a general way and asked if they would be willing to participate. Initial approaches were made to several individuals[85] who had contact with women who were of the correct age to have been either growing up or to have reached adulthood during the Second World War and who lived in Dublin or Belfast. The general intention of the research was explained to these individuals, who in turn contacted some women whom they thought might be prepared to be interviewed. When a positive response was received, the names and contact details of the individuals were passed to me and I then wrote to them giving more detailed information about the project and their possible role in it.

All of the thirty-seven women to whom I wrote replied to me, although some of them said that on reflection they had decided not to take part in the project. Others agreed but changed their minds before the interview took place. In all, I interviewed twenty-six women for varying lengths of time and in some cases, on more than one occasion[86]. Following each interview, I did my best to produce the transcript of the interview within a few weeks, although this was difficult in some cases, because of poor quality in the recording. I sent the transcript back to the woman concerned and followed up with a telephone call or a personal visit when there had been sufficient time for her to read it. Most of the women either gave permission straight away for me to use the interview in full or to make very minor amendments. One woman refused permission and there are no extracts from her interview in this thesis. Another woman asked for most of the interview to be withheld and asked me to paraphrase her contribution.[87] Three of the interviewees requested that names of people or places be changed or withheld.

Although I formally contacted thirty-seven women to ask them if they would be willing to participate in this research, there was a much larger number of women who were asked informally if they would consider it. As reported to me by the people I had asked to act as intermediaries and test the women's interest, most of those who refused did so on the grounds that they would be too 'nervous'. The women who did eventually volunteer to take part in this research project were typical of their

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[85] I knew some of these people and third parties suggested others.
[86] On four occasions, interviews took place with two women together. These were with Catherine and Betty; Lily and Nancy; Jean and Susan; Letty and Josie.
[87] Details of these incidents are included in the short biographical notes in Appendix 1(1).

generation in that most of them were unused to public speaking, and even in the familiar surroundings of their own homes most of them were anxious about doing a taped interview. Many of them were deprecating about their likely contribution and dismissed the value of their recollections, although their attitude changed when they received the transcript and in most cases, the approbation of their families. Having a diverse group of interviewees benefited the research, not least in the recognition that most of the women had similar values and their memories were shaped by many of the same elements, regardless of the disparity in their backgrounds and occupations.

After the first two interviews were carried out[88], they were transcribed exactly as spoken, including grammatical errors, pauses, and hesitations. In each case, the women concerned were very upset that they had made so many 'mistakes' and for future interviews, the transcripts were edited for 'correctness'. In regard to this issue, Ronald Frazer's approach in *Blood of Spain*[89] has been adopted, when he was not concerned to demonstrate that 'this is how it was' so much as 'this is how it is remembered as having been'. While he was referring to the accuracy of the recollection, the method can just as well be applied to the patterns of speech, given that most people will be much more careful about grammar when writing than when they are speaking, particularly in an informal setting.

For the process of analysing the interviews, the transcripts were broken down into separate sentences and paragraphs, which were in turn sorted into various themes, such as 'pay', 'pensions' and 'wartime conditions' and the women's responses were then compared with each other and with other sources of information about the period. Whenever a quotation from an interview was used, a note of that use was made beside the printed version, which helped to avoid repetition. The original transcripts, as approved by the interviewees, are appended to the thesis in Volumes II and III. A questionnaire was not used in the interviews, although the basic information that it would be necessary to elicit from each woman was worked out in advance, as well as having a thematic framework, which was kept in mind in the course of the interviews. Thus, the interview generally commenced with questions

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[88] The first was with Nancy, who did not want to be quoted directly, and the second was with Catherine and Betty. Both of these interviews were conducted in a number of separate sessions and the transcripts are quite lengthy.

[89] Ronald Frazer, *Blood of Spain. The Experience of Civil War 1936-1939*. Longman, London, 1979.

about the woman's family background, where she fitted into the family, and some general information such as parental occupation. In some cases, questions about education and training led into immediate discussions of the interviewee's employment, while in others the family questions led into descriptions of home life and domestic responsibilities.

The conversational tone of the interviews occasionally led to a situation where I became the focus of the interview as some of the women related what we had been discussing in their lives to my personal circumstances. Rather than making an abrupt return to discussion of their memories, I answered questions and used the opportunity to elicit information about the women's attitudes to various subjects, including modern society and the social and legal status of women then and now. As in so many personal interactions, some information about the interviewees was furnished unconsciously, as in the case of Catherine and Betty. Catherine's name was given to me by a woman who knew the family history and had been told stories of Catherine's heroic struggle to raise her six young children after the early death of her husband. At the first interview, her eldest daughter Betty, who lives with her, said she would like to sit in to fill in background information, to keep Catherine 'straight' as Betty phrased it. It became clear that Betty had played an equally important role in the family's history to Catherine, but she did not appear in any of the stories which her siblings told to their children and to family friends, except as one of Catherine's responsibilities. During the hours spent in their home, it became apparent to me that Betty had continued all her life in the role she adopted as a twelve year old girl, caring for her mother and her younger brothers and sisters but her contribution was never acknowledged by her mother and consequently, by the rest of the family.

Some interviewees had prepared for the interview in advance and had made notes for themselves about matters that they thought I might find interesting. It was clear that these notes also reflected what the women themselves found most engaging and had made the strongest impact on their memories. In Ann's case, she had been very happy in the Ormeau Bakery in Belfast, where she worked all through the war years. She was eager to impart her impressions of the work, her responsibilities, and the conditions in the bakery. However, when I discovered that she was still in contact with some of her fellow workers and asked if they might be willing to give an

interview, she was very dismissive of their likely contribution and changed the subject when asked if she would give me addresses where I might write to them. In subsequent conversation, when I tried to find out why she did not think her friends would have useful memories, it emerged that they did not remember the bakery as fondly as she did and she assumed that meant they did not remember it as clearly.

The initial contacts in search of interviewees were made with the intention of keeping a balance between Belfast and Dublin, between Catholic and Protestant and between white collar and manual workers. While the focus of the research was on paid employment, I tried to maintain a balance between the occupations of the women. If I interviewed a former nurse in Dublin, it was my intention to find a nurse who had worked in Belfast and so on. Apart from the difficulties encountered in actually arranging interviews, it very quickly became apparent that it would not be possible to have perfect 'matches' for comparison of experience between the two cities. It was also becoming clear to me that even if the resources had been available to interview the large numbers of women that would have been essential to claim I had a representative sample, there were certain advantages to diversity in the group that were equally desirable, as indicated above. While this is true of any group of individuals, no matter how similar they might appear to be on the surface, the diversity in the group helped me to avoid the danger of drawing over-generalised conclusions from the interviews. Interviewing women from a variety of backgrounds and occupations necessitated careful listening because of the different levels of response to my questions. It was also a useful reminder not to assume that a shared language meant that we had the same understanding of the meaning of what they were saying.

The memory process can be unreliable, not because people are deliberately distorting facts but because time and intervening recollections can obscure some events, while what is not important to a person can be forgotten. Sometimes it is consciously evaded, if a memory represented a source of distress or discomfort. Frames of reference and how opinions are formed will be altered as a person's life experiences multiply and while it would be very appealing to undertake a kind of psychological exploration of the different layers of understanding that people develop as their lives unfold, it was not something that I felt qualified or equipped to

undertake when conducting the interviews in this thesis. It is not possible to understand the impact of social change and organisation without tracing it through the lives of individuals, but the fact that the individual concerned may not have been conscious of the process of change as it happened and cannot therefore identify particular events or stages that marked its progress is not an obstacle to analysing the difference in a person's worldview over a period of time. The interviewer must bear in mind that the woman (in this case) doing the remembering has had the benefit of intervening years of experience to alter her perception of the memories she is recounting. The personal implications of historical events vary according to position in the life span and the perceptions of an elderly person may differ radically from the perceptions of that same person when she was significantly younger.

Clare was one of the women who made notes before the interview and she consulted them frequently in the early stages. She was very definite about what she remembered and her tone of voice and her language were quite formal. However, when we moved on to a point where the notes had been exhausted and she was starting to remember things as a result of the prompting of my questions, her voice became more relaxed, as did the language of her responses. The early questions were mainly related to her family and the role played by her mother in dealing with the privations caused by the Emergency, and her memories were framed to some extent by shared recollections of the time, some of which she had checked with her brother before the interview. On the other hand, the middle stage of the interview dealt much more with Clare's own activities and interests at the time and her responses led to a broader discussion of how Ireland has changed since the war years, and she abandoned all the formality she had displayed when it was more than her individual opinions that were concerned. Clare's mother was very strict in her dealings with her children and it is likely that the fear of incurring her mother's anger, which was an influential element of her childhood and adolescence, also had an influence on the formulation of stories concerning her mother.

Stories may be varied with changes in the circumstances of the telling, depending on how the interviewee relates to the interviewer and the atmosphere in which the interview takes place. Before the commencement of each interview, the kinds of questions that would be asked were briefly explained, as was the fact that the

interview would be recorded and that a verbatim transcript would be produced for their approval. Most of the women immediately embarked on anecdotes that they thought I would enjoy or find useful and it was sometimes difficult to stop them until I had started the tape recorder and asked them to identify themselves. Some of them made clear before we commenced that they would not answer questions about certain aspects of their family lives or that they did not feel confident to remember accurately some details of their paid employment. All of them said they would not feel comfortable discussing sex or family planning, although in one or two conversations following the interview, they were more relaxed when the formalities were concluded and they did tell me some stories about their relations with their husbands, but with the proviso that they were not for publication.

In all of the interviews the physical surroundings were very important. Without exception, the women chose to be interviewed in their own homes, where they felt confident and comfortable. In one or two cases, this led to practical difficulties, as in the case of the interview with Lily and Nancy, where they had a washing machine running in the background and it was sometimes very difficult to understand what they were saying. When I suggested turning it off, they were reluctant because they were trying to get household chores completed before going to a local social hall for a senior citizen's party, so I did not press the issue and had great difficulty with the transcription. On other occasions, background sounds like traffic noise that were not a noticeable problem in the course of the interviews, also made the transcription process difficult. These problems underline the pitfalls of interviewing away from the interviewer's home territory, where it is not always possible to go back to clarify particular points. Although there were large gaps in the transcript of Lily and Nancy's interview, they said they were satisfied with it and 'could not remember' what might have been said at the points where the tape was incomprehensible.

None of the women interviewed who had lived in Belfast remembered any discrimination on religious grounds, either generally or in the workplace, although some of them thought this might have been because the segregated nature of Northern Irish society meant that they rarely encountered anyone other than co-religionists. In

Anzac Memories[90], Alistair Thomson described how the Anzac legend developed and how it was modified over the years as Australian society's need for a particular national identify changed. To some extent, the same process seems to have been operating with the women who were interviewed about Belfast during the war years. The impact of a traumatic event like the Second World War was different in Northern Ireland than the rest of the United Kingdom, in a way that was different again from the way the war was experienced in Éire. Protestant and Catholic interviewees analysed the disparity with different terms of reference, as the former felt that they should have the same level of involvement as others in Britain, and believed that it was because of the 'disloyal' Catholic population that they were not as wholeheartedly involved in the war effort. The Catholic interviewees claim only to remember that the impact of the war was equally hard on everyone in the community. One Protestant interviewee, however, who was born in a predominantly Catholic small town on the southern side of the border where she spent her early years before moving to Dublin, remembered how many of her co-religionists joined the British forces during the war. Her father fought in the British army during the First World War but she regards herself as a nationalist and republican with no loyalty to the British crown, other than as titular head of the church to which she belongs. The discrepancy in the memories is an indication of how the public representation of the past, in this case the Second World War years, can be altered according to the needs of the community, so that private memories are shifted in line with the broadly accepted view. Thomson noted that most of the Anzac survivors, whom he interviewed several times, composed their stories to fit in with what was publicly acceptable, without any conscious recognition that they were doing any such thing.

V Conclusion

During the inter-war period in the early years of the twentieth century, the increasing emphasis on the domestic role of women who lived in countries that would become part of the Allied forces during the Second World War coincided with a contraction in the range of employment opportunities for women during the 1920s and 1930s. The stress on women's domestic role had the greatest impact on working class women, who were much more likely to need paid employment to supplement the

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[90] Thomson, *Anzac Memories. Living with the Legend.*

family income. Women's contribution to family economies was rarely officially recognised, not least because it was presumed to be temporary; nor was their contribution through the productions of goods and services at home recognised as being of monetary value, regardless of how it raised the standard of living of a family.

Much recent research into the experiences of women in wartime has been based on the practice of oral history, which has opened up avenues of exploration not facilitated by using only documentary sources. Although there has been little specific research on the impact of the Second World War on women in Ireland, an omission that it is hoped this thesis will begin to redress, there has been an increasing awareness of the need to include women as a separate category in the examination of history. Their responses to major events or to social and economic changes may not necessarily be fairly represented by the predominantly masculine interpretations that have shaped the official reports and documentary sources on which the writing of history has been focussed. While this is also true of other marginalised groups, it is particularly problematic in the case of women, who comprise at least half the population but whose specific interests and concerns have not received a corresponding level of attention. The evidence of a female centred approach to the history of the Second World War demonstrates the extent to which the traditional view of men as combatants and women as the symbols of the 'home front' - the protective focus for which the war was being fought - dominated the integration into the war effort of the social policies of the Allied governments. The remainder of this thesis will question whether this view of women (which was reflected in the domestic role assigned to Irish women in the inter-war years) was changed in any way by the impact of the Second World War on the two Irish states. By examining the experiences of a small group of women, from a city at war and a city that was supposedly safely neutral, in terms of the priorities identified by the women in their interviews, it is hoped to answer some of the general questions posed at the beginning of this chapter about the impact of that world war on the economic and social status of women in Irish society.

Chapter 2

Cities and states at war

One of the most notable aspects of the impact of war on any city is the extent to which the community must be reorganised around the demands of the war effort. The foundation of urban life is based on people coming together to carry on a range of economic activities that are facilitated by communal organisation, which in turn gives rise to social organisation that is appropriate to the conditions of living *en masse*, rather than in smaller and possibly isolated groupings. The impact of modern warfare on urban populations is of a different nature than on rural communities, where economic activity is most likely to be based on the continuity of agricultural production, in which the means tend to remain the same, regardless of peace or war. Civil defence in urban areas is much more complex than in rural areas, and the latter are also more likely to have the means of substitution for rationed food and consumer goods. Nevertheless, local communities – be they cities, towns or villages or workplaces, for that matter – all take part in war as economic and social units based on people's daily lives and it is this aspect of the Second World War that will be examined in this chapter, with particular focus on the experience of women.

The general issues identified in the literature about cities and war[1] will be used to outline an approach to the analysis of the experience of Belfast, which was a seat of government in a belligerent state, albeit as an element of the political construct of the United Kingdom, with a similar examination of the impact of the war on Dublin, as the seat of government of a neutral state. Some reference will also be made to Edinburgh as a comparator for the wartime experience of women in a British city, subject to the same conditions in terms of daily life. This is because Edinburgh had a similar status to Belfast in terms of its being the seat of government of one element of the United Kingdom, but also because its population during the Second World War was very close to that of Belfast and Dublin[2] and it did not suffer the sustained

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[1] Most of the literature consulted for this section is not quoted directly because it was useful in general rather than specific terms but it has been included in the Bibliography.

[2] In the Northern Ireland Census of 1937, the population of Belfast was 438,000, while that of Dublin (in 1936) was 473,000. The 1931 Census in Scotland showed that Edinburgh had a population of 439,000, which had increased to 467,000 in 1951 by which time Belfast's population had grown to 444,000. The similarity to Dublin in regard to demographic increase had changed by 1946, when the

bombing raids that were a feature of the Home Front in other major cities in Britain. While a more detailed discussion of such issues as the impact of the war on employment, housing, and health will be carried on in dedicated chapters, in this chapter there will be brief explanations of some of the major pieces of legislation that were passed by the three governments (in Belfast, Dublin and London) between 1939 and 1945 in response to the wartime conditions. The governments of Northern Ireland and Éire introduced wartime legislation and regulations in order to alleviate the economic and social pressures created by the Second World War and the Emergency respectively. There will also be an analysis of how they impacted on the citizens of Belfast and Dublin, male and female.

Regardless of the disparity between the belligerent standing of the two governments in Ireland, they had many common concerns. These were the need to ensure the continued supply and distribution of essential commodities while maintaining the security of the state and ensuring the protection of citizens in the event of attack or invasion. In Northern Ireland, the government had the additional task of hosting troops from the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as trying to play an effective role in the war effort by improving production in war-related industries. The position of the Northern Irish government was further complicated by the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 which reserved the making of peace and war and control of the armed services to the monarch (acting through the Westminster government), so that 'matters arising from a state of war'[3] were legislated for in London. For the sake of efficiency, local offices of British ministries were established in Northern Ireland as agents of the Westminster government and powers were delegated to them by the British authority or by inclusion of clauses in the defence regulations, which made special provision for their operation in Northern Ireland. However, the sense of urgency about the war that was characteristic of British cities does not seem to have been extended to Belfast until the Blitz in April and May 1941 and even then, it was noted by contemporary observers that the pace of life in the city was significantly different to that in the cities of

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Census showed the population to be 572,000. (B.M. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.)

[3] The phrase used in Section 4(1) of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 also gave the Westminster Parliament the exclusive right to deal with merchant shipping, submarine cables, wireless, telegraphy, navigation by sea or air, lighthouses, and buoys and beacons (with minor qualifications).

Britain. Tom Harrison, of the Mass-Observation Organisation, arrived in Belfast in June 1942 as part of his analysis of morale throughout the United Kingdom since the outbreak of the war. He commented on the atmosphere in Northern Ireland generally and on Belfast in particular:

> Many of the things which are taken for granted by the average Englishman or Scotsman … like clothes rationing or transport difficulties … are still the sources of considerable irritation and resentment. … in Britain the whole tempo has changed from peacetime and anyone who behaved in a peacetime way now in London or Liverpool would at once be noticeable and might even cause a riot.[4]

Belfast and Dublin shared a number of common features, which form an important background to the legislative response to the war undertaken by their respective governments. Their administrative structures were very similar, mainly because they had been set up under British administration and both Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State (and Éire) retained the model of a central parliament dealing with national affairs, with local affairs being organised by the relevant authority. The legal system in Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, following Partition, owed much to English legal precedent and literature. The justification for retaining English common law as the legislative exemplar was the large body of extant statutory law, which was too useful in the regulation of the body politic to be abandoned or superseded.[5] Although the English courts never bound the Irish courts, following Partition many English decisions were treated with respect in courts of the Irish Free State. Éire and even the Republic of Ireland, while the courts of Northern Ireland were still subject to decisions of the House of Lords in regard to appeals.[6]

I War on cities

In the years between the First World War and the Second, European theorists of air war and defence became preoccupied by an important change they saw taking place in the way wars would affect civilian populations.[7] The development of aerial

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[4] Tom Harrison, Mass-Observation Archive FR 1309, 12th June 1942 quoted in Brian Barton, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*. Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 1995, p.16.
[5] C.K. Boyland and D.S. Greer, *The legal systems, North and South. A study prepared for the New Ireland Forum*. Government Publications, Dublin, 1983.
[6] T.H. Delaney, Ireland. *Bibliographical Introduction to Legal History and Ethnology*. Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1963.
[7] Julia S. Torrie, *Preservation by Dispersion: Civilian Evacuations and the City in Germany and France, 1939-1945*. Paper presented to the *Power Knowledge and Society in the City* International

bombing, in its infancy in 1918, meant that cities would now be much more vulnerable to attack than had been the case when warfare was largely concentrated on the ground or at sea. In broad terms, this recognition had a particular influence in the 1930s on the planning of major European cities, especially where urban regeneration projects were ongoing. Schools of architecture, particularly where the theories of Le Corbusier[8] were prominent, propagated development of tall buildings, separated by wide boulevards and public spaces where the damage from bombing raids could be limited. Le Corbusier developed a theory of urbanism in response to concern about the overcrowded and insanitary slums that could be found at the centre of most major European cities, where casualties in the event of attack were likely to be very high. He advocated the use of modern, industrial techniques and strategies to transform society into a more efficient environment with a higher standard of living on all socioeconomic levels. He believed that only better architecture would stave off revolution, which he thought was inevitable if living conditions for the urban poor were not radically improved. Although his ideas provoked much discussion, his plans were mainly dismissed by planners in the inter-war years because they said the skyscrapers that he proposed to build were impractical, although his theories were put into effect in the modernist architecture of Brasilia, in Brazil. Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's chief architect before the war and Minister for Armaments and Munitions from 1942 to 1945, was influenced by Le Corbusier in his designs for Berlin's city centre in the Nazi era[9] although his motivation was to demonstrate the superiority of the Reich rather than planning for defence or a better environment for the poor.

One of Le Corbusier's most prominent followers was Siegfried Giedion,[10] who became more renowned in later life for his histories of art and architecture but in the late 1930s and 1940s, was extremely influential in the shaping of the New York city high rise skyline and the vertical emphasis in the structure of other major cities in the United States. He was a professor of art and architectural theory at Harvard

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Conference on Urban History, Edinburgh, September 2002.
(http://www.esh.ed.ac.uk/urban_history/text/TorrieM6.doc)

[8] Le Corbusier was the pseudonym of Swiss architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887-1965).

[9] Matthias Schmidt (translated by Joachim Neugroschel), *Albert Speer: The End of a Myth*. Harrap, London, 1985.

[10] Siegfried Giedion (1888-1968) was also a Swiss architect and he was strongly influenced by Le Corbusier's theories. His seminal work, *Space, Time and Architecture* was based on a series of lectures he gave at Harvard between 1937 and 1939.

University for most of his life and influenced many of the major developments in modern city planning in the immediate post-war period. Gideon was echoing Le Corbusier when he wrote in 1941:

> The threat of attack from the air demands urban changes. Great cities sprawling open to the sky, their congested areas at the mercy of bombs hurtling down out of space, are invitations to destruction. They are practically indefensible as now constituted, and it is now becoming clear that the best means of defending them is by the construction, on the one hand, of great vertical concentrations which offer a minimum surface to the bomber and, on the other hand, by the laying out of extensive, free, open spaces.[11]

One of the key responses to the dangers of aerial warfare by urban and military planners was the development of anti-aircraft defences. During the Spanish Civil War (from 1936 to 1939) unrestricted bombing of towns and cities from the air was first used on a large scale. This prompted some observers in Britain to suggest that the Italian and German forces might be using studies of the effects of the bombing on Spanish cities to estimate what damage similar operations might do to large cities in Britain.[12] A specific study published in 1938 demonstrated that the combined tactics of 'silent approach' and 'high explosive' bombing were seen as particularly effective in inducing intense psychological effects in the population of a large city.[13] When the Blitz in Belfast ended, it did not bring immediate relief for the people of the city, simply because they had been so traumatised by the events of April and May 1941 that it took a very long time for them to recover, as one of the women who contributed to this research recalled:

> [Jean] Well you know, I think it takes a long time for people to get over something like that and to think normally again. Normality doesn't come overnight. (68)

Advances in the technology of war did not just influence the physical design of cities. Aircraft and tanks, submarines and ships and heavy armaments are all dependent for their manufacture on methods of mass production, which are normally accessible only in the most highly industrialised countries. The huge demand for war

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[11] Siegfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*. (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1941) quoted in Stephen Graham (Ed.), *Cities, War and Terrorism. Towards an Urban Geopolitics*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2004, p. 39.

[12] Davide Deriu, "Cities through the Viewfinder: The Airborne Gaze and the Urban Target". Paper presented to the *Power Knowledge and Society in the City* International Conference on Urban History, Edinburgh, September 2002. (http://www.esh.ed.ac.uk/urban_history/text/DeriuM4.doc)

[13] John Langdon-Davies, *Air Raid. The Technique of Silent Approach: High Explosive Panic*. George Routledge and Sons, London, 1938, quoted in Deriu, "Cities through the Viewfinder", p. 3.

material required the productive efforts of skilled, urban populations, who became essential elements of the war effort in a way that in previous centuries had been relevant only to the armed forces. The disadvantage of having such skilled populations available for war production is that the cities and urban areas in which they are situated consequently become the objectives of military attack and this blurs the division between civilian and military forces in war. Another difficulty associated with mass production of war material was concern about storage of ammunition and ordinance so that they would be readily available when required but not allowed to pose additional danger to the population of areas in which they were kept. In Britain, construction work on underground depots was commenced almost immediately after the ending of the First World War, driven by the Army Council's belief that the next war would be won predominantly by airpower.[14] These projects included the building of gigantic underground storage depots as well as aircraft engine factories that were situated countrywide. One benefit of this construction programme was the improvement in employment and housing, roads, railways and water supply in cities and towns where they were situated while rural electrification was accelerated by at least a generation.[15]

In Britain, pre-war discussion of the issue was based on an expectation of very heavy casualties (based in turn on the experience of the First World War), which in the event proved to be an over-estimate, but as early as September 1935 the Westminster government issued its first circular on air raid precautions to all the local authorities, including those in Northern Ireland, inviting them to start thinking about the problem and to take responsibility for the protection of the citizens. Two main methods were proposed for local authorities to plan around: the first was evacuation of the civilian population (or at least sections of it, such as children) and the second was the construction of air-raid shelters in densely populated areas, to protect against aerial bombardment. The first was intended to be administered nationally, while the latter would be a local concern. The response was mixed, with some local authorities doing little or nothing about defence, even after compulsion was introduced in 1937.[16] Belfast Corporation was one such local authority, with few steps taken for civil

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[14] N.J. McCamley, *Secret Underground Cities. An account of some of Britain's subterranean defence, factory and storage sites in the Second World War*. Leo Cooper, Barnsley, 1988, p. 2.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[16] Angus Calder, *The People's War*. Pimlico, London, 1969, p. 22.

defence, even as late as 1939.[17] In Edinburgh, the Corporation was quick to respond to the government's call for mobilisation, probably because the city was one of the few places in Britain to experience air raids during the First World War.[18] Early plans included the using of basements and redundant tunnels as shelters and much effort was put into the digging of trench shelters in the city's parks. Andrew Jeffery noted that the city's building contracts were quick to spot the opportunities offered by the enormous programme of building concrete surface shelters.[19] By October 1939, in contrast to the situation in Belfast, shelters had been provided for one third of the population. Fortunately, the city did not undergo any sustained bombing and damage was significantly less than that inflicted on other major British cities because the shelter provision did not proceed much further. This was because many of the plans were based on the use of existing buildings and basements and tunnels under them and many of the city's buildings were too old and decrepit to be used for that purpose.

In May 1938 Westminster Parliament set up the 'Committee on Evacuation', with instructions to examine various evacuation schemes and to consider the experience of other countries.[20] The Committee identified two main problems: firstly, what to do with the evacuees once they were out of the cities and secondly, how to encourage people to leave voluntarily. A significant proportion of the responsibility for organising the evacuation of city people to the countryside was given to the Women's Voluntary Service (W.V.S.), which had been formed in June 1938, primarily for recruiting women for civil defence activities. Even before war was declared on 3rd September, the evacuation of London and other major British centres of population began, moving mothers, children and the disabled out to rural areas. Within fourteen hours of the evacuation order being given, the W.V.S. had alerted 120,000 women throughout the country, 17,000 of whom worked as escorts for the evacuees. Also involved were teachers, local authority officials, railway and other transport workers and volunteers from a number of other backgrounds.[21] After some

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[17] Brian Barton, *The Blitz.Belfast in the War Years*. The Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1989, p. 28.
[18] On the night of 2/3rd April 1916, a Zeppelin airship attacked Leith and Edinburgh, killing thirteen and injuring twenty four people.
[19] Andrew Jeffery, *This Present Emergency. Edinburgh, the River Forth and South-East Scotland and the Second World War*. Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh, 1992, p. 118.
[20] Mike Brown, *Evacuees. Evacuation in Wartime Britain 1838-1945*. Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud, 2000, pp. 3-4.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

months, most of those who had moved were back home in the cities, as the threat of bombing raids receded in the course of the 'phony war'. A second wave of evacuation in early 1940 also resulted in a drifting back to the cities, so much so that in September 1940, when the blitz finally came to London, there were over 520,000 children of school age in the metropolitan area.[22]

The formation of a civilian defence force was announced in May 1940, initially called the Local Defence Volunteers, and later in the year re-named the Home Guard. Training was set up on a freelance basis, organised by veteran commanders but from August 1940 Home Guard units were affiliated to county regiments of the army and given khaki overalls as standard issue. Their main duties were to keep vigil over coastline, airfields, and factories. From October 1942, the Home Guard was used as a training ground for boys of seventeen and eighteen, prior to call-up for compulsory military service. In June 1943 (the highest point of recruitment) there were more than 1,700,000 men involved in Home Guard activities. They were backed up by the voluntary members of the Royal Observer Corps, whose main task was to supplement the radar network by reporting the direction, numbers, height, and type of any aircraft that might be hostile. By June 1942, when women were recruited for the first time, there were 1,500 observation posts, with more than 33,000 men and 1,000 women on duty day and night. When the Allied forces were heading for the Normandy beaches in June 1944, the number of men had dropped to 28,500 while the number of women observers had risen to 4,100.[23]

The Stormont Parliament was empowered to recruit local volunteers for the Home Guard but when the scheme was announced on 28th May 1940 it was significantly different from the its implementation elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It was decided that the B Specials[24] would form the nucleus of the new force because Prime Minister James Craig believed that a policy of open enrolment would facilitate

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[22] Calder, *The People's War*, p. 128.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269 *et seq.*
[24] The B Specials were auxiliaries recruited to the Royal Ulster Constabulary after 1920. They were part-time, usually on duty for one evening per week and serving under their own command structure, and unpaid, although they had a generous system of allowances. They gained a reputation for brutality and were viewed by most Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland as a Protestant vigilante force. They were disbanded in April 1970 after several notorious incidents, including attacks on civil rights marches.

republican infiltration. The force was placed under the authority of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Inspector-General and not under military command, as it was in England, Scotland, and Wales. Although this arrangement was bound to exclude Catholic volunteers, it was agreed after some discussion with the London government that the status quo should be maintained, since Catholics were unlikely to join a predominantly Protestant force, regardless of who controlled it.[25]

An Air Raid Wardens' Service was created in April 1937, and by the middle of 1938 this had more than 200,000 recruits. Although their chief duty in the first year of the war was to enforce the blackout regulations, by the time bombing raids were becoming regular in late 1940, their duties were extended to assisting the emergency services in dealing with the casualties, overlapping with medical personnel and the members of the W.V.S.. Even when the heavy bombing raids ceased, the Civil Defence services were maintained at the ready and there were still hundreds of thousands of volunteers in June 1944, with women joining in increasing numbers.[26] All of the United Kingdom's civil defence organisations had branches in Northern Ireland.

In addition to bombing, one of the fears connected to danger from above was the possibility of gas attacks. This resulted from the use of gas in the trenches during the First World War. Many victims of those attacks were still around, with their poor health offering tangible evidence of the destructiveness of poisoned gas. In August 1938, thirty-eight million gas masks were issued throughout Britain, for men, women and children (although there were none for babies) and barrage balloons appeared in the sky over London.[27] Gas masks were uncomfortable to wear and beards or elaborate hairstyles could interfere with their effectiveness. In October 1939, the Ministry of Home Security issued the following warning to women:

> The attention of women is drawn to the fact that the temperature conditions inside the face-piece of the mask cause eye-black to run, leading to smarting of the eyes, profuse tears and spasms of the eyelids. This produces an urgent desire to remove the mask, with dangerous results if gas is present.[28]

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[25] Barton, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*, pp. 33-35.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 194-202 *et seq.*
[27] Calder, *The People's War*, p. 25.
[28] Extract from Ministry of Home Security leaflet, dated October 1939, quoted in Stuart Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour. The Hidden Story of the Home Front 1939-1945.* Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2001, p. 112.

Another legacy of the development of the technology of war in the First World War was the use of the submarine, which both sides had deployed with great effect to attack shipping convoys, thereby disrupting lines of supply. This tactic was used again during the Second World War and its impact was felt in neutral countries, such as Ireland, as much as in belligerent states. The British government had learned the lessons of the First World War and merchant shipping was mobilised as part of the total war effort, thereby denying its use to Éire, which was dependent on it for vital imports. The British government reacted to the government's refusal to make the so-called 'Treaty ports' available to the British Navy by denying access to British-registered vessels to Irish exporters. In order to maintain his government's position on neutrality, de Valera decided that Éire would have to manage for a time without ready access to sea transport for imported supplies although this situation was remedied in the course of the Emergency.[29] The number of persons on the Live Register[30] (residing in cities and urban districts) was 7.9 per cent higher in the first six months of 1939 than it had been in the same period of 1938, while the numbers continued to increase steadily in the first six months after the declaration of the Emergency in September 1939. The reduction in employment was attributed to the scarcity of raw materials for industrial production.[31]

In France, the government decided on a programme of large-scale evacuation of the civilian population from the major cities and industrial areas, commencing in 1939 with the clearance of civilians from areas along each side of the Franco-German border.[32] While this was done in an orderly fashion, when the German army swept into France in the spring of 1940, huge waves of refugees rushed before them, leaving whole communities vacated in some instances, displacing at least seven million

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[29] Irish Shipping was incorporated in March 1941 to provide the state with merchant shipping that would be independent of British vessels for supply.
[30] The Live Register referred to the number of registered unemployed who were insured under the Unemployment Assistance Act 1933. Registration was compulsory for receipt of unemployment benefits but the Act excluded domestic servants and workers categorised as "Assisting Relatives". This would account for part of the discrepancy between the numbers of unemployed on the Live Register and the number in the Census, which looked at those out of work on a particular date, regardless of their entitlement to unemployment benefit.
[31] James F. Meenan, "The Impact of the War upon the Irish Economy" in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland (JSSISI)*, 93rd Session, pp. 17-22.
[32] Torrie, *Preservation by Dispersion*, p.2.

people, albeit only briefly.[33] Although the German government initially resisted making plans for evacuation from the cities, when bombing raids began in autumn 1940, commencing with a major raid on Berlin in late August, it was agreed that children, mothers, and mothers-to-be should be evacuated to the countryside. As was the case in Britain, problems with differences between urban and rural people came to the fore when they were forced into proximity. Not the least of the difficulties was the lack of work for the evacuees, who were often perceived as lazy by their reluctant hosts.

In the United States, civil defence was not an important issue, even after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941, mainly because geographical isolation from the major theatres of war provided a sense of security. There was little likelihood of bombing raids being perpetrated on the urban industrial centres and security concerns tended to be focussed on the 'enemy within' and the danger of sabotage. Following the declaration of war on Japan on 8th December 1941, Japanese nationals living on the West Coast of the United States were rounded up and interned in camps in remote areas of the western states. They were confined in very bleak conditions until the war ended in 1945. Civilian defence squads were organised in all the major cities and by mid 1941, even though the United States had not formally declared war at that point, evacuation plans had been drawn up for the evacuation of New York, Washington and Boston by the newly created Office of Civilian Defense.[34] With a staff of only one thousand federal employees, the Office of Civilian Defense played its most important role in co-ordinating activities with existing federal, state, and local agencies. It provided millions of gas masks for the protection of urban dwellers that were never used but were manufactured following desperate demands by various city authorities throughout the country.

During the Second World War in belligerent nations, governments were challenged by the extent to which the 'Home Front' was a vital part of the war effort. For women, this meant that they were faced with some very complex manoeuvring by their political leaders to overcome the potential conflict between the need to recruit

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[33] John Keegan, *The Second World War*. Hutchinson, London, 1989.
[34] D'Ann Campbell and Richard Jensen, "Defence forces and civil defence" in John Keegan (Ed.), *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, pp. 928-929.

them into the workplace in significantly increased numbers, as well as into the auxiliary armed forces, and the insistence that after the war they would have to return to the home. Although this had also been the case during the First World War (if to a lesser extent) during the Second World War the Home Front also became a target for direct attack much more than had been technically possible during the earlier conflict. Huge leaps forward in the technology of warfare, especially in aerial combat, meant that the danger of attack and invasion was ever present and this placed the cities of the Home Fronts in particular danger. The Belfast Blitz, the most dramatic manifestation of this danger in Northern Ireland, resulted in the deaths of more than 1,100 people with more than 650 severely injured.[35] The bombing raids on Belfast contributed to an acute shortage of housing, with the first comprehensive survey in 1944 estimating that over 23,500 new houses would be required in the city.[36] In the long run, the aftermath of the Belfast Blitz forced the local authorities to confront the problem of poor public housing in the city, but this issue will be examined in more detail in the chapter on the Home Front. As part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland assumed belligerent status as soon as war was declared on 3rd September 1939 and Belfast was especially vulnerable, as the seat of government, as a centre for industrial production and as the base for the production of much needed aircraft and shipping. Although Dublin was the capital city of a neutral state, the government was aware that the threats to urban areas outlined above could also be a possibility for that city, not least because of its position on the eastern seaboard and many of their responses to wartime conditions reflected the plans and actions of belligerent states.

II Wartime legislation and civil regulation in Ireland

Eamon de Valera, speaking as both Taoiseach and Minister for External Affairs, was clear about the reasons why the southern state should remain neutral:

> We have known what invasion and partition means; we are not forgetful of our own history and, as long as our own country, or any part of it, is subject to force, the application of force, by a stronger nation, it is only natural that our people, whatever sympathies they may have in a conflict like the present, should look to their own country first and should, accordingly, in looking to

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[35] Barton, *The Blitz,* p. 254.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

> their own country, consider what its interests should be and what its interests are.[37]

The decision to keep Éire neutral in the war was widely supported in the state, not least because many people still saw Britain as the enemy that had needed to be forced from Irish shores and that still supported the repression of fellow Catholics in Northern Ireland. Although the southern state's neutrality was inclined to an unofficial friendliness to the Allied side in the course of the war, making preparations to protect the country from potential invasion by British or German forces involved practical measures to secure the government and the populace, many of which were similar to those adopted by the Northern Irish government.

In the spring of 1939, the likelihood of impending war and the I.R.A. bombing campaign in Britain that had commenced in January of that year gave rise to the enactment of a piece of legislation called the Treason Act 1939, which was passed by the Dáil on 30th May, and which declared treason to be a capital offence. It also provided for the imprisonment of anyone convicted of assisting treasonable acts. The Treason Act was followed shortly afterwards by the Offences Against the State Act 1939, which was passed on 14th June. This Act provided for the detection and punishment of any actions or conduct calculated to undermine public order and the authority of the state. On 2nd September, Article 28 of the Constitution was amended by the First Amendment of the Constitution Act 1939 to include a state of emergency in the provisions for wartime governance. Having allowed for the concept of an Emergency, which would have a similar impact on the state in many ways as if Éire were not neutral, on 3rd September the Oireachtas passed the Emergency Powers Act 1939, to 'make provision for securing the public safety and the preservation of the State in time of war and, in particular, to make provision for the maintenance of public order and for the provision and control of supplies and services essential to the life of the community'[38]. This was the most wide-ranging of the wartime laws, in that it was used as the basis for the control of virtually every aspect of civilian life during the Emergency period, from food rationing to transport regulation to wage rises. A complete list of the Statutory Instruments that were issued as a direct result of the Emergency is contained in Appendix 2(1).

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[37] Eamon de Valera, speaking in Dáil Éireann, 3rd September 1939, in debate about the Emergency Powers Bill.
[38] Extract from the Long Title of the Emergency Powers Act 1939.

Plans for the evacuation of Dublin in the event of invasion were formulated in 1940 and 1941 although only for the Cabinet and other key figures in the government. It was intended that de Valera and the Cabinet would try to run the country from outside the city. The National Defence Council, which had been set up in May 1940, was delegated to defend the state against all danger. Regional and county commissioners were appointed to take over the functions of government, operating from 'safe houses' that had been found for them in the event of Dublin or any other vital administrative areas being cut off by belligerent action. Emergency Powers (No. 38) Order 1940, passed on 16th July, vested the power of the Taoiseach in the Tánaiste or another member of the government if the Taoiseach was unable to perform his duties by reason of invasion.

As noted above, because of the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act 1920[39] the demarcation between the powers of the Stormont Parliament and its counterpart in Westminster was overcome by the establishment of local offices in Northern Ireland in which representatives from the relevant ministries carried on business.[40] This method was used by the Board of Trade, together with such wartime ministries as Supply, Production, and Aircraft Production. In cases where it was not considered either feasible or desirable to have local offices or agencies set up in Northern Ireland, special clauses were included in some defence regulations making special provision for their operation there. As the Westminster government retained control of the armed forces, military training and the defence of the realm in general, the issue of military conscription in Northern Ireland was decided in London. On the other hand, the Westminster Parliament passed emergency laws that affected Northern Ireland, touching areas that would usually fall within the jurisdiction of the Stormont Parliament. When this happened, the Northern Irish Parliament passed emergency

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[39] Section 4(1) of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 also retained to Westminster the exclusive right to deal with merchant shipping, submarine cables, wireless, telegraphy, navigation by sea or air, lighthouses, buoys and beacons (with some minor qualifications), the 'defence of the realm' and all 'matters arising from a state of war'.

[40] Section 63 of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 enabled any department of the United Kingdom government to enter into an administrative arrangement with an officer of the Northern Ireland government for the discharge of specific functions.

provisions to legislate for such matters as social services, the control of employment, the war service of local government staff and reparation for war damage to property.[41]

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As noted above, pre-war thinking about defence in Northern Ireland had been dominated by the assumption that the area was unlikely to experience hostile air action. Nevertheless, the legislative groundwork for the protection of the province in the event of air attack was laid on 24th November 1938, with the enactment of the Air-Raid Precautions (Northern Ireland) Act 1938. No further measures were undertaken until the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939 was passed in Westminster on the following 24th August. Its terms were similar to those of the Emergency Powers legislation passed in Éire and by Section 1(6) it included enactments of the Northern Ireland Parliament. On the following day, the Defence (General) Regulations were issued and the Home Secretary was empowered to delegate officers or departments of the Government of Northern Ireland to carry out many war functions.[42] On 7th September, the Stormont Parliament passed the Civil Defence Act (Northern Ireland) 1939. It made further provision for civil defence, particularly the designation of premises as public shelters, although the implementation of this measure in Belfast left something to be desired, according to Moya Woodside:

> When in one of the poorest districts of the city this morning I notice that the air-raid shelters have mostly been built at the edge of narrow pavements (in some streets barely 3 ft. wide) thus blocking out light and air from the houses opposite. The effect, in an already narrow street, is oppressive and to judge from the smell, they are being used as a public convenience! (21st March 1940)

The Civil Defence Act also dealt with measures to be taken if it should be deemed necessary to evacuate the civilian population.[43] Although evacuation plans were drawn up early in the war, there were special difficulties in relation to Belfast that complicated efforts to protect the lives of citizens, particularly women and children. Belfast was the only large city in Northern Ireland, with a population comprising roughly one third of the state's total numbers, and the primary area requiring evacuation also housed the densest concentration of that population. Therefore, it

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[41] John Blake, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1956, pp. 18-19.
[42] For example, under regulation 22, the Ministry of Home Affairs became responsible for billeting in Northern Ireland; under regulation 50, the Ministry of Commerce was made responsible for urgent supplies of electricity arising from the war and under regulation 55, the Ministry of Agriculture was responsible for the control of seeds, crops, foodstuffs and agricultural machinery.
[43] Part VII Section 49 of the Civil Defence Act (Northern Ireland) 1939.

would have been necessary to identify additional accommodation for evacuees, when billets were already at a premium for the allied forces arriving in the province. There was the further complication of the necessity to house evacuated children in the homes of co-religionists. Finally, evacuation plans fell through in many cases simply because of insufficient transport to move women and children from the threatened areas of the city into safer parts of the countryside. Marie's father made his own arrangements for his family and after the Blitz on Belfast she and her mother and siblings moved from the Falls Road to Cushendun[44]:

> [Marie] At Easter, Easter Tuesday I think it was, or Easter Monday, there was a very bad bombing in Belfast and my dad went out and had a look round and came back and said, get packed, youse are going to the country. But Mum and Dad had already arranged with people we always went on holiday to, in Cushendun, that if necessary we could go to them, so Dad packed us all off to the country. … I did know people who every night, went off up into the mountains and slept in tents and things and then came back into the city in the morning. But we went to Cushendun and we stayed there for over a year. … We went to school and all there. … Well, my mother came with us and she stayed with us. We had a house there. Well, it wasn't our house but it was people we knew so I think the government must have paid for us to be ... I didn't think of it at the time but I presume that's what must have happened. I mean the government paid the people who owned the house so that we could stay there. (255, 257, 259, and 261)

In the south, the issues of state security and public order were the subject of Emergency Powers (No.5) and (No. 6) Orders 1939. The former (passed on 13th September) enabled the government to prohibit the importation of 'extern newspaper' (i.e. newspapers published outside Éire) in the interests of public safety. Under Section 6 of Order No. 5, the Chief Press Censor was empowered to censor publication of any 'specified matter' and every newspaper proprietor in the state was ordered to send a copy of the newspaper to the Press Censorship Office, 'as soon as may be after the publication of each issue'. This meant that the press was self-censoring to a great extent, in that they anticipated what might upset the Censor and avoided the necessity of having to withdraw their publications subsequent to their distribution. Article 52 of the Emergency Powers Order 1939 extended the Censor's power to reject a film if it was likely to expose the Irish public to the propaganda of any of the belligerent nations, thereby causing a breach of neutrality. Order No. 6 (passed on 26th September) empowered the Official Censor to refuse a viewing

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[44] Cushendun is a seaside resort on the coast of County Antrim.

certificate to any film 'which would be prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order or to the preservation of the State or would be likely to lead to a breach of the peace or to cause offence to the people of a friendly foreign nation'[45]. The practical impact of this policy is evident in the following diary entry from Moya Woodside:

> "The Great Dictator" is showing here at 2 houses this week. I notice great lamentations in the local press about Eire's attitude to cinema managers and railway and bus companies. Neutrality has gone so far as to even forbid papers published in Eire to accept advertisements of the film, together with times of special excursion trains which it was proposed to run (as was done for "Cavalcade", and the Coronation film). Of course, the Ulster papers circulate freely in Eire, everyone knows about it, and the whole thing becomes a laughing stock. (8th January 1941)

Specific powers for a postal and telegraph censorship were contained in Part 4 of the Emergency Powers Act 1939, Articles 17 to 27 inclusive. These authorised control over posts, private and public telegrams, and telephone communications and others forms of communications, including the use of carrier pigeons. On 12th July, censorship of the mail was extended by Emergency Powers (No. 36) Order 1940, which enabled the Censor to suppress any document seen as 'prejudicial to the public safety or the preservation of the State or the maintenance of public order'. Although the government had the legal power to impose complete censorship on all communications, they chose not to do this because it would have meant devoting scarce resources to the scrutiny of all mail and maintenance of tight border controls. In practical terms, Éire's censorship measures were more useful in securing information about black marketeering activities, which was given to the Departments of Finance and Supplies than it was in combating potential espionage.[46] The government used some of the information revealed by the postal censorship to further the suppression of homegrown dissidents and political activists and groups opposed to the *status quo* in the state. Uinseann MacEoin, who was interned in the Curragh during the Emergency for his membership of the I.R.A., explained how the Publicity

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[45] Section 3(1) allowed the Censor to revoke any certificate which he had granted under Section 7 of the 1923 Censorship Act before 3rd September 1939, if he felt that the film contravened the provisions of the new Emergency Powers Order.

[46] Donal Ó Drisceoil. *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945. Neutrality, Politics and Society*, Cork University Press, 1996, p.256.

Department of the I.R.A. produced and distributed a newsletter called *War News*, despite the censorship regime[47]:

> About 20,000 a week were published. I don't know what effect it had on the general public. It was published and distributed widespread. It was a marvel to get it published and distributed and so on because of the dangers of the war and the emergency building up. Much of it was actually posted, amazingly enough, by the general post office. A package posted here and a package posted there, and they all went out pretty safely.[48]

Although the authorities in Britain were concerned about security, particularly in light of the open border with Éire, censorship of civilian mail to Northern Ireland was only implemented from Liverpool in early 1940. In July 1940, the Ministry of Information opened a Belfast office for the Permit Branch of the Censorship Division and officers were authorised to work in conjunction with the Customs, confiscating unsealed packets, parcels, goods, and commodities passing between Northern Ireland and Britain or from Northern Ireland and Éire. The Belfast Censor Office was opened on 1st October 1940, using the legal powers afforded by the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939. Moya Woodside's observations about some possible drawbacks of having a local depot also tell us something about popular assessment of the operation of the Food Offices:

> Yesterday we learnt that a censorship office to deal with incoming mails is to be set up in Belfast, and a staff of 300 will shortly be recruited under a distinguished military gentleman. … This innovation seems to be very unpopular. It is one thing to have one's correspondence, however innocuous, pass before the eyes of remote and unknown censors in Liverpool and quite another to have it read by individuals living in the same town, who may know one either personally or by repute. No doubt employees are sworn to secrecy, but if recruitment for the staff proceeds on the same principles of nepotism which prevail in the local Food Office, one cannot have much confidence. (18th March 1940)

Unlike the censorship in Éire, the British system was largely voluntary, although the government had the power to compel co-operation and to suppress dissent, if required. The total control over the information that reached the press ensured that nothing would be published which the authorities did not wish to be published. The decision not to censor opinion 'was made from the relative safety of knowing that all news released on which the media could form their opinions had already been censored at

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[47] Uinseann MacEoin was interviewed in Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *The Irish Experience During the Second World War*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 2004, pp. 238-248.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

source while giving the impression of a voluntary system which provided an effective cover for official propaganda and a clearer conscience for a liberal democracy at war'.[49] Another note about censorship from Moya Woodside's observations, made later in the year, draws attention to the potential for misuse of the emergency powers:

> Notice in the paper this morning banning [under the Special Powers Act] about eight different publications in 1941. Mostly they are papers which would give the extreme Nationalist point of view (so I imagine from the titles) but 2 of them are mildly Communist or simply anti-Ulster Government, which of course in this embryo fascist state is enough to warrant their suppression. With the censorship and the Special Powers Act in force, the left-wing groups over here are completely isolated. (27th December 1940)

The state's security was also maintained by the extension of the Official Secrets Act 1939 to include Northern Ireland.[50] This Act was passed in Westminster in order to amend Section 6 of the Official Secrets Act 1920 by giving powers to police to arrest anyone suspected of an offence under the Official Secrets Acts of 1911 and 1920.[51] Section 7(2) of the Treachery Act 1940, enacted on 23rd May, provided for the trial and punishment of anyone convicted of treachery, up to and including death. The possibility of the invasion and occupation of Northern Ireland was recognised in the Defence (War Zone Courts) (Northern Ireland) (Regulations) 1941, passed on 1st July, which allowed for the trial and punishment of offenders in any places in Northern Ireland in which the 'military situation is such that criminal justice cannot be administered by the courts with sufficient expedition'. In order for these Regulations to be operable, the Ministry of Public Security in Westminster had to order the declaration of a war zone.

The first of the Emergency Powers (Control of Prices) Orders was passed in Éire on 7th September 1939, setting the maximum price for a range of goods at the level that was current during the week ended 26th August of that year.[52] Nearly two

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[49] Philip Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain in the Second World War: an Overview' in A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse (eds.), *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, De Walburg Pers, Zutphen, 1987, pp. 165-6. Quoted in Ó Drisceoil, Censorship in Ireland, p. 285.

[50] This was done under Section 2(2).

[51] The 1911 Act gave penalties for spying, wrongful communication of privileged information, and unlicensed entry into prohibited places such as naval yards or storage places of secret information. The 1920 Act added penalties for the unlawful use of uniforms, possession of false documents, communication with foreign agents, and generally extended and strengthened the provisions of the 1911 Act.

[52] The foods listed in the Emergency Powers (Control of Prices) (No.1) Order, 1939 were as follows:

hundred such Orders were issued in the course of the Emergency; some of them setting price controls on scarce goods, while others removed controls as various items became more readily available. Allied to the Control of Prices Orders, such measures as the Emergency Powers (Motor Spirit Rationing) (No.1) (Order) 1939 (which was passed on 13th September) gave the government power to ration petrol by means of coupons and licences that were issued only to authorised dealers.

Until 1941, Éire had no food rationing system and the rising prices meant that poverty and malnutrition were widespread, with children suffering most. A group of women in Dublin decided to mount a petition to the government for the introduction of a system to ensure the fair distribution of food and measures to control prices. Eventually 640 women signed their petition.[53] They also campaigned for better public transport, for school meals and for milk for pregnant and nursing women to be supplied at a special price. In the course of their campaign, they lobbied doctors, T.D.s and members of Dublin Corporation, although they did not always secure unanimous agreement with their proposals:

> When putting our case to the Schools Committee of the Corporation one reverend gentleman said that we would be breaking up the sanctity of the home if children were fed at school.[54]

Following intense lobbying by such groups as the Irish Women Workers' Union, the Irish Housewives Association and various senior clerical and political figures, the Ministry of Supplies was set up in mid-1941 and immediately sugar, tea, and fuel were rationed. In 1942, bread and clothing were added to the list of rationed goods. A little later, gas and electricity were also rationed so that by 1943, there were only available 25 per cent of the usual requirements of tea, 20 per cent of the requirement for petrol, less than 15 percent of paraffin and 16 per cent of gas coal. There was no domestic coal available at all, and only 22 per cent of the normal requirement of

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Tea; coffee; cocoa; sugar; butter; margarine; bacon and ham and other pig products; fresh meat; fresh fish; cured fish – unpacked; fresh pork; sausages and black and white puddings; lard; flour and other cereal products for human consumption; bread; fresh milk; cheese; patent and proprietary foods for infants; jams; packed, tinned and bottled foodstuffs; biscuits; ale, beer, porter, stout, wines and spirits and cider; corn-cakes and meals; maize and maize products. The other goods listed were bran, pollard and other animal feeding stuffs; coal and coke; tobacco and cigarettes; hardware and ironmongery for household use; paraffin oil; candles; soap; leather; footwear of all descriptions and personal clothing and wearing apparel.

[53] The women were Andree Sheehy Skeffington, Marguerite Skelton, Nancy Simmons, Sheila Mallagh and Hilda Tweedy and they eventually founded the Irish Housewives Association. Hilda Tweedy, *A Link in the Chain. The Story of the Irish Housewives Association 1942-1992*. Attic Press, 1992.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

textiles was obtainable. Clare remembered how her mother got around the shortage of children's clothing, which was typical of many women:

> [Clare] The shoes were varnished to make them look like new. Well, you got hand me down clothes, everybody worth their salt could do 'make and mend', which meant cutting up adults' clothes for children, because the clothing coupons were very rationed. If there were a special occasion, like a wedding or something in the family, a First Communion or something of that nature [pause] I remember being given quite adult dresses by one of my mother's friends and I wore it very happily. It was a grown-up's dress, I was about fourteen at the time, but I never protested and clothes were passed from one member of a family to another. (53)

Arrangements for the control of food and of travel between Northern Ireland and Britain were among the first elements of the Emergency Powers to affect the population. Food Control Committees were set up throughout the United Kingdom on 1st September 1939 and an officer of the Northern Ireland Ministry of Commerce was appointed to act on behalf of the Minister of Food in Westminster[55]. This officer became the Divisional Food Officer for Northern Ireland and was given a wide range of powers. Under Section 3(1) of the Food Control Committees (Constitution) Order 1939, the Northern Ireland Committees were allowed to be composed of nine members, compared to the usual fifteen members in the rest of the United Kingdom. There were three trade members, to be a retail grocer, a provision merchant or a retail butcher. In an effort to make the committees as representative as possible of the areas they were servicing, Section 3(3) had the following provision:

> The remaining six persons … of whom at least one shall be a woman, shall be persons who in the opinion of the appointing authority or authorities, as the case may be, are representative of all classes of persons within the area or areas, as the case may be.

Food rationing in Britain was organised by using the information collected after the National Registration Act 1939 was passed on 5th September. Personal details of all citizens were required to be registered, comprising of names, sex, age, occupation, profession, trade or employment, residence, conditions of marriage, membership of naval, military or air force reserves or auxiliary forces or of civil defence services or reserves. In Northern Ireland, at the end of September, application forms for ration books were sent directly to each household. The householder was required to furnish details of every person normally resident in the house, including those temporarily

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[55] Food Control Committees (Constitution) Order 1939.

absent (apart from those in the armed forces), and to return the completed form to the local Food Officers, who then issued ration books to the 'head of household'. Although it was usually the women of the house who administered the rations, returned Census forms indicate that the 'head of the house' was generally male unless a woman was widowed or living alone.

The Prices of Goods Act 1939, passed in Westminster on 16th November, empowered the Ministry of Food to set price controls on a range of essential foods while the Board of Trade was authorised to make a determination on the basic price of a range of goods. Section 3(1) of the Act defined basic price as 'the price at which, in the ordinary course of the business in which those goods were sold, agreed to be sold or offered for sale, goods of that description similar to those goods were being offered for sale' on the 21st August 1939.[56] The various Statutory Orders that were made on foot of the Act were very detailed in the descriptions of food items and the prices set. The maximum prices for food imported from Éire were generally set at a lower level than for items produced in Britain or Northern Ireland, thereby removing the temptation for retailers to bring in excessive supplies from the south and undermine the local economy. Specific orders relating to the maximum price of eggs, sugar, milk, condensed milk, meat, apples, and bread were regularly amended in the course of the war as these foods became more or less available. Moya Woodside sent a note to the Mass-Observation about the rise in prices of essential goods that had occurred in the first fifteen months of the war in Belfast, comparing them to what she had paid before the war started:

> Since 1937 I have kept detailed accounts of the total expenditure on food, fuel, wages, replacements etc. and up to 1939 they came out remarkably similar, in some cases even to a matter of shillings (this of course for the same numbers of people and same way of living). As I expected, however, 1940 totals reveal some interesting changes.
> Baker and groceries: always the largest item in any year, shows a 23% increase on the 1937-1939 averages.
> Fuel: (includes coal, coke, blocks, etc. but not gas or electric) is up 59%! This staggering rise is due to higher costs and (less obviously) to a wet and cold Ulster summer and to the fact that we are at home in the evenings so much more than formerly.
> Fruit and veg: shows a fall of 14% simple because there has been nothing to buy.

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[56] Section 22(1) and (2) extended the Act to Northern Ireland.

> Fish and poultry: is also down 10% and this in spite of rising prices. I attribute the decrease to economy and to the fact that we have practically stopped entertaining.
> Butchers: shows a small increase of 33%.
> Dairy only 5% decrease, so rationing is offset by higher prices.
> All other non-food items are down, some considerably. I suppose some sort of important conclusions can be drawn from these figures? The two most obvious ones are (1) general, that the cost of living index lags far behind actual conditions; (2) personal, that I am still trying to maintain a high food standard which so far has been balanced by economies elsewhere. (10th January 1941)

As in Éire, it was primarily the intervention of women's representative groups that drew attention to the special needs of the most vulnerable members of the population. Moya Woodside was an active member of the Labour Party in Belfast and in late 1940 she was bemoaning the apathetic attitude of women to political organisation:

> Attended meeting of Women's Labour Advisory Council. Very small attendances and everyone very depressed about the hopelessness of organising women in Ulster when everything is split from top to bottom by the sectarian issue. Suggested that Labour women should concentrate this winter on some domestic and non-political object such as family allowances or free milk for tubercular children. They seemed to think this might be a good idea. (3rd November 1940)

Although there is no direct evidence of the outcome of Woodside's suggestion in Northern Ireland, in Britain there was significant lobbying by women's organisations such as the Women's Institute to ensure that the special health requirements of children under five, pregnant women and nursing mothers were recognised in the rationing system, which made them an allowance of one pint of milk daily and twice the normal ration of eggs. They were to be given first choice of any available fruit, as well as cod liver oil, fruit juice and vitamin supplements and of course, these provisions also applied to Northern Ireland.[57]

Rationing was extended to virtually every commodity essential to the daily lives of the citizens of Northern Ireland. Coupons for basic necessities like cosmetics, clothing and household textiles were issued to households on the same basis as ration books for food. Consumer Rationing Orders detailed the numbers of coupons required for specific items and these had to be given to retailers in exchange for

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[57] Ministry of Health, *On the State of the Public Health during six years of War*. Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, 1939-45. H.M.S.O., 1946.

goods, in addition to the money price. The list of goods and the appropriate number of coupons required for each item, which can be seen in Appendix 2(2) is taken from the First Schedule of Consumer Rationing (No. 8) Order 1941, issued on 16th December, but its contents are representative of the categories and the value assigned to each item contained in other orders throughout the war years. Various strategies were adopted for making better use of existing goods, as more and more items disappeared from the shelves. Newspapers and magazines were full of helpful hints for economies, many of them carrying columns headed 'For Women'[58] or a similar title, which made it clear who was considered to have the responsibility for ensuring the nation's well-being, despite the shortages. The language of many advertisements recognised the extra workload created for women by the war shortages, as in advertisements for tonics and indigestion remedies, which made frequent reference to 'times of extra work and strain'.

One aspect of the rationing system that frequently marred the efforts of the authorities to ensure an equitable distribution of the available goods was the difficulty inherent in adapting to the seasonal shortages that arose at different times throughout the war and of course, to the special needs of particular groups, such as the mothers of young children. The difficulty was exacerbated by the failure of the authorities to consult a wide range of interest groups about the problems that might possibly arise. While it made administrative sense to appoint the divisional distribution officers from the ranks of the Civil Service, they generally worked in isolation from the community they served and were not always aware of potential obstacles to the fairest distribution of available resources until they turned into causes for dispute. Again, Moya Woodside's reports to the Mass-Observation point to issues that were clearly the cause of some concern for many women:

> Friend who has studied the Clothes Rations order with care (which I haven't) says she thinks it is unfair in many ways and full of flaws. Those who make their own clothes, she points out (we both do) are being actually penalised for their ingenuity, as it will often take more coupons to purchase material for a garment than to buy it readymade. "What about expectant mothers?" she asks. They've got to have maternity clothes and obviously can't go on wearing them after the baby is born. Again on the subject of made-up versus home made

[58] This particular column appeared in the *Irish News* on a daily basis and it included items on making and mending clothes, recipes and household hints. The other main Belfast newspaper, the *NewsLetter*, carried a column called 'Mainly for Women', which added gossip from 'Mayfair' and the British Court to the domestic economy articles.

> clothes, she remarked that it was all very well to say that clothing for children under 4 was exempt, but what use was this when you could not buy wool or material for them to make their clothes yourself? And what about unborn babies? Have people to give up their own coupons to get wool and flannel for them? These points hadn't occurred to me, but E. who is the mother of one, and expecting another in September, can speak with some sense on the subject. (6th June 1941)

While rationing arrangements were publicised through local and national newspapers and recommended prices were also widely notified, this did not prevent some of the resentment about the scarcity of goods manifesting itself in suspicion of shopkeepers, who were considered, rightly or wrongly, to be benefiting from the situation.

As raw materials became restricted and workers were laid off, the southern government said it would protect remaining employment by imposing a Wages Standstill Order. This was Emergency Powers Order (No. 83) 1941 (which became operative on 28th May) and it prohibited increases in wages and prevented workers from striking for higher pay by removing the legal protection of the Trade Disputes Act from such strikes. Following strong campaigning from the trade unions, in April 1942 workers were permitted to obtain increases in wages by way of bonus orders, but these rises had to be related to increases in the cost of living. The passing of the Trade Union Act 1941 was mainly a result of the government's determination to curtail any possibility of industrial action in response to the wages standstills and the increasing cost of living that resulted from wartime conditions. Despite many demonstrations against the terms of the new law, particularly in Dublin, it was passed by the Dáil, and provided for the licensing of bodies empowered to carry on negotiations over wages and conditions. It also enabled the setting up of a tribunal, with members appointed by the Minister for Labour, which would have the power to restrict the rights of organisation of trade unions.

In Britain the household registration information was also used for conscription to the armed forces and for work in war industries. The Conditions of Employment Act 1939, passed on 21st September, vested the power to control employment in the Minister for Labour and National Service. However, even at this early stage of the war, the extension of conscription to Northern Ireland was recognised as likely to pose political difficulties, and Section 9 of the Act made it clear that the Northern Ireland Parliament would have jurisdiction over all matters of

employment, notwithstanding anything in the Government of Ireland Act 1920. Similarly, the Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Act 1939, passed on the same day, gave full control of the justice system in the province to the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland for the duration of the war, without any need for recourse to London.

A series of strikes in 1942 raised concerns about the Northern Ireland Government's capacity to deal effectively with industrial unrest, as the proposals to introduce labour conscription, as in the rest of the United Kingdom, were rejected for the same reason that conscription to the armed forces was not implemented; that any moves in that regard were likely to be met with determined resistance by nationalists, and possibly even an armed response by the I.R.A. In November 1942, the Northern Ireland Attorney General, John McDermott suggested that the order to make striking an offence should be repealed, as it clearly had no effect on industrial unrest. Not all of the disputes related to wages, particularly in Belfast, where some were focussed on the lack of protection for industrial workers whose workplaces were likely targets of bombing raids. When a new government was formed in 1943, under the leadership of Sir Basil Brooke, the issue was put aside and no effort was made to repeal the law on strikes, although neither was it implemented. Even though strikes were illegal from 1942 onwards, there were 270 of them in Northern Ireland in the course of the war.[59]

As early as March 1939, an advisory committee of the Passport and Permit Office in London had decided that traffic between Northern Ireland and Britain should be routed through approved ports only[60]. Air passenger traffic was temporarily suspended. A Travel Permit Office was set up in Belfast and was run by the former Chief Inspector of Public Service Vehicles, whose staff and premises were now used for the issuing of travel documents.[61] The neutral status of Éire was viewed with suspicion and regulations governing travel over the border between the two states demanded that a valid permit or passport issued by the British authorities must be in the possession of any person attempting to land in Britain from Éire. On 21st November 1940, a new order came into force and Irish (northern and southern)

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[59] Blake, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War.*
[60] The approved ports for civilian traffic in Northern Ireland were Belfast and Larne. Londonderry was used only for naval traffic.
[61] Blake, *Northern Ireland*, pp.19-22.

residents in Britain were allowed to make a temporary visit to Ireland to see their families, although not more frequently than once in six months. Equally, British residents in Ireland were allowed to travel on the same terms. Except in exceptional circumstances, the concession was confined to parents visiting their children, or vice versa, or to husbands and wives visiting each other.[62] Travel restrictions from Éire were focussed on Irish citizens who wished to take up war work in Britain and limitations were based on occupational status. Permits were not granted to anyone who voluntarily left a job in Ireland, nor to anyone in particular jobs, such as turf cutters or agricultural workers. While there were restrictions on young women travelling, in practice these seem not to have been implemented.

While there was virtually no restriction on the movement of individuals between Northern Ireland and Éire, concern about the possibility of spies coming from the southern state gave rise to the inclusion of the following paragraph in the Amending Defence (General) Regulations 1941 on 11th November:

> Section 1(2C) If the Secretary of State is satisfied that any person has come to Northern Ireland from any place in Eire and that before the date on which this Regulation came into force he was not ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, he may, if it appears to him expedient so to do with a view to preventing that person acting in any manner prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the realm, make an order directing that person shall not be in Northern Ireland and may give such directions as he thinks necessary for securing his return to Eire and may by order provide for his detention pending his return thereto.

A further reason for concern from Unionist politicians was the danger that large numbers of people coming from the south in search of work would settle in Northern Ireland and cause changes to the demographic balance of the province, possibly threatening thereby to alter the electoral balance as well.

One of the drawbacks of the security concerns was the problem that was created for arranging musical or other forms of entertainment that involved visiting performers. Moya Woodside was active in a local musical society whose programmes were completely disrupted by the wartime conditions:

> Attended Committee meeting of Annual Musical Festival to be held next week. Running this under wartime conditions is truly a labour of love and a measure of our enthusiasm for the cause of music-making. The secretary told us of some of the snags which are occurring. 1. In spite of repeated requests,

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[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173.

> wires, pressure on authorities, we don't yet know if any of our 3 adjudicators from England have been granted travel permits. 2. One of the Halls, booked since last summer, is being used as a Canteen, and there is some doubt if the people running it will clear out for the week of the Festival. 3. Entries from Dublin have dropped to about 1/3 of the peacetime average. Reason: rations, black-out, fear of bombs. 4. Rationing makes private hospitality for the adjudicators out of the question, so they have to be put up at a hotel, costing the finances so much more. 5. No extra tea has been allowed to the Committee for the serving of refreshments at the mid-morning and mid-afternoon break. Of course, I suppose between us we shall manage to scrape up a few ozs, enough for our hard-worked judges and stewards; but all these difficulties do mount up and dishearten people. (4th March 1940)

In a diary entry more than a year later, she noted the difference between Belfast and Dublin in terms of the quality of available entertainment:

> The Royal Dublin Society (whose winter programme I have just seen, has a splendid series of chamber concerts arranged with artists from London (including such well-known performers as Mersewitch, Thelma Reiss, the Guillen Quartet, etc.) while here in Belfast we face a completely concert-less winter. Dublin too has lectures given by such people as T.S. Eliot. Here all we ever seem to have are pep-talks by M.O.I propagandists, or concert parties by or for the troops. (16th October 1941)

In terms of the serious necessity to protect the population of Northern Ireland from attack, the Stormont government's responsibility to provide shelters for householders and the general public proved to be inadequate in practice. The failure of the Northern Irish government to give any more than rudimentary attention to civil defence meant that even after the fall of France, which underlined the necessity to protect vital air and sea installations that might be vulnerable to attack by aircraft based on the coast of France, a revised scale of defensive measures could not be implemented quickly because of shortages of equipment. When the bombing of Belfast started in April 1941, there was only shelter protection available for approximately one quarter of the population of the city. Despite the concentration of industry in Belfast's docklands, for example, a large number of ordinary residents in the area had virtually no protection.[63] The shoddy quality of the housing in working class areas was reflected in the relatively high number of people killed outright in the poorer areas. Moya Woodside went in to one of these areas two weeks after the major bombing raid on the night of 14th/15th April 1941:

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[63] Brian Barton, *The Blitz, Belfast in the War Years.* Blackstaff, Belfast, 1989, p. 100.

> Out on Welfare case work in the blitzed area. Bitterly cold and a wind which swirled dust, plaster and ashes about the ruins so that one could scarcely see. I had 5 families to visit and found one burnt out and departed, whereabouts unknown; 3 others also gone from houses uninhabitable though still standing and the 5th "evacuated" from an undamaged house. It was a scene of desolation: whole streets of roofless and windowless houses, with an occasional notice chalked on the door "Gone to Ballymena" or some other country address. Not a soul about, except demolition workers. Enormous gaps, or mounds of bricks, where formerly some familiar building had stood. More than a fortnight now since the raid yet it still looks raw and obscene. (30th April 1941)

A week later, even before the next major bombing raid in May, there were scenes of devastation in the city centre and Woodside drew attention to the implications for the future:

> Went to town on bicycle to do some shopping. Belfast will certainly never look the same again. I should say that 1/3 of the centre of town has gone. Streets littered with glass, water, charred beams and debris. Many roped off and firemen still working on smoking buildings. Crowds standing about, many appearing to be employees and owners of shops and offices which don't exist any more. … My fish shop was some way down the roped-off main street, but the assistants were there and walked up and down to the barriers taking orders and carrying bits of fish for inspection. This would have been very amusing if the scenes round about weren't so awful. … Less people were killed than in the previous blitz, as this was mainly directed on city centre and shipyards – but now we have an unemployment problem of staggering proportions. Thousands and thousands are walking the streets, with only the faintest hope of being employed again till after the war. What is going to happen to all those people, many of them homeless and bereaved (as they will be) as well as without work? At present this side of things has scarcely been realised, but material repair or reconstruction is of small importance beside this human problem. (6th May 1941)

As a result of the government's deficient preparations, nearly 1,000 people died and over 100,000 people were made homeless by the bombing raids on Belfast. The psychological impact was worsened by the lack of preliminary warning before the first attack on the night of 7th/8th April 1941 and by the inability of the emergency services to cope with the subsequent devastation.[64] James Doherty was an Air Raid warden in Belfast and in his memoir of the Belfast Blitz[65] he described the effect on the local community of the obliteration of the York Street Flax Spinning Company on

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[64] The situation was so difficult that the Northern Irish government requested help from De Valera and fire brigades and ambulances from south of the border were sent north to assist. Although this action was perfectly permissible in terms of humanitarian assistance, it was perceived in many quarters, not least in Fianna Fáil circles, as a breach of Éire's neutrality and it was even suggested when Dublin was bombed that this might have been retaliation by Germany.

[65] James Doherty, *Post 381.Memoirs of a Belfast Air Raid Warden.* Friar's Bush Press, Belfast, 1989.

the night of 4th/5th May 1941, which resulted in the deaths of 35 people and the demolition of more than 60 homes:

> The York Street spinning factory was the largest of its kind in the world and its destruction led to many economic problems in an already deprived and run down area. The war as yet had not brought full employment to Northern Ireland and the mill was one of the few factories which was working at full capacity. … With its passing went the familiar early morning scene of dozens of girls and women, some of them wearing men's boots, moving along through the narrow streets with arms linked and singing at the tops of their voices the well known mill songs or parodies based on the popular songs of the day. … The parodies were amusing and impromptu and generally referred in a not too benevolent fashion to some members of the lower managerial staff, local politicians, or councillors.

Belfast had insufficient facilities to deal with the aftermath of the Blitz, with one of the biggest difficulties facing the authorities being the absence of sufficient mortuary space to deal with the large number of dead.

In the course of 1940 gas masks were issued to 370,000 people throughout the twenty-six counties but despite being the capital city, Dublin had virtually no active defences and had bomb shelter accommodation for fewer than 30,000 people. Those measures that were adopted were almost a carbon copy of those in place in Britain and were administrative in nature, primarily concerned with the maintenance of law and order.[66] The most widespread precaution against bombing raids was the imposition of a blackout during the hours of darkness, as Minnie recalled:

> [Minnie] You had to have black blinds, or black curtains, that would keep out the light. And I remember all the lamp posts, they had kind of hoods on them to shine the light down onto the road, kind of in a straight line down on the road, and everything had hoods on them, even motor cars. There weren't many motor cars, but everything had to have little hoods to shine the light down on the road, but you daren't have a light. There'd be someone at the door saying you can see a sliver of light at the window and you'd have to make sure the curtain was folded not to see it. And even like, some of the lamps like, if there was a lamp in our keyhole it wouldn't be lit because they were trying to save electricity. And the only lamp would be on the main road. It was pretty dark, you know, if you went out at night. There were very few people out at night, you know, like kids were in bed by eight o'clock. (64)

The blackout was regulated by the Emergency Powers (Control of Lights) Order 1939, which was passed by the Dáil on 16th October.

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[66] Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland. The Irish State and Its Enemies Since 1922*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 157.

There were incidents of German bombs dropping on the South, most of which have been dismissed as pilot error, although various rumours at the time suggested there might have been more sinister motives, none of which were ever substantiated. On 26th August 1940 three women lost their lives when a bomb struck Campile creamery in Co.Wexford. The German government subsequently apologised and offered £9,000 in compensation to their families. Three members of a family at Knockroe, Co. Carlow were killed when a bomb struck their farmhouse. There were also incidents in Counties Louth, Kildare, Wexford, and Wicklow but no lives were lost. The worst case was on the night of 30th/31st May 1941, when 34 people were killed and at least 90 injured when four bombs fell on Dublin. The bomb that hit the North Strand was estimated to be at least 500 lbs. and caused most of the death and destruction in the city. The North Strand incident made a deep impression on everyone in Dublin who witnessed it, particularly because many of them thought they would now be subjected to a sustained campaign:

> [Josie] I remember that night well. I was on the landing when I heard Mammy. Well, when I looked out, I pulled back the blind and looked out, and all you could see was lights, you know, big lights. … We were all stood on that little landing in Cabra and I'll always remember, she put her arms around us and she said, now, said she, if we're going, we'll all go together. I can still see her that night. (27 and 29)

The southern state was as ill prepared to defend itself in 1939 in terms of manpower as it was in physical defences. In 1938 the strength of the regular army, at 5,915, was less than 65 per cent of establishment. This state of affairs was remedied by a massive recruitment campaign, despite obstruction by the Department of Finance, but the army remained ill equipped throughout the Emergency years. Although modern warfare was as likely to be waged from the skies as from sea or land, air defences were virtually non-existent and the focus of the armed forces was almost entirely on the defence of the national territory from invasion by one or another of the belligerent powers.[67] Of the group of Irish volunteers in the Allied forces who were interviewed for an oral history project conducted in University College Cork, almost all of the veterans who listed employment as one of their primary motives for joining up came from low income backgrounds.[68] The impact of

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[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-171.
[68] Aidan McElwaine, "The Oral History of the Volunteers" in Girvin and Roberts (Eds.) *Politics, Society and Remembrance*, pp. 107-120.

the recruitment campaign on women was confined to any benefit they might have acquired as the spouses or relatives of the many men who exchanged unemployment for an army uniform, since women were not considered for enrolment in any capacity, including auxiliaries like the Local Defence Forces.

III Conclusion

The development of the capacity for aerial warfare that was first used in the First World War continued apace in the years between the ending of that war and the commencement of the Second World War in September 1939. The bombing of cities from the air was used to particularly devastating effect in Spain, when both German and Italian aircraft were deployed to carry out massive raids on the country's major cities. Although gas attack was also developed during the First World War, its impact during the Second War was more in terms of the psychological climate created by its earlier use, as the populations of cities on both sides of the war demanded the protection of gas masks. They were produced by the million but never needed. Nevertheless, the fear of gas attack was one of the more common elements in planning for the civilian defence of urban areas, and this concern extended to neutral countries as well. The Dublin government issued gas masks because of the fear of air born danger from Northern Ireland or Britain, even if the state was not subject to direct attack.

Mass industrial production for war that necessitated the involvement of urban populations was also a feature of the First World War that was evident in the conduct of the Second. The industrialised cities consequently assumed a double vulnerability; because they were strategically important targets for their contribution to war production and for the psychological impact on the nation as a whole when closely packed populations were being bombed. In the case of the bombing of Belfast, the focus was on the shipyards and the aircraft construction plants, but the closeness of working-class residential streets to these militarily vital targets meant that the casualty rates were disproportionate to the weight of bombs that were dropped on the city.

During the Emergency, the government of Éire assumed wide-ranging powers in response to the demands of both security and the necessity of ensuring the continuation of essential services. Although there were instances of the Fianna Fáil

government using these powers to restrict the activities of their political critics and dissident elements, the enabling Offences Against the State Act 1939 (which had been continued each year during the Emergency) was allowed to expire when its term ran out in June 1946. Similarly, the Emergency Powers Act 1939, under which such security measures as the blackout regulations, censorship and travel restrictions had been passed, as well as the contentious Wages Standstill Orders, was not renewed when it expired in September 1946. The extensive power given to the Censor's Office under the Emergency Powers Act was passed on to the Censorship of Publications Board which was set up under the terms of the Censorship of Publications Act 1946 and was used to maintain a social control that was excessively focussed on sexual morality for many decades after the war. The Trade Union Act 1941, which had been devised mainly as a response to government concerns about industrial action following the freezing of wages and the increased unemployment experienced during the Emergency, remained in force as its terms had not been designed for the Emergency period alone.

Although the Northern Ireland parliament's powers to legislate were restricted by the terms of the Government of Ireland Act 1920, most of the legislation passed during the war years was enacted to enable the agency arrangements whereby departments of the Northern Ireland government were deputed to act on behalf of wartime ministries in Britain. Although wartime regulations such as rationing of food and other commodities, blackout arrangements and billeting of armed forces were all put in place by the Northern Ireland government, the decision not to extend conscription to the province meant that the state remained less regulated than the rest of the United Kingdom. The emergency legislation passed by the Westminster government concerned most areas of civilian life, including restrictions on travel between Éire and Britain. Whereas the Emergency legislation in Éire was used on occasion for political purposes, in Northern Ireland the influence of the political situation was evident in the decision not to conscript citizens into either the armed forces or the war industries' labour force.

The impact of the war on the lives of women in Belfast and Dublin of the wartime laws passed by their respective governments was manifested in the effect that the various Emergency Powers Orders had on their domestic responsibilities and their

opportunities for employment. In their domestic lives, particularly for women with families to look after, the war led to a significant rise in the cost of food and fuel and this had an immediate impact on their capacity to make their incomes cover all of the basic necessities. Employment opportunity is an issue that will be discussed in the next two chapters but even apart from the unequal pay rates that women workers endured, the Wages Standstill Act enabled the Éire government to suppress any attempt by workers, whether male or female, to press for wage demands in line with the rising cost of living. The rationing introduced by both the Northern Ireland and the Éire governments enabled a fairer distribution of scarce goods and this benefited lower paid women, but the queuing for rations and the 'making do and mend' policies promulgated by those governments also entailed an increased domestic workload which was mainly borne by women.

Chapter 3

From school to workplace

Education and employment

The emphasis on a domestic role for women was the background that influenced the framing of much of the legislation concerning the economic and public status of women that was extant in both parts of Ireland when the Second World War started in September 1939. As workers and contributors to the national economy, women on both sides of the Border were subjected to institutionalised inequality of pay and conditions and social welfare entitlements. Without economic power, women who wanted to bring about change found it difficult to make any impact on the patriarchal institutions that controlled both states while it seems that the majority of women did not question the social structures that relegated them to second-class citizenship. Women's domestic role was explicitly written into the Irish Constitution of 1937.

The focus in the first section of this chapter will be on the role of family income in shaping opportunities for Irish women and their families, particularly their access to education and employment. While most of the women who took part in this project had both parents living during the war years, their family circumstances varied and it was by no means the norm that the father was the main family breadwinner, despite the general bias of social policy that was based on this expectation. On both sides of the border, the domestic circumstances of the women who were interviewed for this research had major consequences for their paid work. This was manifested in terms of their motivation for seeking paid employment in an environment that was far from encouraging and in relation to the additional unpaid work which most of them had to do at home, which in turn impacted on their disposable income and the benefit they gained from their employment. These issues had particular relevance in wartime, when shortages of food and household goods often created significantly heavier domestic workloads for women and the rising cost of living affected their spending power.

I Education and family background

The schooling a girl or young woman receives is crucial to her later life in many ways, not least the manner in which the subjects she is taught control her

possible entry to different fields of employment. Most of the women who took part in this project left school immediately after their primary schooling ended, usually at fourteen years of age. The consciousness that their families needed their earnings was a recurring theme of the women's recollections, and some of them felt that their responsibility to their families prevented them from fulfilling the potential they had shown during their primary education. Even though Anne was a bright pupil, if she had gone on into secondary school it would have meant putting off the time when her earnings could alleviate the pressure on her mother, as well as creating the additional difficulty of finding the resources to support continuing education. Although school fees varied, in both Dublin and Belfast they tended to cost anything from £20 to £50 per annum. Even if the fees were paid by scholarship, uniforms were an expensive necessity, and books and other materials also had to be bought:

> [Anne] I mean, when I was leaving school the president of our public elementary school came to my mother and said that they would pay half the fees if she could raise the half to allow me to go on to be a teacher. And my mother said "I'm waiting for her to go to work" – that's just what it was. There was no choice in the matter; I mean it wasn't a case of doing your GCSCs and getting into university and everything. I mean we had the potential, I think I would say our potential was far higher in those days than they are now but the opportunities weren't there [pause] so the opportunities just [pause] as I say, my mother was a widow, she was waiting for me to go to work. (40)

Anne is now in her eighties but she still regrets the fact that her family could not afford the cost of a continued education for her. While her recollections are informed by pride in her widowed mother's commitment to her family, she feels that there should have been a mechanism to allow talented children like herself to have the benefits of further education. At the same time, she has scant regard for the idea of a welfare state and clearly believes that only the 'deserving' should be supported.

Although Ita's mother was also a widow, as a primary school teacher she was not quite so dependant for survival on her children making a contribution to the family income. Yet she too advised her daughter to choose a secure, pensionable job with good remuneration when the opportunity presented itself:

> [Ita] I started my education in Mountmellick[1] and then went on to Tourmakeady, which was a college for training primary school teachers on the

[1] The Presentation Order nuns set up a primary and secondary school beside their convent in Mountmellick, Co. Laois.

> shores of Lough Mask. In '41, I finished there and went to Carysfort[2] and I was two years there when I was offered a job in the Civil Service as Executive Officer which my mother strongly recommended me to take, a bird in the hand being worth a lot more in that time [laughs) - a steady job with a pension. ... Yes, and I had excellent results in my Leaving Cert., you know, I could have gone to the university. ... I certainly had more than enough marks to qualify for university but it was money. (1, 27, and 61)

John and Joan Dunn, the subjects of the detailed case study in Alexander Humphreys' *New Dubliners*, divided the history of their family into two periods, with the 'hump'[3] between the two being the entrance of their children into paid employment. The couple were married in 1923 and between then and 1943, when their daughter Sheila got a job, John was the sole breadwinner. Apart from the difficulty of making ends meet that this entailed for a family with five children, it also entailed a very strict division of domestic labour. John's employment in the Guinness Brewery involved a forty-four hour week and his time outside of that was mainly devoted to his family. While he undertook repairs around the house and maintained the garden, he was adamant that housework and shopping for food or household items were in Joan's domain. This division was reflected in the chores allocated to the children, with the three boys occasionally helping their father and the two girls expected to assist their mothers. Humphreys quoted John Dunn as saying:

> The men here leave that sort of thing to the women. For example, they would not be seen wheeling a baby or washing the dishes or anything like that. That is considered a woman's job. In fact, if you saw a man doing things like that, you would consider him a traitor.[4]

While the problems created by inadequate incomes and family difficulties made a deep impression on those interviewees who were affected by them, the issue of religious affiliation also had a strong influence on them, although this was manifested in different ways, depending on whether they were from north or south of the Border. In Éire, the pre-eminent place of the Catholic Church was enshrined in

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[2] The Training College of Our Lady of Mercy at Carysfort was the women's training college for national school teachers, run by the Sisters of Mercy under the auspices of the Department of Education.

[3] The term used by John Dunn to describe the Great Divide between when the couple had to rely on John's earnings alone and the time when their children were able to contribute to the family income, commencing with the entry of their eldest daughter into the workplace. (Alexander Humphreys, New Dubliners. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966, p. 95.)

[4] Ibid., p. 98.

the 1937 Constitution, although the Catholic ethos that permeated the state had been developing since the nineteenth century. One of the key instruments for maintenance of this relationship was the Church's control of the majority of educational institutions from primary school through to university.[5] This was particularly important for girls, who were taught that their eventual roles in life would be as wives and mothers.

In Éire, the influence of the Catholic Church on its primary schools was manifested directly through the management of the local parish priest while most girls' secondary schools were run by nuns and consequently dominated by a Catholic ethos. In primary education, the state provided the finance for the national school system, and private schools received limited funding on a *per capita* basis. Social class governed educational attainment because secondary schools were fee-paying and few children from working class backgrounds proceeded beyond primary school. In Northern Ireland, following the 1930 Education Act, government funding for schools covered all capital and daily operating expenses for the state schools, which were attended almost exclusively by Protestant children. According to Patrick Buckland[6] this state of affairs was largely the result of objections from the Roman Catholic Church authorities, who recommended that Catholic children should go to exclusively Catholic schools. The voluntary schools, whether Catholic or Protestant, received most of their funds from public sources but had to make up any shortfall themselves.

Teaching methods in the first half of the twentieth century were formal and the curriculum was restricted by financial constraint and a narrow view of what constituted necessary educational standards, particularly in regard to the subjects that were considered suitable for girls. Both Departments of Education included Domestic Science as a subject for mandatory inclusion in the curricula of girls' secondary schools, whether or not it was being taken as an examination subject. On

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[5] The local parish priest was the manager of the majority of national (primary) or state funded schools, Religious orders also ran some privately funded primary schools and they controlled the majority of secondary schools. Catholics were forbidden to attend the University of Dublin, Trinity College, without a special dispensation from their local bishop because it was deemed by the Church authorities to be a Protestant institution.

[6] Patrick Buckland, The Factory of Grievances. Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-1939. Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1979, p. 263.

the other hand, woodwork and metalwork classes were made available only to boys. In both jurisdictions, the education system reflected the values of the local management, usually clerical figures, and an overall social policy that assumed women would be wives and mothers and should be educated accordingly. Parents who were products of a similar training were generally supportive of school policies in regard to their children. Minnie remembers one occasion when her mother defended her against a particular teacher, mainly because she had not expected her mother's support and the incident stayed in her mind because she felt vindicated for once, instead of victimised:

> [Minnie] So anyway, the teacher told us to sit down and fold our arms and whatever she was doing, I don't know what she was doing, and we sat down and unconsciously I started doing this [twirling a lock of hair around her finger], curling my hair around my finger. And she called me up and said 'I told you to sit down and fold your arms' and she got my four fingers in her hand and came down on my fingers with the side of a ruler. I must have got about twenty slaps and my fingers were sore and I was crying when I went home and I was terrified to go home because my mother would ask me what I was crying for, what did I do. So I told Mam what happened and she was down the next day to Marino, had the head nun and the teacher out in the corridor and I was taken out of that school and brought down to Fairview the next day. She said she wouldn't have that, that was uncalled for, but that was what went on in the schools. (112)

The ambitions of working class parents for their children were constrained by the realities of low incomes, so that they were more concerned to ensure that adequate food, clothing, and shelter were provided than to worry about long-term formal education. Although some children were offered scholarships to enable them to attend secondary schools, family circumstances often prevented them from taking advantage of those opportunities. In such cases, the primary task of a child reaching the legal school leaving age was to get a job and contribute to the family income[7]. If sacrifices were to be made in order to allow a child to continue in formal education, it was much more likely to be for the boys in the family, who would be life-long wage earners, unlike girls, who were expected to marry and have a man to provide for them. None of the women who took part in this research questioned the gender inequality in education when they were young, although most of them would now consider that it was very unfair to women.

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[7] It was frequently the case that older children combined school and employment while they were waiting to reach the legal age when they could leave school altogether.

Anxiety about money was not the only reason for pressure on families and some of Colette's earliest memories are of the disagreements about politics that caused her parents to fight. Of the women who were interviewed, only Colette referred to any lingering influence of the Civil War in Éire, despite the deep trauma of events in the early 1920s and even though all of the women would have been of an age to be aware of them:

> [Colette] My father was educated in Synge Street. He had brains - I don't know where he got them really, his family I suppose but I don't know too much about them, I don't think my mother liked them terribly [pause] and my earliest recollections are of standing on the kitchen table in the basement of their house and hearing some sort of row going on with the brothers. They were a very mixed family, my father, I think was the eldest, but the others were [pause] there was one of them a Free Stater and another was a Sinn Féiner. I discovered recently, quite recently, through my brother through somebody who was claiming cousinship; that the other one was in the British Army, so I think that was the reason for the distance. (13)

Although Colette was curious about her father's family and the background to the rows, she never asked either of her parents about it, because she said 'children were just belted around the place if you said the wrong thing' and she had learned not to set off her mother's temper. Colette seems to have learned early on to humour her mother as much as possible and to steer away from difficult topics:

> [Colette] There was always some sort of a trauma going on, I mean I was aware of anxiety. My mother was an extremely highly-strung woman. She developed, she had very bad health at about the time I was around four or five; she really did suffer. You know the older I get the more I realise how much she suffered. But she was a difficult woman to live with [laughs] and I got the brunt of it, very much so. (19)

Susan was born in Gorey, Co. Wexford and her family were Methodists, which made them feel somewhat isolated from the predominantly Catholic community in which they lived. This distance was exacerbated by the fact that there was no secondary school in the area to which her parents would have been happy to send her, so she never had the opportunity to make friends in the neighbourhood:

> [Susan] I went to boarding school here in Belfast at the Methodist College. The reason for that was, we lived in Gorey but we had no friends there and my grandmother was here in Belfast and she would be able to keep an eye us. (1)

Boarding school was often an option for the children of non-Catholic families in Éire, where most secondary schools tended to be Catholic, reflecting the religious affiliation of the majority of the population. Susan believed that the experience of

being sent away from home when she was only twelve made her very independent and made it easier for her to move away from Ireland from her first job. She also believed that she would not have achieved as much if she had chosen to marry rather than pursue a career, although there was no formal marriage bar in her profession. Susan's assessment of her professional progress was echoed by Ita, who attributed much of her self-confidence to the fact that she had left home at a young age to go to boarding school.

Olive's family were members of the Church of Ireland in a town just south of the Border[8] and she felt that being a Protestant marked her and her sister as objects of suspicion to the Catholic children in the town. They went to a Protestant school and did not mix with Catholic children, although her father ran a successful business in the town and she regards herself as a Southern Nationalist:

> [Olive] I think they, my sister was sent as a weekly border to X because it was probably the nearest secondary school and we were Church of Ireland people and in those days education perhaps was more segregated … We were educated for life there, I still remember, things there that I value now, like having a wonderful Irish and French master who gave me a wonderful love for the Irish language which in those days among the Church of Ireland people, it was a kind of a political thing, we all had to do it. Our parents were brought up under a different regime and didn't know it and my father, even in the First World War, it was the political aspect of having to learn it, he found very difficult. (20 and 22)

Religion seems to have been a unifying factor in most of the neighbourhoods where the women were growing up. Although this was especially true of Belfast, where religious segregation was a response to political conditions, it was also true in Dublin, although in this case the Catholic majority was so large that it had the same isolating effect on non-Catholics as in the smaller rural towns where Susan and Olive were raised. Sheila recalled that her mother was reassured by the certainties of Catholicism, even though she was not especially religious:

> [Sheila] She loved the idea of the cosiness of it but she was very sceptical as well. She went to Mass and she went to Communion and all that sort of jazz, as I say, I think she would have liked it because it was sort of a comfortable idea, set beside what she was going through, but she didn't have time to get involved so she never did, and she was quite sceptical, you know, and Daddy

[8] Olive did not want the name of the town to be used in the text. She made some other minor changes to the transcript.

was very sceptical. But they used to go to Mass just the same. I mean one didn't not go to Mass. … Yes, because of the neighbours. Everybody around was Catholic. (129 and 131)

Religious affiliation was not just a matter of attending a particular church. The social activities attached to the local church were of great importance, especially to children and young people. Church buildings were used as meeting places for guide and scout groups, as well as for more specifically religious associations, such as Sunday School and choir practice. Anne remembers going to Sunday School in Belfast until she was seventeen years old and her mother only allowed her to stop going on condition that she attended a Sunday afternoon service for young people in the city. In the Catholic Falls area, Marie's social life as a teenager was equally focussed on the local church, where a range of activities for young people was organised:

> [Marie] You know, we were very into Irish culture on the Falls Road. So you didn't think of going anywhere else. There was always a lot of things going on. (334)

Catherine started work in Dollard's printing works[9] when she was only thirteen, because her father got her a job there. When she had been there for a few years, she became very friendly with a young man who worked in a nearby drapery shop, who came from a well-off Protestant family. They seem to have been close enough to discuss marriage but they agreed they had no future because neither was prepared to change their religion for the other. Even though her eventual husband was less well off financially, family and friends seem to have agreed that he would be a better match, because he was also a Catholic:

> [Catherine] Well, you were that type in those days. You did your duties and all that. It's different now, of course, the clergy has made it different. (355)

The wartime conditions may even have added to the polarisation of religious identity on both sides of the Border. In the South, the neutrality of the Southern state was increasingly identified with the Catholic, Gaelic Irishness postulated by Eamon de Valera in a range of speeches about the need to keep a distance from the war.

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[9] Dollards Printinghouse (Dublin) Limited was situated at 1-2 South Essex Street, backing on to 2-5 Wellington Quay, in the heart of Dublin city. The company is described in Thom's Directory as "letterpress printers, lithographers, and account book manufacturers, manufacturing and general stationers". (Thom's Directory of Ireland for the year 1938. Alex Thom & Co. Ltd., Dublin, 1938, p.1441.)

Conversely, in the North, the refusal of the Éire government to join the Allied cause added to the conviction of many Protestant loyalists that Nationalists [Catholics] could not be trusted.

Parents who were in a position to forego the immediate contributions of their children were likely to encourage them to go for secure jobs with pensions, rather than face the financial uncertainties they themselves had experienced, but those jobs usually required a higher level of education than the free primary schooling provided by the state. Sheila's father was a cooper in the Guinness Brewery in Dublin until he had a stroke, which prevented him from carrying on his trade and Mary, her mother, got a job cleaning in Guinness's Brewery:

> [Sheila] She worked as a cleaner in Guinness's. I mean she had never worked, as such, so she had no training before she was married, so she was lucky that Guinness's used to look after, you know, anyone in certain circumstances, of their own, in Mammy's circumstances, and they looked after her by giving her a job, the only job she could take on. (19)

The Guinness company offered jobs to the widows or daughters of employees or pensioners or 'other relative of an employee, deceased employee, Pensioner or deceased Pensioner' if they were considered suitable by the Company Medical officer. The only positions available were as waitresses or office cleaners, the latter not employed if they were more than fifty years of age.[10] Mary was forced to let her eldest daughter Gwenny go to work when she was only fourteen, but because of Gwenny's contribution to the family income, Marie, the next daughter, was able to stay on to do the Intermediate Certificate, followed by a secretarial course. By the time Sheila, as the youngest daughter, was in secondary school the family was able to pay for her to continue to her Leaving Certificate and eventually secure a pensionable job in the Civil Service. Mary's ambitions for her daughters were matched by the intentions of the principal at their secondary school[11], who was equally anxious to ensure that her pupils would be equipped to get decent jobs:

> [Sheila] We were the first girls secondary school in Dublin to do a science subject, and our class was the first one to do it, and that was physiology, and we were the first [pause] so she, afterwards I realised that this nun, I mean, God love her, this was the only non fee-paying school in Dublin, that's why I

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[10] Rules and Regulations as to Employees at St. James's Gate, File No. GDB/PEO3.01/0584, Guinness Archives.

[11] The Mount Carmel school was run by the Irish Sisters of Charity and was situated in King's Inns Street in Dublin.

> was at it, and she wanted [pause] we all came from relatively poor backgrounds and by God, she was going to get us into permanent and pensionable jobs, if she had to kill us to do it. And most of us did. … We did the usual English, Irish, French, Geography, History and Physiology ... we'd a lot of music, we'd a lot of music in that school and it was good. We used to do a play or a musical every year and we used to do drill displays and things. Like it was, for a non-fee paying school in the early fifties, it was very good, the results were always brilliant. (159)

Sheila's school principal[12] was sufficiently enlightened to broaden the curriculum for her pupils, at a time when most girls were unable to study science subjects. In an article[13] describing her own schooling in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Gráinne O'Flynn used extracts from *Reports of the Conferences of Convent Secondary Schools in Ireland* to illustrate the principles that informed Catholic secondary school education for girls. In 1949, the Conference Report claimed that 'only twenty per cent of girls are bookish'[14] as justification for their campaign to introduce lower mathematics papers for girls at Intermediate Certificate. This was despite the fact that Department of Education statistics revealed that the success rates for girls at state examinations were higher than for boys, in spite of the efforts to convince them that female inclinations should lie only in the direction of domesticity. Studies of the school system in Northern Ireland have focussed on sectarian divisions rather than the role of gender in shaping formal education and the issue seems not to have concerned the compilers of Census statistics in both Northern Ireland and Éire, an omission that is suggestive if not informative.

Clare came from an area of Dublin that combined working class and middle class homes, but she felt that it was unusual for children from her neighbourhood to go on to secondary school, although she was aware at the time that this was not the case in other parts of the city. Clare was the only member of her family to go to secondary school although some of her friends went on to third level education. She would have liked to go on to university but was aware that the family income would not allow her to do so:

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[12] Her name was Sister Mary Delalus.
[13] Gráinne O'Flynn, "Our Age of Innocence" in Mary Cullen (Ed.), Girls Don't Do Honours. Irish Women in Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Women's Education Bureau, Dublin, 1982, pp. 79-99.
[14] Conference Report, 1949, p.21.

> [Clare] We had moved to another house and in that area people went to work at fourteen[15]. They all went to work and I remember getting some kind of a scathing remark about me still being at school. It was only up to age seventeen, anyway, but it was not usual then. But then, in other areas, people stayed on to Leaving Cert. Some went to university but my contemporaries and friends went in to jobs at age eighteen or so. They took jobs in the Civil Service, they used to get into that, and there were bank jobs and then all sorts of retail marketing and that kind of thing. … Only for the top level of each class there was a scholarship[16] and then I won another scholarship for the commercial college[17] and that was the end of it. If I had not had scholarships I wouldn't have been at secondary school. (65 and 111)

It was not just the need to augment the family income that curtailed the educational ambitions of some of the interviewees. Olive's background was middle class and the family had a reasonable income without any input from her, but the additional financial pressures exerted on her family by wartime conditions meant that they could no longer afford the fees for her secondary school:

> [Olive] We weren't so badly off, really badly off, you know, but things were a struggle … well, of course, in those days secondary education had to be paid for, so in the middle of the war we had to leave school quite early and after my matric, which would be sort of fifth year [pause] because there just wasn't money there. But nobody said anything, we just sort of took it in our stride. (14)

Although Olive's parents raised the money to pay for nursing training, a more academic third level education would not have been possible, although neither Olive or her sister had expected to go on to university in any case:[18]

> [Olive] Well, it never occurred to us, our expectations were quite low in a way because, maybe I should have liked to have, probably. But at the time, I would never even think of saying it, because there just wasn't the money there and while my sister, she was, I'm not sure, but we wouldn't have been scholarship girls, quite near the top of our class but we wouldn't have been scholarship girls. (30)

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[15] It was not unusual for children who had completed their primary schooling before the age of fourteen to repeat as much of their final year as was necessary to bring them to a legal school leaving age.

[16] Between 1939 and 1946, Dublin Corporation awarded between eighty and one hundred scholarships per year, roughly twenty five per cent of the number of candidates who sat the scholarship examination.

[17] Clare's scholarships covered two years in the secondary school and a further two years in commercial college.

[18] The fee for acceptance as a student nurse varied from hospital to hospital, but bed and board was included and the overall cost would have been considerably less than for keeping a student in university for three or four years.

In the inter-war years, and even through to the post-war years, when a working class daughter finished school (usually at primary level) she was prepared for a low-skilled, low-paying job. Semi-skilled positions as salesgirls and office clerks were increasingly available for girls who might otherwise have entered domestic service or factory employment, although office work was more readily accessible to young middle class women who had a higher level of education or the additional skills offered by a secretarial training course. Entry to skilled employment often needed family or other connections to open the door for a young person anxious to be trained or to secure an apprenticeship. When Catherine's father got a place for her in the printing house where he was employed himself, she learned to do skilled work, although not as a formal apprentice to the firm:

> [Catherine] But I worked in Dollards, anyhow, it was a printing house opposite the Dolphin Hotel[19]. Dollards were a big printing place, my father worked in it too. I was on a machine, printing, you know, and feeding the paper into it and it would come out the other end. … I was very young at the time, I was really only [pause] I wasn't really the age to be working, I was thirteen only. [Pause] In those days, you had to go to work, sort of, you know. It was a bad time. (7, 11 and 13)

Catherine's account of her early working life suggests that she enjoyed herself, even though she was working at such a young age. Her family background was comparatively comfortable, her father having a market garden that was used to supplement the family's diet, as well as providing produce for a small vegetable shop.

The feeling of obligation to contribute to the family income was not confined to working class families. Colette's father was a journalist, who was in regular employment during her schooldays, but he had experienced unemployment in the past and this contributed to Colette's awareness of the importance of having a guaranteed income when she left secondary school:

> [Colette] I just lived from day to day, I had really no great thoughts of life – and there was always an atmosphere of anxiety at home so that I really just hoped that I would get something to do that I would be able to pay my way and contribute to the household. … Well, anyway, the main idea when we were in the College, in the Tutorial Institution[20], was to get an examination and get a job. We all were anxious about that and we applied for everything,

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[19] The Dolphin Hotel was a well-known establishment in Dublin in the mid-twentieth century, situated at 45-49 Essex Street.

[20] This was the University Tutorial Institute (owned by the Darragh family), based at 15 Harcourt Street, Dublin.

> from writing assistants to clerical officers, clerical assistants, junior executive officers, the lot[21]. The ESB, the Corporation [pause] it was very difficult, because the intake, they didn't take many in. I don't think people realise now, they all talk about unemployment, but in unemployment in the 1930s and 40s, there was no facility for getting any [pause] if you didn't work, you got nothing, you couldn't earn anything. (33 and 40)

The rates of Unemployment Assistance and Unemployment Benefit varied according to gender and depended on a set number of consecutive social insurance payments having been made in the years prior to the claim. This could be difficult to achieve at a time when jobs were scarce and impossible for women employed in uninsured occupations, such as domestic service. Unemployment benefit and Home Assistance rates in Éire were based on the assumption that there was a male head of household. The amount of assistance was kept lower than the amount that could be earned by the recipient if in casual employment.[22]

Career guidance was not part of the school curriculum in the mid twentieth century, even in secondary schools. When Olive became a student nurse in 1942 she had no clear idea of why she had chosen that particular career:

> [Olive] I left school at about seventeen. I was late enough going and I left school at seventeen and then I got an idea about doing nursing into my head. I had an aunt who was a nurse but I didn't have any of these wonderful games minding people, caring for people or any of that sort of nonsense. I don't know, my sister had, she had done a secretarial course, and I just said, ah, I'd do nursing without having any road to Damascus about the decision or anything [laughs]. (34)

She found the conditions quite daunting, but complaints were discouraged on the basis that the young women had applied for admission, that the hospital[23] had not gone looking for them. One of the friends she made in the nurse's home had been to boarding school and she thought that after the awful school she was in, the nurse's home was like freedom personified. Student nurses were certainly not required to think of themselves as professionals, although they were given a very high level of responsibility from the earliest stages of their training:

> [Olive] There was no intensive care or that in those days, you would have very ill people. Oh yes, it was a big responsibility, you wouldn't want to think

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[21] There were several specialist colleges operating in Dublin when Colette was attending the course in Harcourt Street. The newspaper advertisement placed by Emersons College in Abbey Street was typical of advertisements by other institutions. Emersons offered "tuition for banks, railways and commercial offices, plus preparation for public service exams". (Irish Independent, 3rd January 1938.)
[22] John Collins, "Public Assistance" in JSSISI, 96th Session, 1942-43. Vol. XVIII, pp. 110-115.
[23] Olive preferred not to have the name of the hospital where she did her training included in the text.

about it. … Well, I did a senior night duty at only two years in but then the night sister was ultimately responsible and you'd ring for her to come up, but by jingo, you had to have an eye, you had to be smart. Although you had the feeling somebody mightn't be very well you didn't have all the technology, but I mean, she was your baby or he was your baby, you know, and night duty was very, very responsible. Day duty too, but then you would have interns and things to call on, but we didn't call on the interns nearly as much as in my daughter's day. And we took on much more responsibility. (114 and 116)

In Belfast, Elizabeth would have liked to become a nurse but her family could not afford the fees and so she went out to work as a clerk, after enjoying two years in secondary education as a result of getting a scholarship:

> [Elizabeth] I went to the Sisters of Charity in Dunleer Street[24] and then when it come the last year, my brother and myself, we were supposed to be the two intelligent people, so he had got a scholarship to St. Malachy's College and I went to the Dominican Convent up the Falls Road. … People hadn't the money then to pay for education. A lot of girls left and went to England to nurse. Because you had to pay to get into the hospitals here to do nursing. I left because I was getting a job. (16 and 18)

Although Elizabeth did not have her career of choice, she considered herself to be fortunate compared to some of her schoolmates, who had gone into the much harder work in the mills, sometimes without completing their primary education:

> [Elizabeth] Some of them were working in the mills from when they were twelve years old; … they went half time in the mills. Yes, they lived around me and the mills were all around us. The Blackstaff on Odessa Street, the Clonard Street Mill and there was the Ross Mill and Milford Weaving[25], they done all the weaving for the Irish linen. … We just lived next door to it, and above us on the same road was the dining hall belonging to the factory. (122 and 124)

The girls referred to by Elizabeth were typified by Lily and Nancy, two sisters who were aware from an early age that they were destined to go into the local mill to work, as soon as their primary education was ended. Most of their female neighbours were employed in a similar capacity and their only concern was that they would be put in a 'dry' area, where the work was considered to be easier. The women remembered that in some areas of the mill, the floor would be wet all the time as a result of the flax treatment, and this contributed to the development of arthritis and

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[24] This was a primary school in the Falls Road area of Belfast and catered mainly for the children of working class families.

[25] There were many mills on side streets off the Falls Road, all within a mile or two of each other and where the majority of employees were Catholic. In addition to the mills mentioned by Elizabeth, there was the Durham Street Weaving Factory, the Falls Flax Spinning Mill, and the Falls Road Flax Spinning Mill.

other problems, as workers got older. Lily and Nancy went into the mill to work straight from primary school:

> [Lily] … until we were fourteen years of age. You stopped school on Friday and started work on Monday. You went into [pause] the Blackstaff Mill, yes, the Blackstaff … you were always put beside somebody to learn you. … You started at eight and went to six o'clock and you worked from eight to twelve on Saturday. (8, 12 and 17)

Because they were of a legal age to start work, Lily and Nancy would have gone straight into the mill under adult conditions. The Northern Ireland Education Act of 1930 made education for all children compulsory up to the fourteenth birthday. After that date, children could go out to work on a full-time basis. The Factory and Workshop (Amendment) Act 1920 set the hours of work at 48 hours per week and these would have been the hours worked by Lily and Nancy. In Betty Messenger's book on the linen industry in Northern Ireland *Picking up the Linen Threads*[26] she refers to the common practice in Belfast of parents getting forged birth certificates for their children so that they could be sent out to work in the mill earlier than the legal age.

Reports from the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education show that the majority of pupils who reached the highest grades in public elementary schools (like the one attended by Elizabeth) had gone to work or were employed at home by the time they were fifteen years old. The table in Appendix 3(1) shows a breakdown of the destination of pupils after their attendance at public elementary schools in Belfast County Borough from 1937 to 1948 and indicates that the percentage of pupils who left school to go to work increased from 68.44 per cent in 1937 to 78.55 per cent in 1948.[27] In Éire, such information has to be abstracted from the Census Reports, which do not give a breakdown for each year. In the Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment (which relied on Census figures), it is noted that the number of unoccupied young persons tended to fall considerably with increase in age[28] and the decrease in the proportion of females unoccupied in Dublin County Borough was solely due to an increase in the proportion at school or college. The Report further

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[26] Betty Messenger, Picking up the Linen Threads. A Study in Industrial Folklore. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1975, 1978, 1980.
[27] Government of Northern Ireland, Reports of the Ministry of Education for the years 1937-38, 1938-39, 1945-46, 1947-48 and 1948-49, H.M.S.O. Belfast.
[28] Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment 1951, Government Publications Office, Pr. 709, Dublin 1952, p.3.

noted that while the proportion at work showed little change, from 57.6 per cent in 1936 to 57.5 per cent in 1946, the proportion at school increased by three per cent to 22.3 per cent. In the fourteen to sixteen age group, the increase was substantial, rising from 35.8 per cent in 1936 to 43.8 per cent in 1946. In the fourteen to twenty age group, only 4.7 per cent of females in Dublin were engaged in 'home duties', compared to 19.5 per cent in the rest of Éire, but it is not known if this was due to better access to schools in Dublin than in small towns or rural areas or because 'home duties' on a family farm were more likely to be reported.

Families did not always report having a daughter 'engaged in home duties', and in some cases a child's help with housework and younger siblings had to be combined with attendance at school. Frances went to a convent school in Dublin but she was not regarded as a good student, through no fault of her own:

> [Frances] I used to get slapped there for being late because my mother had a shop and I had to stay and get all the kids out to school, wash up, prepare the vegetables and the meat and whatever for my father's dinner before I went to school. I never got to school before half past nine. It was just being the eldest, you did those kind of things, you didn't query it, you know. (80)

Frances and her younger sister Clare attended the same primary school in Dublin until the family moved house and a new school had to be found:

> [Frances] Sister Magdalen said I can put Clare into third class but there was no vacancy for me in fourth and Sister Magdalen wanted to put me into fifth. And Ma said no, I wouldn't be able for it. And then she went all around to look for a school for me and I ended up in Scoil Mhuire[29] in Marlborough Street, where it was all Irish. (127)

Frances felt her mother's lack of trust in her academic ability undermined her self-confidence throughout her life. It was nothing to do with Frances being a girl because her mother's attitude was extended to the boys in the family. Frances recalled that her three brothers were all sent to England to get jobs because their mother felt they were not bright enough to succeed in the more competitive employment market in Dublin and would 'end up' as messenger boys. The sons were later sent to Canada while they were still in their teens because their mother believed the opportunities there would be better for them.

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[29] Scoil Mhuire was a national school which was set up in attachment to the primary teacher training college in Marlborough Street. When that college was closed down in the late 1930s, the school continued to teach all subjects through the Irish language.

In Minnie's family, she was the only girl, with three older brothers and two younger than her. All of her brothers went to secondary school but she was sent to a technical school, where she studied sewing and cooking. She had ambitions to become a professional chef but did not get the training, mainly because her parents did not encourage her:

> [Minnie] It just wasn't the thing, women always [pause] the thing about girls were, they didn't get the education that boys got because they were supposed to end up at the kitchen sink, as the saying goes, and why waste money educating them if they're going to do that? … I often said it but nothing came of it, you know. (48 and 50)

When asked if she thought the war had changed that attitude and created wider opportunities for women, Minnie replied that the war had made women realise their capabilities but that nothing changed immediately afterwards apart from women recognising that they were being treated unfairly, an opinion that was consistent with the results of research in other countries referred to in Chapter 1. Many of the women felt that when they were young children they had been too repressed in their upbringing and discouraged from standing up for themselves. Although they generally believed that the pendulum had swung too far in the other direction, most of them agreed that the authoritarianism of their upbringing made them too passive when they went to work and less likely to question poor pay and conditions and institutionalised inequality.

II Paid work – terms and conditions

(a) Employment opportunities

Between 1926 and 1951, the total population of Northern Ireland aged 14 and over increased by 97,703 but the occupied population increased by only 32,860.[30] Regional figures reveal that there were substantial variations in the proportion of women in the labour force within Northern Ireland, with Belfast well above the average in this regard. Alison Morrow noted that on a smaller scale, women's employment in Belfast revealed a similar pattern to that for Northern Ireland overall, except for agriculture. In the 1926 Census, the main sources of women's work were textiles and clothing, accounting for nearly 55 per cent of the female labour force. Personal service accounted for 17.3 per cent and commercial and white collar jobs for 19.7 per cent, while the other 8 per cent was divided among various manufacturing

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[30] Census of Northern Ireland, 1951, p. XLV.

sectors loosely defined as unskilled work. There was also a marked rise in white collar employment, particularly clerical workers and typists, accounting for 31 per cent.[31] All of this reflects an economy moving away from its older industrial base into service sector employment. It is also worth noting that there was no dramatic appearance of new light industries employing women.

In Northern Ireland as a whole, unemployment rose every month from the declaration of war until February 1940 and as late as May 1940 more people were still unemployed than in the last full month of peace. Moya Woodside noted some of the consequences of the government's policy of encouraging unemployed workers to take up jobs in Britain:

> Unemployment figures still reach the 46,766 mark (March 17th), and nothing is done. Some two thousands of men work overtime and Sundays in the shipyards but the rest derive no benefit from the supposed boom. … Men who have been on U.A. or P. assistance have no resources, yet their families are expected to tide over anything between 10 days to 3 weeks till the husband's money comes through from England. If he falls sick, is on short time through bad weather or bombing, or – iniquitous practice – works 2 weeks before receiving one week's pay, well, it's just too bad for his wife and family. (26th March 1940)

Although there was no conscription, workers were subject to a certain level of coercion to take up work in Britain as the Unemployment Insurance (Emergency Powers) Order 1940 enabled the authorities to deny unemployment benefit to anyone who refused to take up a job in Britain without 'good reason':

> Interviewing applicants for relief at Welfare office, I should say that 1 case in every 4 is that of a woman whose husband has been sent to work in England by the Labour Exchange and who in consequence has been left without any money for 2, 3 or even 4 weeks. Postal hold-ups, short time due to bad weather, illness of the workers, bombs, and iniquitous practice – working 2 weeks before receiving 1 weeks' pay, all contribute to the delay. Meanwhile, wife and family starve and carry on by pawning and borrowing, as Outdoor Relief is only granted after further delay and with the greatest reluctance in these cases. Sending men away to jobs in England and Scotland is certainly not the solution for Ulster's 70,000 unemployed (Jan. figures just out 62,000). (18th February 1941)

At a Cabinet Meeting in September 1941 approval was given to a proposal by the Ministry of Labour that single women over twenty-one years of age who had been unemployed for five months or more should be offered employment in Britain and

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[31] Alison Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland 1920-1950*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ulster at Coleraine, 1995, p. 58.

that an examination should be made of the "title to unemployment benefit of any woman claimant who refused such work". The scheme involved a four month training period at a basic rate of 38s per week for work in engineering and munitions. Once placed, wages were at a minimum 38s per week plus a cost of living bonus, and in large firms after a month this would rise to £3 with a maximum of £4 7s including cost of living bonus. Food and lodgings were to cost 22s 6d a week. Some workers were also transferred for textile and N.A.A.F.I. work (canteens for the troops.)[32]

Many people felt that it was unfair that unemployed workers had to be sent to Britain instead of employment being brought to Northern Ireland. As early as May 1940, Patrick Agnew, the M.P. for Newry complained about girls being sent to Britain to work in canteens and he raised another aspect of the reason for concern about the transfers:

> We live in an atmosphere today filled with grave dangers. I suggest to the Ministry of Labour that the question of parental control should be recognised by the Government … As a father of a family I personally would not allow my girl to go to any such work. I feel that family life and control in my home is part of my personal responsibility.[33]

The 1937 Census was very restricted in the range of enumeration and there is no analysis under the headings of "Occupation" or "Industrial status". It had been intended in 1937 to launch a complete enumeration in 1941 in conjunction with the rest of the United Kingdom, but the war made a Census impracticable in that year. The reports of the 1937 Census were also restricted by the shortage of paper and the fact that wartime conditions affected the resources available to conduct a thorough analysis of the data. By the time the next Census was taken in 1951, the extraordinary conditions of wartime were no longer likely to be influential and there are no records to facilitate a reliable calculation of the extent to which women workers became involved in traditionally male dominated industry during the war years. The main findings are illustrated in Appendix 3(2). Some industrial groups appear to have had significant rises in the numbers of female workers employed in these sectors but the increases are likely to be due to re-categorisation. The "Personal Service" category, which accounted for more than 13,000 women working in Belfast

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

in 1926, does not appear in the 1951 Census Report on the Belfast County Borough, although the category is used in the Report on Northern Ireland as a whole.[34] Some of the sub-categories were included under other headings in 1951 – for instance, "Entertainment and Sport" covered the hotel industry for the first time in 1951. The "Other Undefined Workers" category increased considerably between 1926 and 1951 but there is no indication if this number included the domestic servants and Lodging House Keepers (most likely to have been women) who accounted for a significant proportion of those enumerated under the "Personal Service" category in 1926. All of these examples illustrate the problematical nature of the Census Reports as a source of accurate information about women's employment, in particular, although the difficulties also arise in relation to male workers. In general, it would seem that the war accelerated existing trends in female employment patterns in Northern Ireland, with the rise of the service sector absorbing some of the decline in the manufacturing sector. Because of the general unreliability of the Ministry of Labour statistics, however, it is difficult to gauge the exact timing and extent of changes

The Ministry of Commerce questioned the policy of encouraging women to leave home for training in Britain for fear they would not return to Northern Ireland and the new industries developing there would be left short of workers. They were particularly concerned about the munitions factory and the fuselage factory being opened in Belfast by Mackies and Bairds Engineering, respectively.[35] Generally, employers seem to have preferred to train workers in the factories and some employers came to favour young women workers in preference to older men:

> We would appreciate the training of girls in the Government Training Centres and would be prepared to engage them, but so far, our experience of trained men of other trades has been bad. It is quite obvious that a young girl, round about the twenties is very much more adaptable than an elderly man of the fifties or sixties, who has perhaps been doing bricklayers' or painters' work for a number of years. We find that almost invariably a girl, after three weeks training in the Works, can knock spots off this type of elderly man.

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[34] The number of male workers in the whole of Northern Ireland engaged under the category "Personal Service" was roughly 8,300 in 1926 with 41,000 women enumerated under the heading. By 1951, the number of male workers had increased to 10,700 but women workers in Personal Service had decreased to 32,900, possibly due to the reduction in the number of women willing to be occupied as domestic servants.

[35] Ministry of Commerce, Training of Women for War Work, correspondence in October 1941. P.R.O.N.I. Com.61/13/649.

> Therefore, I would say that we would be prepared to take a considerable number of young girls who have had a course of training.[36]

In late December 1941, the Ministry of Labour set up a course for women to train in machine operation at Lurgan technical school. A four week course was set up at Belfast Technical College in May 1942, and one at Bangor College in June 1942. At this stage, government announced its plans to train unemployed women and girls, as part of a recruitment drive for war work. They were looking particularly for 'suitable women' aged 18-35 years. By December 1942, the Ministry of Labour records state that 696 women had been sent for training under this scheme and of those 558 were working in the war industries while 72 were still in training.[37]

A voluntary registration scheme for women workers was set up in November 1943 but the majority of the 3,000 registered unemployed women workers were living in Belfast and were unable to move to other areas of Northern Ireland to work. In response to the appeal for women workers, unions and other campaigning groups made various comments and suggestions, such as the need for nurseries, school meals, shopping and laundry facilities, if married women were to join the paid workforce in large numbers. The Women's War Effort Association, an *ad hoc* group of women campaigned to promote opportunities and facilities for married women to work so they could contribute to the war effort, arguing that:

> … the government must take into account that the vast majority of the women to whom the appeal will be made are women with family and domestic responsibilities. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for the government to provide such facilities as will enable women to fulfil their home duties and at the same time participate in the war effort.[38]

The low number of respondents to an advertising campaign to recruit women for work in new industries was such that it was decided not to advertise for new industries in Northern Ireland because of the uncertain labour supply outside Belfast. The range of employment opportunities for women widened considerably in the course of the war, though not to as great an extent as in mainland Britain:

> It would seem indeed, that a substantial body of workers, especially women, in Northern Ireland, whose labour had become redundant in textile

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[36] Letter from W.P. Kemp, Short & Haarland Limited, Queen's Island, Belfast to E.H. Cooper, Ministry of Commerce, dated 14 April 1942. P.R.O.N.I. Com.61/113/649.
[37] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, p. 111.
[38] Ministry of Labour, Recruitment of married women for war work in 1943. P.R.O.N.I. LAB 4/22/10.

> manufacture, was drawn into the engineering industry. In fact, during the Second World War, more people were employed in shipbuilding, aircraft manufacture and engineering than at any other time in the history of Northern Ireland.[39]

In 1935, 46.5 per cent of the industrial labour force in Britain was female, compared to 26.4 per cent in Northern Ireland.[40] While the total increase of insured women workers in the province did not increase dramatically, from 111,900 in 1939 to a wartime peak of 118,600 in 1943 (only six per cent), the sort of work open to them, as Blake suggests, did alter quite considerably. At the start of the war, British unions with branches in Northern Ireland had reached agreement under the Relaxation of Existing Customs Agreement, which meant that for the duration of the war, if need be, some jobs could be broken down into components so that semi-skilled, unskilled and women workers could do them, but that at the end of the war there would be a return to 'normal' union regulations.

Another avenue of employment opened up to women was entry to the women's auxiliary arms of the services, such as the Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.). This kind of work, more than any other, opened to question traditional perspectives on women's place in society. It was also better paid than other forms of work open to women:

> A woman doctor I know rang up to see if I could get her a refugee for domestic work. She said they had been without anyone, except for 2 short and unsatisfactory spells, since last June, and that the registry offices are worse than useless. Her opinion is that all the available labour which is any good has either been absorbed in the A.T.S. or N.A.A.F.I. or been snapped up by English evacuees or officers wives who are accustomed to pay much higher wages than those prevailing locally. (20th January 1941)

Advertisements for maids and other domestics in Belfast daily newspapers offered between £35.0.0 and £52.0.0 per annum during the war years. Women who worked in clerical jobs before the war also found that pay and conditions improved when the government employed them. The Salaries Department of Belfast Corporation announced new pay rates in July 1943, rising from £90 a year for 'juniors' to £150 a year in the fifth year, and pay for clerks rising from £162 to £200 a year in three years.[41]

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[39] Blake, Northern Ireland, p. 396.
[40] *Ibid.*, p.61.
[41] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, p. 133.

The Civil Service employed one of the largest groups of women workers in Éire. The 1936 Census recorded a total of 23,971 females in the establishment of the Civil Service, of whom 76 per cent were employed in Central Government (with 24 per cent working in Local Government).[42] By the time the 1946 Census was taken, there were 26,681 females in state employment (an increase of 11 per cent) and the ratio of Central to Local Government had changed to 70:30. The rise in numbers was less than the rise in the number of male employees[43]. The significant increase in both male and female employees may well have been due to the additional demands made by the Emergency situation on government services. The security of an established post in the Civil Service is underlined by the numbers described as 'Out of Work' in Dublin County Borough in both 1936 and 1946 - only 3 out of 2,179 at work in Public Administration in 1936 (0.14 per cent) and 11 out of 3,556 in 1946 (0.31 per cent).

The measures taken by the Irish Free State government to protect industrial production during the 1930s had certainly benefited the citizens of Dublin in terms of increased employment opportunities. The total of 205,989 persons enumerated in the Census of 1936 was 52 per cent greater than in 1926, and this increase was exceeded by a 56 per cent rise in the number of persons 'At Work'. This was particularly significant in the case of female workers, whose numbers in the workforce increased by 74 per cent in the period between the two Census Reports, compared to a decrease of eleven per cent in the number of women workers classified as 'Out of Work'. The General Report of the 1936 Census found that:

> ... relative to the total employee class there appears to have been a fairly substantial reduction in the "hard core" of unemployment, which for the present purpose, may be defined as those idle for two years or more.[44]

Urban industrial unemployment figures began to rise again in 1938, after the expansion in employment of the previous seven years. While the agricultural sector was recovering from the hardships of the Economic War, it could not provide an alternative for workers laid off from manufacturing concerns. The number of persons

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[42] Census of Population 1936, Vol. VI Industrial Status, p. 15.
[43] The number of male workers rose by 16 per cent from 53,666 in 1936 to 62,703 in 1946 while the number employed in Central Government fell from 77 per cent of the total in 1936 to 74 per cent in 1946.
[44] Census of Population 1936, Vol. IX - General Report. P. No. 5260, Dublin, 1941, p.171.

on the Live Register[45] (residing in cities and urban districts) was 7.9 per cent higher in the first six months of 1939 than it had been in the same period of 1938, while the numbers continued to increase steadily in the first six months after the declaration of the Emergency in September 1939. The reduction in employment was attributed to the scarcity of raw materials for industrial production.[46] Production and employment in the industrial sector of Éire were already slowing down in 1939 when the outbreak of war in Europe added further major difficulties to those already being experienced by manufacturers faced with a contracting market.

Finding a job in Dublin in the early 1940s was difficult, but especially so for women, whose employment opportunities had already been curtailed by the terms of the Conditions of Employment passed in 1936. Section 16 of the Act gave the Minister for Industry and Commerce the power to prohibit women from industrial work or to fix a proportion of women workers in industrial employment, "after consultation with representatives of employers interested in such form of industrial work and with representatives of workers so interested". The Act was resisted vigorously by women's groups but supported by male labour leaders like William Norton[47] and Tom Johnson[48] who welcomed it as a measure to increase employment opportunities for men. The Fianna Fáil government may have been motivated by a genuine belief in the benefit to society of promoting traditional family structures, supported by a male breadwinner, but the legislation ignored single women and widows or married women who needed to work to supplement their family incomes. Fianna Fáil did institute several schemes to alleviate family poverty, but the effect of

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[45] The Live Register referred to the number of registered unemployed who were insured under the Unemployment Assistance Act 1933. Registration was compulsory for receipt of unemployment benefits but the Act excluded domestic servants and workers categorised as "Assisting Relatives". This would account for part of the discrepancy between the numbers of unemployed on the Live Register and the number in the Census, which looked at those out of work on a particular date, regardless of their entitlement to unemployment benefit.

[46] James F. Meenan, "The Impact of the War upon the Irish Economy" in JSSISI, 93rd Session, pp. 17-22.

[47] William Norton was first elected to the Dáil in 1932 and he also became leader of the Labour party that year. Norton led Labour into the First Inter-Party Government in 1948, becoming Tánaiste and Minister for Social Welfare. He retired as Labour leader in 1960 and died in 1963. (Henry Boylan (ed.), A Dictionary of Irish Biography, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1998.)

[48] Thomas Johnson was the first parliamentary leader of the Labour Party in Ireland. He was a member of the small group that drafted the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil. He was Secretary of the Irish Trade Union Congress from 1920-28 and in 1922 became T.D. for South Dublin. Although he retired as leader of the Labour Party in 1927 he remained very active in the Irish labour movement and the headquarters of the Irish Labour Court, in Dublin, is named after him. (Boylan (ed.), A Dictionary of Irish Biography.)

the Conditions of Employment Act was to strengthen the sexual division of labour and to make many women and children more vulnerable to poverty.

Colette made many employment applications through her secretarial college, but her first job was secured through the intervention of a family friend, after she had completed her secretarial course. Although the job became available as a result of another woman leaving to get married, a marriage bar was not official policy for all women working in the private sector, although some companies did operate their own policy in this regard. In the public sector, a marriage bar was operative in the clerical and administrative grades of the Civil Service, as well as in the teaching and nursing professions. In Guinness's Brewery, where Colette spent most of her working life, she would have been required to resign if she had got married, although occasionally the company allowed a woman to stay on for a limited period after marriage, if it was to the Company's advantage and she was an exceptionally good worker.

Colette was dismissed from her job after an illness had made her absent from work for some time. She was horrified by the experience of going to the Employment Exchange, where one of the women behind the counter had been to Tutorial College with her and she felt humiliated to be in the position of looking for social welfare payments. Colette was of the opinion that most people at that time were reluctant to claim social welfare, because of the perceived social stigma attached to being unemployed. Colette's father contacted as many friends and relatives as he could in an effort to find her another job and she went back to secretarial college, to keep up her shorthand and typing and to learn more about book keeping. She applied for work in a range of companies and she was called for an interview in Guinness's:

> [Colette] I was terrified, but my father said to me to buy myself a new hat, we wore hats and gloves in those days; we were always very formally turned out, even when you were riding a bicycle. There was no such thing as slacks [pause] that was quite unheard of. Well, it wasn't quite unheard of but it was certainly unusual. Well, I had my interview … but they hadn't taken any lady clerks in for a few years and I think they suddenly discovered that they needed them so they held an examination. There was quite a big number of lady clerks who attended for the examination [pause] it was quite formal, like the Leaving Certificate or something like that, and out of that so many were picked. In the event, there were 21 of us, which meant there were quite a few they did take, and it was very unusual. I think I was probably one of the oldest, I must have been 22, and you were supposed to be 21, 18 to 21 I think

> it was. A colleague and myself discovered that we were both - well we were over the 22 mark anyhow. But they got great value out of us anyhow, because we both ended up as very senior ladies so it was no great harm. (46 and 48)

Lady Clerks were first employed by the Guinness company in the late 19th century and the first Special Female Clerks Department was set up in 1905, where the women were graded as Book keepers, Typists and Shorthand Writers. The entrance procedures for Lady Clerks had three stages. Firstly, there was a preliminary interview with the Lady Superintendent 'in order to eliminate the socially undesirable candidates'.[49] This was followed by an interview with the Managing Director and the Chief Accountant, for which marks were assigned to the candidates. Finally, there was a written examination, which was to be one 'which could not be crammed for at the various commercial classes which are attended by a large majority of the candidates'.[50]

Catherine's husband worked as a cooper in Guinness's until he died of a duodenal ulcer when he was only forty, leaving her with six children to care for on the very low income that she could earn from working in the Brewery as a cleaner. When asked why she did not attempt to take up the relatively skilled printing work she had done in Dollard's before her marriage, when it would have paid her much more than the cleaning work, she replied that the hours would not have allowed her to look after the children. The early shift in Guinness's suited her family responsibilities, despite other difficulties associated with the work. Catherine blamed the doctor in the Brewery for failing to diagnose her husband's condition early enough to cure him and she was very resentful of having to leave her children to go out to paid employment:

> [Catherine] … when things happened I went in to Guinness's to see Dr. P. and of course, I told him off, that he was responsible for his death and he should have had him in hospital and having the operation when he was able to have it. He said, these things happen, you know, they make excuses. So I said well I've six young children, now what do I do? Well, he said, you can come into work, he said, at six every morning. I used to leave here at half past five. (33)

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[49] The phrase was used in a memorandum from the Managing Director, W. Haldane Porter to the Registry Department, dated 18th July 1935, setting out the entrance procedures for Lady Clerks. The procedures were still applicable when Colette joined the Brewery in 1941. (Guinness Archives File No. GDB/PEO.103/00300/2 concerning Lady Staff.)

[50] Ibid.

It is unlikely that the doctor would have specified the work or the hours but in Catherine's mind the connection between the reason for her needing to work outside her home and the actual job she was given has become a part of her memory of the years she spent in the Brewery and those memories are coloured by her conviction that a mother's place is in the home and a man's worth is gauged by his ability to provide for his family. Although she would have qualified for a pension for herself and the children under the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act 1935, the amount payable was not raised between 1935 and 1942 when Catherine's husband died, and the most she would have received was 10s per week for herself and 5s per week for the eldest child, with a further 3s per week each for the other five children.

(b) Equal pay

Women workers were not paid at the same rate as men, nor did they expect to be, although women's groups in both Northern Ireland and Éire did make several attempts in the course of the 1940s to raise the question of equal pay. The Northern Ireland Government took its lead on the question of equal pay for women in government service from the Ministry of Finance in Westminster. The policy in respect of pay for women workers was to adhere to the practice observed by non-governmental employment:

> In the industrial sphere, in those cases where men and women are paid alike in industry, they would normally be paid alike in Government service. In the non-industrial sphere, however, the position is that equal pay has not been adopted for clerical and similar work. Two Royal Commissions have considered whether a departure should be made in the Government service. Neither has been able to recommend adoption of this proposal. The Government does not see its way to alter the existing position.[51]

Anne's first job was in Thompson's[52], where she enjoyed the work, but she was glad to move to a job in the Ormeau Bakery when the opportunity arose. Although she was set to work in the chocolate and confectionery department of the

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[51] H.M. Government Report of Proceedings of the National Conference of Women, Tuesday 28 September 1943, London, p.40.

[52] Thompson's (Belfast) Limited was established in 1847 as 'Purveyors, Restaurateurs, Caterers, and Confectioners'. Their premises at 14 Donegall Place and 31 Castle Lane, Belfast had luncheon, dining and afternoon tea rooms and could cater for private parties. They also had a hiring department, from where all the cutlery, glass etc. necessary for any size of party could be obtained. The Confectionery Department, where Ann worked, also supplied wedding and christening cakes. (The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory, Anderson and Company, Belfast, 1946.).

Bakery, she was employed as a Female Baker, and this meant that she got higher wages than she would have done working under the Sugar Confectionery Trade Board regulations, although that might have seemed more appropriate:

> [Anne] Yes, that was why I changed from Thompsons. I immediately had [pause] it wasn't a lot of money now but in those days to get ten shillings a week more than where you were leaving was a lot of money, especially during the war years. (34)

A Female Baker was defined by the Trade Board as a worker over 21 years of age, who had served a learnership of not less than five years, or who, in the case of Home Bakeries, had not less than five years' experience in the trade of baking, employing any or all of a variety of processes in the making of bread, pastry or flour confectionery.[53] Workers in the baking trade had a 48 hour week, for which the male bakers' rate was set at 80s. per week in November 1940, while female bakers were paid 47s., a difference of 41 per cent.[54] By August 1944, the male rate had been increased to 87s., compared to a female rate of 50s. 6d., with the difference between them at 42 per cent. In correspondence dated August 1940, between the Ministry of Labour and T.F. Hall, the Secretary of the Office of the Trade Boards, Mr. Hall noted that the Baking Trade schedule of wages was 'considerably in advance of the rates fixed by other Trade Boards in Northern Ireland for comparable types of workers'.[55] Male workers in the Sugar Confectionery and Food Preserving Trade also worked a 48 hour week, for which they were paid 49s. per week in 1941, while female workers were paid 30s. for the same working hours, a differential of 39 per cent. By 1944, the male rate had increased to 64s., compared to 41s. for the female workers, decreasing the differential to 36 per cent. Minutes of Trade Board meetings suggest that the increases were intended to keep up with the rising cost of living engendered by wartime conditions and there is no mention in the deliberations of any need to balance male and female earnings.

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[53] The processes specifically mentioned by the Trade Board were:
(a) the mixing of flour, eggs, sugar or other ingredients into dough or batter;
(b) the manipulating, moulding, or shaping of dough by hand;
(c) the ovening of bread, pastry or flour confectionery;
(d) decorating, icing or piping; or
(e) any other similar operations incidental to or appertaining to the manufacture of the above-mentioned articles.

[54] Ministry of Labour, Orders under the Trade Boards Acts, Baking Trade, NIBk (32) and Sugar Confectionery and Food Preserving Trade NIF (21).

[55] Ibid.

Appendix 3(3) shows the weekly rates set by the Trade Boards for all the industries regulated by them. In each employment, comparisons have been made only between the rates set for jobs in which both male and female workers were doing generally similar work. There was often considerable disparity in the wages they were paid as, for example, in the Aerated Waters trade where the male workers were paid 63 per cent more than their female colleagues who were doing exactly the same work in the same conditions, or the General Waste Materials trade where there was a 72 per cent differential, again for exactly the same work. The situation was slightly different in some other trades, like the Baking and the Shirt-making trades, where there was respectively a 70 per cent and 78 per cent differential. In these trades, male and female workers were not doing exactly the same work because certain aspects of the trades were gender specific and only men were hired for some work while only women were hired for others, although the skills demanded were comparable if not identical. Women were never employed as cutters in shirt-making factories while men never did the sewing although both aspects of the trade required similar skills and training.[56]

In Éire, women whose jobs came under the auspices of Trade Boards benefited much more than men from the restricted wage increases permitted under the Wages Standstill Act of 1941 because they were starting at a lower level (see Appendix 3(4). Many of the jobs that were taken up mainly by women, such as personal service and work in the trading and finance areas, were not subject to Trade Board or Joint Labour Commission regulation. Wage levels in the industries regulated by the Trade Boards were based on acceptance of the notion that women should be paid less than men, even in situations where they were performing similar work. All of the weekly rates given in Appendices 3(3) and 3(4) were based on a 48-hour week for adult male and female workers. The age at which workers were classified as 'adults' varied in different trades from 18 years and over to 22 years and over.[57] Women workers were often vulnerable to replacement by lower-paid juniors or apprentices at times of slackness. Efforts to regulate the number of apprentices permissible in individual enterprises were resisted by the employers, particularly in

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[56] Ministry of Labour files, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.
[57] Department of Labour, File TIL 120, Draft Survey of Minimum Wage Regulations, p. 2.

small firms, who were reluctant to surrender their autonomy in relation to hiring practices.

Pay scales in the Civil Service were higher for men and seemed to be based on the assumption that women were to be regarded as temporary workers, rather than employees intent on developing a career path. A 1934 memorandum from the Department of Finance about an investigation into equal pay commissioned by the Executive Council (in response to a request from the International Labour Conference) elicited the following opinion:

> In arriving at an adequate figure of remuneration for posts in which men are to be employed, the salary must be such as will attract and retain during the whole of their useful lives the services of men who are married or will marry while in the Service. … What the additional cost (for equal pay) in the Service as a whole would be it would be difficult to calculate. There is no doubt that it must be large and in return for it, it should be noted that the State would get nothing more than it gets at present.[58]

There is no evidence to suggest that this attitude had been altered in any way by the time the Emergency started in 1939.

In 1940, the Department of External Affairs sought a Minor Staff Officer (Acting) and advertised the post on two scales: Scale A was for a woman or unmarried man already on a scale differentiated by marriage and ranged from £130 to £230 per annum. This was compared to Scale B, for a married man or unmarried man on a scale undifferentiated on a marriage basis. This carried a salary range of £200 to £300 per annum, a difference of £70 per annum (or 54 per cent at the bottom of the scale and 30 per cent at the top).[59] In 1944, an advertisement for an Assistant Inspector of Taxes also distinguished between women and unmarried men on a differentiated scale and married men and unmarried men on an undifferentiated scale. In this case the base point was identical (£150 per annum) but the top point of the first scale was £380 while the second scale rose to £500, a difference of £120 per annum, or 32 per cent).[60] Women also had to retire on marriage while a man, whether

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[58] Department of the Taoiseach, File No. S6834A, Equal Pay for Men and Women.
[59] Department of the Taoiseach, File No. S 11695A, Civil Service Vacancies 1940-43.
[60] Department of the Taoiseach, File No. S 11695B, Civil Service Vacancies 1944-48.

married or not, had a job for life if that was what he wanted.[61] Some grades were confined exclusively to women because they were considered to be better suited to the work requirements and these were generally at the lower end of the pay scales. An explanation of the grading system is set out in Appendix 3(5), which reflects the relegation of most female civil service workers into low-grade jobs. While some of the objections to women workers seem to have been based on the perception of lesser physical capacity, others were social, as in the belief that it was not appropriate for women to work at night.

All of the married women who contributed to this research believed that their primary responsibility was to their families and their paid work was supplementary. Because of this, their relationship with their employers assumed a secondary status in terms of their priorities. This attitude was reflected in their acceptance of the inequality between male and female pay rates, although none of the unmarried women questioned the difference either. The Civil Service had a pragmatic as well as ideological basis for the disparity, as discussed above, but employers and male trade union representatives supported its continued presence, despite the often-repeated concern that cheaper women workers would be more attractive to employers.

A widespread belief in women's domestic function as the foundation of a healthy society, which should be protected by removal of the economic need for women to work outside the home, was intrinsic to the perpetuation of the disparity between male and female wage rates. Even Marie, who became an active trade unionist, was uninterested in the fact that men got paid considerably more than women for doing the same work. In Ireland, North and South, in the 1940s, there was no agitation for widespread reform of pay structures for women workers and claims for increased rates were confined to specific employments and were made in the context of acceptance of the fact that male workers would automatically be paid more than female, because of the assumption that a woman's place was rightfully in the home. Most women's public representatives worked within this framework, even such prominent figures as Louie Bennett, General Secretary of the Irish Women

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[61] The marriage bar was laid down by Statutory Order of the Minister for Finance under Section 9 of the Civil Service Regulation Act, 1924. The rule applied mainly to established posts and not to 'subordinate situations' such as office cleaners.

Workers' Union. Her report to the 1939 Annual Convention of the Union regarding her work on the Commission on Vocational Organisation was probably written as much for wider public consumption as for her members and therefore exaggerated her position, but the main point she makes about woman's primary role is consistent with other documents written by her and other influential figures at the time[62]:

> We are often told that woman's place is the home. We agree that it is her special sphere. But war and social injustice are both enemies of the home. Women and children are their victims as well as men. It is in order to defend the home and the family that women must now take a larger part in public life and politics. Because the woman as mother has a deep-seated conviction that family life can only be soundly based on religious and moral principles, she realises very clearly that the life of the community as represented in Government and Public Bodies must also be based on such principles.[63]

There were some occasions during the war when women fought inequality and won. In February 1940, the women members of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union who were employed by Ewart and Company, the biggest linen manufacturing enterprise in Northern Ireland, went on strike over the issue of union recognition in the company. The origin of the dispute was a technicality and the core of the matter was the very low wages being paid to the women workers, even after protracted negotiations with the company had finally secured a minimum wage for the men employed outside the craft section:

> The case of the Women Workers demands special consideration. Their whole existence is a fight against a small wage-packet at the end of the week. Every defect in the Management, every flaw in the Departmental Organisation, every hold-up, every break-down, is reflected in the wage packet of the woman worker – especially the Weaver and the Winder. A large proportion of every forty-eight hours spent in the Factory is wasted in waiting. It is not an uncommon thing to see a Woman Worker, after standing about half the week, leave the Factory with HARDLY ANY WAGE AT ALL.
>
> Here is a Wage List of 276 Damask Weavers, representative of a typical week in the Industry in a period of prosperity:-
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 36 women had less than 10/- per week | 12 women had from 30/- to 35/- per week |
> | 66 women had from 10/- to 15/- per week | 9 " " " 35/- to 40/- per week |

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[62] In her recent biography of Louis Bennett, Rosemary Cullen Owens argues that Bennett's personal attitudes were consistent with conservative public opinion of the time and she quotes her presidential address to the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1932, when she claimed that the increasing tendency to draw women into industry 'is of no real advantage to them. It has not raised their status as workers nor their wage standard. It is a menace to family life, and in so far as it has blocked the employment of men it has intensified poverty amongst the working class'. (Rosemary Cullen Owens, Louie Bennett. Cork University Press, Cork, 2001, p. 91.)

[63] Report of the Executive to the Annual Convention of the Irish Women Workers' Union, 3rd May 1939. Archive of the Irish Labour History Society.

45	"	"	"	15/- to 20/- per week	4	"	"	"	40/- to 45/- per week
73	"	"	"	20/- to 25/- per week	1 woman	"	"		45/- to 50/- per week
23	"	"	"	25/- to 30/0 per week	7 women	"	"		50/- and over per week

> Many women are receiving more on STRIKE PAY than they receive in WAGES. THIS IS THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRIKE.[64]

Concern over the possible effect the strike might have on the war effort led to intervention by the Ministry of War and the employer's representatives were forced to abandon their refusal to meet the workers' representatives and to attend talks in London at which a resolution to the dispute was worked out and the women workers secured a significant pay rise and improvement in their conditions.

(c) Pay and money management

Anne took her position in the Ormeau Bakery very seriously and made herself available for extra work if the company needed her. When asked if she had been paid overtime rates for this work, she explained that she volunteered because she was needed but the management had appreciated her commitment:

> [Anne] But the discipline was very, very high but you had to learn to live with it. And I found the better you did that, the happier you were in the job and you got a better standing, in your wages and everything. And I used to help with boiling the jam; this was for the department like. … Well, you volunteered, you know, because it would be after hours and maybe in the summer time, you know it was a very warm job, type of thing. But I remember when I got my pay one Friday and I remember I said I'm overpaid and I went back to the accounts and I said look, it was ten shillings or something which in those days was a lot of money. I said there's an error in my pay packet, there's extra money in it and they said oh well, I was given that instruction, you'd better talk to Miss Grahame. Which I did, and she said that I had more than earned it. You know, you got it that way. … Oh no, it wasn't formal overtime, it was because of the work you had done. They showed their appreciation of it. (104 and 108)

Miss Grahame made a strong impression on Anne because she set high standards of behaviour and 'manners.' Anne remembered her as coming from Balmoral Avenue, a wealthy area of Belfast. Miss Grahame joined the Ormeau Bakery in 1929 and started the homemade cake department. The booklet issued by the Bakery for their centenary celebrations in 1975 refers to the owners' claim to have the highest standards of quality and hygiene of any bakery operating in Northern Ireland and credits Miss Grahame with their implementation.

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[64] Extract from strike leaflet produced by the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, February 1940, reproduced in David Bleakley, Saidie Patterson, Irish Peacemaker. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1980, p. 37.

Anne looked on her years in the Ormeau Bakery as part of her education, especially because of the training she was given by Miss Grahame, and apart from recalling that she was paid more there than in her previous employment, she responded to questions about pay with a reiteration of how good the Ormeau Bakery was as an employer:

> [Anne] Discipline was very strong and manners were everything. I mean when we met our lady superintendent in any department, if I had have said 'Good morning' she'd have turned to me and said: my name is Miss Grahame. You see, we had to say: Good morning, Miss Grahame and this for me, anyway, I thought was a wonderful way to grow up. … Yes, they called me Anne, they didn't say Miss S., but they were absolutely, they treated the staff wonderfully, so they did. … You know, I was a girl guide all my life and I always say that the Guides and the Ormeau Bakery made me what I am. I know we all need the three Rs when we leave school, which I had no problem with, but the things that really matter, that's where I got them. (30 and 32)

It seems that the most important aspect to Anne of her position in the Ormeau Bakery was that the quality of her work was recognised both on a daily basis and in the long term, when she was promoted to a supervisory position that had previously been held only by men.

Colette did not remember being paid overtime in Guinness's Brewery but she believed that the company compensated staff very well for any extra work that might be required.[65] The practice with regard to overtime was to pay employees (weekly paid workers) of the Brewery for agreed overtime worked, while staff (salaried workers) were given time off in lieu unless there was a notably large number of hours that had been agreed in advance to deal with a particular situation. The Department Manager of the area seeking the overtime had to give a full explanation to the Board to get clearance, like the situation outlined in a Memorandum from the Manager of the Registry (Personnel) Department to the Managing Director, which also gives an insight into some of the benefits in kind enjoyed by Guinness employees:

> There is a considerable increase in the work of this Department in connection with British, Northern Ireland and Eire Income Tax work. It is now necessary to state on the Income Tax Forms the amount paid to each employee for cash allowance in lieu of Beer, Annual leave, cash allowance etc. and Brewery

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[65] Guinness's policy was to stay ahead of the average pay rates in Dublin city and this practice was applied to both male and female employees. In regards to tradesmen working for the Company, the practice was to pay a rate 'which to the nearest sixpence will be 2/6 above the "City Rates". (Memo from Registry Department concerning minimum wage rates for tradesmen, dated 13th March 1940. File No. GDB/PEO3.01/0048, Guinness Archives.)

> Savings Bank Interest. There is also a certain amount of incidental work, which has to be performed during each month in connection with the payment of British and Northern Ireland Income Tax.[66]

When Colette joined the company, her starting pay was more than she had been earning in the solicitor's office where she had previously worked. Colette would have been recruited to Class D, which was a probationary grade for Lady Clerks. The pay scale rose from £2 per week on entry to £2 10s. after four increments. The grade carried an annual leave allowance of 18 working days. After a probationary period of one year, it was possible to be promoted to the C grade, which was paid on a scale moving from the minimum of £2 10s. per week to the maximum of £4, again after four increments. The B and A grades were for posts of significant responsibility and were paid at the maximum rate of £5 per week for the B grade with 24 days annual holidays and a maximum of £6 for the A grade, with a 26 day holiday entitlement[67]:

> [Colette] When I went in it was £2 a week, which was double what I was getting. But you were paid by the month so that you didn't always get £2 a week, you know. If you had a five-week month it was different but it was good, well I thought it was great. I wasn't complaining but I was living at home, of course. (84)

The point about living at home with her parents was that Colette did not have to pay rent, although she contributed to the family income by giving housekeeping money to her mother.

All of the women who lived at home when they started work had handed their pay to their mothers, who then returned a small sum to them for pocket money:

> [Anne] Oh yes, we had to bring home; we had to hand in our pay. We got so much back, you know, but it was never [pause] there was no stress about it or difficulty. We were glad we had got to the stage where we were working and of course, in those days, you could buy material and somebody could make you something to wear. (66)

Anne's point about dress making skills was one that was repeated in other interviews, where women suggested that they had been very skilled money managers because their resources were so limited.

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[66] Memorandum dated 18th April 1941, Registry Department File No. GDB/PEO3.01.0048, Guinness Archives.
[67] Revised Classification for Lady Clerks, Board Memorandum dated 8th February 1939. File No. GDB/PEO.103/00300, Guinness Archives.

Mothers kept control of the housekeeping and most of the women remembered their fathers and brothers also handing over unopened pay packets to them and the mothers deciding how the family income would be spent. Their daughters negotiated with them when they needed extra money to buy clothes or even to fit out their own homes when they were getting married. In certain circumstances, another woman could take control of the family budget, but none of the women remembered anyone but women having this responsibility. Lily and Nancy's mother died when they were young and their aunt effectively took her place, including taking over the spending of the family income when the women went out to work themselves:

> [Lily and Nancy] You handed up your money. Oh aye, you got maybe a half a crown[68], you were lucky if you got a half a crown. … My mother died Christmas Eve and my aunt Marie took us over. You got your pay and you'd give your money in. You didn't open it, you'd have been afeared to open it. … Now don't get me wrong, she was the best, my aunt was the best and my mother, but I mean it wasn't that they were strict but you knew not to do them things. … The week before you were married you gave your mother your money. She'd give you back a wee bit of it. (35, 37, 41 and 48)

When Rose started work in Woolworths as a counter girl she also handed her pay packet to her mother. She was so convinced by the notion that only her mother had the right to allocate her pay that she went to extremes of behaviour not to overstep the mark she had set for herself:

> [Rose] Every penny was needed then because [pause] I handed up my wage packet. I can remember one Christmas Eve, in those days you worked until all hours and I can remember a Christmas Eve and I was coming out of Woolworths, this was in my very early days, I was very young at the time, I was only a counter girl. One o'clock on Christmas morning and rather than break my pay I walked the whole way from Woolworths to Springfield Road[69]. And my mummy nearly [pause] why, she said, why didn't you take a bus? I said I had no money; I didn't want to break my pay. (44 and 45)

Rose was very satisfied with her wages from Woolworths, even though she did not get to spend very much of it on herself. She was very proud of her increasing contribution to the family income:

> [Rose] Woolworths was reckoned as one of the best paid firms and when I reached eighteen [pause] when I was twenty one, I got 27/6 per week, which

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[68] Half a crown was 2s.6d.

[69] This story may have become a little exaggerated in the telling. There was no bus service on Christmas Eve after ten o'clock so Rose would not have had that option. In any case, it is clear that the imperative to hand over an 'unbroken' pay packet to her mother made a very deep impression on her.

was big money in those days.[70] That would be about 1939 and as I say, 27/6 was a terrific wage because things were very cheap in those days. (17)

Taking responsibility for their own spending was almost a rite of passage for young women at the time, often coinciding with leaving the family home or marriage. It was an important recognition of their maturity, although in some families it happened later than others. While Betty handed up her pay to her mother for her first few years of work, she then started to pay for her share of the housekeeping but kept the pay packet for herself as she took over responsibility for allocation of her money:

> [Betty] Well, when I started work, my wages was 14 bob[71] a week, for the whole week I got 14 bob. Well, it was around that, because I went to work in 1944. I was fifteen. … Yes, I handed my mother my wages the way I got them and [pause] when I was twenty-four, my wages were £4 [pause] the pay was £4.50[72] but I handed it to her and got the 50p back. We all did that and then the money would be given back to us if we needed anything. But after a few years, I started keeping the money and gave Mammy housekeeping. … Oh, it didn't go down well at all. I dressed myself out of what I had then, this was when I was about twenty eight ... I never interfered with Mammy over, regards spending money on the house. (682, 684, 686 and 698)

Sheila's decision to keep her pay and just give housekeeping money to her mother was similar to Betty's experience. An amount was decided upon that was fair for board and lodging and that would help maintain the rest of the family but acknowledgement of the younger woman's development was made when earnings in excess of that amount were retained and independent decisions were made about how it would be spent:

> [Sheila] Well, we always contributed from our [pause] you know, from our salary or wages, whatever you like to call it, we always did and I remember when I started work, my wages were £4 and you gave £3 to your mother. And then, a year later, I was promoted. I did an exam and I was promoted and I got, I always remember these figures, £5 10s. 10d. and I still gave £3 to my mother but at that stage, before that, when I only had the £4 2s 2d she still dressed me, but now I had £5 10s. 10d., she still got £3 and I dressed myself. (137)

The daughters rather than the mothers seem to have decided on the appropriate time to change the arrangement. Handing over cash to their mothers, directly from their

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[70] In fact, Rose's wages of 27/6 did not compare well with the weekly female rates paid under various Trade Board agreements, where only one rate was lower than Rose's – that of the Aerated Waters Trade Board. (See Appendix 3(3).)

[71] A 'bob' was one shilling.

[72] Betty was using the currency of the 1990s to describe her pay in the early 1950s. 50p would have been the equivalent of 10s.

pay packets, underlined the nature of the family chain of command. In the Civil Service where Sheila worked, the lower paid grades such as writing assistants, typists and clerical assistants, were paid in cash on a weekly basis. Clerical officers, minor staff officers, and executive officers were paid fortnightly in cash and all higher grades were paid by cheque on a monthly basis, which necessitated having a bank account.

Ita's job as an Executive Officer in the Civil Service[73] was 'regarded as a plum job, it was better than teaching'[74] but the status she enjoyed at work did not follow her home and her mother did not treat her any differently to other members of her family:

> [Ita] You were brought down to size when I went from this very important job and I came back home again [laughs]. It was very good but I was expected to toe the line and do domestic work. … Well, none of the sons were working. One of them was a clerical student, both of them were students, we were keeping them more or less, with fees. The males never contributed much in our family. (147 and 149)

Most of the women remembered that they had to do domestic chores in addition to handing up their wages, while their brothers were not expected to help. However, men often had specific chores such as fetching coal or doing repairs around the house that reflected the gendered division of work in the home.

The experience of the women described above is consistent with the arrangements outlined in *New Dubliners*, where the Dunn family income was discussed. In the first period of the couple's marriage, when John was the sole earner, he handed his pay to Joan and she took responsibility for its allocation. However, when the children began to bring home their pay, the arrangements changed gradually. When the son[75] and two daughters who got jobs first went out to work,

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[73] Ita was promoted quite rapidly to Higher Executive Officer and in the course of her career she eventually reached the grade of Assistant Secretary in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

[74] Between 1941 and 1942, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation applied on a number of occasions for a war bonus, referring to the fact that the teachers were the only body of public servants who had received no increase in pay since 1939, despite the fact that the cost of living had doubled since the beginning of the Emergency. They cited a figure of 2,000 whole-time teachers earning salaries varying from 32/6 to 48/- per week, with more than 50 per cent of the whole teaching body earning less than £4 per week. This was compared to a civil servant on Executive Officer grade who would have been earning a basic salary of £5 per week, plus a cost of living bonus of £138.17s (£2/13/4 per week). (T.J. O'Connell, History of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation 1868-1968. INTO, Dublin 1968, p.209.)

[75] One of the sons of the family became a priest and later a missionary in Australia, so he was never in a position to contribute to the family income.

they handed up their entire weekly earnings to their mother and she gave them back a weekly allowance for personal spending. Between 1943 when the first child became employed and 1949, when all three were working, there was a re-alignment of the arrangement and the two daughters were making a weekly contribution to the family funds through their mother and keeping the rest of their pay for themselves. However, they were expected to manage their money in the same way as their mother had done for the whole family, and to buy their own clothes and personal items, as well as travel expenses or other incidentals, while also being encouraged to save some money for the future. The son, on the other hand, continued to hand all his pay to his mother and to be given back some spending money.

As a student nurse, Olive had to live in the nurse's home[76] attached to the hospital where she did her training. Her parents had to pay for her training but she did get paid a small monthly wage in addition to her food and lodging. The students were permanently hungry because the food was not very good and Olive to glad to have her pay supplemented by her mother and especially by her older sister, who was working and who sent her 10s. every month:

> [Olive] Oh yes, we got paid once a month, on the last Tuesday of the month there would be a board meeting, so on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday of every month, we would be paid. And we'd all go down to the medical office – there was a great gulf between office staff in hospitals and nurses, and we'd all meet at this office to collect our pay and the people would say here they are again, they think of nothing but money and the ones that smoked borrowed from the ones that didn't, and as soon as they got paid the people they owed money to were turning round, saying you owe me this, you owe me that and we got paid, yes, once a month. (122)

While some of the women continued in the work they had gone into after school, getting promotion and achieving better conditions through seniority, others moved into different areas, not always for increased pay or better conditions. Susan started her working life as a music teacher but after a couple of years she decided to train as a medical social worker because she wanted a greater challenge:

> [Susan] Then I taught music schools for a couple of years in Inverness and Eastbourne. Then I decided that I didn't want to do that any longer and I trained as a medical social worker, an almoner as we were called in those days, at London University and at the Institute of Almoners in London. And

[76] Olive remembered that the local name for the Nurse's Home was the 'Virgin's Rest'.

> then I was offered a job at the Rotunda Hospital,[77] and I was there from 1939 to 1943 and then I was offered a job at the Royal Victoria[78] here. It was a promotion really, and I came here in 1944 and I worked there until I retired in 1970. (1)

One of the reasons for Susan's move from Dublin was her belief that a Protestant would not be promoted in a Catholic hospital and the position she would like to move up to in the Rotunda was filled and unlikely to become vacant for a long time.[79] Her position at the Royal Victoria was a groundbreaking one, in that she was the first person to hold such a job, and she encountered some initial difficulty in convincing the medical staff that her attitude to patients would be as professional as theirs. She overcame these obstacles very successfully but she maintained that her subsequent long career was enhanced by the fact that she did not marry, although there was no formal marriage bar in her profession.

Ita shared Susan's assessment of the benefits remaining single for an ambitious woman. She felt that if she had married she would never have reached the senior position to which she was eventually promoted because the marriage bar in the Civil Service would have excluded her during the important years when she was building her career:

> [Ita] I think if I really was keen on getting married I could have but I'd have had to leave. … But of course at that stage one out of about three women didn't get married in Ireland and one out of every four men didn't get married at all – that was the marriage pattern at that particular time. So you weren't in any way unique in not being married. (179 and 181)

Ita's assessment of the numbers of women in Ireland who did not marry at that time was accurate but with the gender proportions reversed. Around the turn of the twentieth century it was established that 30 per cent men and 25 per cent women had never married.[80] According to the 1946 Census, the marriage rate in Éire (excluding the six counties in Northern Ireland) in the ten calendar years 1936 to 1946 was 5.4 per 1,000 of population, that is 159,425 marriages in a population of 2,955,107. The

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[77] The Rotunda Hospital for the Relief of Poor Lying-In Women was founded in 1745. There were two distinct hospitals, the maternity or 'lying-in' wards and the gynaecological wing, which had 151 beds between them when Susan worked there in the early 1940s. The hospital had over 3,000 maternity cases during 1940 and nearly 1,000 gynaecological cases, with over 5,000 women attending the external Maternity Department. (Thom's Directory for the year 1940, p. 1116.)

[78] This hospital is situated on Grosvenor Road in Belfast. It was founded to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and was opened on 27th July 1903.

[79] Miss M. Murphy was the Almoner and Susan was Assistant Almoner.

[80] Brendan Walsh, "Marriage in Ireland in the Twentieth Century" in Art Cosgrove (Ed.), Marriage in Ireland. College Press, Dublin, 1985, pp. 132-150.

rate in Dublin County Borough, where Ita was living, was higher, at 7.4 marriages per 1,000 or 36,919 in a population of 506,051.[81] This rate reflected an increase in the marriage rate from the earlier Census period, which was 4.6 marriages per 1,000, between 1926 and 1936. Research in other countries has shown that marriage rates generally increased in wartime[82], and the neutrality of the southern state might explain why the pattern there was different. It must be noted, however, that Ireland had been a demographic anomaly in Western Europe because of the combination of its low rates of marriage and high rate of births per marriage[83] but this issue will be alluded to in more detail in the chapter on health. The long gap between the Northern Irish Census of 1937 and that of 1951 means the generalised figures in the latter are of little use in drawing conclusions about the marriage trend there.

While pay rates were low, additional benefits were rare and few women enjoyed membership of an occupational pension scheme. Anne had been involved in a savings scheme in the Ormeau Bakery, to which staff contributed instead of a pension scheme.[84] When she migrated to Canada at the end of the war, she withdrew the lump sum she had saved and gave it to her mother; in lieu of the money she would normally have given her from her wages:

> [Anne] Say I allowed two shillings to be deducted from my pay every week, the firm put two shillings to it, and we got, when you would retire, a lump sum. When I left, like, after fifteen years, my lump sum was £50, you know. Well, under the circumstances in our house, I had to put that on a book for my mother to keep her until I would get work in Canada, so that's where that went. Then we got jobs [pause] and then once I got earning, I was able to send my mother money. (70)

Ita's decision to abandon a teaching career and take up a position in the Civil Service was largely motivated by the salary and the fact that the job was pensionable.

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[81] Census of Population 1946, Vol. 1, Stationery Office, Dublin, 1949, p.130.

[82] In Britain, for example, more people married in six years of war than would have been the case if the pre-war trend had continued, although the peacetime inclination towards marriage at a younger age was consistent, with nearly three war-brides out of ten being under twenty-one. (Angus Calder, The People's War, Pimlico, London, 1969, p. 312.

[83] Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *'In Respect of Motherhood': Maternity policy and provision in Dublin city, 1922-1956*. University College Dublin, 2001, unpublished Ph.D. thesis.

[84] The Company also ran a scheme entitled 'Employees Benefit Trust' which had set up by a Trust Deed on 13th March 1918 to provide weekly payments for employees incapacitated by illness or disability. The Scheme also provided for payment of pensions to male and female employees and lump sum payments on the death of employees, their wives and children. In the event of an employee leaving the Bakery before pension age all the contributions made by that employee were repaid together with compound interest. (Ministry of Labour Files, P.R.O.N.I., LAB/4/24/6).

She was admitted to the Civil Service pension scheme when she joined the Department of Supplies, at the age of nineteen. Apart from the higher salary pertaining to the Civil Service position, the pension scheme was better, as women teachers at the time had to retire at sixty. Female Civil Servants had the option of retiring at sixty, but it was not compulsory.[85]

(d) Hours of work

Most of the women remembered being expected to work on Saturdays, generally for half a day, to lunchtime. Anne had an early start, having to be ready for work in the Ormeau Bakery at eight o'clock in the morning:

> [Anne] … in the Ormeau Bakery you couldn't start work any day without first having a shower [pause] and woe betide you if you didn't and you were told on, you know. You were as good as gone. … I started work at eight and I had to be in and be showered and punch the clock so that I was ready. And if you didn't punch for maybe a couple of minutes after eight there'd be a red mark on your card and if it went to five past, there'd be another one and if it went any further than that, you were called in. (12 and 104)

Anne thought it was perfectly acceptable for the management to insist on the showers being taken before work started, even though it meant that people had to be in the Bakery earlier than the time for which they were being paid.

As cleaners, both Mary and Catherine had to be in Guinness's Brewery very early in the morning to get the bulk of their work done before standard working hours commenced at 8.30 a.m. Catherine found it very hard to leave her children, but she was also very nervous going out on dark winter mornings and usually one or two of the older children accompanied her for part of the way. Neither she nor Betty gave any indication that they considered it less than desirable for young children to have to walk home again in the dark on their own, which would have been the case:

> [Catherine] I'd be in at six. I'd leave here at half five and I'd have to walk down the Canal, walk into James's Street and round by the harbour. … I might get two flights of stairs to scrub, and all the usual, kitchens, washing and cleaning all the time, you know, whatever was there. I got home by about half nine, to see that the children got out to school, you know. … I'd have a load of work to do, maybe for them too. They might say to me, will you bring home the towels and do them, because we're short of towels. … I used to

[85] This rule was introduced in 1938 as a means of reducing the number of young teachers who were unemployed. It was not until 1948 that the regulation was overturned after a prolonged campaign by the I.N.T.O. against the inequity to older women teachers, whose pension rights were adversely affected.

> wash sheets, pillow slips and all, because there was a night staff of number one clerks, and they used to stay, they'd be the night clerks and some of them would be sleeping there and of course, they'd beds in James's Street there.[86] (64, 71, 73, 75)

Catherine had a good relationship with her supervisor in the Brewery and she explained her difficulty about the early mornings. It was decided that she could work at home, which suited her better for looking after the children, but actually involved her doing longer hours:

> [Catherine] That's why they said to me, if there was too much for me, to go home and not have the worry of the children. That's why they gave me the chance of the washing, they said they'd put me on and you could take home the washing and do it for us. And I'd be here until three in the morning, I needn't tell you, especially when you only got such a short time to have them ready. (92)

Although Betty remembered helping her mother with the washing, Catherine said she got no assistance from Guinness's with bringing the heavy loads to and from the Brewery.[87] She had to wash the linen by hand, although she had a mangle to wring out the heaviest wetness and she had to dry the washing in front of the fire overnight. She did not get a washing machine until the 1950s, when several of her children were working and were in a position to buy one for her.

A much wider introduction of part-time working was a feature of war production in Britain and the United States mainly because it allowed women who had families to care for to combine their domestic duties with work in the war industries. It had the advantage for employers of allowing them to operate factories and other enterprises on the basis of much longer hours, without having to pay overtime, provide childcare or otherwise increase their costs. In order to employ women on a system of shifts and overtime the Northern Irish government had to bring in certain regulations to alter the Factory Act (Northern Ireland) 1936. To do this, they utilised Section 156 of the Factories Act (Northern Ireland) 1939 and Regulation 59 of the Defence (General) Regulations 1939 in order to exempt certain premises from the provisions of the Factory Act. In December 1942 the Ministry of Labour made the Factories (Hours of Employment of Women and Young Persons) Northern

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[86] Guinness had a premises at 101 James's Street that was set up for the night clerks to sleep in.
[87] Guinness did set up a transport service for the cleaners in the 1950s, but Catherine had left the Brewery by that point, although Mary benefited from not having to walk long distances to work in the early mornings.

Ireland Order 1942 which applied to every factory within the meaning of section 157 of the Factories Act (Northern Ireland). This allowed for women and young people to work more than 48 but not more than 55 hours per week (maximum 11 hours per day) and there had to be a certain number of breaks in the day. Women and children were not to be employed on Sundays.

When Rose started work in Woolworths, she thinks the number of people employed by the company in Northern Ireland was 432, although no independent evidence of this figure has been found. She marvelled at how these numbers had been reduced over the years, although she felt that staff now did not work at all as hard as she and her contemporaries had been expected to do:

> [Rose] Well, when you look back at how hard you worked in those days [pause] well there are escalators and all sorts now that we didn't have in those days. When I look back, many a time, from Monday to Friday, from Monday to Thursday you finished at half five. Six o'clock in those days and on Friday, half past six. That extra half hour was a [pause]. Well on Saturday, you worked to half past nine. Half past nine was closing time for the shop. We were told to carry stock then, down to the counters because there was no lifts, as I say, in those days. The stock room was on the fourth floor and maybe you had a load of stationery, which was heavy books, and exercises and all that, to carry or maybe crockery, and you had to carry that from the fourth floor down to the ground floor and maybe the bell would have went then when you were half there, you were half up the stairs and the bell would have went to go home at ten o'clock and you were lucky to get out at ten o'clock or half past ten on a Saturday night. It was really hard work, really you know. (52)

During the 1930s awareness of the poor conditions of many shop workers prompted an investigation. The Committee on the Shops Acts reported in 1938, making a range of recommendations with which to improve the working conditions of shop assistants, including the provision of seats, better heat, light and ventilation, a reduction in working hours and the introduction of paid holidays.[88] The report was shelved until 1943 when the recommendations were incorporated in a Shops Bill. In the meantime, war had brought some changes. Shop opening hours were restricted because of the blackout. As the economy moved into gear with the consequent expansion of the labour market, shop workers had more options and in consequence became more militant in their demands for higher pay. The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, frustrated with the lack of regulation, took matters into its own hands and there were frequent arbitration tribunals which successfully raised pay levels,

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[88] Report of the Committee on the Shops Act. P.R.O.N.I., CAB 4/539.

albeit on a piecemeal basis.[89] The new regulations did not suit all women. Women working in other areas found the new hours very difficult to fit into their other responsibilities while women who had traditionally opened shops as a means of getting over financially difficult times were now constrained by increased red tape.

The interviewees generally agreed that conditions had improved for workers, particularly in the last twenty years, not just because pay and conditions got better, but also because technological developments in the workplace made most people's work easier to do. The extent to which office work has changed, for example, is illustrated by Ita's recollection of the area where she worked in the Department of Supplies:

> [Ita] From Higher Executive down we were all in the one big space. The Assistant Principal had his own room but there was no distinction that way, you were just sitting at a table and the other staff were sitting there too. … In fact, a lot of the letters that were sent out were hand-written. … No, there was an Inquiry Office all right but I wasn't involved with that. I mean, the phone was hardly used at that point, very few members of the public, in fact no members of the public would have telephones and the first time most of the members of staff would have used a telephone would be actually at work. I remember one poor man he was so terrified – he was an Executive Officer too – he was so terrified of using the phone that he used to walk out when the phone would ring so that someone else would answer it. He'd go red in the face at the thought of it. (123 and 129)

When Colette worked in the solicitor's office, she remembered that there were often spurts of activity when she might be called upon to work all night:

> [Colette] In fact, I can remember we'd been busy about something, I can't recall what it was [pause] we'd been working hard and I thought now they won't want me later and I thought I'd go off and see my friend over in Rathgar and when I got home, at about ten o'clock on my bicycle and my mother said they'd been over there looking for me. We hadn't a phone, either we hadn't a phone at the time or we had just got our telephone, but anyway there they were with a taxi and we had to go back in. … They got another lady in, she was in another office, she wasn't in the clerk's office but she was a typist, and she was there and we were all there and we ended up going up to Mountjoy to deliver this whatever it was, probably a writ for *habeus corpus* or whatever it was.[90] (52 and 54)

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[89] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, p. 142.

[90] Colette did remember that Sean MacBride had been the barrister in the case but she did not remember any other details. In November 1939, he made a habeus corpus application for the release of 53 I.R.A. internees, on the grounds that their detention under the Offences Against the State Act 1939 was unconstitutional. His success in this case led to the government introducing an amendment

As a student nurse, Olive's hours were extremely onerous, particularly as study for examinations had to be fitted in around the working day:

> [Olive] But our off duty, we worked 104 hours per fortnight, I remember that, I'm sorry I haven't the old brochure to show you. 104 hours a fortnight, now sometimes it would be a split shift, sometimes from half past seven to five, or sometimes half past seven in the morning until nine o'clock at night with a break between two and five. (86)

Off duty time was very limited and subject to the approval of the ward sister, whose power to withhold permission might be arbitrarily exercised:

> [Olive] We got two days, two consecutive days off a month. You didn't have any choice about it, maybe when you got towards your final and your sister was getting married, well you might have a hope of getting off for that wedding. Now, if sister was decent she'd give you a half-day before the two days but she didn't have to, in other words you'd be off at two o'clock before your two days off, but she didn't have to, so you might have the first two days in January off and the last two days in February. But everybody was in the same boat. I know there was another hospital, under the religious in Dublin, and the poor girls there on their days off, had to go back and spend every night in the nurse's home. But at least we got away for two days[91]. (86)

Securing a favourable report from the ward sisters in the various rotations through the hospital was essential if students were to pass through the course and they were very conscious of the hierarchical staff structures. Even when nurses were off duty, the hospital had to be kept informed of their whereabouts and entry to the nurse's home at night was strictly monitored. Olive felt that the students had to be seen to work, even when there might not be much to do, although they also carried quite a load of responsibility from an early stage of their training:

> [Olive] Then on the night duty, you'd be put on night duty when you had done about six months. I much preferred it to day duty but it was very long. Half past eight at night until half past eight in the morning and if you were a junior, you weren't to be seen sitting down during the night, you wouldn't be if you were a junior. So if sister was on the rounds and it was quiet, you went into the bathroom and shut the door and you'd sit on the loo. Well, we were very busy but you weren't to be seen sitting down. You were to be busy with other things if the patients were asleep, there would be something to be done in the bathroom, or for some reason work went on and at one stage, we had lectures during the night. (88)

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to the Emergency Powers Act 1939 in January 1940 which gave the Minister for Justice retrospective powers to intern known or suspected I.R.A. sympathisers.

[91] Irish National Archives, File No.A8/157 Health.

Although the work done by most of the women was low paid and consequently tended to be of low status, they got considerable satisfaction from the skills they acquired and pride when they were promoted:

> [Anne] I speak with love of the Ormeau Bakery and I never cried leaving home because we figured well, if we don't like Canada we can come back. But I cried leaving the Ormeau Bakery. I just thought what am I doing, you know? I could have gone back into it … but I probably would have been subordinate to some of the people I had trained and that didn't appeal to me at all. (74 and 76)

Anne continued to be in employment for another thirty years until she retired in the 1970s, but she says herself that she never enjoyed any other job as much as her work in the Bakery. It is clear that the promotion she achieved and the fact that the management seemed to value her more than other workers contributed significantly to her nostalgia for the company:

> [Anne] You can see I'm sitting beside a silver tea service that I got for a wedding present when I left, and [pause] you always got a gift from the works, you know they always gave [pause] Which I did, I got a canteen of cutlery but no one up to that stage had ever got from the management, which I did so that was really something, you know. … Usually, the staff and the management would contribute to what was being collected in the work place, you know. But apparently when they went to one of the director people for the donation they were collecting for Anne, you see they said management are doing something for Anne and that was the first time. (34 and 160)

Anne is very conscious of the fact that she could have gone on to secondary education and maybe further if her family income had been sufficient and the Ormeau Bakery's recognition of her talents compensated for that disappointment to some extent. Her employers' opinion of her was very important to her and she constantly referred to the high esteem she had earned, even in the first job she undertook, which was in Thompson's confectionery firm in Belfast.

> [Anne] There were older people there who were doing it and they trained me and I was apparently pretty quick on the uptake and I think I was about sixteen and I was put into different [pause] I'm not talking about the Ormeau Bakery now, I'm talking about the first place I went, Thompsons. They put me into the different [pause] they'd beautiful big places in Belfast, one in Donegall Place, a big one in the Antrim Road and one on Anne Street and these different shop windows [pause] I was sitting fork dipping chocolates, white cap, white coat and everything. … So I had done all that before I went to the Ormeau Bakery so when I went to the Ormeau Bakery I was fully conversant. (24)

My findings in regard to the women's self of pride in their work is consistent with those of Alison Morrow, the majority of whose respondents cited job satisfaction as a

reason for working, even when financial necessity did not force them to do so. Of the single women who took part in her research, in particular, those at the higher end of the career scale expressed a sense of satisfaction in their work achievements, while those who remained in poorly paid clerical work regretted that they had wasted opportunities, and also remarked on their sense of having 'lost out' by not marrying.[92]

III Cost of Living and spending power

Few of the women remembered exactly what they had been paid; although they all agreed that while their wages were low, the cost of living was much lower then and money had a greater value. This is an interesting point because it came up so frequently in the interviews, but in fact it was not the case for the majority of the women who took part in the research, who were low paid and for whom basic necessities would have constituted a significant proportion of their weekly wages. Those women who got employment that might have been beyond their ambitions before the war, especially those who went to Britain to take up jobs directly related to the war effort, were adamant that the wartime conditions had secured them significantly higher pay than would otherwise have been the case.

The Trade Boards in Éire answered to the Minister of Industry and Commerce and changes in wage rates were only permitted under an Emergency Powers Order or a Bonus Order in extreme circumstances. The Wages Standstill Order of 1941 imposed a complete embargo on increases in some areas, despite the rise in the cost of living that resulted from shortages:

Table 3(1) Cost of Living Index 1939-1946 and Weekly Industrial Earnings Index 1939-1946

Year	Cost of Living	Weekly Earnings	Year	Cost of Living	Weekly Earnings	Year	Cost of Living	Weekly Earnings	Year	Cost of Living	Weekly Earnings
1939	192	48	1941	237	49	1943	294	52	1945	298	55
1940	214	48	1942	273	49	1944	296	54	1946	294	57

Source: *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Journal*, Vol. XXI No. 4, November 1946 and B.R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750-1970*, p.187.

There was a steady rise in the cost of living index from the pre-war level of 176 in 1938 (1914 = 100) up to 298 in 1945.[93] The index of weekly industrial earnings (based on money earnings per worker in manufacturing industries and transportable

[92] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, pp. 218-222.
[93] Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Journal, Vol. XXI No.4, November 1946.

goods) rose slightly, but was very much out of line with the rise in the cost of living.[94] When the Emergency Powers Orders (under which pay had been controlled during the Emergency) were repealed in September 1946, there was a steep rise in wages and salaries and by the end of 1948 the earnings index almost exactly equalled the cost of living index.[95]

Following the introduction of rationing in Northern Ireland in September 1939 the newspapers featured allegations of profiteering, and it was agreed that the Ministry of Food would place advertisements in the press giving the controlled prices of food as set out in the Emergency Powers Orders. There were some difficulties as regards the advertising, with complaints that only city newspapers carried the advertisements, putting people from rural areas at a disadvantage:

> As a matter of fact, the general attitude of the Ministry of Food to press advertisement is negative, as they have told me in the course of correspondence which I have had with them on the subject. They say that the Press is publishing from their Orders quite sufficient for the general guidance of the public. After the War itself, as I pointed out to press representatives who came to see me here the other day, food is supremely "news".[96]

The effect of this was to cause confusion for ordinary people, although it is clear from the following correspondence that those responsible for policy in the Ministry of Food in London were more concerned about the enormous logistical task they faced than they were about publicising food orders:

> I quite agree that it must be a matter of some difficulty for the "average housewife" to keep track of controlled retail prices. If it would be any consolation to her, you might tell her that it is not an easy matter for the Divisional Food Officer![97]

The cost of living index in Northern Ireland was not differentiated from the cost of living index for the rest of the United Kingdom, which was calculated from statistics compiled by the Ministry of Labour in Westminster. In these figures, the Indices for rent and rates in the Working Class Cost of Living Index did not rise significantly until 1947 which suggests that the housing shortage created by the

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[94] Mitchell, European Historical Statistics, p. 187.
[95] Irish Statistical Survey 1948-49, Stationery Office, Dublin. 1949, P. 9664.
[96] Letter from G.H. Parr, Divisional Food Officer, Belfast to W.D. Scott, Ministry of Commerce, Belfast, 5th October 1939. Northern Ireland Ministry of Commerce Files, Com/61/92, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.
[97] Ibid.

bombing raids on many areas of the United Kingdom, including Belfast, did not cause rent prices to rise, most likely because of the anti-profiteering measures adopted by the Ministry of War in London[98].

Table 3(2) **Cost of Living Index in the United Kingdom, 1938 – 1947. (All Items, 1914 = 100. Working Class Cost of Living Index for Food, Clothing, Fuel and Light, Rent and Rates, 1st September 1939 = 100)**

Year	All Items (WCCLI)	All Items (IRP)	Food (WCCLI)	Food (IRP)	Clothing (WCCLI)	Clothing (IRP)	Fuel and Light (WCCLI)	Fuel and Light (IRP)	Rent and Rates (WCCLI)
1938	156	173.3	102	159.3	100	225.8	99	181.3	99
1939	158	177.8	102	163.3	103	230.3	101	187.8	100
1940	184	205.3	119	183.3	137	288.3	115	235.0	101
1941	199	225.8	122	201.5	177	310.3	125	289.0	101
1942	200	250.0	117	222.5	192	346.5	129	321.0	101
1943	199	281.5	120	247.5	169	420.0	134	334.0	101
1944	201	295.0	122	261.5	166	442.4	141	336.5	101
1945	203	294.5	123	263.5	167	436.0	149	330.5	102
1946	203.5	290.5	122	263.0	166	425.5	152	308.3	103
1947	203	306.3	117	284.0	166	434.3	155	304.7	108

Source: B.R.Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics*. WCCLI = Working Class Cost of Living Index. IRP = Indices of Retail Prices.

Despite the very sharp rise in the cost of living index generally[99] in the course of the war, as illustrated in table 3(2), the fact that rationing reduced the social inequities in consumption acted as a boost to the poor and low paid, who had not enjoyed much purchasing power in the pre-war years.

The Census of Northern Ireland up to and including 1951 did not include rents in the information that was collected about the dwellings in which the population was living. In a survey of the health of a working class community conducted in 1939 in Lurgan[100], a town just outside Belfast, the author divided the families into groups determined by their incomes. As part of the study, he got information on the essential items of weekly expenditure for each family and rents ranged from 4s.3d. per week to 5s.3d. per week, but Dr. Deeny did not specify whether the dwellings were in public or private ownership. Unemployment Assistance rates included rent allowance but the Reports of the Unemployment Assistance Board do not give examples of the rents that were being paid, although the Report for 1938 refers to a random survey of

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[98] Prices of Goods Act 1939.
[99] Mitchell, International Historical Statistics 1750-1988, pp. 739-742.
[100] James Deeney, "Poverty as a Cause of Ill-Health" in Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, Vol. XVI, 1939-1940, pp. 75-89.

recipients of Assistance in Belfast showing an average rent per household of 6s.8d. per week[101]. Reports were not published during the war years and the first composite report, issued in 1946, did not refer to rent allowances.

Table 3(3) is based on the survey in the *Report of the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Class of the City of Dublin 1939-43* and illustrates the rent-paying capacity of a random sampling of the families surveyed. It shows that almost 30 per cent of the total had no income margin at all while another 25 per cent of the families had absolutely minimal levels of income over and above basic subsistence[102]. The survey covered 130,769 persons or 33,411 families, living in a variety of accommodation types, including Corporation cottages, and privately owned tenements. The *Report* recognised that many of families would be unable to afford even the economic rent set by the Corporation.

Table 3(3) Rent-paying capacity of 9,200 families of two persons or more taken at random from those surveyed in 1938 by the Corporation.

Number of Families	Percentage of total number	Margin for other purposes, including rent, after allowance for basic subsistence
2,755	29.95%	Nil
675	7.34%	5/-
788	8.57%	10/-
464	5.04%	15/-
487	5.29%	20/-
580	6.30%	25/-
500	5.43%	30/-
565	6.14%	35/-
439	4.77%	40/-
1,948	21.17%	Over 40/-
9,200	100.00%	

Source: *Report of the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Class of the City of Dublin 1939-43*, p. 257.

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[101] Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31st December 1938, Ministry of Labour, H.M.S.O., 1939, p.7.

[102] This was defined by the Corporation as the means to feed and clothe a family on the most frugal level. In "Tuberculosis: A Social Survey", Dr. Kidney referred to a discussion with Professor T.W.T. Dillon during which the latter said that the minimum income necessary for the purchase of necessities in 1943 would be at least 18/- per week per adult and 9/- per week per child. This would provide for adequate nutrition but just above starvation level, with a proportionate allowance for rent and other expenses. He suggested that this level was set following an international inquiry and was the standard of living of "Shanghai coolies". He thought that the income required to sustain this level at 1945 prices would be 21/- weekly for an adult and higher, at 23/- per week, for an adolescent in order to maintain healthy growth and development. Children under 15 were assessed at needing an average of 10/- per week and 5/- weekly for children under five years of age.

In Dublin, as in the rest of Éire, the shortage of basic essentials led to a rise in the cost of living during the Emergency, particularly in the early period between 1939 and 1941 when the absence of rationing arrangements increased the opportunities for exploitation of the need for scarce goods. In February 1940, the cost of living index number was five points (or three per cent) above that for November 1939 and 23 points (or thirteen per cent) above that for February 1939, which was "altogether attributable to war-time conditions".[103] Between August 1939 and August 1945, the cost of living index for food alone rose by 120 points or 70 per cent as indicated in Appendix 3(6).[104]

Appendix 3(7) compares the average cost of several basic but essential foodstuffs through the period from 1938 to 1945, derived from information collected in 120 towns, large and small, throughout Éire. Fresh milk, an essential for most people, but particularly for families with children, rose in price from 5¼d. per quart in November 1938 to 7½d. in November 1945. Potatoes, also an essential item for most families, rose in price from 9¾d. per pound in November 1938 to 1s. 9d. in November 1945. Tea was rationed, but that did not stop the price rising from 2s. 9d. for a pound of tea 'as used by wage-earning classes' in November 1938 to 4s. in November 1945.[105] The effect of the rising cost of basic necessities obviously had a greater impact on the low paid than on families with reasonable incomes. Given that women workers earned considerably less than their male counterparts in most industries the effect of rising costs on their wages was disproportionately greater. At the earliest stages of the Emergency, before there were any shortages of supply, the cost of such basic foodstuffs as eggs, butter, cheese, milk, bread, potatoes, tea and sugar could amount to as much as 45.65 per cent of a woman's weekly wage. Sheila's mother had her own methods of ensuring that her family was fed properly:

> [Sheila] She kept hens, she grew potatoes, she grew everything. She grew lettuce, we had apple trees, she was amazing in that way; and I mean we always had fresh eggs, so that we were quite well fed. Funny, I remember my sister, I remember Marie saying that, you know, when things were probably quite bad, that she remembers the actual slices of bread being rationed. Like, Mammy would butter the bread on the table and there were two slices each,

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[103] Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 1. Government Stationery Office, Dublin. March 1940, p. 14.
[104] Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin, Vol. XXI, No.1, March 1946, p. 36.
[105] Irish Trade Journal, Vols. XIV - XXI, March 1939 to March 1946.

but I don't remember that, I really don't. I must have been maybe sheltered, I don't know, but I don't remember that. (41)

Even for the average female wage as set by the Trade Boards under the Emergency Powers Orders, in November 1939 the essential food items represented 34.21 per cent of a weekly pay packet. This proportion had risen to 35.49 per cent by November 1944 for the average female worker and as high as 46.88 per cent for the lowest paid on the Trade Board scales. The cost of food may have represented a smaller proportion of the average male wages, but men were more likely than women to be supporting a family and 26.20 per cent of the lowest male Trade Board wage that was needed to buy the 'shopping basket' in November 1944 left very little for other essentials like rent, clothes and fuel. While the total cost of the food items rose by 27.97 per cent between November 1939 and November 1944, the average Trade Board wages rose by only 23.82 per cent for women and 24.61 per cent for men, while the increases were even smaller at the lowest end of the scale, at 14.29 per cent for men and 22.44 per cent for women.

Before the war the Northern Ireland government had accumulated reserves of coal and this allowed the Divisional Coal Officer some latitude in controlling retail prices. As in the case of food rationing, advisory committees were set up to oversee pricing and rationing so that coal merchants could not take advantage of the situation, although Moya Woodside thought the committees were unsuccessful:

> Coal prices have been on the up and up since before the war, and this morning I see the Northern Ireland Coal Owners Association are adding yet another 2/6 per ton, the reason given being increases in wages and in freight charges. This means that 1st and 2nd grade coal will now cost the frightful sum of 67/6 a ton – I'm perfectly sure the miners are getting little or no benefit. (23rd October 1940)

As shortages in a range of products became more widespread, shopping took up a great deal of the average woman's day as she had to search for everything, including items that were common before the war. This was difficult enough for the full-time housewife but must have been a nightmare for the woman who was also in employment outside the home, as Moya Woodside commented:

> One wastes so much time, running round from place to place, begging for ½ lb. of this and ¼ lb. of that, and mostly being told 'no'. Rationing, which of

course inevitable, does put one at the mercy of the shopkeepers so, who are in a position to grant or withhold scarce commodities and who know that this customer can't go elsewhere. (13th March 1940)

Various strategies were adopted for making better use of existing foods, as more and more items disappeared from the shelves. The newspapers were full of helpful hints for economies, many of them carrying columns headed 'For Women'[106] or some similar title which made it clear who had the responsibility for ensuring the nation's well-being despite the shortages. The language of many advertisements recognised the extra workload created for women by the war shortages; for example, in advertisements for tonics and indigestion remedies, with frequent references to 'times of extra work and strain'. The Ministry of Food produced a 'Food Facts' leaflet on a regular basis that suggested recipes for healthy eating. The fact that the restricted diet was healthier in many ways than traditional Ulster high-fat cooking was of little consolation:

> I am very much grieved at receiving my notice to only give one sixth of an ounce of butter to men for breakfast, tea etc. I enclose this quantity just to let you see the size of butter for a man's breakfast – and have some soldiers[107] who call in occasionally for these meals and I think it would be an insult to any man who was going out to fight for us and also fight for both King and Country the man who made this law has little faith in God and does not seem to know the 23 Psalm, The Lords my Shepherd I'll not want, if these men who make the laws of the land lived on the laws of God they would be a shepherd to the flock who have to go out when trained to meet and fight the enemy. I was told by a Belfast man on Saturday that he knew that lots of butter was stored up until stinked and then it had to be sold to the soap factorys. I'd like very much to know if this is true and perhaps you would find out and ever so much oblige.
> Signed Mollie Lee.
> P.S. Years ago I read a speech made by Miss Pankhurst I don't know if she is alive yet she was trying to get votes for women and in her speech she said I'd be willing to do six months in gaol to get sense boxed into men's heads.[108]

Butter rationing seems to have caused disagreements in the families of most of the women, whose experience was not unlike that described by Clare:

> [Clare] From the beginning, we were aware of shortages of certain foods. When rationing began, I expect it was a little later than 1939, we were given

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[106] This particular column appeared in the *Irish News* on a daily basis and it included items on making and mending clothes, recipes and household hints. The other main Belfast newspaper, the *NewsLetter*, carried a column called 'Mainly for Women', which covered gossip from 'Mayfair' and the British Court.

[107] Soldiers got 3 ½ times the civilian ration of butter.

[108] Letter from Mollie Lee, Owner of Lee's Temperance Hotel, Coleraine to Lord Craigavon, October 1939. P.R.O.N.I. COM/61/182.

> our portion of butter and there were many rows in my house because I managed to keep it for a week, unless it was stolen on me. My brother reminded me of this recently. … I had a friend who was a girl with two brothers and in her family, as rationing went on, the brothers were given the butter that came to the household, and she got beef dripping. Now she grew to be a beautiful girl so obviously it didn't do her any harm but I think she resented it or she wouldn't have ever mentioned it. (5)

Like the family mentioned by Clare, Susan's landlady in Belfast clearly did not understand the basis of the rationing system and the intention to equalise access to scarce commodities:

> [Susan] I was in lodging with an elderly lady who didn't really understand much about rationing. She thought that if the food was there she would take it. I had to share her larder and one day I came home from work [pause] well, I don't think we got much butter at all but we had marg, and I had my marg ration in the larder and when I came home from work that evening there was 1s/6d there or something instead of the marg and a little note from her saying 'I have taken your marg. (79)

The rationing system recognised that some people had special needs and children under five, pregnant women and nursing mothers had one pint of milk daily and twice the normal ration of eggs. They also had first choice of any fruit. Cod liver oil, fruit juices and vitamin supplements were also allocated to expectant mothers and children under five.[109] As food became scarcer, prices rose so that even if essential items, such as fruit, became available, they were out of the reach of women on low incomes:

> At usual weekly case committee of Welfare Society. Case after case asking for 'extra nourishment', 'clothing for the children'. Local U.A.B. and P.A.'s scales of relief make it impossible for people to provide even the barest of minimum diets (£2.2s.0d for a family of 11 was one sample) and clothing replacements are almost out of the question. In this war, the very poor will suffer the worst. (29th November 1940)

The Southern government also made special provision for pregnant women and young children.

Throughout her diary, Moya Woodside referred to the prices of individual items of food and she wondered often who could actually afford to pay for them, even though she herself seems to have enjoyed a reasonably good income. She noted that

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[109] Ministry of Health, On the State of the Public Health during six years of War. Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, 1939-45. H.M.S.O. 1946.

the shortages had the further effect of closing down small businesses like groceries and fruit shops, whose trade was cut back to such an extent they could no longer afford to stay open.

> The debacle begins! A neighbourhood fruit shop, which previously did a thriving trade, is closed down this morning. That means at least 4 assistants thrown out of work. Commenting on this when paying a bill in the diary, I heard that 2 more fruit shops nearby were rumoured to be closing. (31st December 1940)

The majority of the shop assistants in these businesses were women. The Ministry of Food did make efforts to maintain profit margins for food retailers and in virtually every case, the margins allowed under the various price orders for food were slightly in excess of the profit levels before the war. The Ministry of Food (Defence Plans) Department in London made a comprehensive series of orders during the period from the end of August to early October 1939 in which control was assumed over the sale of virtually every form of foodstuff. In Dublin, Clare's mother's small grocery shop was also forced to close because of the scarcity of goods to sell:

> (Clare) … it was a very bad time because of the rationing. I remember seeing what they called 'penny packets' of tea, where people would just buy enough tea to do maybe the husband and the wife and they would ask for [pause] they couldn't ask for 'best butter' as we called it, they would have to take margarine mostly. It was not a good time to own a shop, a small shop. … In the area where the second shop was – we had a second shop afterwards – it was a poor area where they lived from hand to mouth, with just buying per meal. (9 and 11)

In Northern Ireland, rationing of essential items was introduced at a very early stage of the war, subject to regulation and control by the Westminster government. The cost of living was measured for the whole of the United Kingdom and there was no separate indexation for Northern Ireland, so that the statistics are of no assistance in analysing the impact of the war on the cost of food, clothing, fuel, light and rent and rates in Belfast or in the province as a whole. Although the Cost of Living Index rose quite sharply in the course of the war, wages kept pace with the rises and working-class women benefited from the price controls on essential goods, since luxury items had always been beyond their means in any case. In the South, although shortages of essential goods were experienced very early in the Emergency, rationing was not introduced until 1941 and in the meantime, the cost of living rose very significantly. In contrast to the situation in Northern Ireland, wages did not keep pace

with inflation and a 'shopping basket' of typical essential goods represented an increasing proportion of the average wage as the Emergency continued. This was particularly true for women workers, whose wages were so much less than those of their male colleagues.

IV Conclusion

Access to formal education in Ireland during the years of the Second World War was mainly governed by family income. While working class girls were much less likely than middle class girls to be in a position to continue into secondary school, even when scholarships were on offer, financial constraint was relative and the testimony of the women interviewed for this research suggests that it was their gender that tended to be the final arbiter in family decisions about continuing education. A boy was expected to be entering into a lifetime's wage earning, while girls would marry and have a man to take care of them. The fact that this expectation was undermined by the personal experience of many of the families concerned, for various reasons, did not cause them to question official policies that were also based on the premise that if educational opportunity was available but restricted, then it was better offered to a boy.

Official education policy in both Northern Ireland and Éire, as it was manifested in primary and secondary school curricula, also emphasised the gender stereotypes that prevailed. Domestic skills like cookery and sewing were seen as essential subjects for girls, while boys learned to do wood and metal work. In the purely academic area, girls were steered towards less demanding levels of mathematics and were generally denied access to science subjects. The consequence of this was that girls were much more restricted in the range of employment opportunities open to them on leaving school than boys.

While the Census of Population in Éire allows some conclusions to be reached about women's paid employment in Dublin in the 1930s and 1940s, the scarcity of statistical data on the employment of women workers in Belfast during that period makes it difficult to make similar definitive statements about the position there. The 1937 Northern Ireland Census Reports do not explain why the industrial and

occupational data was not collected. Given that most accounts of the immediate pre-war years agree that the Northern Ireland government was reluctant to admit to the likely imminence of war, it was not the case that preparation for war distracted officials from normal administrative concerns.

It seems from the limited evidence available about women workers in Northern Ireland that their entry to a narrow range of occupations was not as dramatically altered by the war as was the case in the United Kingdom, although some women did find employment in previously all-male preserves, such as engineering. Women workers in Belfast and Northern Ireland were subject to the same institutionalised pay inequality as women in Dublin and the rest of Éire and the war did not change this situation. Even when women did secure pay rises, so did men so the gap between their respective scales remained equidistant from before the war until well after it ended. Many of the social conditions in Belfast which blighted poorer women's lives up to the 1940s were altered by the implementation of post-war welfare measures in Northern Ireland but there is no evidence that women were consulted about the nature of those measures or that they were expected to be involved in their administration. Whereas the government in Éire had a determined policy to promote the domestic role of women, the Northern government does not seem to have even considered the issue or to have concerned themselves with the possible future implications of involving women in war work as the London government was forced to do.

The extracts from the interviews that have been reproduced in this chapter illustrate very clearly that the memory process depends on individual comprehension and whether the interviewee is really interested in the questions being asked. What someone remembers can be a good indicator of what has been most important to that person over time. The women who took part in this project, regardless of social or economic background, in Dublin and Belfast, recalled their experience of workplaces during the Second World War period much more clearly if their work was the primary criteria by which they defined themselves. Women who thought of their lives mainly in terms of their experience outside the workplace, usually as wives and mothers in the home, were much more vague about their working terms and

conditions and were much less likely to have considered responses to questions about their own or society's attitude to women as workers.

While it is clear that the women were aware that there was gender discrimination in terms of pay and conditions, this is not something that concerned them very much at the time they are recalling or that is of much more than peripheral interest now. Work was seen primarily as a means of increasing the family income and so long as the work was available, that was the defining criteria for their assessment of it. The recurrent theme in most of the women's recollections of their entry into their various workplaces is of satisfaction about securing a job and earning a wage that would allow them to keep themselves and contribute to the family income. None of them could remember being conscious of the limitations that were placed on them in the workplace simply because they were women. They say that in later years they came to understand that they had been discriminated against, although they dismissed it 'as the way things were'.

The women's sense of self worth was linked to their capacity to earn, although most of them had considerable pride in the high standard of their work, which they pointed out often exceeded the demands of their employers. It may be that emphasising the extra value they provided vindicated them when society generally undervalued the work they were doing, not least because low pay was associated with low status. It is also important to note that most of them agree that even if they had been conscious of structural gender discrimination in the workplace, due to the exigencies of the period they would have been much less concerned to do something about it than simply getting on with the task at hand.

Chapter 4

New opportunities for women?

Irish women's employment in Britain during the war years

One of the recurring themes of research into women's recollections of the Second World War in Britain and other Allied states is the extent to which many women welcomed the fact that their services would be needed in areas from which they were usually excluded, like the armed forces or such 'male only' preserves as engineering works.[1] Women's recognition that they were necessary to the war effort was combined with the belief that the exigencies of the situation would create new opportunities for them to break out of the strictures of the domestic role usually assigned to them. This chapter will examine the stories of some Irish women who left their homes to travel to Britain during the war years, as well as the question of whether the experience was a liberating one for them in terms of access to opportunities that were usually denied them because of their gender. It will also look at recent research about the experience of Irish women who migrated to Britain, focussing on the years 1939 to 1945, as well as other available information about emigration from Ireland to Britain during the Second World War.

The suggestion that the social and economic conditions created by the war could change the status of women in society echoed similar claims made during the First World War. Despite the fact that in the inter-war years women had largely been discouraged by legal and social barriers from involvement in the workplace outside the home and that inequality in terms of pay, conditions and welfare rights was institutionalised, the linking of war work and liberation was used as an incentive in national recruitment campaigns in Britain to encourage women to volunteer for the armed forces or for civilian war work. It became possible for young women whose working lives had been strictly controlled by their parents or family circumstances to

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[1] Penny Summerfield, *'My dress for an Army Uniform': Gender Instabilities in the Two World Wars.* An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lancaster on 30th April 1997; Dorothy Sheridan, "Ambivalent Memories: Women in the 1939-45 War in Britain" in *Oral History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1990, pp. 32-39; Caroline Lang, *Keep Smiling Through. Women in the Second World War.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989; Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s*. Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1982; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations and the status of women during World War II.* Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1981; Mavis Nicholson, *What did you do in the war, Mummy? Women in World War II.* Chatto and Windus, London, 1995.

find new roles for themselves, with the justification of their country's necessity to support them. While the debate about the liberating potential of the war still continues, Mass-Observation archivist Dorothy Sheridan has drawn attention to a very important point in this regard, that is equally applicable to any aspect of the impact of the war on women's lives:

> An important element has tended to be overlooked in the debate – the extent to which women themselves made deliberate and informed choices about how they contributed to the war effort. It is essential to acknowledge the ranges of experience which result from differences of class, age or even temperament in order to avoid characterising women's experience as if it were homogenous.[2]

I Reasons for leaving

Emigrants from Ireland seem to have moved primarily to better themselves economically, both before and during the war years, with the majority heading for employment in Britain's industrial areas[3]. In the conclusion to Enda Delaney's exploration of Irish emigration to Britain in the twentieth century, he recommended that further studies using oral testimony and documentary sources should begin so that questions about the Irish emigrant experience in Britain can be answered 'with any degree of certainty'. Sharon Lambert's book about the emigrant experience of Irish women in Lancashire contributes significantly to the field of enquiry suggested by Delaney. The effect that emigration had on people's lives in personal terms, particularly on their relationships with the families they left behind, have mainly been left out of the study of the Irish emigrant experience. The themes of Lambert's book were selected from the priority accorded to them by the women whom she interviewed, thereby identifying the influence of family and religion as being the most important factors shaping their lives, both before and after they migrated from Ireland to Britain. The women who were interviewed about their wartime emigrant experiences for this thesis also indicated that family influence was a significant element in how they usually made decisions about their lives, but in this regard, with one exception, they chose to go to England themselves. For Lambert's interviewees, while economic necessity was the most common reason for the initial decision to leave, obligations to the family most often outweighed individual choice, whether it

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[2] Dorothy Sheridan, "Ambivalent Memories: Women and the 1939-45 War in Britain" in *Oral History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1990, pp. 32-39.

[3] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society. Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000 and Sharon Lambert, *Irish Women in Lancashire 1922-1960: Their Story*. Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 2001.

was sparing their family the need to keep them, leaving in order to make money to send for younger siblings or even to spare families the shame of an unwedded pregnancy. Most frequently, arrangements for accommodation and employment were made within family networks. Lambert rejected the idea that use of the word 'emigrant' is both politically and emotionally loaded and insists that the more neutral term 'migrant' would only be relevant if she were discussing the movement between Northern Ireland and Éire, whereas the movement from either part of Ireland to the British mainland can properly be referred to as 'emigration'. Lambert also points out that the women interviewees referred to themselves as 'emigrants' and the term has been used in that sense in this thesis.

During the period 1921 to 1939, the successive governments of the Irish Free State and Éire had paid little attention to emigration[4], but during the Second World War, both the Irish and the British governments introduced regulatory controls, which were abandoned after 1945. As a means of monitoring emigration, passengers to Britain from Éire were required to obtain travel permits and these were not issued to anyone who already had a job in Ireland or who had left their employment voluntarily. Restrictions were placed on persons with skills considered essential for the Irish state, including turf cutters and those occupied in food production. Intending emigrants had to apply for travel identity cards through the Garda Síochána. They had to supply a certificate from the Department of Social Welfare, which stated that they were exempt from emigration restrictions and their application had to be accompanied by a written offer of employment in Britain[5]. A number of regulations were introduced in the course of the summer and autumn of 1941 specifically to control the flow of emigration from Ireland to Britain, including the requirement that anyone applying for a travel permit had to be over twenty-two years of age. The role of recruitment agents for British employers was curtailed because their overt activities had caused some public outcry and the censor was instructed to ensure that no advertisements that offered employment outside the country appeared in the national press.[6] From 1940 to 1945, Irish workers going to Britain were classified as

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[4] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*.
[5] Tracey Connolly, "Irish Workers in Britain during World War Two" in Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts (Eds.), *Ireland and the Second World War. Politics, Society and Remembrance*. Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000, pp. 121-132.
[6] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 120.

'conditionally landed', as described by James Wolf in a very useful article on the subject.[7] This term implied that Irish workers were excluded from conscription if they returned home after two years. When the British National Service Acts were passed in June 1939, men living in Britain for longer than two years were treated as 'permanent' residents and consequently liable for conscription. However, Irish citizens who could prove that their residence in Britain was of a 'temporary' nature were specifically excluded from military service. In practice, throughout the course of the war, Irish emigrants who came to Britain were regarded as 'temporary' and therefore not subject to conscription. Presumably, persons who were resident in Britain for longer than two years prior to the outbreak of the war and who did not return were willing to take their chances as regards conscription. However, any Irish citizen living in Britain who was called up for service could return home, and somewhat later, in 1941, an assurance was given by the British authorities that this would remain the case.

Table 4(1) shows that in 1939 about twice as many travellers went to Northern Ireland from Éire as were going to Britain, and these proportions were roughly the same for inward traffic to Éire from both destinations - this information is outlined in greater detail in Appendix 4(1).

Table 4(1) Percentage of Passengers Leaving/Arriving from Éire by Sea, Rail, Road (bus) and Air 1939 – 1946

Year	Outwards to Britain	Outwards to Northern Ireland	Outwards All other destinations	Inwards from Britain	Inwards from Northern Ireland	Inwards All departure points
1939	32.68	66.55	0.77	32.55	63.78	3.67
1940	10.34	89.29	0.37	11.40	88.60	0.00
1941	10.07	89.86	0.07	8.81	91.12	0.06
1942	11.76	88.03	0.22	10.36	89.27	0.36
1943	13.03	86.73	0.24	11.69	87.96	0.35
1944	8.81	90.99	0.20	8.86	90.88	0.26
1945	15.30	84.33	0.37	15.02	84.67	0.31
1946	25.57	74.40	0.33	22.46	74.15	3.39

Source: *Ireland Statistical Abstract 1939-1946.*

The outward traffic to destinations other than Northern Ireland or Britain was negligible and only 3.67 per cent of all inward traffic came from other departure points. There was a significant change to this pattern in 1940, when traffic to Britain

[7] James B. Wolf, "Withholding their due. The Dispute between Ireland and Great Britain over Unemployed Insurance Payments to Conditionally Landed Irish Wartime Volunteer Workers" in *Saothar 21*, 1996, pp. 39-46.

dropped by seventy eight per cent, reflecting the involvement of both states in the regulation of emigration and the requirement for identity cards and permits. The change in the pattern of travel to Northern Ireland was not as dramatic, but still registered a drop of seven per cent. Similarly, the number of people travelling to Éire from Britain dropped by seventy six per cent and by six per cent from Northern Ireland. Travellers from all other departure points were so few as to barely register statistically, with a total of forty-four in 1940, less than 0.01 per cent. The pattern remained consistent between 1941 and 1943 until the lowest number of passengers going from Éire to Britain was registered in 1944, with only 8.81 per cent of the total traffic, compared to 90.99 per cent going to Northern Ireland. In 1945 the gap narrowed between the numbers between Britain and Northern Ireland and Éire, with 15.30 per cent and 84.33 per cent of outward traffic respectively and 15.02 per cent and 84.67 per cent travelling from Britain and Northern Ireland to the South. By 1946, the difference had decreased even further but for the first time since the beginning of the war there was a rise in the number of travellers entering Éire from departure points other than Britain and Northern Ireland, amounting to 3.39 per cent of the total traffic.

Female emigration from Ireland was strictly controlled and limited throughout the war years, according to the Department of External Affairs.[8] The Westminster government maintained records relating to wartime travel to and from Northern Ireland and they did not differentiate between Northern and Southern Irish passengers. It is therefore not possible to ascertain exact figures for Northern Irish women who emigrated during the war, although John Blake maintained that more than 7,500 Northern Irish women transferred to war work in mainland Britain.[9] According to the Ministry of Labour briefings prepared for Blake when he was writing his history of the war, the peak year for transfer of women appears to have been 1942, when there were 2,536 work placements in Britain.[10] The Ministry of Commerce questioned the policy of encouraging women to leave home for training in Britain for fear that they

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[8] Tracey Connolly, "Irish Workers in Britain during World War Two" in Girvin and Roberts (Eds.), *Ireland and the Second World War. Politics, Society and Remembrance.*, pp. 121-132.
[9] John Blake, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*. HMSO, Belfast, 1956, p. 340.
[10] Quoted in Alison Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland 1920-1950*. Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Ulster at Coleraine, 1995, p. 105.

would not return to Northern Ireland and that the new industries developing there would be left short of workers.

As employment opportunities decreased in the South, mainly due to the rationing of raw materials for industry, greater numbers of workers, both male and female, went to Northern Ireland and Britain to take advantage of the need for personnel to service the war industries. Appendix 4(2) classifies the numbers of passengers migrating from Éire to Britain by sex, showing the very high proportion of residents from Dublin in the total number of travellers. Diarmaid Ferriter says that Dublin County Borough had the second-highest rate of emigration (72 per 1,000) in the years 1940-43, surpassed only by County Mayo.[11] The large number of travellers from Dublin may have been because of easier access to transport but is also likely to have been due to the greater impact on industrial employment caused by wartime shortages of raw materials. Letty had worked in a sewing factory in Dublin since leaving school at fourteen and she was one of the casualties of the shortage of raw materials:

> [Letty] We were laid off, yes, there was no material coming in, you see, there was nothing coming in. Everything was stopped. You see, the people that didn't live through it, they don't know how bad it was. (47)

She applied for unemployment benefit but the weekly payment rate was so low that she felt unable to manage on it. The Labour Exchange in Dublin offered her an alternative:

> [Letty] I went with a couple of other girls I was working with. I think a whole lot of us, like we were only in our twenties when we went. And we said there's no sign of this war being over so we had better go and do something, you know? There was no work and you only had about 12s. a week coming off the Labour - that was the money at the time. And my goodness, sure you'd give that up to your mother so you'd no money left, like, you know? And so I decided to sign up and some others, you know the way the word goes round, and they took our names and so we were signed on. (72)

One of the most unpleasant aspects of the emigration experience was the delousing procedure that was performed in Dublin, introduced because of unease in Britain about the spread of infectious diseases. A health embarkation scheme was reluctantly

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[11] Ferriter cited Gerard Fee, *The Effects of World War II on Dublin's low income families*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College Dublin, 1996, for this information. (Diarmaid Ferriter. *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000.* Profile Books, London, 2004.)

set up by the government at the Iveagh Baths in Dublin, where prospective emigrants were examined and certified before leaving for Britain.[12]

Letty and several of her friends were sent to a munitions factory in Reading[13]. They were accommodated in a hostel, which she described as being extremely comfortable, with every convenience. She was happy enough with the job she was given, even though it was quite dangerous, involving packing explosive into shells. Alison Morrow interviewed a woman from York Street in Belfast, who went to work in a Royal Ordnance Factory in Britain, after her one year old baby had died. She had to get her husband's written permission to go, which he refused, even though he was away at sea for long periods with the Royal Navy. Mrs. Barclay was undaunted and forged his signature on her application form. Her job was like Letty's, putting explosive powder into shells but she was less fortunate and accidentally got some of the powder in her eyes. She was forced to wear dark glasses for the rest of her life, being unable to tolerate bright light.[14]

Letty did not remember any of her fellow workers complaining, in contrast to the experience of an Assistant Welfare Officer who was responsible for helping Irish women settle in to a factory in Aston, near Birmingham, which was the subject of a Mass-Observation investigation in July 1942[15]:

> So much of my work is smoothing the girls down when they first come. They're not told that it's heavy dirty work when they're in Ireland – it's left to me to deal with smoothing that down at this end.[16]

In *Across the Water, Irish Women's Lives in Britain*[17] there is an account by a Cork woman, Noreen Hill, of how she left her home city in 1945 because she could not get work. She was recruited for British war work in Leicester through the local labour exchange and she recalled the regulations governing her work permit:

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 383.
[13] Reading is noted as the county town of Berkshire, with a history as a settlement that stretches back more than 2,000 years. (Philip Llewellin and Ann Saunders (Eds.), *AA Book of British Towns*. Drive Publications Limited, London, 1982, p. 334.)
[14] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, p. 105.
[15] Dorothy Sheridan (Ed.), *Wartime Women. A Mass-Observation Anthology 1937-45*. Phoenix Press, London, 1990.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 168.
[17] Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam and Joanne O'Brien (Eds.), *Across the Water. Irish Women's Lives in Britain*, Virago, London, 1988.

> We were able to move freely, but when you changed your address you had to report to the police. You were alien, because our country was neutral and we were under suspicion actually, we were aliens in a country that was at war with Germany. In the police station there was two sides – Alien Visitors, Residents. So we had to go in the Alien door. And if you changed your job or changed your address you had to report to the police straight away.[18]

Nancy remembered having to report to the police in this way although she only did it when she was coming home to Ireland on holiday. Frances moved several times in the course of the war but she had almost forgotten about the registration requirements:

> [Frances] I think it was every six weeks, with my identity card, and if you moved out of the area you had to go and tell them. I forgot that part. And of course, you carried the gas mask everywhere with you. … She [Frances's mother] got the job and I think she must have taken me over to the British embassy, I think it was in Merrion Square, she took me over there but there was no passport. I have my birth certificate somewhere and on the back it has an oval stamp, 1 September 1941 and that was the entry thing to cover me. (58 and 62)

Frances was in England because her mother had decided that her daughter was very badly behaved and needed discipline:

> [Frances] … and the reason that I went so meek and mildly was that you did what you were told by parents in those days and in a way, because my mother and I, we didn't really get on, because as I say, I was a bit cheeky growing up, mouthy, and in a way I was glad to get away from her. (29)

Frances's mother answered an advertisement in one of the Catholic newspapers[19] looking for domestic help and she arranged to send Frances to Birmingham to work in a convent school, despite her young age. She had not expected to be staying in school but had never thought of leaving Dublin until her mother sent her away:

> [Frances] I was fifteen on the 1st August and I came to England on the 1st September and I didn't even have to have a passport, because I wasn't sixteen. My birth certificate was stamped at the emigration entry at Holyhead. (7)

In an extract from a Department of External Affairs memorandum written in 1944, it was noted that there was 'deep public uneasiness at the number of young girls in the

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[18] *Ibid*, pp. 94-95.

[19] Frances's mother was very religious and although she was sending her away in wartime, she was concerned that her daughter's religious practices should be observed. Consequently, she only looked in the Catholic newspapers for job advertisements. Frances thought it was *The Universe* where her mother found the notice that a woman living in Dublin would be interviewing for the position in Birmingham. *The Universe* was a weekly Catholic newspaper, which came out on Sundays. It had been founded in 1860 and in the 1940s it was distributed from the publishers' premises in Manchester.

late teens and early twenties who are being allowed to leave the country'.[20] The same memorandum noted that the rate of emigration was heavier in women aged less than twenty-two years of age than over it:

> We have had cases of Irish girls being sent back to this country by the British police on the ground that they were too young and immature to be away from home! The taking of employment in Britain by young girls of 18 and 19 may be justifiable on other grounds, but it is certainly not good for the girls themselves and, in many cases, it is very humiliating for the country.[21]

The only money Frances had with her was five shillings that her father had given her and which he told her much later in life he had obtained by breaking open the gas meter in the family home. Frances's mother had arranged for a cousin to meet her at the train station in Birmingham and bring her to the convent but the plan went awry:

> [Frances] I hadn't seen him for years and we missed each other. I was stood there for the longest time and eventually came out [of the station]. It was wartime, there was a blackout and I asked people how to get to St. Bernard's Road and I had to get a bus to Acocks Green[22] in the dark, with my gas mask and the big case and a Ministry of Works label on my coat. I eventually got to St. Bernard's Road and I walked up this long, dark road and I came to a police station. I went into the police station and asked them where the convent was. There was a policeman behind the desk and there was another gentleman outside the desk. I don't know to this day if he was a policeman but he said I'm going that way, I'll give her a lift. I was delighted to get rid of the load of the case. He was a decent man. He took me up to the convent gate which was about five minutes away and he said don't ring the bell until I'm gone and I did ring the bell. This was half past ten at night and I'd left Dublin that morning at half six. (7)

Frances's mother's failure to ensure that her daughter would be safe in another country, especially one in a state of war, was consistent with the attitude of the Irish government to the welfare of female emigrants. Despite the repeatedly expressed alarm concerning the moral dangers for female emigrants, Lindsay Earner-Byrne found that the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau was given no state aid or municipal grant by the Irish government to support their work in Britain.[23]

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[20] Department of External Affairs memorandum on new proposals regarding restrictions on travel permit issues to workers [9th May 1944], p. 4 (written by J.P. Walshe, Secretary of the Department) quoted in Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 134 and in Lindsay Earner-Byrne, "The Boat to England: An Analysis of the Official Reactions to the Emigration of Single Expectant Irishwomen to Britain, 1022-1972" in *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. XXX, 2003, pp. 52-70.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Acocks Green was named after the Acocks family who built a large house in the area in the 18th century. Originally a village, it was connected by rail to Birmingham in the 19th century and was gradually subsumed into the city suburbs. (Oliver Mason (Ed.), *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain*, Bartholomew & Son, Edinburgh, 1977, p. 2.)

[23] Earner-Byrne, "The Boat to England: An Analysis of the Official Reactions to the Emigration of Single Expectant Irishwomen to Britain, 1022-1972", p. 65.

Kathleen was living in Portstewart in County Londonderry when she first met her husband. He was in the British army and was based in an army camp near the town. They met in a W.V.S.[24] canteen and were married at the end of January 1941. Her sister also met her husband at the same canteen. Kathleen and her husband could only have a weekend for their honeymoon because he could not get a longer pass. Shortly afterwards, he was told he was being posted back to England to train for going to Europe, and he asked Kathleen to move over there and to stay with his family in Berkshire. She went to live in the village of Cookham[25] with her parents-in-law and her sister-in-law. Her sister and her husband were based in Reading, which was only about twenty-five miles from Cookham so they were able to see each other occasionally. Kathleen's brother-in-law was also in the army. Kathleen's father-in-law had recently retired from the police force. When the war started, he had become a night watchman at a nearby factory where secret war work was going on:

> [Kathleen] He was on nights, which was a great strain for my mother-in-law because of the dog barking and the least little thing that woke him up during the day. So we all had to [pause] we were all under a bit of a strain trying to keep quiet. At weekends, he used to go in so we were able to let go a bit at the weekend [both laugh]. We used to do the housework when he went [laughs]. He was a lovely man but he just had to sleep. That's right, we couldn't let the dog bark or anything. (43)

Kathleen and her mother-in-law shared the household chores. They got most of their vegetables from their vegetable garden, which was cultivated by her father-in-law. He supplemented their meat allowance with rabbits that he hunted and caught himself.

When Kathleen registered for work with the Ministry of Labour she was given a choice of working as a bus conductor or going into a factory, neither of which appealed to her very much. She felt fortunate that her father-in-law knew somebody in a concern in Maidenhead[26] where a small light industry had been set up and she was given a job there:

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[24] The Womens' Volunteer Service ran canteens for the troops as part of their war work.

[25] Cookham was actually comprised of three villages; the main one was Cookham and within a mile on either side on the London road were Cookham Rise and Cookham Dean. Cookham is a riverside resort on the River Thames, three/four kilometres north of Maidenhead. (Mason, *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain*, p. 61.)

[26] Maidenhead was the most industrialised town in the area of Berkshire nearest to Cookham. In Edwardian times it was considered to be a favourite spot for the 'fun-loving younger generation', although the old town had been encircled by modern development by the time the Second World War started. (Llewellin and Saunders, *AA Book of British Towns*, p. 277.)

> [Kathleen] … actually it was attached to a very, sort of high-class jewellers. Queen Mary used to come down and shop there, the old Queen Mary. So they set up a small light industry. It was doing meters for aircraft. … They were very nice there. What they did [pause] they did it to keep their staff, more or less, because they had very skilled people. It was mainly I think to keep the staff, the men, so that the men who were older didn't have to go to war. (7 and 11)

Kathleen's job was to check the setting of the meters at the end of the construction process. She inspected them and made sure that they were balanced correctly. It was quite a responsible job because the next stage was installation of the meter in the aircraft. The planes were outfitted at a small airfield close to Maidenhead, which she remembered as the Ferries Field. She believed that Amy Johnson[27] had flown from the airfield while serving in the Air Transport Auxiliary. In the early days of the war, female pilots were allowed only to ferry planes from the factory to airstrips and there was even hostility to this 'concession', regardless of the women's experience. However, as the war continued more women were permitted to fly further because male pilots were needed for combat duties:

> To be actually allowed to fly brand-new planes before even the RAF got their hands on them was beyond one's wildest dreams. It was give years of absolute bliss.[28]

It was while she was flying such a delivery run that Amy Johnson was forced to bail out over the Thames Estuary, where she was drowned.

In wartime, the nursing profession allowed women to get close to the action without arousing any misgivings about their suitability as combatants. Entry to nursing in Ireland had to be paid for by the applicants or their families, and this forced many women from both parts of Ireland to go to Britain for training. There was a shortage of trainee nurses in Britain from the late 1930s onwards and young Irish women were welcomed.[29] Nancy's parents had sent her to a secretarial college when she finished her secondary education, but she did not want to pursue a career in administration:

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[27] Amy Johnson (1903-1941) was a pioneer aviator, born in Hull, in North East England. She was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia in 1930 and to Japan via Siberia in 1931. She also set a record for the first female solo flight to Cape Town in 1932. She became a pilot in the Air Transport Auxiliary during the Second World War and was working in that capacity when she was killed in 1941. (David Crystal (Ed.), *The Cambridge Biographical Encyclopaedia*, Cambridge University Press, (Second Edition), Cambridge, 1998, p. 498.)
[28] Woman pilot, quoted in Peter Lewis, *A People's War*, Thames Methuen, London, 1986, p. 140.
[29] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 135.

> [Nancy] Well, my mother was absolutely appalled when I went home and said that I wasn't going back, nobody had ever said anything like that in our house before, and she said well I'll have to speak to your father. You'd think my father was somewhere else, the way she said it, but she came good; she came back when she had had the discussion with my father. She came back and she said he said you can go and do the nursing and you can go to England, if you want, which I thought was very good of her. … My mother didn't say I couldn't do it but she was so flabbergasted that I think her way out for the time being was to say, well I'll have to talk to your father. (13 and 15)

Nancy's mother wanted her to train in a Catholic hospital and so she applied to several in London. After waiting some weeks, the only response she had received was a suggestion that she wait until the war was over. Not being willing to wait indefinitely, she went to the head of her secretarial college, Miss Regan, for information about other training hospitals in England. Miss Regan suggested that Nancy should apply to the Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham and in the summer of 1943, she was accepted there as a student nurse and she took the mail boat to Holyhead:

> [Nancy] We had to wear our life jackets all the way over, because of the possibility of being bombed from underneath[30], and then by train. (29)

When Olive completed her training as a nurse in Dublin, she got engaged to be married, but because of the couple's financial position, they could not afford to buy a home and they decided to wait for a year or two before the wedding. In any case, if she had got married straight away, because of the marriage bar on hospital nurses at the time, the only work available to her would have been to go in to private nursing[31], which did not appeal to her. She decided to go to England where she could get further specialist training as a nurse:

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[30] Nancy was referring to the danger of torpedo attack by German U-boats. Although significant numbers of British merchant vessels were sunk in British coastal waters in the early stages of the war (from September 1949 to March 1941), by 1943, the U-boat fleet had moved its operations into the North Sea and the Atlantic waters south of Ireland, rather than being anywhere near the Irish Sea. Although the U-boats again operated in British coastal waters in the final months of the war, by that time the numbers of Allied naval vessels so outnumbered the German fleet that the average life of a U-boat and its crew had shrunk to three months. (John Keegan, *The Second World War*. Hutchinson, London, 1989, pp. 105-123, "The Battle of the Atlantic".)

[31] This meant working as a temporary nurse for a nursing agency. Olive could have found herself nursing just one patient or being moved around on a regular basis, neither being a prospect that appealed to her, not least because agencies at that time demanded very long working hours from their employees.

> [Olive] Anyway, I went off to England to an RAF hospital to do plastic surgery, down in Sussex[32], and I had a great time there for a year and a half. They had all these RAF pilots who'd been terribly badly burned and wonderful plastic surgery. At that time, there was no plastic surgery in Ireland. … it was a very exciting place after the parochialism of the Irish hospital. … But I was terrified going there. I went on my own. I was supposed to go with a friend and she discovered she couldn't leave her boyfriend so I had to sally off to the unknown over there and when you've got a qualification, your first job is quite a [pause] of course, the *Nursing Times* then was that thick with 'jobs vacant', you could pick and choose wherever you wanted to go, they were all dying for us.[33] And I went over and I was even quaking in my shoes and I realised that my training was more than adequate for me to do this course. I'd never been anywhere but my own training school and I really had a great year, almost two years there and really enjoyed it very much. (185, 187 and 189)

The hospital had originally been a cottage hospital before the war but after the Battle of Britain there was so much need for a specialist burns unit that it was expanded on a very large scale. A New Zealander, Sir Archibold McIndoe, ran the hospital[34] but the American and the Canadian governments had also contributed new wards and this further emphasised the cosmopolitan nature of the operation. Olive was chastened by the numbers of men who were still in need of the major surgical treatment that was being developed in the hospital, even as late as 1946 and 1947:

> [Olive] Most of them had twenty or thirty operations by the time they got there, because they were in the Battle of Britain, which was 1940, I suppose, and they were still coming back and you know, a lot of them, their faces were burnt and they had remade their faces and they were coming back to get grafts over years and years. I still look at the Cenotaph every year and I see the Guinea Pigs[35] marching by, and these were the men who were not much older than me and were in this place and were being treated and needed plastic surgery. (214)

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[32] This was the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, in Sussex.

[33] The *Nursing Times* was published in London and was distributed throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Prior to 1941 it was known as the *Nursing Mirror and Midwives Journal*.

[34] Sir Archibald McIndoe (1900-1960) was born in Dunedin, New Zealand. He was appointed by the Emergency Medical Service in September 1939 to set up the burns unit in the Queen Victoria Hospital. He was renowned for the innovative methods of plastic surgery that were developed in the unit, particularly in the aftermath of the Battle of Britain. (Crystal, *Cambridge Biographical Encyclopaedia*, p. 601.)

[35] Former patients of Sir Archibald McIndoe set up the Guinea Pigs' club. Qualification for acceptance depended on being a member of an aircrew and having at least one operation in the hospital. Scientists, doctors and surgeons from the burns unit were honorary members and benefactors to the fund raising activities of the Guinea Pigs were known as Friends of the Club. Sir Archibald was elected Honorary President for life. (Crystal, *Cambridge Biographical Encyclopaedia*, p. 601. See also the website for The Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust at www.qvh.nhs.uk.)

Meta was already in England when the war started. She had travelled to Liverpool in 1937 to help her older sister, who had recently given birth. While visiting her sister in hospital, she met some student nurses and became interested in their work. She was quite frank about her lack of vocation to become a nurse:

> [Meta] I said to her you know I think I might do nursing. I said at least I will have my food and lodgings and I will be looked after that way and I will be working with a nice sort of person. You see, we were conscious of the sort of people we were mixed around with. (7)

By the time Meta qualified as a nurse, the war had started but she decided to remain in England and took her training in midwifery, which would enable her to do more specialised nursing and increase her employment prospects. By this time, she was planning to get married and she found that restricted the range of opportunities that would be open to her:

> [Meta] Then I went to stay with my sister at Parbold[36] and applied for all sorts of jobs, but because I was going to get married, I wanted a staff nurse's post. No one would employ a nurse getting married, and marrying a soldier. They thought, you see, that you'd always be wanting leave and I think in those times, I think when soldiers were given leave they were expected to let the wife have that time off. And someone suggested to me to try the Civil Nursing Reserve and that's what I did. I applied to the Civil Nursing Reserve with Lancashire County Council and their headquarters were in Preston. (13)

Following an interview with the Chief Medical Officer[37], Meta was given a choice of two posts: running a first aid post in Manchester or a sick bay for evacuated children in Blackpool. She chose the latter because the thought of working in Manchester 'with the bombs falling around you' was not very appealing.

Although her parents were Irish, Pat was born in Liverpool and lived there until she was old enough for secondary school. Her mother brought her to Ireland to go to school there. Her father was still working in England when the war broke out in 1939 and he insisted that his family remain in Ireland, where he considered they would be safer. Pat's father was a banker and he was 'getting on for sixty' at that time so he was not likely to be conscripted. He was an A.R.P. Warden and her mother worried constantly about his safety. They did not see him very much during the early years of the war because of the difficulty travelling:

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[36] Parbold is in South Lancashire. Until the middle of the 19th century it was only a village, but with the coming of the railway it began to develop as a dormitory town of Liverpool. (Mason, *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain,* p.188.)

[37] Dr. Gawne was the Chief Medical Officer for Lancashire County Council.

> [Pat] It wasn't very pleasant travelling between England and Ireland and it was also very unsafe. This was because of the submarines and being bombed, it was very risky. … Nothing ever happened to my knowledge, but there was always that danger. (37 and 39)

In 1942 Pat's parents decided that the whole family should return to Liverpool and shortly afterwards she reached her eighteenth birthday, which meant that she would have to volunteer for the forces or be conscripted for war work:

> [Pat] So I pleaded with my mum and dad to let me join the forces. So, reluctantly, they did because I said I didn't want to go into a factory and I didn't either. … Well, I wouldn't have liked the work. … So they gave in, they had to. … I joined the A.T.S. The Auxiliary Territorial Service[38] or something like that [laughs]. (45, 47 and 49)

When Pat completed her basic training in Scotland, she was posted to the Royal Air Force station at Farnborough[39], where she was appointed as secretary to a major:

> [Pat] He was the second in command of the regiment. There was the colonel and then he was the second in command and I did his work. He was a man [pause] I think he must have been about fifty, and I got on very well with him and I had a very good time there. (67)

The secretarial course that Pat had attended before joining up qualified her for the job she was given, although she had further training relating to safety procedures at the station, as well as the normal range of drilling. She would have preferred to join the Transport Corps but training was only given to women who could already drive.

The Ministry of Labour advertised for women to move to Britain during the war to take up the many job opportunities. Despite the neutrality of Éire, there seems to have been widespread facilitation of the recruitment drive. Posters were put up in the local Labour Exchanges advertising work in England but also urging Irish women to enlist in the British forces.[40] Being Irish does not seem to have been a problem and none of the women remembered any resentment of the Fianna Fáil government's

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[38] Pat was correct in referring to the Auxiliary Territorial Service. Angus Calder referred to the female volunteers in the A.T.S. in the early stages of the war as 'girls' who tended to come 'from the better off sections of society and had put travel or adventure higher on their agendas than the dubious pleasures of marriage in wartime'. (Angus Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-1945*. Pimlico, London, (1969) reprinted 1993, p. 54.) There were difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers for the auxiliary services and in December 1941 the British government decided to conscript all single women between the ages of nineteen and thirty. In practice, it was mainly those women between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four who were actually conscripted, and like Pat, they were given a choice of occupation. (Rex Pope, *War and Society in Britain, 1899-1948*. Longman, London, 1991, p. 42.)

[39] The Farnborough R.A.F. station is in Hampshire. It was first used in the closing days of the First World War and is still an operation as a base for the R.A.F..

[40] Citizens of Éire had to go to Northern Ireland or to mainland Britain if they wanted to join the armed forces. (Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland. A Century of Change*. The Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 2003, p.117.)

policy of neutrality. Nancy remembered that some Irish women in the hospital where she worked felt discriminated against but she thought they were being unreasonable:

> [Nancy] Well, you see, people could make trouble for themselves by trying to be Irish, in a sense. For instance, we couldn't go to Mass every Sunday so that what happened was Sunday morning you got to go to Mass once in three weeks, when you were junior, every three weeks because one Sunday morning off, one Sunday afternoon off and one Sunday evening off. We had to take it in turns because somebody had to be in the hospital. But they felt that they should go to Mass every Sunday. They'd go to the Matron, and she said I have quite a number of staff here who feel they should go to church on a Sunday morning. She said I can't possibly let them all off. These would be people who were Church of England or whatever. But they would make trouble for themselves by feeling that they were against the Irish, which was not true. (85)

One of Sharon Lambert's interviewees was annoyed that people in Lancashire automatically assumed that because she was Irish, she must be Catholic when in fact she was a Protestant. Lambert noted that the whole group identified themselves as Irish emigrant women who lived in England.[41] The only resentment noted by her interviewees was that felt by family members who had remained in Ireland and who seemed to think they had missed out on 'a great life', even though many of her interviewees had originally emigrated in wartime.

A variety of arguments were used to persuade Northern Irish women to join the auxiliary branches of the armed forces during the war. Rallies and military parades were held during recruitment campaigns and also at regular intervals throughout the war years. The women's services were usually represented at general military parades. With the absence of conscription in Northern Ireland, the armed services had to rely on persuasion rather than coercion to get women to join, revealing the contradictory ideology inherent in their aims even more starkly. Parents had to give their consent to their daughters' recruitment while married women had to have their husband's written permission. There is little evidence that women's role in the military had a major impact on challenging prescribed ideals about women's place in society. When military needs dictated that women enter spheres previously inhabited only by men, the terms were clearly dictated. They were there for the duration of the war only, and even then strict limits were placed on the extent of their involvement in these 'masculine' activities. With a lack of conscription and therefore smaller

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[41] Lambert, *Irish Women in Lancashire*, p.p.96-97.

numbers of women being mobilised, the impact was even more muted in Northern Ireland than it was in Britain.[42]

II Pay and Conditions

The employment situation in Britain was certainly better than that in Dublin or even Belfast, largely due to the extra opportunities created by the demands of the war. Pay and conditions depended very much on the job that was being done although even so-called 'traditional' women's jobs, like domestic service, were generally better paid in England, so much so that the emigration rate during the war resulted in a shortage of domestic workers in Ireland.[43] Appendix 4(3) gives a general comparison between the wage rates and cost of living in Ireland and Britain between 1939 and 1945. The figures from the Westminster Ministry of Labour included the wage rates and cost of living index for Northern Ireland.[44] By any standards, the job in domestic service that Frances was sent to do in the convent boarding school was very hard and the accommodation provided by the nuns who ran the school was primitive, although she believed that the food was much better than she had been getting at home and that this compensated for the other conditions:

> [Frances] We worked very hard at the school, there were no dishwashers then and everything was done by hand but again, I was a bit cheeky and I used to fall out with the nuns. I'd be changed, or the jobs would be changed, I'd be put down in the laundry to stand up on a stool with these big massive tubs with these big paddles to stir the clothes. There were long corridors to scrub – no wonder I've arthritis in my knees. Mass every morning and polish the church and one thing and another. They had a Montessori school there and that had to be polished and when the girls went on holidays we used to clean all the paintwork and the curtains in the dormitories. But the food was very good and there was no shortage because the nuns cooked all their own food. … So we were quite safe there. There were three of us girls who lived in the convent. We were up in the attic. There was no electricity and we had candles for light. (8)

One of the girls with whom Frances shared the attic was twenty-one and she later joined the Order herself. The other was sixteen, a year older than Frances, and they spent their weekly one half day off together. On one such day they went to the cinema at Acocks Green, which was near the school, and got into trouble with the nuns when they returned at six o'clock because one of the teachers had seen them at

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[42] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland*, p. 245.
[43] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 136.
[44] Appendix 4(3) is based on information tabulated by Fee, *The Effects of World War II on Dublin's low income families*, p. 65.

the cinema and the nuns were angry with them, although they had not been forbidden to go. Apparently the problem was that the cinema was full of 'soldiers and sailors and foreign people'. Sonya Rose described the increase in public comment and denunciation of the romantic escapades of women and girls, intensifying both official and unofficial scrutiny of their behaviour.[45] The growing presence of American soldiers on British soil clearly stimulated the commentary.

Frances and her friends were not allowed to go to the cinema again, even though there was very little else for them to do when they were not working:

> [Frances] You knitted or sewed and there was no radio, no television, nothing. You didn't read or anything, just talked to each other. You could read the 'Universe' [both laugh] and just talk to each other. Things like that. Then we went to bed at eight and we were up at half past six in the morning. (98)

She was often locked in the air raid shelter for the night as punishment for what was perceived by the nuns as misbehaviour, including talking too loudly at night and being reported by the nun who occupied the bedroom bedside the girls.

Frances was paid ten shillings a week, from which her mother had stipulated that she wanted five shillings:

> [Frances] So once a month, Mother Juliana – she was an old French nun – we used to go up on a Sunday morning to get our wages and I used to get mine and we got a little lecture. Once a month she'd give me the postal order and I'd have to write the letter to send the one pound postal order home to my mother. (13)

Frances did not think she was badly paid because her father was only earning three pounds ten shillings a week in Dublin, working as a barman. It never occurred to her not to send the money to her mother. She did not resent having been sent to a strange city at a time of war because her relationship with her mother was not good, even though the nuns were very strict:

> [Frances] And then when I used to come home on holiday [pause] I came home on holiday the first time and I was just inside the door when I got a slap on the side of my face from her. How dare you misbehave in front of the nun and have her write to complain to me? I made a show of her. And she didn't even know them, really, this kind of thing. I also was wearing a pair of trousers, slacks, and my father said: get those trousers off. He said only low, bad women wore trousers [laughs] but it was from an economical point of

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[45] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, pp.74-75.

> view because we'd clothing rationing and clothing coupons and sweet coupons and that. (29)

Frances's father's anger about her wearing trousers reflects a strain of concern about the moral welfare of young Irish women in England that was the focus of many newspaper articles during the 1930s, in particular, that was carried on for some decades. Louise Ryan suggests that this was because of the 'extraordinarily high incidence of young women emigrants'[46] and she supported her argument with an in-depth study of Irish newspapers, particularly the *Irish Independent*, where there were regular contributions about the dangers posed by a non-Catholic environment to naïve young emigrants:

> Their freed sexuality represented a threat not just to their own health and well-being (pregnancy, disease, poverty) but also to their souls (loss of religion) and to their national identity (de-nationalisation).[47]

As noted above, with the increase in emigration during the 1930s, pastoral and newspaper interest in the 'moral welfare' of emigrants, particularly young women, had begun to exercise the interest of the Catholic Church, in Ireland and Britain. The crux of the matter was where the ultimate responsibility lay for the welfare of young Irish female emigrants in Britain. So far as the State was concerned, this was a matter for the Irish and British clergy. In any event, the outbreak of war in 1939 and the introduction of travel restrictions ensured that the Irish authorities could regulate the flow and therefore these problems seemed less urgent. The broader significance of the representations made by Catholic clergy on both sides of the Irish Sea is that the Irish state was forced to formulate a policy on the welfare of Irish citizens in Britain which resulted in the Irish state abrogating all responsibility for the problems that Irish citizens faced and relying on the voluntary efforts of Catholic clerics.[48] The Church of Ireland and other Protestant denominations do not seem to have had the same concerns about the moral welfare of emigrating female parishioners as that exhibited by Catholic clerics, although Protestant welfare organisations in Britain raised concerns about the numbers of unmarried and pregnant Irish women who were coming to them for help.[49]

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[46] Louise Ryan, "Sexualising Emigration: Discourses of Irish Female Emigration in the 1930s" in *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2002, pp. 51-65.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[48] Earner-Byrne, "The Boat to England: An analysis of the official reactions to the emigration of single expectant Irishwomen to Britain, 1922-1972", p. 62.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

After a year at the convent school, Frances was sent away because she thought the nuns found her difficult to handle. Locking her in the air raid shelter in the basement and writing to her mother had not stopped her getting into trouble and they found a 'suitable' job for her:

> [Frances] They got me another job at Grantham[50], with a Catholic family. … I was house parlour maid there and the cook was Irish. They were evacuated from London - they were quite posh people, they had butlers and cooks and maids and all in London. They lived in Onslow Square in London and they were evacuated to Grantham during the war. … The nurse came and lived in for a couple of months, I think and then the nanny came and lived in. Quite a big household they had. (31 and 33)

The family's lifestyle does not seem to have been affected by the war. They had found Irish replacements for their absent domestic staff because they would not be subject to conscription. The house was large and Frances's accommodation was very pleasant. She was also being paid twice the amount she had earned in the convent. Because the house had large grounds, the family's gardener was able to keep them almost self-sufficient for food. The housekeeper, who administered the coupons, kept the staff's ration books. Frances felt that this system, which had also operated in the convent, was much better than getting individual rations particularly when it was possible to supplement them with fresh garden produce.

Nancy's experience of food rationing in England was also positive, although for different reasons in her case, and the strict application of the allowances did not affect her adversely. She felt that people adapted to the new conditions and made the best of whatever food was available:

> [Nancy] We were not short of food, you understand, because all the patients handed in their ration books when they were admitted but some patients wouldn't be eating or would be eating very little so on the whole – the type of food – but we were never hungry. And also, the people I knew who were living in homes, like, I had friends outside, they seemed to manage all right. People learned how to get this and that and how to make up for things. They weren't hungry as you had in Europe, in places like Holland or Denmark, like that. We didn't have that but I didn't [pause] some people might have felt they were badly off but I didn't. (77)

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[50] Grantham is a town on the border of Lincolnshire and Leicestershire. It is famous for being the place where Sir Isaac Newton went to school. Coaching inns played a vital role in its development, because of its position on the main roads connecting several major towns. (Llewellin and Saunders, *AA Book of British Towns*, p. 164.)

Although Olive went to England straight from her nurse's training in Dublin, where she thought the hospital had fed the students very badly, she found the situation in England to be even worse. She was not very impressed by some of the measures taken to feed the staff:

> [Olive] And the rationing was frightful and I remember the first week I was there, we had one egg a week and my egg was bad. Oh, they said, hard luck and the next week my egg was bad again and I realised that everybody's egg tasted like that, they were so stale, and after a while I was eating the bad eggs. ... We used to eat whale meat, which was dreadful. Another thing was rook pie, which was a bag of black bones in a sort of gravy, and I suppose they were out shooting pigeons - I don't know what was really in it [laughs]. (190)

Olive's primary interest in going to England was to take advantage of the additional nursing training she could get there, so she was not very concerned about the pay.

Letty was very impressed by the meals that she and her co-workers were given in the munitions factory hostel which were simple but better than the food she had eaten at home, in her opinion. She was convinced that the rationing in Dublin was much more severe than that in England. Letty's family were not poor by contemporary standards, in that her father was working and her mother was in a position to purchase their home through Dublin Corporation's rental purchase scheme, but their finances were sufficiently precarious to be badly affected when she lost her job. It is likely that they were not eating as well as they had done before the war, as a result of restricted income rather than rationing, since the food rations in England were much smaller than they were in Éire at any time during the war years. Letty also thought that munitions workers might have been given better food than anyone else because their work was so vital but I have found no evidence to support this suggestion.

The Assistant Welfare Officer referred to in the Mass-Observation investigation[51] believed that very few of the Irish women who came to England did so because they wanted to assist in the war effort, although she did not hold it against them. She thought they were good workers and she was constantly frustrated by the failure of the Ministry of Labour to spell out the conditions that the women would be working in before they left Ireland. She was also bothered by the refusal of the

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[51] Sheridan (Ed.), *Wartime Women*, p. 164.

Wages Department in the factory where she was based to explain exactly how each woman's exact wage was arrived at and spent a lot of time dealing with grumbles from the women because their pay varied from week to week, because they were paid by piece rates. In the factory, women made up twenty-five per cent of the workforce, compared to fifteen per cent before the war. The single largest group of women came from Ireland:

> I'm afraid very few of them (Irish girls) are here to do "war work". It's the money that brings them over – they're eager to earn as much as they can. That's why most of the Irish girls work pretty well on the whole. There's very little evidence of their having the right spirit towards the work.[52]

Letty was particularly pleased that the wages she was earning was sufficient for her to have a good time in England and still have enough to send money home to her mother every week. The factory where she had been working in Dublin got a big contract for army uniforms, some months after she had left for England, and she could have gone home but she was happier staying where she was at that point.

Queuing for goods in the shops seemed to be a component part of the rationing system and for women who were working outside the home it could make significant inroads into their spare time. Kathleen described the way news of a scarce or prized product would be circulated:

> [Kathleen] Of course, we had to queue up for everything, for different things, you know. In your lunch hour, if you heard somebody had some bananas or something you just gave up your lunch hour and queued to get the few bananas, or nylons, or whatever. If you wanted makeup and you heard Boots[53] had something in, you just had to queue up and to get it. … Someone would say they saw something and they would say it to somebody else and so on that something was going. (48 and 50)

This occasionally led to the development of an informal barter system whereby a family that did not use much sugar might swap their ration for something else. Kathleen's mother used to send food parcels to her and her sister in Reading because a wider range was available in Northern Ireland. Other women also remembered their mothers doing this while Letty reversed the process, especially when she could get hold of tea for her mother, who found the ration available in Dublin too small for her needs. Letty's mother sent more than just tea and on one occasion she got in trouble because of it. She had sent Letty a small parcel containing elastic, which was very

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[53] The Boots pharmacies were a chain of chemists shops throughout Britain.

scarce in England. The parcel fell foul of the Customs officers who wrote to her requesting her presence at their offices:

> [Letty and Josie] They wouldn't open the parcel and she had to come down and open it and whatever. They knew what was in it but she had to open it and declare it. In front of all the men and she had to tell them what it was for – the girl's knickers had no elastic [laughs]. There was no elastic over there and they could get it here, you know. … The letters would be opened, and parcels, like that. I'll always remember the elastic, the way she was sent for and she was saying, what do they want me for, you know? And like, she had to go down to some office and declare it because they wanted to know what was in the parcel. (330 and 334)

All of the women who were interviewed believed that they had been better paid by going to England than they would have been if they had stayed in Ireland, whether in Belfast or Dublin, even if pay was not their primary reason for going. Kathleen gave her mother-in-law ten shillings per week towards her keep. She would have been happy to pay more but her mother-in-law said that because she had all the family's ration books she was able to manage better and she did not need any more. This allowed Kathleen and her husband to save for their own home. She got an allowance from the army while her husband was away and she saved that and lived on her own pay. The factory where she worked provided a subsidised canteen for the employees so that she had a very good meal there during the day and if the staff had to work late, the canteen stayed open for them. Kathleen felt it was easier to save because there was not much to spend money on. She and her sister occasionally travelled back to Northern Ireland to visit their mother, but it was difficult to get travel passes.

Towards the end of the war, there was no call for the aircraft equipment being made in the factory where she worked and the contract ended:

> [Kathleen] The contract was finished then but I was still eligible to go to work and they were going to put me on the buses as a conductor, but anyway, I said no to that and then they put me up to Slough[54], which was the nearest town, it's a very industrial area, Slough in Berkshire, or is it Buckinghamshire? So that was working with [pause] I presume it was things to do with aircraft but they never really said. It was like a small television and you had to work on those and assemble those. There was always people there to help you. I

[54] Slough was at that time the commercial centre of Berkshire. In the 1930s, 850 new factories were established and the town was thriving industrially throughout the war. (Llewellin and Saunders, *AA Book of British Towns*, p. 366.)

> didn't like it much because it was a different class [pause] I'm not a snob but it was a different class of people up there, they were more factory people. (89)

Kathleen did not have children so she had not been particularly interested in childcare arrangements but so far as she could remember there had not been a crèche in the Slough factory or the factory in Maidenhead. She thought that women with children had left them with family members or had worked part-time shifts that coincided with the children's school hours. At a conference of the Standing Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations on the provision of nurseries in wartime, held on 14th February 1942, a resolution was passed declaring that the care and supervision of the children of employed mothers was a national responsibility and protesting against a Ministry of Health circular that had been sent to local authorities in the previous December, suggesting that most of the children must be cared for by means of private arrangements made by the mothers. The conference described the suggestion as an "attempt to evade promises previously made by the Government that the children of mothers volunteering for war work would be properly looked after".[55]

Nancy was paid from the beginning of her nursing training, as well as getting full board and lodging:

> [Nancy] Well, it would be more or less pocket money because you see, we had three meals a day, we'd full board and lodging. You know, bedding, the whole lot, plus our education, plus everything else. I think it was about £3 something a month that I got, when I first started, which would have been a lot, especially in comparison that I didn't have anything to buy. Clothes or stockings, whatever you went over with, would have lasted you at least a year before you would be replacing things so that really your stockings and your pens and your pencils and your books – you did have to buy your books, textbooks and things. (73)

Nancy thought her conditions were particularly good because the City of Birmingham funded the hospital at Sellyoak where she was doing her training and nurses who were training in voluntary hospitals would not have been as well off:

> [Nancy] But when the Rushcliffe rate of salaries came in, because some of the nurses were getting very little, they brought it up to, actually not quite what we were getting at that time, but because we were all getting the higher rate, we continued on it. Whereas those coming in after me, in fact about three months later, they were getting according to the Rushcliffe scale. (75)

The Rushcliffe Committee on the Pay of Nurses (for England and Wales) undertook a major review of salaries and conditions in 1940 and 1941, following representations

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[55] Mass-Observation Archives, Day Nurseries Box 1 [245].

from a variety of organisations concerned about the huge discrepancies in pay rates for nursing staff in different areas of the health service, particularly between public and private institutions. It was chaired by Lord Rushcliffe[56] and comprised of representatives from a wide range of organisations[57] involved in healthcare and local government.

Frances was happy in her work for the family in Grantham, but when she was seventeen she decided that she would give up domestic work:

> [Grantham] I applied to Grantham Hospital, which was on the Great North Road, opposite Mrs. Thatcher's shop. I used to see Margaret Thatcher when she was a young girl, the same age as myself, standing at the door with her two blond plaits. There was a Dr. Martin in the hospital at Grantham and he was from Dublin. They were coal people, coal merchants, and he used to take me to Mass in his car. He was very nice. I stayed there for [pause] it must have been nearly a year. … At that time, because the war was on, they allowed you to enter at seventeen and a half without a good education, unlike now. (41 and 43)

Although she had not been consulted about it, Frances's mother was delighted with the idea of Frances becoming a nurse. She thought of buying a large house in Dublin that she would set up as a nursing home, with Frances acting as a midwife. Unfortunately, Frances's career in nursing was short-lived:

> [Frances] I failed the theory part of my exams – I was all right in the practical but I wasn't very good at remembering the theory. … . That was terrible because I wasn't one for studying and we did [pause] we had a horrible sister tutor who didn't like me, because I was cheeky again. … She was a little woman like Queen Victoria, and she had the white cap on tied under her chin and she made me write 'I will not be rude to Sister Tutor' one hundred times [laughs]. … But I carried on then and if you wanted to register you could automatically register as an S.E.N.[58] if you had taken the exam but our wages were only six pounds ten shillings a month and it was three guineas to register, so you never registered. But I always got by being an auxiliary and that, but

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[56] Lord Rushcliffe was nominated to head the Committee by the British Hospitals Association, in consultation with the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London and the Nuffield Trust. (*Nursing Mirror and Midwives' Journal*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 1917, December 1920, p. 163.)

[57] As well as Lord Rushcliffe, the Committee had representatives from the County Councils Association; the Association of Municipal Corporations; London County Council; the Urban District Councils Association; the Rural District Councils Association; the Queen's Institute of District Nursing; the Royal College of Nursing; the Trades Union Congress; and National Association of Local Government Officers; the Royal British Nurse's Association; the British College of Nurses and the Association of Hospital Matrons.

[58] This was only the case during the 1940s when there was a shortage of nurses. The rules for registration of nurses were changed in the early 1950s to include a mandatory period of study and by the mid 1960s a candidate would have to complete a two-year course of study and pass an examination in order to qualify for conversion from an S.E.N. (State Enrolled Nurse) to an S.R.N. (State Registered Nurse).

> it's the piece of paper that counts that says you're qualified, no matter how much knowledge you've learned, that doesn't count. But I was a good practice nurse in my own way. (47 and 121)

Even though she had not qualified as a S.R.N., Frances got a job in the fever hospital in Boston[59], where she was working during the polio epidemic[60] that hit Britain in 1945. During the polio epidemic, Frances said that the hospital was so short of staff that she was giving injections and other advanced forms of treatment, even though she had failed her first year nursing examinations.

Even before that, the regime was very tough. When she was working on night duty, it was for three months at a time:

> [Frances] And then when you went on night duty you had to move out of the day home completely and move into the night home. And you had to go to bed because the night sister slept on the ground floor and she'd hear you going in and out. If you were out in the day and that night you had [pause] you had to have dinner before you went on, we had breakfast before we went on duty. (115)

The student nurses were expected to keep every minute occupied and had a wide range of duties:

> [Frances] I did three months in theatre and on a Sunday, you did all the sterilising of all the drums, you had to pack all the drums with the trays, then autoclave them, which was the sterilisation. When they came out, they had to be all brassoed, silvoed[61] and polished. That was the student nurses' job in the theatre on a Sunday afternoon and the staff nurse would be checking the instruments and doing that kind of thing. On the wards the nursing staff, two of the nursing staff would be doing the lockers, while the visitors were there, clearing out all the rubbish and that kind of thing. Cleaning the sluices, washing the bed-pans, doing beds. When anyone left a bed it was completely washed in carbolic solution and there wasn't half the infection there is now. (117)

Both Olive and Meta remembered being equally busy when they were doing their training, but Nancy's recollection of the training regime in the Sellyoak hospital was that it was more relaxed although they were constantly supervised. She preferred that and felt it was beneficial to have a practical demonstration of the theory that she was

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[59] Boston is in Lincolnshire. Pioneers from the town it during the seventeenth century to found Boston, Massachusetts. (Llewellin and Saunders, *AA Book of British Towns*, p. 50.) The Pilgrim Hospital where Frances worked has been amalgamated with the Grantham Hospital where she did her training in the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust.

[60] Poliomyelitis was still being called infantile paralysis in the 1940s, because it was thought only to affect children. It is extremely infectious.

[61] *Brasso* and *Silvo* were proprietary names of cleaning products for brass and silver respectively.

studying in class. Although her hours were long, when she was off duty she was completely free to do as she pleased:

> [Nancy] Well, we were on duty at seven o'clock in the morning and we had two hours off during the day, except for one day when you could finish at six fifteen. We finished at eight thirty at night and we had one day off in the week. … Well, you see, when you were on duty you were accounted for but when you were off duty you were free to do whatever you'd want. (49 and 51)

Frances remembered that it was standard practice for the nurses to be locked into the nurse's hostel at night, regardless of the danger from fire or other emergencies. On the night the war ended, the nurses climbed out of the windows and over the hospital railings so that they could join the celebrations in the town:

> [Frances] There was a camp at the back and we heard the soldiers all coming back shouting the war is over, the war is over, so we all came down, over the railings and down the town at two o'clock in the morning. There was a huge big bonfire going, it was the best night of my life. (49)

Staff shortages during the war could create promotion opportunities, as well as additional responsibility. Six weeks after Meta started work at the evacuation centre, Dr. Gawne called her for in the middle of the night from the County Hall to deal with a staffing problem:

> [Meta] So I hastily got dressed and went down there and anyway, to cut a long story short, there had been an episode there with the Matron and another older assistant nurse. I didn't know anything about the sort of relations, in my education there had been no mention of lesbians or such things, and of course, they left right away. So he said that anyway, she was leaving and he would like me temporarily to take charge. Well, I said I'm only just qualified and all that kind of thing and he said I will send someone out from the Accounts Department in County Hall to show you about the petty cash. Because it was a huge big house out in the country and with its own vegetable garden and all that, there was a cook came every day from Preston, there were three women from the village who were cleaners and did general work about the house and I had to pay them every week. … I didn't tell Dr. Gawne that I had commercial training [laughs]. But you see, it was responsible because I was only twenty-one or twenty-two, something like that and apart from my training, I hadn't much experience. (15 and 17)

One of the most important of Meta's duties was liasing with the Food Office in Kirkham[62] because she administered the rationing for the staff and children in the centre.

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[62] Kirkham is a small market town in Lancashire, situated between Blackpool to the west and Preston to the East. The main industry is textiles. (Mason, *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain*, p. 136.)

The evacuation centre dealt with children from poorer homes, because as Meta pointed out, the more affluent ones were evacuated privately and some were even sent to America. Many of the children had impetigo and scabies[63] and aneuresis[64] for which they gave treatment in the evenings. The aneuresis meant that someone had to be up during the night to take the children to the bathroom so the staff tended to work long hours, although they had a break if the children were attending classes. None of the children were under five and they could be aged up to twelve or thirteen. Parents could have access to their children if they were able to visit the area but more often than not, the children had been evacuated on their own:

> [Meta] But I often think now of all those little children marched down to the railway station with just a label on them and it must have been terrible for the mothers to part with them, not knowing where they were going to. (27)

More than three million people were evacuated from British cities in the first four days of September 1939, most of them schoolchildren separated from their parents.[65]

Meta had met Godfrey, her husband to be while she was training in Liverpool and he was called up for the army when the war started. He was in the Royal Engineers and was moved around quite a bit in the early years of the war. This had implications for their plans to get married because at least one of them had to have a permanent address. They decided to use Meta's address at the evacuation centre and were married in the Methodist Church at Kirkham, which was the nearest town. Meta bought her wedding dress in Liverpool. It cost three guineas, which was more than her week's wages at the time and she needed extra coupons, which she got from her sister to enable her to purchase it. Her husband wore his military uniform, which had been made by a firm of tailors in the Isle of Wight while he was stationed at Cowes.

Godfrey had been working in the laboratory of a large firm of manufacturing chemists when Meta met him in Liverpool and he had been about to pursue a degree course when he was conscripted. Although he had to postpone this ambition until after the war, he did get the opportunity to take various courses when he was seconded to the R.E.M.I.[66] He eventually ended up as an instructor at the army radio

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[63] Impetigo and scabies are highly contagious skin diseases, often associated with malnourishment.
[64] Bed-wetting.
[65] Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-1945*, p. 223-224.
[66] R.E.M.I. was the research facility for the Royal Engineering Corps.

school at Petersham, which is outside Richmond, between Kingston and Petersham[67]. By this time their son David had been born and Meta had given up her job at the evacuation centre so she decided to move to Richmond to be with her husband:

> [Meta] This was 1943 or 44 and anyway, I got a letter from the War Office or somebody saying you are very valuable as a trained nurse. Would you come back and do nursing in a hospital and you could relieve a single state registered nurse to go in the army, for a military hospital. You see I wasn't suitable because I had to care for David so anyway, I went along and I saw the Matron at Richmond Hospital and so she said there was no problem at all. David went to a day nursery – he got priority in a day nursery. … Now those day nurseries were very well run in those days. It was an S.R.N. who was in charge of it and David was quite happy there. (71 and 73)

Meta was very pleased to be back at work. She was assigned to the Casualty and Outpatients' Department because she was tied to the nursery hours, which were from half past eight to five. Although she had no previous experience of Casualty, other than her nursing training, she found the challenge very stimulating, including the responsibility of overseeing the student nurses who were working in the department with her:

> [Meta] With Richmond there, it covered a very big area because there was Kew and Mortlake, right up to Hammersmith; there was Chiswick; there was part of it over the bridge in what was Middlesex, Twickenham, St. Margaret's as far as Hampton and half way to Kingston on that side[68]. We covered a very, very large area and the clinics were very busy. … There was one incident at Kew where one of those doodlebugs was a direct hit on Chrysler's car factory[69] and there were a lot of casualties in there. That was a dreadful episode. (79 and 81)

When something happened to prevent Meta leaving the hospital at her usual time, her husband was able to collect David from the nursery. She also had an arrangement with the nursery that the local ambulance service would occasionally collect him for her and drop him off at the hospital, where she put him in a cubicle to keep himself amused. All of the staff kept an eye on him and the Matron and senior staff called in

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[67] Kingston upon Thames, situated on the left bank of the River Thames, was the site for coronation of the Saxon kings. Petersham is also located on the River Thames, on the right bank. Both towns are located in the Borough of Richmond, which is a dormitory suburb of London. (Mason, *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain,* p. 135 and p. 193.*)*

[68] All of these districts are in the Borough of Richmond, lying along both banks of the River Thames.

[69] The Chrysler factory had been in Kew since 1925, turning out cars named after nearby districts, such as the Wimbledon, the Kingston, the Mortlake and the Croydon. The factory was turned into a manufacturer of aircraft components and military trucks in 1939. In 1944, in the incident to which Meta referred, it was actually a landmine that was dropped on the factory, killing seven men (http://media.chrysler.co.uk).

to talk to David when they were doing their rounds. Clearly they felt that it was more important to free Meta to do her work than to be very rigid about hospital rules.

When Pat joined the A.T.S. she was sent to Scotland for induction and training in the middle of a freezing cold winter. The training for A.T.S. volunteers involved four weeks of drilling and marching, mainly intended to teach the recruits to obey orders. The women were paid two shillings per day, plus food and board, during this training period:

> [Pat] It was a dreadful time. We all thought we were crazy for volunteering because to go from comfortable homes to chalets, yes, wooden chalets. You'd all go into the ladies room ([laughs] and there'd be all the hand basins and you'd to get on and get washed. Oh, we often cried at night because you couldn't do anything. The last weekend, I think, we went to Edinburgh and that was the highlight. (51)

Pat found the training quite difficult, not least because of the fact that uniforms were distributed with little care for size or comfort[70]. The recruits had come from different backgrounds and areas and part of the challenge was getting along with women with whom she had little in common. Pat's clearest memory of her training was of having to spend hours marching and having no showers. Being sent to Farnborough was a huge relief to her because she was billeted with about thirty other young women in an 'old rambling house with grounds and a couple of cooks'.

Pat was paid about twenty-five shillings per week, with full board and lodging. She remembered that at the end of the war, some of the older women who had been promoted were quite sad at having to leave 'because they would have no authority in civilian life, like they had in the army'. This observation is consistent with Dorothy Sheridan's research[71] into the memories of women who joined the A.T.S. and became both a part of the military machine but at the same time remained separate from it, mainly because it was clear that it was a temporary role they were playing. Their dissatisfaction with relegation to the domestic sphere after the war did not manifest

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[70] Women in the A.T.S. wore a khaki uniform. Penny Summerfield's account of the debates about uniforms for women in the armed forces illustrates the ambivalence of many male politicians about the recruitment of women. (Summerfield, *My Dress for an Army Uniform*.)

[71] Dorothy Sheridan, "Ambivalent Memories: Women and the 1939-45 War in Britain" in *Oral History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Spring 1990, pp. 32-39.

itself in any particular form of protest but may well have contributed to the gradual changes in social attitudes to women that eventually emerged in Britain.

III Life away from work

Pat enjoyed her time away although she was aware that her parents were not very enthusiastic about it:

> [Pat] If I was to be quite honest, it was a chance to get away from home [laughs]. Spread my wings [laughs]. They [Pat's parents] were quite worried. That I would be caught out, maybe in an air raid and be killed, that was the thing. But whether I lived at home or whether I was away, all dances finished at ten o'clock and you just came out and nobody would believe it, but it was just totally black. And that was an awful worry for parents. (95 and 99)

One of the benefits of being away from home, from her point of view, was that it enabled her to meet people of many different nationalities. At the air force base, there were Danes, Poles, and French men who had joined up and were identifiable by the shoulder band on their uniforms naming their home countries. Pat thought that beer was not rationed during the war and there was always a pub open where people congregated although closing hours were much earlier because of the blackout. The dances at the base were egalitarian occasions at which all ranks were invited to attend.

Olive also remarked on her enjoyment of the opportunity to meet people from different countries. In the hospital where she was working, a lot of people came to get the sort of training in innovative procedures that had attracted her, including a large group from Australia and New Zealand:

> [Olive] I loved seeing the interaction between the English and the New Zealanders and the Australians and they called them colonials. Now they were grand to me and only once did somebody say something to me about us being neutral during the war and I said well I wasn't old enough, you know, but it was an RAF hospital and of course there were Irish fellows in the RAF but they used to call these colonials. (200)

Olive was fascinated by the fact that the 'colonials' did not have a vote in the General Election of 1945, whereas she did. She said that the reason the English in the hospital disliked the Australians and New Zealanders was because they got invited to all the garden parties in Buckingham Palace through their embassies and that they 'crowed' about it afterwards.

Frances fell foul of the matron in Grantham hospital because of a friendship with a soldier who was one of the patients there:

> [Frances] I went out to the pictures with one, he was married, a nice man, and I was told off about that. Someone saw me, the sister tutor saw me, she was Irish as well, she saw me and I was hauled over the coals for that, Matron called me, because he was married. And we only went to the pictures, never even gave me a kiss; he gave me some of his chocolate ration. Ever such a nice man he was, but that was wrong, you couldn't do that. It was very moralistic, in some ways. But you were told off and you accepted it and that was the end of it. (157)

The rebuke seems to have been because the man was married, rather than because there were any strictures against socialising between the nurses and the patients, although Frances was reprimanded again because of another incident with a patient who also happened to be a soldier:

> [Frances] I was in the ward and my suspender broke. We had suspenders then and my stockings fell down and one of the soldiers chased me round the beds and my hat, my veil came off and who came back into the ward only the sister. And there was uproar. I was taken to the Matron's office and tore off a strip and moved to the women's ward [laughs]. The disgrace – I'll never live it down, I said to myself. (45)

In Sonya Rose's analysis of public concern about female morality, she describes how the term 'moral laxity' was repeated over and over again in letters, editorials, and official documents.[72] It was a phrase that suggested weakness and a lack of will and women and young girls who were perceived to be straying from convention and overtly seeking entertainment and pleasure were given the ironic label of 'good-time girls' and moral outrage was accompanied by fears about the rising rates of venereal disease. There was sufficient concern about the matter for the Westminster government to set up a parliamentary committee to investigate the 'amenities and welfare conditions in the three women's services', under the chairmanship of a lawyer, Miss Violet Markham.[73] The Committee showed that the incidence of illegitimate births and venereal disease in the women's services were less than in the comparable civilian population – in some cases half the level. The Committee also said that pregnancy figures were no guide to promiscuity, owing to the fact that condoms were issued to servicemen but significantly, not to service women.

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[72] Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1934*, pp.79-80.

[73] Stuart Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour. The Hidden History of the Home Front 1939-1945*. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2001, pp. 142-144.

Discussion of measures adopted to deal with venereal disease will be discussed in the chapter on health.

Pat could not remember any specific rules about the extent of socialising that was permitted between male and female members of the armed forces, and the A.T.S. seems to have been very discreet when relationships resulted in pregnancy:

> [Pat] All I ever knew was that if somebody was discharged under Paragraph 11 we knew then that they were pregnant. That was it but that only went up after they'd been discharged. (220)

Only one of her friends had a serious relationship with another member of the armed forces and that ended sadly. Pat thought the couple had divorced after the war:

> [Pat] One of my best friends, Joan, she met this young Canadian officer and they were married and shortly after that, he was sent out to France and Germany. He was one of the first to go into Belsen. Well, she used to just sit and write to him every night but when he did come back, his impressions of Belsen were very bad and I think it took quite a lot out of him, really. (222)

Nancy remembered that the blackout regulations curtailed social life because public transport shut down much earlier in wartime than it had done in pre-war years:

> [Nancy] We wouldn't be out late at night, on our own. I did once have to walk – an Irish dance, the only one I ever went to, at one of the church halls and I missed the last tram and had to walk from the city centre almost out to Selly Oak. (134)

The Selly Oak area of Birmingham is about three miles from the city centre so going to the cinema or the theatre meant that she and her friends had to go early in order to be sure of having transport home and because of the hospital shift system, this was not always possible. They concentrated their entertainment on more outdoor activities that they could pursue during the daylight hours, such as walking in the Black Country[74], which they could reach fairly easily. The nurse's hostel was beside the village of Bournville[75], where the Cadbury's chocolate factory was situated:

> [Nancy] It was beside Bournville so you could always smell the chocolate when it was going to rain and you could smell the chocolate most of the time. (138)

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[74] This is the area just west of Birmingham that got its name from the uncontrolled pollution arising through a cluster of towns in the area that sprang up in the Industrial Revolution, with colliers, blast furnaces and foundries producing a layer of black dust that covered the countryside.

[75] Bournville is a garden village built by George Cadbury to relieve the slums of Birmingham at the turn of the 20th century. Cadbury set up the Bournville Village Trust to provide funds for the maintenance and development of the village, which is mainly occupied by employees of the chocolate factory. (Mason, *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain*, p. 30.)

Pat enjoyed the social life at Farnborough, regardless of the restrictions, but towards the end of the war she was moved to another base in Wiltshire, which was much more isolated than Farnborough, being a long distance even from a bus stop:

> [Pat] We were about seven miles from this town, Marlborough, which has a very well-known public school there, and on a Saturday, about six of us would get the bus into Marlborough and have chips and eggs and this was heaven to us. … We'd then sit there in this lovely bay window and have the chips and the eggs and bread and butter and I think it amounted to 2/6. (188 and 190)

Many years later she tried to recreate this 'heaven' and she paid a visit to Marlborough:

> [Pat] So, my husband, when he retired we went over and we went to those places again, revisited them and I went to this little tearooms and it had changed. I was so disappointed that it had changed. (190)

Kathleen also remembered getting enjoyment from fairly simple pleasures. The nearest big town was Maidenhead, where there was a cinema, but she and her family did not go there and preferred to entertain themselves closer to home:

> [Kathleen] No, it was very much in wartime so there were no jaunts or that sort of thing. You made your own pleasure really, we used to go for bike rides and walks and simple things. I was speaking to my sister-in-law last night to see if she could remember much about those times. She said well we couldn't really go anywhere; we couldn't go down to the coast or anything, because it was all blocked off. You couldn't go down and take a trip to the coast because it was all sealed off. (33)

Dances were organised in the village hall and these were enlivened by the presence of the exiled Queen Wilhelmina[76] of The Netherlands and her entourage, who were staying in the area. Kathleen's sister-in-law became friendly with one member of the Queen's bodyguard and her parents hoped that their daughter would marry the man. She decided not to, however, because she was not willing to move to Holland after the war and Kathleen said he was much too dedicated to his Queen to take a different job and move to England.

There had been several bombing raids on villages near where Kathleen was living, which she thought might have happened because of the proximity of the airfield, but the family agreed that there was not much they could do about them and

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[76] On 10th May 1940 the German army attacked Holland and the Dutch royal family was evacuated to Britain. Queen Wilhelmina proclaimed that London would be the Dutch capital until the occupation of the Netherlands was over. She made regular broadcasts from London until her return to Holland in 1945.

they should just get on with their lives. Kathleen's husband did not get much leave from the British army but when he did they tried to behave as normally as possible. They would get a train to London and see whatever show was on, ignoring bombing raids if they occurred, because they felt they 'just had to get on with things':

> [Kathleen] We used to go to Lyons Corner House[77]; that was always open. You might get a pastry there but we were very strictly rationed. It made shopping easier in a way, like for Christmas, because there just wasn't anything to buy. It levelled everybody. (138)

Kathleen and her sister exchanged regular letters with their mother in Northern Ireland but few people had private telephones so keeping up with home news was not always easy and they were unable to persuade their mother to travel to England because of her fear of U-boat attacks:

> [Kathleen] We got a train up to Crewe and then on to Stranraer and over to Larne. She [Kathleen's sister] did it once on her own when her husband couldn't get a pass to come over. People didn't really like travelling across the sea at that time. (77)

Nancy remembered that the only time she had difficulty getting home to Dublin for her holidays was in May 1944, when preparations were being made for the D-Day landings, although she did not know that at the time:

> [Nancy] There was a ban on all travel between Ireland and England in 1944, just before D-Day but our hospital had a rule that if you started on the 1st June you had your holiday in May and you came back on the 1st June so that … it was just that particular time there was a ban. But they made provision for me because there was a place up in Shropshire where nurses who couldn't go home – it was for convalescent nurses who were sick. There was one Irish girl and she had her tonsils out and she was going up and I went with her. I paid for myself but they made arrangements for me to go to this farm in Shropshire so I had a holiday. It was like being in another world it was so quiet. (152 and 156)

The ban on travel from Britain was imposed in March 1944. Before that date, Irish workers in Britain had been entitled to one visit home every six months, subject to the various travel restrictions and the agreement of their employer in Britain.[78] The Irish government responded by suspending the labour exchange facilities for recruitment of war workers in Britain. It was only when Nancy got away from Birmingham that she realised how noisy it had been, with the constant rumbling of heavy traffic that she

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[77] The first Lyons Corner House was opened in London in 1909. They were huge restaurants on four/five levels, employing hundreds of staff. They were known for their long opening hours, which were as much as twenty-four hours in London.

[78] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 126.

recognised afterwards would have been from the large numbers of troops being moved south to prepare for transfer to Europe.

IV Coming home

The numbers of Irish workers travelling to Britain diminished significantly in the final year of the war although 1944 had also seen a decline in the number of travel permits that were issued. Frances continued to send money to her mother when she remained in England but it did not improve the relationship. She finally returned to Dublin in 1947 because she was having health problems:

> [Frances] I always sent money home, yes, but Ma would never recognise it. In later years, she always said I'll look after those who looked after me. And then I came home to have an operation in 1947 before the National Health started. I was going to have to have a hernia done and my father said come home, don't have it done there, you can be looked after here. (56)

Frances married an Irish man whom she had met in Dublin in the early 1950s but her husband was out of work and they decided to return to England. They moved to London and had two sons. When Frances's husband died of cancer in 1967, she decided to remain in England because she thought it was a more open society then Ireland and she preferred to live there. It seems that in this area at least, she had something in common with her mother, who had worked in England all through the 1920s, after going there during the First World War to work in a munitions factory:

> [Frances] Sure my mother was the same. She never went back to Ireland – at eighteen, she went to work on munitions, and she didn't like all the women around her effing and blinding and swearing. But she never went back for years. (172)

Kathleen also remained in England after the war, when her husband was demobilised from the army. They settled in the area around Maidenhead where she had lived with her parents-in-law during the war and she did not return to Ireland until her husband died suddenly in the early 1990s:

> [Kathleen] … the reason I came over here was that my younger brother, his wife had died suddenly and my husband had died suddenly as well so I came over here to sort of be company for him. And then he died of cancer. … Anyway, I did think of going back but then I thought it would be such upheaval to go back and I stayed here. (120 and 122)

Letty liked England and stayed on even when work became available in her previous employment and she could have gone home. When she returned to Ireland she moved back into the family home. Although she had enjoyed living in the hostel with the

other workers from the munitions factory, she was happy to be home with her mother and felt no sense of restriction of her personal freedom. Letty lived in that house until recently and she looks back on the time she spent in England during the war as a youthful adventure; that her sister Josephine was able to contribute to Letty's account of the years in England suggests that the stories have been told in the family many times.

When Meta first moved to England in the late 1930s, she decided very early on that she would not return to Northern Ireland, because the 'bright lights of Liverpool' were so much more exciting than even the city of Belfast could offer and the hardships of war did not change her mind. She supported her husband when he went to college in the years immediately after the war and he eventually became a Professor of Chemistry in the University of London. When Godfrey died Meta moved to Guildford, where she is an active member of the local Ulster Society. She maintains frequent contact with her niece, who is now the only remaining member of Meta's family living in Northern Ireland.

Before being released from the A.T.S. at the end of the war, Pat was offered the opportunity to sign up again and to travel abroad:

> [Pat] ... my junior commander, she asked me would I like to go to Washington. Washington where? I said [both laugh]. Washington DC. So I said I'd have to ring my parents so I rang home that night and my mother said this is very short notice. I just knew she didn't want me to go so I went back the next day and I told the junior commander. I've often wondered what would have happened if I had gone there. It would have been very nice. (105)

Although Pat has often thought of how her life would have been if she had insisted on going to Washington, she does not regret her decision to leave the A.T.S. as soon as the war was over. The army provided her with transport home and a small sum of money:

> [Pat] That's what I got when I was demobbed, I got £25, which was my demob money and I bought two suits with it. ... And they weren't cheap, I can assure you, they were beautiful. (179 and 181)

Shortly after moving back with her parents in Liverpool, she decided to come back to Ireland and to live with her uncle again. This was partly because she wanted to be independent but also because she preferred Ireland.

When Nancy qualified as a nurse she decided to expand her skills and she went to London to do a course in midwifery. She returned to Dublin in 1946 and she went to the Cork Street Fever Hospital to be trained in combatting communicable diseases. After she finished her training she moved back to England until eventually she joined the World Health Organisation. Olive remained in England until 1950, working in the Queen Victoria Hospital. She and her fiancée were saving hard to get married and buy a home. They travelled back and forth between Ireland and England for a few years to see each other and then she returned to Dublin:

> [Olive] But then I came home and that was the end of my nursing career. I got married and settled down [laughs]. That was that. (214)

V Conclusion

Recent research on the status of women in belligerent Western states during the Second World War[79] found that the potentially liberating aspects of the war situation for women were offset by the extra work that was generated for them by the expectation that they should continue to fulfil their traditional domestic function, in addition to taking up war work. Although the question of equal pay was raised, considering that many women were taking on jobs that had previously been done by men, only in the United States was the principle conceded and then individual employers frequently ignored the government's recommendation on the issue.[80] No fundamental changes in women's public status resulted from their involvement in war work, although in the long term, their emergence into the workplace in large numbers contributed to the undermining of institutional gender based discrimination.

The women who were interviewed for this research were not subject to conscription (with the exception of Pat, whose dual nationality would have allowed her to evade it) and their motivation for travelling to Britain to work during the war years was varied. They had a choice about whether to go or not, in terms of conscription, but for most of them their reasons for going were a consequence of a lack of other choices that were in turn related to a combination of their family's

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[79] Lang, *Keep Smiling Through. Women in the Second World War.*; Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s.*; Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations and the status of women during World War II.*

[80] International Labour Organisation, *The War and Women's Employment. The Experience of the United Kingdom and the United States*. Montreal, 1946.

economic circumstances and the women's gender. All of them looked back on the experience as a positive one that had allowed them to become independent and to have experiences that might otherwise have been denied them. They appreciated being able to earn decent wages at a time of hardship at home or availing of the opportunity for specific training or even just the chance to 'spread their wings' for a while. Frances, Kathleen, Meta, and Nancy chose to remain outside Ireland in the long term (although both Nancy and Kathleen eventually retired to Ireland) but all four felt that in one way or another, their lives would be richer for not returning home. While Letty, Olive and Pat came back willingly, they also seemed to feel that they were 'settling down' and their time in England was synonymous with adventure and independence, which they could look back on with gratification.

Chapter 5

The Home Front

In the 1930s and 1940s, local authorities in both Belfast and Dublin were forced to acknowledge the extent of poor housing stock and overcrowding in many areas of the two cities. In Belfast, the bombing raids in April and May 1941 revealed the shocking state of many homes in the city's slum areas and a massive building programme was undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the war, as indeed was also the case in a number of cities in Britain. In Dublin, slum clearance was already well under way when the war started, but the shortage of raw materials for construction brought the programme to a virtual standstill in mid 1941.[1] All the women who contributed to this research were adamant about the importance of their homes, both to their mothers and themselves. In this chapter, the women's recollections of the Home Front will be considered and the analysis will be conducted under several headings, including access to decent housing, family and neighbourhood relations. The term 'Home Front' will be used in this chapter in the same way that it appeared in government propaganda produced by several Allied states, meaning an extension of the battlefront that included 'keeping the home fires burning' not just by contributing to war industry and related involvement, but also by preserving the idealised 'Home' for which the armed forces could be said to be fighting. In this regard, women were assigned a particularly important role.

Writing about Dublin in the early 1950s, Alexander Humphreys noted[2] that other investigations of marriage and family life in Ireland indicated that urbanisation in Ireland produced certain effects that were quite dissimilar to other countries in the Western world, where family stability seemed to be weakened in cities, evidenced particularly by the consistently higher urban divorce rate.[3] Although Humphreys was primarily concerned with the impact of urbanisation on 'New Dubliners' (first generation immigrants from rural

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[1] Mary E. Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment.* Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1997, pp. 275-276.

[2] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966.

[3] While it was not possible to measure this phenomenon in Ireland in 1951 because of the unconstitutionality of divorce, Humphreys noted that the age structure in urban Ireland was clearly younger and better balanced than the rural. Similarly, the spread of cities in the West had generally produced a drastic decline in fertility but in Ireland, the decline had been relatively small.

backgrounds), elements of the questions he asked about the internal organisation of Irish family life will be considered in this chapter, as will the particular background to housing policy in Belfast that was a consequence of the sectarian problems in that city. Some of the aspects of home and family life that were examined in works about belligerent countries, such as Angus Calder's research on Britain[4] and Susan Hartmann's similar investigation in the United States[5] will also be examined.[6] In this work, identification of the Home Front as part of the wider battlefront was looked at in light of the role of non-combatants. Government propaganda identified the maintenance of the Home Front as the patriotic duty of women and older people in particular and the plans for post-war reconstruction and development outlined in the Beveridge Report[7] in Britain could be said to represent a *quid pro quo* for that contribution. This chapter will also examine how the difference between the two Irish states in terms of their status in the war affected the shaping of the post-war Home Front.

Up to 1935, Belfast had a worse house-building record in the inter-war years than any other city in England, Wales or Scotland, either in the public or private sector or taking the two together. Public authority housing in Belfast accounted for only 15 per cent of all new housing stock, compared to an average of 25 per cent in the rest of the United Kingdom.[8] Housing was still considered to be a branch of the Poor Law tradition of providing for the poor, in which the emphasis was on protection of the ratepayers' interests. Despite the failure to institute an effective public housing programme in Belfast in the 1930s, however, the Northern Ireland Census Report of 1937 showed a significant decrease in the numbers of persons living in overcrowded conditions, like those described by Marie, compared to the 1926 Census figures[9]:

> [Marie] Well, we all had to sleep in the one bedroom. There were four of us in one bed, girls in one bed and boys in the other bed. [Laughs] Three boys in one bed and

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[4] Angus Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-45*. Pimlico, London, 1992.
[5] Hartmann, Susan M. *The Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s*. Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1982.
[6] Other works not quoted directly are included in the Bibliography.
[7] William Beveridge produced a *Report on social insurance and allied services* in 1942, following lengthy discussion and consideration of social policy in Britain. The recommendations in the Report were intended to form the basis of legislation for the post-war Welfare State.
[8] A.C. Hepburn, *A Past Apart. Studies in the History of Catholic Belfast 1850-1950*. Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 1996, p. 238.
[9] *Northern Ireland Census of Population 1937*, H.M.S.O., Belfast, 1938, p. xv.

> four girls in the other and then the youngest one, she slept in Mum and Dad's room. We thought nothing of it really. … Yes, everybody had two bedrooms, so you know, no matter how many children they had, that was just the way it was. (485 and 487)

Marie's family lived in the Catholic Falls area where mill and factory owners had built many artisans' dwellings in the nineteenth century.[10] The houses were mainly 'two/three-up, two-down' terraced dwellings, with minimal facilities. There was a kitchen and scullery downstairs with a small parlour or family room. The two or three bedrooms upstairs were also very small. Appendix 5(1a and b) outlines in detail the intercensal changes in the numbers of houses available to occupants of the various Wards of the Belfast County Borough. Despite the longer period between 1937 and 1951 than the previous intercensal interval the increase in the number of houses was significantly less because the post-war building programme had not yet compensated for the destruction caused by the Blitz.

When Nancy got married in the late 1930s, finding affordable property in some areas of the city was very difficult for young working class couples on low incomes. She was born and raised on the Falls Road and could not envisage moving to another area but it was one of the city wards where overcrowding got worse during the war years[11]:

> [Nancy] And there were no houses then and I went to Leo's family and they let us have a room with them. And Leo found [pause] a week before I was married his brother got a house and he wanted to share it so I went into two rooms in that. You were very lucky when you got two rooms. I was very lucky the way things happened that I got the two rooms. (50)

While there was not a dramatic rise in the population of Belfast between 1926 and 1937, there were significant rises in the numbers of houses available in some areas, as illustrated in Appendices 5(1a) and 5(1b). In 1937, the areas of greatest demographic increase, such as Clifton and St. Anne's, were also the areas with the highest numbers of new houses, but it is not clear whether people moved to these areas because of the new housing or if the houses were built to answer the demand. There is a strong case for suggesting that the priorities for housing programmes were influenced by sectarian interests, as Unionist politicians had to bear in mind the demographic implications of planning to ensure that there

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[10] Women who contributed to the oral history project *Women's Voices* remembered how houses could be tied to a job, so that if a person was put out of work, they could be put out of their homes as well. *Women's Voices, An Oral History of Northern Irish Women's Health 1900-1990*, National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), Attic Press, Dublin, 1992, p. 65.

[11] *Northern Ireland Census Report, 1951.*

would be a sufficient majority of their voters in each ward to maintain their power base. The largest number of new houses built in the period between 1926 and 1937 was in the St. Anne's Ward, where the Catholic population was roughly 37 per cent of the total, compared to the Church of Ireland population of 32 per cent and the Presbyterian population of just over 21 per cent of the total. St. Anne's was still classified as a mixed ward in the 1951 Census, although the Catholic population of the ward had risen to just over 44 of the total, while there was now 29 per cent affiliated to the Church of Ireland and nearly 23 per cent in the Presbyterian community. The 1951 Census showed a decrease of 0.9 per cent in the number of houses available in the St. Anne's Ward compared to the figure in 1937, whereas the greatest increase was in the Protestant Victoria Ward, with a rise of 13.2 per cent. According to the Census Report the number of houses in course of erection in 1951 was more than twice as many as at the former Census, noting that the numerical increase of 4,084 houses for the whole County Borough, an increase of 3.8 per cent, should be considered with the figures for uninhabited houses, which showed a drop from 4,260 in 1937 to 1,594 in 1951.[12]

The denominational breakdown between the three main religious groups (Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian) illustrated in Appendix 5(2) shows the extent to which co-religionists tended to live in the same areas. Segregated housing had been developing as a policy in Belfast since the nineteenth century, when the main providers of housing (speculative builders and developers and large employers, especially the mill owners) also tended to encourage it as a means of avoiding trouble between the two communities. Marie's family was Catholic, living in the Falls Road area of Belfast. She did not remember ever meeting any Protestants when she was growing up, probably because her school and social activities and her early working life were all situated in the Falls Road, where more than 91 per cent of the population was Roman Catholic. She had an interesting insight on neighbourhood attitudes, which could distance some people for reasons other than religious prejudice:

> [Marie] My mother was an outsider, you see, she didn't come from the Falls Road. She came from Ballymakerrig, over the Newtownards Road direction. Oh she was still a Belfast woman but she wasn't a Falls Road woman. [Both laugh] And she was very reserved, she didn't mix a lot with the other women in the street. … We were

[12] *Northern Ireland Census Report 1951*, H.M.S.O. Belfast, 1953, p. xii.

> considered sometimes to be snobs. [Laughs] Because Mummy was very particular about how we dressed and on Sunday, you had to wear your hat and you had to wear your gloves and you know, people thought who did they think they are? [Laughs]. (386, 388 and 394)

Appendix 5(2) shows that the largest numbers of people living in overcrowded conditions in both 1937 and 1951 were to be found in the predominantly Catholic Falls and Smithfield Wards, the predominantly Protestant Court Ward and the mixed Dock Ward. The highest proportions of Roman Catholics in Belfast as a whole were to be found in the Falls and Smithfield Wards of the city, at nearly 92 per cent of the total population and 91 per cent respectively. The Falls Ward had a very high proportion of persons living at a density of over two persons per room while the Smithfield Ward had the highest proportion in Belfast. There was also a strong class element in this residential segregation as working class co-religionists tended to stay together. This reflected the fact that working class people are generally more dependent on neighbourhood relationships for a sense of community than middle class people whose membership of a community is dictated by associations such as school and social links, rather than geographical location.

Dorothy Bates was an English civil servant who wrote for Mass-Observation from her home in Purley, Sussex and continued her diary when she was based in Belfast for five months in 1941. She described the evidence of overcrowded housing in her notes on a walk in the Falls area:

> Not having a map I just walked straight for it from the hotel. First through small squalid houses and across a dismal gap with an engineering works on it. Hundreds of small children - some pretty, most stupid looking, and all dirty, were playing in the streets. I counted 82 in 2 minutes. I have never seen so many living in a small area.[13]

The poor housing was by no means confined to Catholic areas but efforts to deal with homelessness were not helped by sectarian suspicions. Even at the height of the Blitz, while Catholics and Protestants sheltered together from air raids in the hillsides, when it came to finding billets for those made homeless by the bombing, there was invariably gravitation to co-religionist areas. Even if families were willing to offer accommodation or to stay with members of 'the other' religious community, the attitudes of social agencies discouraged this as a policy. Moya Woodside reported on one of the results of this attitude:

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[13] Dorothy Bates, Mass Observation Diary 5245, 16 March 1941.

> Spent most of the morning trying to find lodgings for a temporarily homeless Catholic girl, who had left her employment on account of illness and was without relatives or friends. She had spent 2 nights at a Catholic girls' hostel at 6d a night, but complained that everyone was turned out on the streets at 7.30 a.m. and not let in again till 5 p.m. (not, it seems to me, the best way to keep young girls straight). I telephoned 3 other hostels (Salvation Army, Girls' Help Society and something else) but all of them, on hearing the girl was a Catholic, found they didn't have any beds. ... Eventually we got on the track of a Catholic social worker who, we were assured, would find some lodgings for the girl in the right religious surroundings [Woodside's emphasis]. One forgets how wide the gulf between Catholic and Protestant is here until something like this happens.[14]

While most of the interviewees who were married stressed the importance to them of their families, none of them had enjoyed the benefit of help from extended families when their children were growing up. When asked about friendships, most of them referred to friends they had made at school or work, and to refer to neighbours as people who lived near them, rather than as personal friends. They seem to have moved in narrow circles, confining themselves to the areas in which they lived, so that they were not very conscious of the lifestyles of people who lived in other communities. While Anne grew up in a predominantly Protestant area of Belfast, living with her brother and sister and her widowed mother, she was never conscious of any tension between Protestant and Catholic residents of the city, although there were no Catholic families living close to her:

> [Anne] Well, strangely, my mother's closest friend when we were young children, was a Catholic lady and we went as a family and visited each other's homes. ... So these were Catholic girls and a Catholic family and Mrs. Smith's husband died and by that time my mother was expecting Frank. So you see my mother had the third child but they were both left widows. They were very young. But I remember walking [pause] it was quite a walk to where they lived, you know, to visit. We always went to visit their home, so we did, there was never any Catholic/Protestant thing much, we were all people, and we grew up with them and knew them well. And I think with me it has been like that throughout my life because, not in the Ormeau Bakery[15] but after I was married I drifted into full-time office work and it was Catholic girls and boys all the time, you know, and I never had any of those problems [laughs]. (280)

In both Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast the local church was the centre of many social and sporting activities. In the Falls Road neighbourhood, there was a choir and

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[14] Moya Woodside, MO5462, 23 August 1941.

[15] The Ormeau Bakery had a completely Protestant workforce during the years that Anne worked there, from 1939 to 1953.

parish dances and the parish priest also helped to manage the G.A.A.[16] club in the area, where boys played football and hurling and girls played camogie. The association of the Catholic Church and Gaelic games was an important part of the mindset of nationalist areas in Northern Ireland and allowed local clergy to strengthen their social control in a manner that was not necessary for them in the South, where Catholics were a majority and State institutions clearly fostered a Catholic ethos. Other forms of entertainment were connected to local churches, especially the street celebrations that were an intrinsic part of the Catholic Church rituals. Such occasions were celebrated by the whole parish and were also important family days. Marie loved the sense of excitement generated by the Corpus Christi processions, when most people in the Falls Road area followed a statue of the Virgin Mary which was carried through the streets, singing hymns and praying aloud in unison with the clergy of the parish, reinforcing a sense of community:

> [Marie] I belonged to St. Peter's Cathedral, it was a pro-Cathedral then and we had processions around the church, round the streets, you know, and if you had just made your first holy communion you wore your first holy communion dress and veil or your confirmation, you wore the outfit that you wore. And they were big days, they were very big days. … They used to be great big days that you really looked forward to, getting dressed and walking in the procession. … Everybody joined in. I think anything that was going on people joined in because it was sort of the only entertainment they had, you know it was something to look forward to. They didn't have television or going away on holiday. (463, 465 and 467)

Religion was also important to Anne's family and her mother made sure that her children attended church every Sunday. When Anne was seventeen she was permitted to stop going to Sunday school but only on condition that she went to a service at the city's Y.W.C.A.[17] hall instead.

In Dublin, the areas of highest population density in the city generally corresponded to the areas of greatest poverty, particularly on the north side of the city, where large numbers of single-family residences were given over to multi-family tenement accommodation. Clare's mother ran a small grocery shop in the Mountjoy Ward[18] of the city, which had the

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[16] The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded in 1884 by Michael Cusack. As well as overseeing such games as gaelic football, hurling, camogie and handball, it supports activities that are intended to foster gaelic culture and the Irish language.

[17] The Young Women's Christian Association hall where Anne attended services is now run as a hostel, on Lisburn Road, close to Queen's University.

[18] Mountjoy Ward was part of the Dublin No. 2 Electoral Borough, which also included the Ballybough, Clontarf, Drumcondra, North Dock and Raheny wards. The City Councillors for this borough included such

highest percentage of people living in overcrowded conditions, with nearly 57 per cent of the total population of the Ward living in one-room dwellings[19]:

> [Clare] I remember one family, they were living in a large room and I remember going in and seeing mattresses piled on top of each other which were taken down at night. They were young adults, they were not small children, a very large family. … That was in what's now Sean McDermott Street.[20] … I can still see the woman's face but they considered themselves very lucky to have a huge room in an old Victorian house, whatever it was. (27, 29 and 33)

In the city as a whole, there was a decrease in the numbers of persons living in extremely overcrowded conditions between the Census of 1936 and that of 1946. As Appendix 5(3) shows, in the ten-year period the numbers of persons shown as living in dwellings with only one room decreased by 29.74 per cent, while the numbers occupying two room dwellings decreased by 10.99 per cent. The numbers of persons living in three-room dwellings or larger increased. The increase was most notable in the numbers living in four-room dwellings, which rose by 66.72 per cent, while the numbers in three-room dwellings rose by 15.41 per cent. These changes may have had something to do with the slum clearance projects and the greater number of Corporation homes becoming available for tenancies. The Corporation managed to maintain the slum clearance schemes throughout 1939 and 1940 but shortage of materials had put an almost complete halt to building by 1941.[21] The increase of 23.30 per cent in the number of persons living in dwellings of six rooms or more is evidence of the scale of building of middle-class, private housing schemes.

The possibility of buying their own homes was beyond the capacity of most families during the 1930s and 40s, even in middle-class areas, because of the shortage of mortgage finance. It was particularly difficult for working-class families, partly because they would have found it extremely difficult to raise sufficient money for a deposit and partly because they did not have confidence in their ability to keep up payments. The Corporation had

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notable figures as Kathleen Clarke and Alfie Byrne (who both became Lord Mayor) and Jim Larkin. (*Thom's Directory 1940*, p. 1089).

[19] Department of Industry and Commerce, *Register of Population, 1941*. Government Stationery Office, Dublin, 1944, pp. 90-91.

[20] It was also called Sean McDermott Street then and comprised mainly of tenement buildings, although there were a few businesses on the street, including a horse dealer's premises, the St. Mary Magdalen Asylum and the headquarters of the Carpenters' and Joiners' Trade Society. (*Thom's Directory 1939*, p.1411)

[21] Ruth McManus, *Dublin, 1910- 1940: Shaping the City and Suburbs*. Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2002.

instigated a rental-purchase scheme in 1926[22] that allowed tenants to use their rent towards the eventual ownership of their homes but without losing the advantages that accrued to Corporation tenancy, such as the provision of free repair and maintenance. Shortly before the war started, Sheila's parents bought a house in the new development of Marino under this scheme but when Sheila's father suffered a stroke, the opportunity to own their own home was jeopardised:

> [Sheila] They shared a house in Richmond Road[23], and then they bought [pause] theirs was one of the first houses built [pause] Dublin Corporation/Council houses, built by the Town Commissioners[24] in Marino - and you could either rent them or rent/buy them and they rent/bought them and everybody told them they were mad. In those days, you know, you didn't buy a house, you lived in one unless you were very wealthy. But through all her troubles, she continued to buy it, which was, you know, I think a tremendous achievement for her, because they [pause] once Daddy had the stroke, there was little or no money coming in. But she somehow managed to keep on to the house and everybody was saying, you should sell it, but she wouldn't. She was an amazing woman. (11)

Letty and Josie's mother decided to move from the house in the North Strand[25] where they were both born when her health began to suffer as a result of living in a low lying area of Dublin where dampness was prevalent. The family moved to Dowth Avenue[26], which was part of the new estate of Cabra on the north side of the city:

> [Josie] They weren't long built at the time. They were [pause] after the war they got rid of all the tenements, although we didn't come from the tenement houses, there was a lot of clearing out of the city, you see, and all those houses were built at the time. Through Sean T. O'Kelly, he was the man that forged all that along.[27] They rid Dublin of the tenements because there was such devastation in them. So that's how we moved up there, it was a purchased house in Dowth Avenue. There were other

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[22] *Ibid.*

[23] This road ran from Drumcondra Road, one of the main arteries of the north city, down to Ballybough. There was a mixture of houses and business, with the houses ranging from small to medium, indicated by the rateable valuation which ranged from £6 10s to £26. (*Thom's Directory 1940*, pp. 1384-1985)

[24] Sheila was most likely referring to the Town Clerk who acted on behalf of the Corporation. The houses in Marino were leased for 99 years in the rental purchase scheme.

[25] This was a major artery on the north side, leading from Amiens Street to Annesley Bridge.

[26] In Thom's Directory, Dowth Avenue is described as having 60 houses, with rateable valuations of £9 to £10.10s. There were shops at the end of the road that included a pharmacy, a pork butcher, a bakery, a victualler and a drapery store. (*Thom's Directory 1937*, p. 1243.)

[27] Sean T. O'Kelly was T.D. for Dublin North West during the 1930s. He was also an Alderman on Dublin City Council and was the Minister for Local Government and Public Health from 1932 to 1939, the period during which the houses were built in Cabra.

cheaper kinds of houses too, on Attracta Road[28]. (14)

The house was purchased when a small legacy from an uncle allowed Josie's mother to buy out their interest from a previous tenant of the Corporation. The rent paid was intended to cover the eventual purchase of the Corporation's interest, while giving an affordable home to a working class family who might not have qualified for a commercial mortgage, although renting rather than owning property was much more prevalent at the time. For the Dublin Housing Commission's *Report of the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Class of the City of Dublin 1939-43* a survey was carried out of the rent-paying capacity of a random sampling of families. It showed that almost 30 per cent of the total had no income margin at all while another 25 per cent of the families had absolutely minimal levels of income over and above basic subsistence[29]. The survey covered 130,769 persons or 33,411 families, living in a variety of accommodation types, including Corporation cottages, and privately owned tenements. The *Report* concluded that 22,172 dwellings would be needed to re-house families living in unfit or overcrowded conditions and it recognised that many of those families would be unable to afford the economic rent set by the Corporation. Despite representations from a variety of individuals and public bodies, the Corporation was not persuaded to introduce a differential renting system for tenants, even though the core of the corporation's housing problems was at all times linked to the pressing problem of poverty in Dublin.[30]

The precarious nature of tenancy for many working class families was illustrated by the rules governing the house in which Josie's husband's family lived. Her father-in-law was

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[28] The rateable valuation of the houses in St. Attracta's Road varied between £8 and £10, only marginally less than those in Dowth Avenue. There were approximately 340 houses on the road. (*Thom's Directory, 1940*, p. 1393.)

[29] This was defined by the Corporation as the means to feed and clothe a family on the most frugal level. In "Tuberculosis: A Social Survey", Dr. Kidney referred to a discussion with Professor T.W.T. Dillon during which the latter said that the minimum income necessary for the purchase of necessities in 1943 would be at least 18/- per week per adult and 9/- per week per child. In an article entitled "The Social Services in Eire" in *Studies*, Vol. XXXIV, September 1945 pp. 325-336, Professor Dillon referred to the "health standard" of income. This would provide for adequate nutrition but just above starvation level, with a proportionate allowance for rent and other expenses. He suggested that this level was set following an international inquiry and was the standard of living of "Shanghai coolies". He thought that the income required to sustain this level at 1945 prices would be 21/- weekly for an adult and higher, at 23/- per week, for an adolescent in order to maintain healthy growth and development. Children under 15 were assessed at needing an average of 10/- per week and 5/- weekly for children under five years of age.

[30] Diarmaid Ferriter, *'Lovers of Liberty'? Local Government in 20th century Ireland.* National Archives of Ireland, Dublin, 2001.

an engine driver and the house in Great Western Square in Phibsborough[31] belonged to the railway company for which he worked. The right to a tenancy in the house lasted only as long as the employment:

> [Josie] When they came to retirement they had to get out. Oh, indeed, it was dreadful, they had to get out. They only got six months, six months and if they weren't out in six months their furniture was put out on the street. I remember seeing that as a young one, their furniture was put out if they weren't out in the six months. That's the way it was. Then eventually then the railway sold it to the people that were in it. So, I suppose the railway now is regretting it because they're getting any amount of money for them now. (228)

A notable feature of the various inter-war residential developments in Dublin is that they were generally conceived of as catering for people who would be employed in the city centre. Employment opportunities in the locality of the new estates were given scant attention. The focus of design in the estates was on the road network, which would link them to workplaces, rather than on the provision of shops and schools, but for many people dependant on public transport, if their working hours were outside the scheduled bus service there was no provision for them. Mary, Sheila's mother, was forced to leave home nearly two hours in advance of her starting time because she had no transport and she lived some distance away from her workplace:

> [Sheila] I think it was probably very, very hard. I know for a fact that she had to leave Marino at half four in the morning to walk to the Brewery, because there were no buses at that stage, you know, and she certainly never rode a bike in her life.[32] So she walked, and she probably got the bus back. ... I think she probably had to be in for six, but maybe it was six thirty, and as far as I know, she did three hours. But it meant getting up at half past four, and leaving the baby at home, so Gwenny, my eldest sister, more or less was half rearing me. … At the time that Mammy went to work, Gwenny was fourteen. (21 and 23)

Access to public transport was frequently curtailed by lack of money. When discussing with Josie and Letty their custom of handing their unopened pay packets directly to their mother, Josie told me that she would often walk home after a day's work from Grafton Street to Cabra[33] (a journey of about four miles) because she did not feel she could

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[31] Great Western Square is off the North Circular Road, a major road circling the north side of Dublin city, from the North Strand at one end ending at the Phoenix Park at the other.

[32] The Guinness management provided a bus service for workers like Mary and Catherine, who started work before public transport was available, but this did not become available until the late 1950s.

[33] Grafton Street was then an upmarket shopping street on the south side of Dublin, linking St. Stephens Green and College Green. It is about four miles from there to Cabra, a working class area on the north side of the city.

take the bus fare without her mother's permission. After she had given her mother the pay packet, the amount she was given back for her own expenses often did not cover the full bus fare:

> [Josie] I always remember, I would walk sometimes from Grafton Street at lunchtime down to the, like, it was the Pillar[34] that was there at the time, and I'd get the number 10 bus as far as Doyle's Corner. I'd have to get out at Doyle's Corner[35] because I wouldn't have the extra halfpenny to bring me up to Cabra. It was three halfpence to Cabra - a penny and a halfpenny and your penny would bring you to Doyle's Corner and if you hadn't got the other halfpenny, you'd get out and you'd walk. (207)

She would hope to meet a neighbour who was also going home and get a lift home on the crossbar of his bicycle because that would save her the cost of the bus fare.

Measures such as the Emergency Powers (Motor Spirit Rationing) (No.1) (Order) 1939, which was passed on 13th September, gave the government power to ration petrol by means of coupons and licences that were issued only to authorised dealers. Bicycles were particularly useful as a means of transport at a time when petrol rationing curtailed access to public and private transport:

> [Clare] When my husband bought his first car, it had been on blocks all through the war period. It was a Wolseley and it was in mint condition. It had never been used because petrol was not allowed for private cars. It wasn't our problem, we didn't have cars, we used bicycles. And I got a bicycle when I was twelve, a big old-fashioned bicycle, second-hand, and I was delighted. (55)

Clare used her bicycle to get around Dublin, even travelling from Phibsborough to Rathfarnham on one occasion, a journey of about ten miles from one side of the city to the other. Clare and other women remarked on the difficulty involved in cycling during the blackout in the winter, when it would be quite difficult to see the road ahead. The blackout regulations required that bicycle lamps had to be dipped and pointing down to the ground, rather than straight ahead, so that light could not be seen from above, although the women insisted that they had felt safer in the dark in those days than they would now on well lit streets.

In September 1940, Moya Woodside wrote that Dublin was much better lit than

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[34] This was Nelson's Pillar, a Dublin landmark in O'Connell Street, the main street of the city, until it was demolished by a bomb in 1966.

[35] Doyle's Corner is at the junction of North Circular Road and Phibsborough Road. There is an old public house called 'John Doyle's' on the corner. (*Thom's Directory for the year 1935*, Dublin, 1935, p.897.)

Belfast, despite the Dublin women's perception of how dark the city was in the blackout:

> In Dublin for a few days of bright lights and gaiety before settling down to the gloom of an Ulster winter. The streets after dark seem like daylight to our unaccustomed eyes – electric signs flashing, shop windows ablaze, large street lamps, cars speeding along the streets. One can actually see what people are wearing! … But why is this neutral and so far unthreatened city putting up air-raid shelters and running classes in First Aid and A.R.P.?[36]

Although the Dublin government did not consider it likely that the state would be a target for bombing raids, given its neutral status, in the course of 1940 gas masks were issued to 370,000 people throughout the twenty-six counties. Despite being the capital city, Dublin had virtually no active defences and had bomb shelter accommodation for fewer than 30,000 people. The most widespread precaution against bombing raids was the imposition of a blackout during the hours of darkness. This was regulated by the Emergency Powers (Control of Lights) Order 1939, which was passed by the Dáil on 16th October. When Woodside returned to Dublin in January of the following year, she noticed that preparations for war were further advanced, although there still did not seem to be any sense of urgency:

> Saw 3 air-raid shelters in O'Connell St. with wooden doors which were securely padlocked. It takes quite a time before you realise the cause of the different atmosphere in the streets – there are no uniforms. Blessed relief. Once down here, in this peace and plenty of normal living, you understand why the people of Eire want to stay neutral as long as possible. Coming out of the pictures at 11 p.m. was like awakening from a bad dream, to find again a normal world of light and colour, and carefree crowds strolling in the streets. True, the big standard lights have been dimmed a little on the top since I last law Dublin 4 months ago, but otherwise everything is as brilliant as before.[37]

Writing in May 1941, Dorothy Bates shared Woodside's perception of Dublin as being much brighter and more appealing than Belfast, although ultimately she decided she was not envious of Dublin's apparent affluence.

> I loved Dublin, which seemed much more attractive than Belfast. The hotel (the Gresham) was rather palatial in O'Connell St. – rather like Versailles inside – with chandeliers, murals mouldings, but less expensive than I expected. It worked out at 12/6 for bed and breakfast. … It looked queer to see iced cakes and newspaper posters. I went to the Abbey Theatre to "The Money Doesn't Matter". A comedy, but quite serious with an Irish setting. … It was strange to come out at 11.00 and find street lamps full on and lighted shop windows and buses. Yet I had a feeling of depression – I couldn't live in such a precarious peace – purchased as it were, at other people's expense, while they were suffering.[38]

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[36] Moya Woodside, MO5462, 16th September 1940.
[37] *Ibid.*, 31st January 1941.
[38] Dorothy Bates, MO5245, 6th May 1941.

One of the first measures of the war taken by the Westminster government in relation to rationing was the Motor Fuel Rationing Order 1939, which was passed on 3rd September and applied to Northern Ireland as well as the rest of Britain. This allowed a basic ration of petrol and a supplementary allowance. On 7th September, the Stormont Parliament passed the Civil Defence Act (Northern Ireland) 1939 by which the Home Secretary was empowered to delegate officers or departments of the Government of Northern Ireland to carry out many war functions, including the imposition of blackout arrangements.

Moya Woodside noted that travelling to work was increasingly difficult for workers and shoppers, although she escaped some of the worst restrictions because her husband was a surgeon and doctors were exempted from the petrol rationing. In her diary, she drew attention to several aspects of the problem, which would not have been confined to Belfast:

> Everywhere one hears remarks: 'oh, I'm living out at so-and-so now' or 'I have to get up at 6 to be in time at the office' etc. The strain thrown on the transport facilities by all those unaccustomed commuters is terrific. Three and four buses run where formerly one sufficed; and buses have evidently been borrowed from Dublin, Glasgow and even Sheffield, judging from the licence plates. I believe that the railway stations at night are like a football match. Numbers of people, especially the lower-paid workers, must find it impossible to manage when railway or bus season tickets are suddenly added to their expenses. Then, too, if travel to and from work takes perhaps an hour or 1½ hours instead of 15 minutes, and with maybe billets instead of a home, discontent and weariness is bound to be manifest.[39]

Elizabeth had to leave her home on the Falls Road at six o'clock in the morning to walk to the railway station, where she caught the train for Bangor. Her N.A.A.F.I. office in Chichester Street[40] was bombed in the April 1941 raid and all of the staff were moved to Bangor. It was not possible to stay in the town because of a shortage of accommodation and she and other staff members who lived in the city were forced to spend long hours every day just travelling to and from work.

The failure of the Northern Ireland government to pay any more than rudimentary attention to civil defence in the early years of the war meant that when Belfast was bombed in

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[39] Moya Woodside, MO5462, 3rd May 1941.

[40] Chichester Street runs from Donegall Square North to Oxford Street. It is named after Arthur Chichester, the progenitor of the Donegall dynasty, after whom Belfast's central square and streets are named. (Marcus Patten, *Central Belfast. An Historical Gazeteer*, Western Architectural Heritage Society, Belfast, 1993, p. 61.)

April and May 1941, there were only shelters available for approximately one quarter of the population of the city. Despite the concentration of industry in Belfast's docklands, for example, the large number of ordinary residents in the area had virtually no protection.[41] This compared with the situation in Edinburgh, where shelters for one third of the population had been provided by October 1939, using trenches, basements and tunnels under existing buildings, 13,585 Anderson domestic shelters and blast walls constructed from sand bags. Later in the war, Morrison shelters were also supplied for the use of civilians. These were steel cages intended to take the place of a kitchen table but it was soon discovered that many of Edinburgh's building were either too old or dilapidated to take their weight.[42]

By June 1940, when British cities were being bombed and it was clear that Belfast was a potential target, Belfast homes had been given only four thousand free domestic shelters, out of a potential six thousand homes that were eligible to receive them. Although funds were allocated for the construction of several public shelters, these were very unpopular and generally not used for their intended purpose. Jean's husband purchased an Anderson shelter for their home but like many people, she had ambivalent feelings about its security:

> [Jean] It was a big [pause] it was about the size of that rug only twice as much across [indicating rug about 8 feet x 6 feet] and it was sitting in the living room. We crawled under it. … They were very small; you had practically no room. … Some people felt secure, others felt trapped under them. You know, too, if the house fell down on some of them - the walls - you'd be smothered. (37, 39 and 41)

The shoddy quality of the housing in working class areas was reflected in the relatively high number of people killed outright in the poorer areas. Even in more middle class areas, like that where Jean and her family lived, there were significant numbers of fatalities:

> [Jean] There was a coal merchant lived [pause] I think he had eight of a family, four girls and four boys, and seven of them were killed and only one lived from that night. … The following morning I got up, very tired, and went to the window to look into the garden and the place was all gone. My mother's house was gone too, and the strange thing, there was a pantry [pause] I can see it yet, there was part of a windowsill sitting and part of the house was still standing with no room left behind it, and there was a bright blue teapot sitting on the windowsill [laughs]. (41 and 43)

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[41] Brian Barton, *The Blitz. Belfast in the War Years*, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1992, p. 100.
[42] Jeffery, *This Present Emergency*, pp. 119-120.

Fortunately, Jean's mother had been staying overnight with friends and she escaped the bombing but the shock of seeing the destruction of her mother's home stayed with Jean for many years.

Because of the danger of bombing, people had to look at their homes in a new way, assessing them for their capacity to protect the family. Anne's home was on the Donegall Road, in a very vulnerable position:

> [Anne] … right up opposite it was Maguire and Paterson's Match Factory[43], a big, big building, just opposite to it on the other side, which meant that as soon as the sirens went we had to get out immediately because if an incendiary had hit the match factory, well it would have blown the Donegall Road[44] to kingdom come. … No, we didn't go into shelters; we always went up [the Black Mountain]. There was no shelter really [pause] if there was any danger and you thought there might be something and you didn't have to go out [pause] everybody had something. We had a place underneath the stairs, for instance. (16 and 18)

It was not strictly true that there were no shelters but Anne clearly shared the general antipathy of the Belfast population to the public shelters that were provided. They were considered to be too small for their intended purpose and were frequently used by 'courting couples' or as public conveniences, so that people were very reluctant to enter them.[45] In any case, the shelters were too few in number and too flimsily constructed to offer adequate protection against heavy bombing.[46] Moya Woodside noted other disadvantages in the construction of the public shelters:

> When in one of the poorest districts of the city this morning I noticed that the air-raid shelters have mostly been built at the edge of narrow pavements (in some streets barely 3 ft. wide) thus blocking out light and air from the houses opposite. The effect, in an already narrow street, is oppressive and to judge from the smell, they are being used as a public convenience![47]

Several days later, Woodside was expressing her frustration with the failure of the local authorities to keep householders properly informed about civil defence:

> If the propaganda authorities want something sensible to do, why don't they survey results of different methods of window protection in already bombed areas and publish their findings for the benefit of those in remoter parts? As all but the vaguest

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[43] Maguire and Paterson's also had a large factory in Dublin, at Church Street in the north inner city. Like the factory in Belfast, it was in the centre of a densely inhabited residential area but the local authorities took no precautions in either city to secure the safety of the people who lived near such potentially dangerous plants.
[44] Donegall Road runs from Shaftesbury Road to the Falls Road, linking to Sandy Row along the way.
[45] Barton, *The Blitz*, pp. 61-62.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[47] Woodside, 21st March 1940.

> reference to raids and their effects is chopped out of letters from England, people over here are completely in the dark as to what is effective and what isn't.[48]

Bombing could create other hazards for residents of Belfast, as Anne discovered when she was going out to work one morning:

> [Anne] … one night coming back over the Albert Bridge[49] on the bicycle, you know there were tramlines in those days? Well a land mine had fallen on Cromac Square[50]; … I had this racing type bike coming over and the front wheel, the narrow wheels you see, went in to a tram line, into the dent the tram line made and I shot over into the hole the landmine made in Cromac Square. And the army you see, they were all there, and so a few of the soldiers got in the hole and got me out. And I didn't even know where the bike was [pause] but I could see the soldiers with the bike between their knees taking the buckle out of the wheel and everything. (164)

Road accidents were a common feature of the blackout because few city people were used to getting around in darkness. Road signs were also obscured or removed, with the intention of causing confusion in the event of invasion.

In his account of the Blitz in Belfast Brian Barton refers to the preference that many Belfast people showed for the safety of the hills, rather than staying in shelters in the city. Just as Anne's family used to go to the Black Mountain for safety in a bombing raid, they regularly joined hundreds of other people who obviously did not feel any safer there than in their homes:

> [Anne] Well, they weren't sleeping really, just all standing, watching out. They had put up sort of tents, sort of pole things with what do you call them, big tarpaulins over them, because it would be raining sometimes, you see. And people were just all crowding in, just standing, keeping one another warm, type of thing. And then the 'All Clear'. As soon as the 'All Clear' would sound, we'd go the way back. When you got back down it was hardly worth while getting into bed because the first thing you'd want was a cup of tea and then it was work time. You'd been out half the night. (172)

One less obvious outcome of sheltering in the hillsides surrounding the city was that shared danger also contributed to the development of something resembling communal harmony, although subsequent events were to prove the transient nature of this effect:

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[48] *Ibid.*, 25th March 1940.
[49] The Albert Bridge was first built in 1831 and was known as the 'Halfpenny Bridge' because of the toll charged. The bridge that Anne was crossing was erected in 1890 after two arches of the original bridge had collapsed. (Patten, *Central Belfast. An Historical Gazeteer*, p. 4.)
[50] Cromac Square runs off Cromac Street, which links Victoria Street to the Ormeau Road in Belfast's Markets area. (Patten, *Central Belfast*, p. 91.)

> An Independent Unionist MP for the Shankill Road spoke of the concern of the people coming together and having something in common, their lives in danger. 'The Catholics and the Protestants are going up to the Cave Hill together and are now talking to each other, they are sleeping in the same sheugh, below tree or in the same barn. They are saying the same thing, that the Government is no good, that it is rotten to the core, that they are all 'safe'.'[51]

In areas where people had been settled for many years, the threat of being bombed brought them closer together, even where they had little in common with each other:

> [Jean] We were fairly young at the time, they were all middle aged when we [pause] I remember about three or four o'clock in the morning, in between the bombing you would get a lapse of maybe ten or fifteen minutes, maybe longer. There was a man next door [pause] there was a knock, and there was the husband at the door with a jug of tea. ... My neighbour at the other side, they were older too, than us, and her husband, he was a bit panicky. Years afterwards, we laughed because they had two sons and a daughter and as soon as the sirens went, he said - and her name was Minnie - and he said, Minnie get next door and bring that baby in next door, bring that baby in to us here. He thought she would be safer with them than with us. (74 and 76)

On the other hand, Jean also remembers people who were not so concerned for the well being of their neighbours:

> [Jean] You know, at that time, we didn't have a car, and we had bought the house so we had very little money then, but there was quite a lot of people had cars and we called them the hillbillies. The minute the sirens went, they were in their cars and they were away to the hills. We said those were the hillbillies when at one o'clock you'd hear the sirens going and they started up. ... Certainly, we were never offered a lift. (70 and 72)

Many neighbourhood networks were disrupted by the dispersal of people following the destruction of their homes in the bombing raids:

> [Susan] In that particular house where I lodged, she had another lodger, a lady working in the factories had been bombed out and she had very reluctantly agreed to take her in, and this poor woman, really she was wretched because she was from a different part of the town altogether, and she didn't know any of the people round about and she missed her neighbours and she missed her own home as well. The lady that we were lodging with was really very eccentric and wasn't very kind to this other lady. I don't think she felt she came from a good background and that kind of thing. (80)

Susan's story was echoed by Moya Woodside's observation about the 'culture shock' experienced by bombed out families from the slum areas who were temporarily re-housed in middle class homes. The families who played host were often equally stunned by the

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[51] Denis Smyth, *Days of Unity in the Docklands of Sailortown, 1907-1969*, Portlight Press Project, Belfast, 1992, p.22.

disparity in lifestyles, although Woodside believed that it was about time for exposure of the extreme poverty and poor housing in Belfast's slum areas. She welcomed the fact that complacency and/or ignorance had been shattered in the course of the Blitz:

> My mother telephoned to say that she took in 8 evacuees last night, 2 mothers and 6 children. Says one mother is about to have another baby any minute; that they are all filthy; the smell in the room is terrible; they refuse all food except bread and tea; the children have made puddles all over the house, etc. She is terribly sorry for them, and is kindliness itself, but finds this revelation of how the 'other half' lives rather overpowering. … Went up to see my mother, who has now discovered to her horror that several of the evacuee children are T.B., and 2 have skin diseases on their hands.[52]

Woodside's comments about the Belfast evacuees were similar to the problems outlined in a report called *Town Children through Country Eyes*, which was prepared by the Women's Institute from the experiences in 1,700 of their branches. The report concluded that:

> … the dirt and low standard of living of the evacuees from big industrial cities of Leeds and Hull has been an eye-opener and an unpleasant shock to the inhabitants of an agricultural county like Lincolnshire, who had no idea that such terrible conditions existed.[53]

Official policy on evacuation throughout the United Kingdom was based on the assumption that the poorer sections of the city populations would be the most likely to panic under air attack. Even though they were classified as 'priority evacuation classes', parents of children from slum areas were expected to provide their children with a very specific range of clothing and equipment, most of which was beyond both their income and their experience. Children being evacuated from Edinburgh were given a list of essential items that included 'handkerchiefs, a toothbrush, a face cloth, pyjamas and house shoes or rubber shoes'.[54]

Anne believed that because people had to take houses wherever they could be found, it had the effect of breaking up many neighbourhoods and the community spirit did not recover until years after the war. She also believed that in the long run this was in the interests of the people, because the Housing Trust and later the Housing Executive replaced the destroyed homes with better buildings. While the German bombing raids on Belfast in April and May 1941 destroyed more than 3,000 houses and severely damaged a further 53,000, this catastrophe provided the impetus for a major programme of slum-clearance in

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[52] Woodside, MO5462, 20th April 1941.
[53] Quoted in Stuart Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour. The Hidden History of the Home Front 1939-1945*. Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 2001, p. 46.
[54] Jeffery, *This Present Emergency*, p. 12.

the city. In 1944 a Housing Bill was introduced which provided for new subsidies and for the establishment of the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, which was originally given the dual objectives of providing employment and improving housing conditions. Objectors in the Unionist Party saw these aims as a reflection on the competence and integrity of the local authorities. They succeeded in obtaining a number of assurances from the Government, which ensured that the Trust was to be no more than an auxiliary to the local authorities without power to coerce them into action. The Minister of Finance decreed that the Housing Trust's costs must determine the rents. Everything was to be paid for out of the subsidies received from the Stormont government. The task of providing housing was to be shared between the private sector, building almost entirely for sale rather than for rent; the local authorities and the Housing Trust.[55] Unlike other housing authorities in the United Kingdom, the Northern Ireland Housing Trust could not spread the rent-load over old housing stock, built when costs were not as high, nor could they use the rate fund to subsidise rents. This meant that when post-war building costs began to rise sharply and interest rates rose the Trust was never able to charge rents low enough to meet the needs of the worse-housed and lowest-paid and it was forced to build to a lower standard than that adopted in Britain.[56]

For many working-class women the struggle to maintain their homes was very similar, regardless of the area they lived in, in either Belfast or Dublin. Anne and Marie both remembered their parents doing all the house maintenance themselves, because paying someone to do it would have been a luxury beyond their means. Anne's widowed mother would have had a great deal in common with Sheila's mother in Dublin, who was well able to take advantage of the little outside help that was available:

> [Sheila] I think she was pleased to have her own home but I think it was probably also the only house they could afford you know, because of it being a Corporation house, the maintenance, if anything went wrong. That was another thing, my devious mother [laughs] if she wanted the bedroom decorated she caused the chimney breast, the chimney to go on fire and the Corporation would come out and examine it, and the chimney breast would be a little bit cracked so she'd have to paper the room. (145)

As well as being the most overcrowded dwellings in the County Borough of Dublin, the majority of the houses without a private water supply or fixed bath were to be found in

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[55] Brett, *Housing a Divided Community*, p.26.

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the 'inner city' area, e.g. Arran Quay and Ballybough Wards on the north side of the city and Merchant's Quay and Pembroke East Wards on the south side (see Appendix 5(3) for details). While the lack of adequate, or even indoor sanitary facilities made life difficult for every member of a family living in poor housing conditions, it was especially difficult for women, particularly those with young children. As Appendix 5(4) indicates, many dwellings, whether they were houses, flats or rooms in tenements, still had only minimal sanitary facilities. Flats and tenements constituted 43.54 per cent of the number of private dwellings and 75 per cent of these had shared sanitary facilities, compared to 35 per cent in houses. As late as 1946, nearly 40 per cent of private dwellings had no indoor lavatory while very few working class homes had bathrooms, making the public bathhouse a feature of the urban landscape in both Belfast and Dublin. Bathhouses had swimming baths as well as bathrooms, which could be hired for short periods of time. Some families filled a tin bath in front of the fire but this involved heating so much water and carrying buckets from the fire or cooker to the bath that it was often not considered worth the bother. While the lack of adequate, or even indoor sanitary facilities made life difficult for every member of a family living in poor housing conditions, it was especially difficult for women, particularly those with young children.

Housework was very hard for women who had few labour saving devices. Water had to be heated for washing clothes, most of which was done by hand in a bath with a scrubbing board. This involved lifting heavy pots of water on and off the range or cooker before emptying them into whatever container held the clothes, as Catherine explained. She had moved into a new Corporation house in Drimnagh in 1942 when her husband became ill and they could no longer afford the rent on the house where they lived previously, which she thought was a much better house. She had six children and her daily routine was difficult, even before her husband died in 1944 and she had to take a cleaning job in Guinness's Brewery:

> [Catherine] That's it exactly now what I done [pause] clean up all the rooms and change the bedclothes and anything that had to be washed, throw them off to be washed. And things like that. And I had no washing machine, the washing all had to be done in the big zinc bath, and a scrubbing board which I still have, for washing, and I'd do the clothes in that. … I'd have to heat the water … I'd rub them up and down, and leave them for a while to soak in, you know, and keeping putting in more hot water and rub up and down, like. [Laughs] (403,405 and 412)

Anne's widowed mother was out at work at her cleaning job all day and she allocated household chores to her two daughters and her son. Because of the pressure on her own time, she was very strict about ensuring that those chores were completed within a tight schedule:

> [Anne] We had a mangle and I had to turn it while she put the clothes through. Thursday was ironing night and I had that to do. We had pulley lines, you know, for the clothes. Oh no, as I say, they don't know about hard work now, so they don't. My mother had a really hard life but we all had to help, our jobs were all laid out for us. She had to go back to do an office always on a Monday night. She washed on Tuesday nights so Thursday night was ironing night and that was my job. I had the ironing to do, even when I would be eighteen, nineteen and maybe [pause] I used to say to my mother I've got a date and she'd say that's all right, after you get the ironing done. (64)

Electric washing machines became available in Ireland in the 1920s but they were prohibitively expensive as well as being inconveniently large and unwieldy to use and it was not until the late 1960s that they were looked upon as a necessity for average homes. Washing clothes was a difficult household task and many advertisements for a range of products alluded to this in their imagery and texts, including frequent references to 'times of extra work and strain'. Newspaper features aimed at a female readership stressed that it was a woman's duty to make the most of the raw materials available to her to keep herself and her home looking attractive, particularly at a time of crisis. Many advertisements for household services (such as carpet cleaning) were written in the guise of news columns and 'household hints' about the most effective ways of coping with the shortages. While the following paragraph is taken from a newspaper article published in Éire, the content and tone were reproduced in similar features in Northern Irish journals and were applied equally to food preparation, personal grooming and housework as tasks for which women were deemed to be responsible. The implication was clear that women who failed to 'make do and mend' efficiently were guilty of letting down their country as well as their families:

> The woman who is going to make or retain a reputation for a fashionable appearance in 1941 is she whose own natural flair tells how to make best use of old and familiar things, and how to place small innovations so that they will be of the best possible advantage to the whole picture. From this, I dare to prophecy a new art will develop, the art of improvisation, and its developments will be a fascinating and absorbing pursuit for all those who are not too lazy or unenterprising to give serious consideration to a matter of such vital personal interest. [57]

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[57] "Of Interest to Women" column, *Irish Times*, 7th March 1941.

Marie's home on the Falls Road was typical of artisans' dwellings in both Belfast and Dublin. Individual fireplaces heated the rooms, but having a fire in the bedroom was a special treat reserved for cases of illness, because the cost of fuel was too high for most working-class families to have fires anywhere other than the family room downstairs. The main kitchen was where the family lived and ate and where the mother cooked the meals on the range. The scullery had an earthenware sink or 'jawbox'[58] with one coldwater tap – there was no hot running water in any of the houses. There were no plumbed-in baths and toilets were usually in outhouses in the back yard. Local employers with large numbers of workers owned many of the houses and tenants could expect to have the rent deducted from their wages before they received them.

Only the largest and wealthiest homes had any form of central heating, and this meant that a common daily chore was cleaning out and lighting the fires or stoves that provided heat. While girls were expected to help with cooking and cleaning, carrying coal and turf to and from household bunkers was generally a task for the boys in a family. However, the household dirt that resulted from burning fires was a constant source of extra work for women, who were primarily in charge of domestic cleanliness. Coal dust has a tendency to leave a fine deposit over every surface of the room in which the fire is burned, not only leading to extra cleaning work, but also eventually damaging the various textiles in the room. When coal had to be replaced by turf, as a consequence of wartime rationing[59], the problem was exacerbated, because turf dust was even finer and more difficult to control.

Due to the shortage of coal and the subsequent restrictions on gas and electricity, the Dublin government commissioned the Turf Development Board to look into the mechanisation of turf collection so that it could be exploited on a commercial scale, as opposed to the very unwieldy and inefficient methods used prior to the Emergency[60]. Turf dust was also burned in order to generate electricity. By 1942, in most homes in Dublin, coal had been replaced by turf, which was fetched directly from the storage area in the Phoenix

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[58] Paul Hamilton, *Up the Shankill*. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1979, p.16.
[59] The British Government decided to cut Irish fuel imports early in 1941.
[60] Most turf was collected from small plots belonging to families and was cut manually and then dried out during the summer. Because of the uncertain climate in Irish summers, turf could often be quite damp or even wet in the winter and did not give off much heat. There had been some efforts even before the Emergency to devise methods that would give more reliable fuel, but not co-ordinated by the government.

Park[61] or delivered by local horse and cart drivers. It had been brought to Dublin in open rail carriages and stacked in the open air to dry. It had generally not been dried for a sufficient length of time to make it burn efficiently and people developed various strategies for helping it along:

> [Josie] It was always soaking, most people couldn't use it, it would be so smoky. … . I remember a man, he worked in C.I.E. and whatever part of it he was in he'd pick up the bits of coal from the trains, and I remember he was using the lining of his coat, to put bits of coal down the lining of the coat and he'd be walking from side to side with the coal. … He'd be bringing home the coal from the railway for a bit of fire. That's the only way he could get a bit of coal and everybody used to see him coming. (341, 343 and 344)

When turf began to replace coal as the domestic fuel the government issued an order to fix the price of turf at 64 shillings per ton[62], but the poor often had to put up with overcharging for their quantities in many instances. By 1942, necessitous families were so in need of help that the government decided to introduce the winter fuel scheme for necessitous households in November 1942. This ensured that one hundredweight of turf was supplied weekly to needy families, either free of charge or at rates ranging from one shilling to two shillings per hundredweight, which compared very favourably with the fixed retail prices of commercial suppliers. In practice, 66 per cent of recipients were charged at the rate of 6d or less for their fuel. Moreover, the operation of the scheme led to the opening of more local depots throughout the city and although the collection of fuel from these centres was frequently a trying experience for many people, they reduced the need to travel and improved the distribution network.[63]

Another drawback of turf was that it was frequently flea ridden, as Clare and other women recalled. Clare's mother sent the family's bed linen to a laundry for cleaning, and she recalled how the white sheets were often covered with tiny blood spots where the fleas had bitten sleepers:

> [Clare] But with the turf came fleas, by the million. Everybody suffered from the fleas. We became expert at checking our blankets at night. We would look at them before we got into bed and you might find two or [pause]. … No, they would have

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[61] The Phoenix Park comprised 1,760 acres of woodland which had been designated as a public park in the reign of Charles II. (*Thom's Directory 1940*, p. 1079)
[62] Emergency Powers (Control of Prices) Order No. 106 of 1941.
[63] Gerard Fee, *The Effects of World War II on Dublin's Low-Income Families 1939-1945*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College Dublin, 1996, p. 145.

been in the house from the turf. No, I don't think we lit fires in the bedrooms; it wouldn't [pause] because Irish people were not accustomed to heat in the bedrooms. But the fleas would get into the bed, probably on our clothes. They were just endemic. Because of this turf, they lived in it, and everybody suffered from them and we used to squash them between our thumbs and fingers, our thumbnails. We became expert at finding them because otherwise you would be bitten. (42 and 44)

In Belfast, coal was available in sufficient amounts for domestic consumption because of the accumulation of reserves before the war. The Divisional Coal Officer controlled retail prices and set rations for the domestic consumer, but there was no real shortage, due to the maintenance of regular imports from Britain.[64]

Restrictions on gas and electricity affected cooking just as much as the shortage of rationed foods. Many households used a trivet over their turf fire, on which a kettle could be left to boil. Letty remembered that her mother used the 'glimmer' of gas left in the system to keep her teapot warm because she couldn't bear to be without a pot of tea. The glimmer men[65] were officers of local gas companies, whose job was to check that the regulations concerning gas usage were strictly observed. Letty's sister, Josie, remembered being sent out by her mother to watch for the Glimmer Man so that she could be warned if he was coming to her house and ensure the gas cooker was cool if he came in. The Glimmer Man also assisted in checking that blackout regulations were enforced. The Department of Supplies issued newspaper advertisements advising on alternative means of cooking, making use of easily obtained objects:

> [Clare] During this period, my mother was very skillful at cooking in unconventional fashion with what we called a 'sawdust' cooker. It consisted of a strong biscuit tin, which was actually square. It was given out by Jacobs Biscuits[66] through shops. You would try and find one of these and you would fill it with sawdust. In the middle while you were filling it with sawdust you would put down a very strong bottle. My brother reminded me it was a champagne bottle; we didn't drink champagne but that's what it was. So then the sawdust was packed tightly around this bottle in this twelve-inch square tin and dampened and through some method, it became congealed, I suppose, and then it was ignited and it burnt very slowly, in a manner like a slow cooker and it was extremely efficient. Apparently, there were other systems known as

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[64] John Blake, *Northern Ireland In the Second World War*. Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1956, pp. 91-93.

[65] The 'Glimmer Man' was not an official title but it became widely used in both Northern Ireland and Éire and the impact of the job on the public imagination in Dublin is evidenced by the number of public houses in the city that are called 'The Glimmer Man'.

[66] W.R. Jacob & Co. Ltd. was a large biscuit manufacturer based at 28 Bishop Street, Dublin. The company was controlled by the Jacob family, although J.P.Fox was the managing director during the Emergency, with W.F. Bewley as Company Secretary. (*Thom's Directory 1941*, p. 1104.)

> hay box cooking, for keeping food warm, because gas was rationed in the Dublin area. You got one hour for cooking and then you must turn off the system and people [pause] the glimmer men went around checking for gas, whether it had been used in the off period. It was extremely limited in the amount you could use every day so this haybox system would keep food warm where people came in for a late dinner or whatever. (11)

Home entertainment tended to be of a communal nature, with the family based in one room, probably because it was easier and cheaper to heat in the winter. Marie's parents believed in keeping their children busy and she has very happy memories of her father's efforts to make sure that they read as widely as possible:

> [Marie] Sit together, yes, around the fire and knit or [pause] my mother used to make rugs out of pieces of cotton. … My father was very insistent that we read and he bought us [pause] he used to cut vouchers out of the newspapers and send away for books. … He could read and write but very limited, but he was very insistent that we had a good education as far as he was able and he bought us a range of Dickens's books and he used to send away to the newspapers for different offers that were on, of books. (419 and 421)

Marie used to wonder why her mother did not join in some of the family activities, particularly those at night, and she said it was not until she had her own family that she realised that her mother had always been busy and would not have had the time.

The close community spirit was not confined to neighbourly assistance in times of trouble but it also extended to communal activities that involved all the women and children in a street:

> [Marie] We had a great time when we were young. We were playing together in the streets. We used to play all the street games and the women used to come out and sit on a chair outside the door and just watch all the kids in the street. And in some streets, they used to play bingo, but it wasn't called bingo it was called 'housey-housey' and there was a few streets and they used to come out to the doors and I suppose they paid a few pence and then, they got these cards and they played 'housey-housey' in the streets in the summer time. (491)

Delivery vans and carts were a common feature of the streets in both Belfast and Dublin. Since few people at the time had refrigerators, storing food could be problematic, especially in warm weather, and shopping had to be done frequently, even daily. A regular delivery of perishable foods like milk, eggs, meat and bread allowed women some relief from the pressure of having to shop every day:

> [Marie] Well, we had people coming around the streets with carts, with the milk and with vegetables, and oh yes, with bread. My Uncle Tommy was her breadman. And they came round the street with the big cans in the back of the cart; two big cans and you'd go out with a great big jug and fill it up with milk. … I don't remember us having a larder. I don't remember how she would have kept it cool. … I remember she used to make potatoes and butter and fried herrings. I always loved that. … Ardglass [pause] Ardglass herrings. The man used to come round the street with them on the cart as well. (441, 445, 447 and 449)

Anne was the only one who remembered wartime vacations and that was because the wartime conditions made the memory more vivid for her:

> [Anne] I never would have known the South or saw all the beauty of it if it hadn't been that we could go there. My husband and I, we cycled the whole of Co. Wicklow during the war. We took the bikes of course on the train, then you see to Dublin. And there were a lot of Dublin fellows, you see, came up to work in the aircraft factories and all here. And there was one [pause] that friend of mine who as I said was a sergeant, a man from Dublin was living with her daddy, just from Monday to Friday like, he went home to Dublin at the weekends. But his wife had a nice boarding house in Bray, so that's where we went for our holidays and we left every morning early and we would cycle so much of Wicklow. Sometimes we stayed over and sometimes we came back and I wouldn't have missed those holidays for anything. (144)

Moya Woodside and her husband were able to travel away from the routes served only by public transport because of the petrol allowance his job afforded him and this made it possible for her to see less developed areas of Éire. They spent several wartime holidays in a luxury hotel in Donegal,[67] where they met other people from Northern Ireland who were in a position to escape the privations of war for a time:

> This hotel provides an extraordinary oasis in a wartime world. Catering must be a nightmare (for geographic reasons alone – 135 miles from Belfast, 215 from Dublin, no other towns and a scanty and uncertain train service) yet food remains at pre-war luxury level; and a band plays during tea and dinner and later for dancing; people golf solemnly most of the day and bridge with equal seriousness at night. All around are sand dunes, mountains, sea and the poverty stricken country people, whom one does not dare to approach because of being ashamed (to speak for myself) of staying in such a place. (3rd September 1940)

[67] Woodside did not name the hotel or its location and I have been unable to identify a hotel in Donegal that fitted her description.

Clare's family enjoyed the mystery train and coach tours organized by C.I.E., which were a regular part of her childhood. The tours had to be suspended during the Emergency because of the shortage of fuel:

> [Clare] We didn't take family holidays. My father took us once, before the war, to Balbriggan, took three of us and after that, there were no long holidays. We used to take days out, mystery tours. Now the mystery tours would have been before the war as well, to Northern Ireland, which were lovely. (73)

The impact of the war on holidays seems to have been restricted to the practical inconveniences that arose from petrol rationing because travel around Ireland became difficult. Even if a family did have a private car, it was virtually impossible to get petrol for pleasure trips. Travel outside the country was restricted and travel passes were mainly issued for reasons related to work or family emergencies. Without a tradition of travelling past Ireland and Britain for pleasure, the lack of access to continental Europe was not a hardship.

Conclusion

The impact of the war on housing policy was manifestly greater in Belfast than in Dublin, where the major slum clearances were carried out in the 1930s. Not only were many of Belfast's slum areas destroyed in the bombing raids, necessitating the implementation of major public house building programmes, but Northern Ireland's role in supporting the Allied war effort helped to secure the funding from the Westminster government that was essential to the development of the Stormont government's plans. Although official housing policies did make differences to the lives of many ordinary people in Belfast and in Dublin, the primary interest of the women interviewed for this project was in having a home where they could be part of a wider community that safeguarded the interests of its members.

Travelling from home was restricted during the war, due to the strict rationing of petrol that was adopted by both governments. While pre-war preparations meant that Northern Ireland was better off in terms of coal provision for heating, the government in Éire responded to fuel shortages by focussing on turf production, which was to develop into a valuable state asset in post-war years. Rationing of household goods made shopping more difficult for already hard-pressed housewives while the restrictions on gas encouraged novel methods of cooking. While the blackout seems to have been more strictly enforced in Belfast than in Dublin, in both cities it was a constant reminder of the wartime conditions.

The 1941 bombing raids on Belfast caused enormous death and destruction but the aftermath also led to the exposure of chronic social evils in the city, particularly in the areas near the docklands that suffered the heaviest damage. The sectarian divisions in the city were not changed by the shared hardship, although some temporary identification of interests seems to have occurred. While the target of the bombs dropped on Dublin remains open to question, the consequence was a strengthening of support for the State's neutrality.

Research about the recruitment of women for war work or service in the armed forces of the Allied states points to the gendered identification of citizenship in belligerent states that associated the Home Front with feminine attributes such as maternity and nurture, in contrast to the masculine War Front where battle was conducted to protect and preserve the values of the home.[68] Even though it was not responsible directly for increasing the availability of divorce and contraception, women's involvement in both world wars in the twentieth century contributed to changes in the concept of marriage and family in most Western countries, whereby the sexual division of roles within the family unit and wider society was irretrievably altered. Changes in familial organisation and the allocation of domestic responsibilities were much slower to change in Ireland, perhaps because the exclusion of Northern Ireland from conscription and the neutrality of Éire meant that there was no need for a serious or prolonged debate about women's emergence from the home, either on a temporary or permanent basis, as there was in countries where women were encouraged to fulfil their role as useful wartime citizens, but within existing constructions of femininity or masculinity.

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[68] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003; Summerfield, Penny. *Women Workers in the Second World War. Production and Patriarchy in Conflict.* Croon Helm, London, 1984; Noakes, Lucy. *War and the British. Gender, Memory and National Identity.* Tauris, London, 1998.

Chapter 6

Health

Writing in February 1942, a Belfast doctor[1] noted in his diary for the Mass-Observation organisation that war is bad for health. While that might seem to be stating the obvious, he was referring to the general health of patients coming to his clinic rather than to the direct casualties of bombing raids or combat. In this chapter, the impact of the war on the general health of women in Belfast and Dublin will be examined. This examination will include the health services provided by the state and the social policies that shaped those services, with particular reference to the medical issues connected to wartime that have been identified by research in other countries. These issues include maternity and childbirth, sexually transmitted disease, nutritional changes associated with food rationing and other illness related to the wartime conditions as well as the increased bureaucratisation of medicine that accompanied a growing reliance on hospitals in the first half of the twentieth century.[2] Consideration will also be given to the working conditions of some women who were employed in the health services in both cities. As in previous chapters, testimony from the oral history interviews will be compared with contemporary observations and official sources.

I Policy and funding

The only time when preventive medicine really flourished was during wars, when the need to prevent people from falling sick, as distinct from curing them when they did, was urgent.[3] Health care was not a priority for the Northern Ireland government in the inter-war years. There was no Ministry of Health until 1945. Before that date, the Ministry of Local Government controlled health matters. Similarly, in the Irish Free State and Éire, health was the responsibility of the Department of Local Government and Public Health, rather than a dedicated ministry,

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[1] Dr. R.H. Trinnick, diarist No. 2837, Mass-Observation Archives, University of Sussex.
[2] Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison and Steve Sturdy (Eds.), *War, Medicine and Modernity*. Sutton Publishing, Gloucestershire, 1998; Charles Webster (Ed.), *Caring for Health*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1993; Roger Cooter and John Pickstone (Eds.), *The History of Medicine in the Twentieth Century*, Harwood International, Reading, 1999; Derek Fraser, The Evolution of the British Welfare State. A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1998; Ruth Barrington, *Health Medicine and Politics in Ireland, 1900 – 1970*, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1987; James Deeney. *The End of an Epidemic. Essays in Irish Public Health 1935-1965*. (Selected and edited by Tony Farmar). A.& A. Farmar, Dublin, 1995.
[3] Brian Inglis, *A History of Medicine*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1965, p. 171.

which was not established until 1947. When the Fianna Fáil Government came to power in 1932, they adopted measures to improve the health service. The health insurance system was radically overhauled and procedures were put in place to ensure that employers complied with the law.[4] To widen access to health care to as great a number of possible, especially to the low paid, the National Health Insurance Act 1933 unified all the friendly societies, into which those with low incomes paid as much as they could for protection in the event of illness. The Hospitals Sweepstake gave the Minister for Local Government and Public Health the funds to improve the hospital service in most counties in the course of the decade following its creation in 1930. The National Insurance Act 1941 gave workers entitlement to free hospital treatment but excluded General Practitioner cover from the scheme.

In Northern Ireland, the government's reluctance to fund the health service was reflected in the low standards of public hospitals. As late as January 1939, the Belfast Union Infirmary[5] was still reliant on poor law funding to support its activities. The medical staff reported to the Hospital Board that the conditions in the hospital would 'soon reach a state such as to prevent even a moderate standard of medical and surgical care.'[6] They drew attention to dangerously overcrowded and unhygienic wards and surgical theatres that were obsolete even at the beginning of the twentieth century, where decent work could not be done:

> Special departments such as Radiological, Bacteriological and Dental, are working in the most cramped conditions possible. The kitchen food storage, and conveyance arrangements are primitive and totally inadequate. Altogether we feel that no more unsuitable conditions for dealing with sick people could be found in the remotest country districts, and the Infirmary in its present state is a disgrace to any community and this is the seat of the third largest Medical School in the Kingdom.[7]

The Northern Ireland government made allocations to local authorities for essential services, like health and education, which were in turn drawn from grants made by the Exchequer in London.[8] These limits were quite generous and were not the reason for the failure of the Northern Ireland government to fund improvements in

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[4] Barrington, *Health Medicine and Politics in Ireland.*
[5] The hospital was renamed the Belfast City Hospital in 1948 and was the main general public hospital for the city.
[6] Report of the medical staff of the Belfast Union Infirmary to the Board, January 1939, pp. 63-64.
[7] Minutes of the Belfast Board of Guardians quoted in D.H. Craig, *Belfast and its Infirmary. The Growth of a Hospital from 1838 to 1948.* Belfast, 1985.
[8] The Imperial grant was agreed following the implementation of the Government of Ireland Act 1922.

the health service. Where there were efforts by progressive local authorities to provide better hospitals and health care, this was generally funded by the ratepayers in those areas. Although it was permissible for the local authority to apportion up to 50 per cent of the government grant to maternity and child welfare schemes, in January 1941 only 21 per cent of this money had been allocated and concerned members of Belfast City Council called for government action to address the grave situation, particularly in regard to the high number of deaths caused by tuberculosis.[9] The result of their concern at that time was the appointment of a special committee to examine the city's health services. The investigation found that the Government's reluctance to increase finance to the health service purported to be on the grounds of the continued existence of funding by the poor law medical service (still responsible for the city's public hospitals) and this caused confusion for the City Councillors, who were unsure if they had the means to make effective changes.

Dr. R.H. Trinnick was a Mass-Observation diarist in Belfast, and many of his reports concerned his patients and the affect the war was having on their health. Writing in February 1942, he categorised the physical and emotional manifestations of the wartime conditions that were bringing patients to his clinic. The different types of patient that he identified were suffering from many of the same conditions recalled by the women who took part in this project and also described by Moya Woodside in her own Mass-Observation diary, although he did not mention any particular difficulties associated with maternity:

> I don't think the war has affected my physical health, but I have to deal professionally every day with people whose health has been so affected. The following are some examples:
> 1. An entire group (members of related families) living together, some of them bombed out, who used to live in the same small cottage. There were 14 of them and although it must be a physical impossibility, the whole lot of them used to shelter in an Anderson when raids were on. Almost all of them got bronchitis.
> 2. Although perhaps not strictly physically ill, there is a large group of women who are listless, nervous, and inclined to weep easily as a direct result of war circumstances. They come from what is in peacetime an underfed and badly housed section of the populace, and may be divided into:-
> (a) wives of privates and equivalent ranks who seem to be lost and helpless without their husbands, and fairly frequently ask for medical certificates on insufficient grounds for a grant of leave for their husbands.

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[9] Report of Belfast City Council meeting in *Belfast Newsletter*, 11th January 1941.

(b) … mothers whose sons and daughters (civilian) are back with them on account of being bombed out or of the call-up of the husband. The extra homework and responsibility frequently leads to "nerves" in this group.
3. Workers, men and women from all walks of life in factories and offices who are either working too long hours or under grossly unsatisfactory conditions of ventilation, lighting, both or worse. For example, a group of Home Defence workers who in their spell of night duty are shamefully overcrowded in a small brick building with inadequate ventilation in which they sleep situated on the banks of a sewage farm. About half these men have had influenza, bronchitis, or heavy colds. …
4. There is an increase in minor skin injections such as scabies and impetigo, due to the poorer housing conditions, and the general movement and mixing of population groups – evacuation, bombed outs, etc.[10]

The 'special position' accorded to the Catholic Church in Éire by the 1937 Constitution[11] was manifested in the influence of Catholic social teaching on the health system in Éire. This was not confined to medical practice and the patients but also affected the manner in which health workers were treated, particularly women. A large body of the nursing staff in voluntary hospitals came from religious orders, where the emphasis was on an altruistic approach to their patients, sometimes to the detriment of their own interests. When the long working hours and difficult conditions were raised with the management bodies of the hospitals, nurses were urged to accept their suffering as a means of gaining access to God, even if sometimes it seemed as if that suffering was likely to be counter-productive in terms of the efficiency of the staff.[12] This way of thinking was by no means confined to Catholic hospitals, as Olive found, when she started her training in a Dublin hospital[13]:

> [Olive] Now the whole thing, the main attitude to you was, we didn't ask you to come here, you asked to be here and that still pertains to this day and that really annoys me about it. …. We were not under any account allowed to wear cardigans during the night. No, we had capes, dreadful capes which would go on for night duty but we weren't allowed to wear them during the night. Now this was in the winter of 1944/45 and some girls got chilblains on their upper arms from the cold. No cardigans - it was unprofessional. (80 and 92)

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[10] Mass-Observation diary of Dr. R.H. Trinnick, MO2837, February 1942.
[11] The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, passed on 5th January 1973, removed the special position accorded to the Catholic Church.
[12] Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh, *Flower Power: Nurses and the Christian Ideal*. Paper given at Ireland in the 1930s: New Perspectives Conference, University College Dublin, 11th September 1997. Another paper by Ó hÓgartaigh has a very useful discussion of the emphasis on philanthropy rather than professionalism that dominated the training of Irish nurses in the first decades of the 20th century: "Nurses and midwives in Ireland in the early twentieth century" in Bernadette Whelan (Ed.), *Women and Paid Work in Ireland 1500-1930*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000, pp. 133-147.
[13] Olive did not want the hospital to be named.

The strict application of a uniform code was not unique to Irish hospitals. Other interviewees described their seasonal discomfort because the uniforms remained the same all year round, regardless of environmental conditions.

While Public Health officials were content to place the running of many hospitals in the hands of religious orders, the patients were not always satisfied with the arrangements:

> At a meeting of your Board held some weeks ago, it was stated by a member that the patients in the Union hospitals wished to be under the care of the nuns. So far as Rialto Hospital[14] is concerned, the member is entirely in error. We, whose names are appended herewith, being definitely opposed to the placing of the nuns in control here, as we are of the opinion that such change would not serve the best interests of the patients. We consider that the harmony and understanding which exists at present between the patients and nursing staff cannot be improved upon. Also, with regard to our spiritual welfare, it has always been earnestly looked after.[15]

The patients wrote the letter in reaction to a proposal by Alderman P.S. Doyle, the Lord Mayor[16] of Dublin and Chairman of the Dublin Board of Assistance at the time, to give complete charge of nursing services in the Dublin Union hospitals to the Sisters of Mercy. He claimed to be acting on foot of a request from the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Sean T. O'Kelly who was apparently in favour of all hospital services being in the charge of nuns. The Irish Nurses' Organisation, who expressed resentment of the imposition of nuns on their members, partly on professional grounds, also registered protests. They pointed out that nuns were less likely to be properly trained than lay nurses, who were required to be trained and certified, and that nuns would not undertake night duty.[17] It is likely that the Minister had more pragmatic reasons than spiritual concerns for wanting to put the nuns in charge of the hospitals. Apart from the fact that they were not likely to demand improved pay and conditions, their accommodation was provided by their Order, whereas lay nurses had to be accommodated in nurses' homes provided by the hospitals.

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[14] This was St. Kevin's Institution, one of the last of the Dublin Poor Law Union hospitals, which were still run largely under pre-Independence legislation. (Department of Local Government and Public Health File A8/157, National Archives, Dublin.)
[15] Letter to the Board of Assistance, 3rd April 1939, from 70 male and 52 female patients. File A8/157 Health, National Archives.
[16] Alderman Doyle was Lord Mayor for two years, 1941 to 1942.
[17] Department of Local Government and Public Health File A8/157, National Archives, Dublin.

Links between the role of the nurse and the female role of nurturer were made in hospital training programmes. Lay nurses were also subject to a marriage bar, although this was occasionally waived for temporary nurses who were taking up very short-term contracts. Throughout the 1930s, the Irish Women Workers' Union led a campaign for an eight-hour workday on behalf of the psychiatric nurses who were members of the union. As a result of agitation and discussion, a worldwide survey of conditions was undertaken and conditions for nurses in Ireland were found to be comparable, if not better, than most other countries, although this finding said more about the poor conditions elsewhere than it did about rebutting the claims of long hours and overwork in this country.

By the time the Emergency commenced, no changes had been made in the standard pay scales for public nurses, despite many representations from various quarters to the Minister of Local Government and Public Health and the Boards of the Voluntary Hospitals and the Union Hospitals. Many of the lay nurses were members of the Irish Women Workers' Union, whose campaign for permanent appointments for nursing staff in the Union hospitals was mounted in the early 1940s. Although most lay nurses seem to have belonged to the Irish Nurses' Organisation or the Irish Women Workers' Union, they were generally not militant in pursuing claims for better conditions for themselves. One reason for this may have been their sense that their professional responsibility was primarily to their patients and they were not prepared to take any action that might put patients in jeopardy. This is indicated by the tone of their efforts to avoid one of the requirements of the Trade Union Act 1941. This was the rule that trade unions must hold a negotiating licence to enable them to deal with joint industrial councils, arbitration boards and similar bodies, unless an exemption could be obtained. The licence would not be granted without the lodgement of a substantial deposit of money in court. The Schedule to the Act set the deposit as a minimum of £1,000 for less than 500 members, rising to a maximum of £10,000 for 20,000 or more members.[18] The Irish Nurses' Organisation sought an exemption from the need to deposit the money, on the grounds that they were not

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[18] The Irish Nurses' Organisation's files are still private and the information on their membership in 1941 was not available and the exact sum of money involved was not mentioned in the correspondence. The Irish Nurses' Organisation is listed as one of the six unions for which no information was available for the survey conducted by the Irish Labour History Society – Sarah Ward-Perkins (Ed.), *Select Guide to Trade Union Records in Dublin. With details of unions operating in Ireland to 1970.* Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1996, p. 231.

really a trade union within the meaning of the Bill, which had not yet been enacted when this letter was written:

> As no doubt you are aware, the Organisation represents the great majority of the qualified general nurses and the great majority of the qualified midwives in this country, especially those in the public service. The nursing profession, as is generally accepted, is very much underpaid and the Organisation representing them has from its inception suffered from the fact that it is unable to accumulate a substantial reserve fund in the same way as a Trade Union. The members have a sense of professional responsibility which has always prevented their taking anything in the nature of strike action, and so strong was this that some years ago they changed the name from the Irish Nurses' Union to the Irish Nurses' Organisation with a view to emphasising this point of view. .... Having regard to the fact that strike action has never been taken by the Organisation, and that such action would be altogether repugnant to the professional feelings of the members of the Organisation, and having regard to the fact that it is obviously with a view to protecting the community and individuals against the result of illegality committed in the course of such action that the necessity for depositing money in Court arises, we beg to suggest that the Irish Nurses' Organisation should be made an excepted Body within the meaning of Clause 6(3)[19] which would at once remove our clients' objection to the Bill.[20]

The Minister for Industry and Commerce seems not to have been impressed by the organisation's arguments, although it was unclear from the files whether the excepted status was eventually granted.

The hours of work were long in the nursing profession internationally and the difficult conditions that Olive described could have been found in hospitals anywhere in the western world:

> [Olive] ... we worked ... 104 hours a fortnight, now sometimes it would be a split shift, sometimes from half past seven to five, or sometimes half past seven in the morning until nine o'clock at night with a break between two and five. We got two days, two consecutive days a month off a month. ... But everybody was in the same boat. I know there was another hospital, under the religious in Dublin, and the poor girls there on their days off, had to go back

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[19] Section 6(3) read as follows:
In this section the expression "excepted body" means any of the following bodies:
(a) a body which carries on negotiations for the fixing of the wages or other conditions of employment of its own (but no other) employees,
(b) a body which is registered under the next following sub-section of this section,
(c) a civil service staff association recognised by the Minister for Finance,
(d) an organisation of teachers recognised by the Minister for Education,
(e) the Agricultural Wages Board,
(f) a trade board established under the Trade Board Acts, 1909 and 1918, and
(g) a body in respect of which an order under sub-section (6) of this section is for the time being in force.

[20] Letter from Little, Ó hUadhaigh and Proud, Solicitors for the Irish Nurses' Organisation to the Minister for Industry and Commerce, 21st May 1941. File A8/157 Health, National Archives.

> and spend every night in the nurse's home. But at least we got away for two days. (86)

Even when nurses were off duty, the strictures on their conduct were not relaxed. The regime in nursing hostels (where most of them were expected to live) was very strict and even fully qualified nurses were subject to fairly stringent rules concerning access and the right to have visitors. The nurses' home attached to the Adelaide Hospital was known locally as the 'Virgins' Rest' because the single women lodging there were subject to such close scrutiny and worked such long hours that it was considered unlikely they would get an opportunity to change their single status. Student nurses were particularly curtailed, being subject to a nightly curfew at 11 p.m. whereas qualified nurses had to be in bed before 12.30 a.m. when the doors were locked for the night:

> [Olive] But we had to sign in and out, of course, when we went out. We had to sign out, if we had a half-day or something, we would have to sign out and we had to sign in. And the nurse's home door was shut after half past ten, so it was locked and if you were late you had to go to matron the next day. When you were a staff nurse you were allowed one quarter past eleven leave once a week and you would sign for that. The night sister would come and let you into the nurse's home and you got one two o'clock, two a.m. leave, once a month, if you were going to a dance. (134)

No consideration seems to have been given to the danger of fire when the young women were being locked in at night and it seems to have been a widespread practice in nurse's homes. Although the danger was even more acute in Britain, because of the danger of bombing raids, it was also the practice there, as Frances recalled from her time in the Boston Fever Hospital.

The students' lectures were held during the students' off-duty hours and as they also had to study during these hours their free time was very limited:

> [Olive] Now, you were allowed so much sick leave a year, I can't remember, perhaps a week, and if you went over that you had to make it up at the end of your four years, which was I think, fair enough. But, it was all very much your duty to the hospital. I remember one girl, a contemporary of mine, and her brother got meningitis and he lived down in Sligo. There were different sorts of meningitis but this was a serious one and she went and asked Matron could she go home and Matron said, I'm sorry you can't. And she said I must see my brother, he's got meningitis and I'm going and she said well, you've lost your vocation then. The girl's father had to come up from Sligo and beg Matron because you know the girl couldn't go home for two days because she'd had her days off that month, even to see her brother. I mean, it was inhuman when you think of it, a case like that. (98)

Olive believed that the Matron's reaction was 'a power thing', part of the perpetuation of the hierarchical structure of hospitals on which internal discipline was based and was nothing to do with any extra pressures associated with wartime.

The hierarchical nature of hospital staffing was reflected in the increasing separation of traditional, amateur forms of health care from the modern, professional methods that were spearheaded by the growing reliance on experts and institutions in the first half of the twentieth century. This transition was not confined to Ireland and indeed, both Northern Ireland and Éire were lagging behind developments in the United Kingdom, even before the establishment of the National Health Service after the war. The debate about the real cause of mortality decline in Britain during the years from mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century was based primarily on research into political, institutional and professional issues[21] but the use of oral history methods in recent years has allowed the point of view of the users of health services to be included in the investigations. This has shifted the emphasis away from the role of trained medical personnel and public policy shapers and made it clear that in the United Kingdom it was not so much increased confidence in 'formal' medical care that was the catalyst for change but the increased accessibility that was made possible by the introduction of free services. However, this is not to suggest that this alone was responsible for the shift away from traditional management of ill health, particularly among the working classes, but the availability of local treatment in the shape of school services and neighbourhood clinics enabled the public health policy makers to enforce their decisions.[22] While the change was slower to emerge in Éire and did not really become consolidated until the late 1940s and later, neighbourhood clinics did play a role in bringing professional health care to people who had previously relied on 'handywomen' and other amateur practitioners.[23]

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[21] T. McKeown's *The Modern Rise of Population* (London, 1976) challenged then current orthodoxy about the role of modern scientific medicine and argued that improved diet solely accounted for the decline in mortality. McKeown was challenged in turn by Simon Szreter, "The Importance of Social Intervention in Britain's Mortality Decline c. 1850-1914: A Re-interpretation of the Role of Public Health" in Social History of Medicine, Volume I Number 1, 1988 pp. , claiming that the public health movement working through local government … should be seen as the true moving force behind the decline of mortality in this period.'

[22] Lucinda M. Beier, *Contagion, Policy, Class, Gender, and Mid-Twentieth Century Lancashire Working-Class Health Culture.*

[23] Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland.*

II Maternity and childbirth

One of the most significant features about maternity care in both the Irish Free State and Éire in the twentieth century prior to the Second World War was the extent to which it was developed in a piecemeal fashion, largely due to the tension between the local authorities (whose responsibility it was) and various other interested parties, notably the Catholic Church and a number of charitable organisations.[24] The emphasis was on child survival, rather than the mother's health.

In a study carried out in 1945 to assess the means of improving the health services in Belfast city, it was recommended that better maternity services were the most urgent requirement.[25] There was a further suggestion that home helps should be recruited in sufficient numbers to help the many women needing assistance at home. One of the difficulties in this regard was recruitment of sufficient numbers to do this work. There was a presumption that only women would be applying for the jobs but nevertheless the poor pay and conditions were clearly a barrier to recruitment:

> The present conditions of service apparently are not attractive enough to enable us to get a sufficient supply of women for the work. The present rate of pay is 8s. per day and the hours worked are from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sundays excepted, save where Sunday falls within four days of the confinement. These hours seem to be too long with insufficient off duty time. … Another disadvantage of the existing conditions is that employment may be irregular, and the Home Helps do not qualify for unemployment benefit. To get over this difficulty, I suggest that we pay a retaining fee of 4s. per day after three months service.[26]

While women in Belfast and Dublin were going to hospital in increasing numbers to give birth, many working class women still chose to give birth at home, particularly after the birth of their first child:

> [Catherine] Well, it was handier to stay at home. … Well, it was more or less handier with the others, to have them in the house. Gertie was born at home, and Maureen. … So Gertie and Maureen and Paddy, three were born at home. (169, 171 and 174)

Mothers might have found it easier to have births at home, but this was not necessarily because they could expect assistance from the fathers, but because they

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[24] Lindsay Earner-Byrne, *'In Respect of Motherhood': Maternity policy and provision in Dublin city, 1922-1956.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College Dublin, 2001, p. vii.
[25] Report of the Senior Maternity and Child Welfare Officer to the Ministry of Health, March 1946.
[26] Report by Dr. Thomson, Medical Superintendent Officer of Health, submitted to the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee of Belfast City Council, 24th January 1945. The Ministry of Health officials persuaded the City administrators to adopt Dr. Thomson's recommendations, apart from the proposal to pay a retaining fee, which they refused to countenance.

needed to be around to make sure the children were looked after and domestic chores were attended to properly. Susan recalled a case she came across in her work at the Rotunda Hospital:

> [Susan] In those days, husbands didn't attend the birth or the delivery room. … I don't think they [the mothers] were given too much advice at all. I don't think they were given a lot of help in any way. They mostly had swarms of young children at home and very inadequate housing, a lot of them. …. I was visiting a woman who'd had her twenty first child and it was in a tenement house. The staircase was all gone; I had to practically crawl up the last few steps on my hands and knees. Her husband was unemployed … and the doctor said, he's not unemployed, if he's got 21 children. (111 and 114)

There were occasionally other reasons given for wanting to give birth at home, including the comfort of being somewhere familiar where a woman could feel confident and in charge of the situation. Sheila's mother had her first child in hospital but she disliked the experience so much that all her other children were born at home. Her reason had nothing to do with the medical care and illustrates the insularity of many Irish women's attitudes:

> [Sheila] … I know the first child she had, she was booked into the Coombe, and she went in and it was a false alarm, and while she was here, there happened to be a black doctor [laughs] and she never went back to the Coombe, she said no black man was going to touch her. So all the rest, everybody else was always born at home. (15)

The women who had their children at home usually called on local midwives to assist at the births. Dublin was better served by maternity hospitals than the rest of the country and the maternal mortality rate tended to be lower than in the rest of the country, although there has been some argument about whether this was due to the hospitals themselves or the fact that the only extensive maternity and child welfare scheme in the country was operating in the city.[27] In 1944, the Annual Report of the Department of Local Government and Public Health paid tribute to the Rotunda, Coombe, and National Maternity Hospitals in Dublin, crediting them with playing a significant role in the reduction of maternal morality rates in the country as a whole. Cormac Ó Gráda notes that the high mortality was in part the product of repeated childbearing, and the associated high blood pressure and anaemia. He credits the combination of smaller families with improved medical care for the huge reduction in

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[27] Caitriona Clear, *Women of the House. Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922 – 1961.* Irish Academic Press, 2000. Chapter Five," Some Aspects of Pregnancy and Childbirth", pp. 95-125.

maternal mortality since the 1930s and 1940s.[28] The Department of Local Government and Public Health Report attributed the improvement to increased use of measures to combat puerperal sepsis, which had been responsible for many maternal deaths in earlier decades.[29] The quality of care depended on the standards of the staff as much as the facilities and Jean's experience of puerperal sepsis in a nursing home in Belfast underlined the fact that childbirth could be very dangerous:

> [Jean] Well, I was three days in an emergency room, which was next to the delivery room and the other miracle is that we both lived thanks to my own doctor having to come in at five o'clock in the morning. He saved us both. … The problem was that the night nurse who was on was incapable; she didn't give me an enema when she should have. The doctor said it was dirty and she was dirty and then the doctor wouldn't risk her giving me a sedative or an anaesthetic so he looked after me himself and called in a consultant. (104 and 106)

Unqualified midwives were forbidden to practise in Northern Ireland, just like in Éire, although some women still preferred to rely on local women who were trusted to assist with family crises, including childbirth. These 'handywomen', as they were known, were attractive to mothers because they would help with the housework and the other children, as well as delivering the new baby:

> [Marie] …. there was always a woman in most streets and if anyone was sick you went for her. [Laughs] Childbirth and everything. Mrs. Craig it was in our street and when you were sick everyone went for Mrs. Craig. … We were all born at home. My mother always had a nurse come in. If there was complications, probably a doctor would be called but usually the nurse would come in when you called her. (159, 167 and 169)

The Midwives Act 1917 (predating the partition of Ireland and the establishment of the two states) made it illegal for an untrained person to assist at a birth if a trained person was available. The provisions of this Act were strengthened in the South by the Midwives Act 1931 and the Registration of Maternity Homes Act 1934 and in the North by the Midwives and Nursing Homes Act (Northern Ireland) 1929, although the latter dealt primarily with the registration of midwives working in private nursing homes.

Moya Woodside made a diary entry which cast light on a phenomenon also noted in Britain in the early years of the war:

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[28] Cormac Ó Gráda, *A Rocky Road. The Irish Economy since the 1920s*. Manchester University Press, 1997, p. 207.
[29] *Department of Local Government and Public Health Report 1944-45*, Government Stationery Office, Dublin, 1946, p. 38.

> A friend told me yesterday afternoon that she has started her 2nd baby, to arrive in September. Has 1st only 13 months old, but "we wanted to get on with it" she said. I admired her faith in the future, belief that there would always be enough to eat for these children. It's rather curious that people married during the last 3 or 4 years tend to believe in children again and to start families right away; while those who got married from 6-10 years ago frequently held that the world was in no fit state to bring children into, and postponed parenthood – when indeed, the world was considerably more liveable in than it is now! I can't explain this unexpected change of outlook, but it's a fact. I know many examples here and elsewhere; and some Czech refugee friends tell me it was the same with people there. (8th March 1940)

It might seem that it would be more likely that the birth rate would fall in wartime but in *The People's War*, Angus Calder also remarked on the popularity of marriage and childbearing in the first two or three years of the war, although he attributed it to the greater fluidity of social relations, including the presence of American troops from 1942 onwards. Woodside was still preoccupied with the phenomenon late in the following year:

> Talked to a friend about the astonishing popularity of babies at the moment. We could think of dozens of people known to one or other of us who were either having or have just had an infant, and many of them barely a year married. We decided that it must be that so many young wives expected their husbands to be sent out East, and wanted to have something to occupy them selves with while they were away! (4th November 1941)

The subject of birth control was introduced because it seemed likely that there would be a need for some measure of family planning if women were working outside the home. In several conversations before the interviews commenced, I explained to the women the general approach I wanted to take and the kind of topics I would like to cover. Whenever I mentioned family planning there was silence and the subject was changed. Informal exchanges following the interviews in one or two cases elicited the information that the married women had never really thought about planning their families and the unmarried women did not think it was a subject that concerned them, although some of them, with hindsight, were amused at the huge changes in attitudes to sexuality and related subjects since their younger days.

In his study of births in Dublin between 1941 and 1942[30], Professor Stanley Lyon pointed out that 57 per cent of all births registered in the three Dublin maternity

[30] Lyon, "Observations on Births in Dublin, 1941-1942".

hospitals occurred within the first year of the mother's marriage, suggesting that very few women were using contraception:

> [Catherine] In those days you went by your religion to have a family, you had to have a family according to your religion. That's if you were married, whether you wanted to or not, like you know. The priests, you couldn't go to confession, unless that you were living a proper life to have your family and not avoid it, but it's different now, of course. (193)

Moya Woodside gave regular talks on birth control to women's groups, particularly in Protestant working class districts of Belfast. Although she does not refer to it directly, it is unlikely that such talks would have been encouraged in Catholic areas, where most welfare work was channelled through the local priest. Her account of one meeting where she gave a lecture gives a good indication of attitudes that were shared by the women who spoke to me, particularly in regard to their reticence about the subject:

> Gave talk on birth control to Co-Op Women's Guild meeting. .... Response to my talk much as usual – older women (in the majority) inclined to repeat they had 8 (or 10 or 12) children and were none the worse for it. One woman (60ish) enquired "doesn't all this bother with birth control make you neurotic?" I told her how it soon became as automatic as your dentures, which amused the others greatly. Younger women are more receptive, although shy of asking questions in front of people. Although I have no children myself, I find that at these meetings, I am always made the recipient of intimate gynaecological and obstetrical histories, once the ice has been broken.[31]

If a woman wanted to exercise some form of mechanical birth control, she had to make arrangements to get supplies from Britain, although organisations like the Marie Stopes Family Planning Clinics in London had local agents in Belfast, like Moya Woodside herself, who would arrange to import some medical supplies. Detailed information about birth control was available also through mail order from Britain[32]. In Belfast, because Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, no attempts were made to ban birth control, even though there was considerable disapproval and opposition from both Catholic and Protestant sources. Greta Jones' research on the operation of the Marie Stopes Mother's Clinic in Belfast suggests that

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[31] Woodside, MO5462, 29th November 1940.

[32] A catalogue of publications relating to sexual health and behaviour showed that the following titles were available in Belfast: *Marriage and Birth Control* by Brenda Barwon; *Sexual Knowledge for the Young Woman* by Hayden Brown; *Radiant Motherhood* by Marie Stopes; *Enduring Passion* by Marie Stopes and *Married Love*, also by Marie Stopes.

it was not only local women who were using the services.[33] The admittedly limited evidence, because most of the case files were destroyed, suggests that women from Éire were asking for advice and information about birth control. Even after the banning of advertisements about contraceptive devices, such information was available through the Marie Stopes Clinic or in British newspapers and magazines, which were still accessible, despite the stringency of the wartime censorship. Investigations of sexual relations in other countries in the early and middle years of the twentieth century also emphasised the reluctance of people to talk about such an intimate aspect of their lives.[34] Many of these studies concentrated on birth control as an issue of interest primarily to women, although the oral history interviews conducted by Kate Fisher[35] make it clear that contraception was at least of equal concern to men and that in many cases, it was men who were better informed and more likely to make decisions about the method used. Fisher's interviews illustrate the extent to which euphemism was used in discussing sexual intimacy and how the women respondents tended to equate ignorance of the mechanics of sex and birth control with femininity and respectability. The women who responded to my questions also equated lack of knowledge with innocence.

The extent to which matters of family planning were normally kept very private is reflected in the following entry in Moya Woodside's diary, when she also drew attention to an aspect of Northern Irish political life that was unique in terms of comparison to both Britain and Éire:

> Astonished to see the report of our annual public Birth Control Clinic meeting yesterday given large headlines and more than half a column in each of the local papers, instead of being relegated to a few lines in an obscure column, if indeed it is noticed at all. Reason: the speakers dealt largely with population problems and mentioned that in Eire (where all contraceptive information is illegal) the birth rate is lower, and has been falling longer, than anywhere else

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[33] Greta Jones, "Marie Stopes in Ireland: The Mother's Clinic in Belfast" in *Social History of Medicine*, Volume 5 Number 2: August 1992, pp. 255-278.
[34] Kate Fisher, "'She was quite satisfied with the arrangements I made': Gender and Birth Control in Britain 1920-1950" in *Past & Present*, Number 169, November 2000, pp. 161-193; Kate Fisher, "Uncertain aims and tacit negotiations: birth control practices in Britain, 1925-1950" in *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 26 No. 2, February 2000, pp. 295-317; Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain, 1860-1940*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996; L.A.Hall, G. Hekrna and F. Eder (Eds.)., *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Vol. II Studies in Sexuality*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999;
[35] Fisher, "She was quite satisfied with the arrangements I made."

> in the world. This piece of news falls pleasantly on Ulster Unionist ears, hence the headlines and verbatim report. (22nd October 1940)

As part of the initiative to improve maternity and paediatric services in Belfast, it was also recommended that arrangements should be made with the Society for the Nursing of the Sick Poor (a Society affiliated to the Queen's Institute of District Nursing) to provide home nursing facilities for children up to two years of age suffering from acute bronchitis, bronchial pneumonia or gastro-enteritis. Nurses employed by the Society were paid less than Queen's Institute nurses because they did not undertake maternity work and they had definite hours of duty, although their qualifications were the same. They were answerable to the Matron of the Homes run by the Society, rather than local doctors, and their salaries were paid by the Society. Discipline in the Homes was quite strict and there were various reports in the Minutes of the Society during the 1940s of difficulties in recruiting new staff, partly because of the requirement that they should stay a minimum of 18 months.[36]

III Sexually transmitted diseases

Medical personnel and the Westminster Ministry for Health raised concerns about the danger of the increased spread of sexually transmitted diseases because of wartime conditions. Both the local authorities and the military authorities were aware that the presence of large numbers of American and British troops billeted in Northern Ireland from 1941 until 1944 was a potential cause for difficulties arising out of 'fraternisation'. The handbook issued to the United States soldiers explained that they should be aware of differences in approaching young local women:

> Ireland is an Old World country where the woman's place is still, to be a considerable extent, in the home. … Quite probably the young lady you're interested in must ask her family's permission before she can go out with you.[37]

The military authorities also recognised that some fraternisation might have unwanted consequences, and part of Susan's job in the S.T.D. clinic in the Royal Victoria Hospital was to deal with the prostitutes who might have passed on a venereal disease to a soldier:

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[36] Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Belfast Society for Providing Nurses for the Sick Poor 1937-1946. File D1630/6 Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.

[37] Mary Pat Kelly, *Home Away from Home. The Yanks in Ireland.* Appletree Press, Belfast, 1994, pp. 39-40.

> [Susan] Of course it was wartime still and the American soldiers were here and there were was a special nurse attached to the American forces, one of their own nurses, and she was following up their contacts so she worked very closely with me. She would advise them on the use of condoms and she would be aware if someone needed to be treated and bring them to me. We worked together whenever we could without breaching too much confidentiality, you know. It had to be done and also, in those days, at that time, there were special regulations. I don't remember the name of them, and if the partner didn't turn up for treatment, she could be taken to court. So this American girl she told me about these girls who were having treatment, and which of her soldiers were being infected or vice versa. I didn't have anything to do with the men; I only had to deal with the girls. So I had to follow the girls up very closely and try and insist on their coming and it was very difficult to do. … I was just in the business of finding the girls and getting them in for treatment. It was just the people who had been referred to me by the medical staff. (130 and 132)

Susan's position in the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin often involved quite sensitive dealings with patients in difficult circumstances so she was quite used to keeping confidences and respecting the privacy of the women whom she was assisting. When she moved to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, she encountered an unexpected difficulty with one of the senior medical personnel:

> [Susan] Well then, when I came up here, I came specifically to work in the S.T.D.[38] department and that was a very difficult job because I was the first social worker ever to work in the hospital. … I wasn't either a nurse or a doctor and the question of confidentiality was what was bothering them. … I remember the first morning when I went in, he [the Senior Doctor] called me into his private office and he took me aside and read me the story from the bible of the woman taken in adultery and he said, now I don't want you to condemn any one who comes in here. I said I wouldn't do that, it's not my job to condemn, I'm here to help and it's completely outside my training to make any moral judgements. (126 and 128)

Susan explained how she had made the consultant recognise her professionalism and accept her standing in the hospital. She did not believe that the doubt about her ability to keep confidences was due to her being a woman, but was due to a misunderstanding of her role as a medical social worker, which was not yet a widely recognised profession:

> [Susan] There were a lot of children in the hospital, particularly in the wards, who had been passed the diseases by their mothers, they should have been in children's hospitals, but because of their problems they were there. … I said I would like to do something for all these children and I said how would it be if I asked the ladies who visit to give each child two tickets for the pantomime … they also gave me a lot of toys which they sent to a party ... and this all

[38] Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

> worked very well and some little time after, I found a picture on my desk, entitled the Good Fairy, of me with a wand and wings. So after that I had no opposition at all. (128)

In Britain, the early years of the war had seen a sharp increase in the number of syphilis[39] cases being reported for treatment and there was also a rise in the cases of gonorrhoea[40]. Since neither disease was a notifiable one, the Westminster government introduced Defence Regulation 33B, which provided that any person suspected of having infected two or more patients might be compelled to undergo treatment.[41] The provisions of this regulation were extended to Northern Ireland. In theory, Regulation 33B was supposed to be applied equally to both sexes but in practice, it was focussed almost exclusively on women, so much so that the Annual Conference of the National Council of women in October 1943 formulated the following resolution:

> The NCW repudiates as fallacious the prevalent opinion that it is the conduct of girls and women that is mainly responsible for the present increase of Venereal Disease, and desires to emphasise the fact that in the great majority of those fleeting and irresponsible sex relationships by which the disease is spread both partners must be held responsible, and a recall to moral responsibility must necessarily made to both sexes.
> The NCW therefore calls upon the government to consider afresh its whole approach to this problem, and to initiate a bold and positive education campaign which will bring home to every citizen and every household the conviction that all who indulge in sexual promiscuity not only may be responsible for the spread of VD, but are lacking in good citizenship.[42]

In Éire, the army Medical Corps was overwhelmed by the extent of disease, including venereal diseases that they had to deal with following the massive recruitment campaign in the early 1940s.

An information campaign was launched in Britain in February 1943 and the Northern Ireland government followed suit. Newspaper advertisements were placed to give the 'plain facts' about venereal diseases and their likely prevalence in wartime, how they were caused, and the urgent necessity for early treatment and where advice and treatment could be obtained. This was quite a significant move and indicated the level of concern about the problem because before the war, newspapers had refused to

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[39] Syphilis is a highly contagious venereal disease that professes from infection of the genitals via the skin and mucous membranes to the bone, muscles and brain, frequently resulting in insanity.
[40] Gonorrhoea is also very infectious but the consequences are not as severe as those of syphilis, although if untreated, it can lead to infertility. It is diagnosed after the appearance of an inflammatory discharge from the urethra or vagina.
[41] Calder, *The People's War*, p. 313.
[42] Quoted in Hylton, *Their Darkest Hour*, p. 155.

carry any information about sexually transmitted diseases and there was a social taboo against any public reference to 'sexual intercourse'. In Northern Ireland, the advertisements were sent to the *Irish News*, the *Belfast News Letter*, the *Belfast Telegraph*, the *Northern Whig* and a range of provincial papers for insertion each Friday 'for about four to five weeks'. A requisition was also sent to London for two hundred copies of the series of seven booklets, issued by the United Kingdom Ministry of Health, which the Northern Ireland Ministry intended to over-stamp and distribute.

Officials in the Northern Ireland Ministry of Local Government seem to have been ambivalent in regard to the V.D. awareness campaign and were reluctant to be too explicit about the nature of the problem. The Royal Hippodrome cinema in Belfast suggested that they use the first showing of the information film *Social Enemy No. 1*[43] as part of an anti-V.D. campaign but this initiative was rebuffed by the Ministry,[44] despite the agreement with the Odeon chain that had been worked out by the Ministry of Health in Whitehall. Part of the reason for refusal seems to have been based on concern about the audience although the precise nature of this concern was not spelled out. A possible reason may be suggested by the plans for a photographic display on V.D., which was produced by the Ministry of Information on behalf of the Ministry of Health. A circular from the Ministry of Health in London was forwarded by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Health under its own stamp to hospitals and workplaces in which it was announced that the photographic display had been 'prepared for private showing to those who wish to see it, and to members of the two sexes separately.'

IV Nutrition

Lack of finance for the hospital service was not the only reason that health standards in Northern Ireland were lower than those in the United Kingdom, especially for mothers and children. The main causes of infant death in Northern Ireland during the war years were identified as premature birth and injury at birth and

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[43] This was an American film, lasting one and a half hours, which had been used as part of a V.D. information campaign in the U.K.
[44] File No. HLG1/2/2, Venereal Disease, Publicity and Propaganda. P.R.O.N.I., Belfast.

bronchial and gastric disorders[45]. In Belfast in particular, these causes were related to the poverty and inadequate nutrition of the mothers, although it is likely that the food rationing scheme operating during the war years operated to the advantage of poor mothers and their children in that many of them received a guaranteed and balanced diet, possibly for the first time in their lives. Nevertheless, Northern Ireland had the worst record in the United Kingdom in respect of taking advantage of free vitamin products, with the result that in a survey of rickets[46] in the United Kingdom and Éire, Belfast had the poorest record of any other city.[47] This state of affairs would not have been improved by the scarcity of fresh fruit during the war. Infant mortality rates[48] in both Belfast and Dublin showed little improvement during the war years. In Belfast in 1939, there was an infant mortality rate of 70 per 1,000 rising to 80 per 1,000 in 1940, showing little improvement by 1945 at 68 per 1,000[49].

Infant mortality was also high in Éire, for many of the same reasons as in the North. Between 1940 and 1944, the infant mortality rate in Dublin was even higher than in Belfast, going from 91 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1940 to 117 per 1,000 in 1944. In 1943, it was particularly high, at 126 deaths per 1,000 live births, with diarrhoea and enteritis accounting for 81 per cent of the increase in the number of deaths.[50] In 1941, 1,293 infants had died in the Dublin County Borough from a severe epidemic of gastroenteritis.[51] In the 1939-1940 Report of the Department of Local Government and Public Health, the Medical Officer of the Dublin County Borough Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme is quoted as citing the failure of mothers to breast-feed their infants as a causative factor of infant morality:

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[45] Some medical personnel suggested that maternal ignorance was a major cause of the high infant mortality rates in the region. In discussions on post-war health policy in Northern Ireland undertaken by officials of the Ministry of Health in 1945, it was proposed to have mothercraft instruction in girls' schools and to intensify the work of child welfare clinics.

[46] Rickets is a disease which mainly affects children. The characteristic feature is a disturbance of bone growth, associated with a deficiency in calcium absorption.

[47] Dr. F.M.B. Allen, *Report of the 1946 Annual Meeting of the Royal Maternity Hospital*. File HLG1/2 Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.

[48] The infant mortality rate refers to the deaths of infants who die between their birth and the end of their first year of life.

[49] *Report on Maternity and Child Welfare 1939-1945 for Ministry of Health*. File No. HLG1/1/2 P.R.O.N.I., Belfast.

[50] Annual Reports of the Department of Local Government and Public Health 1940 to 1944, Government Stationery Office, Dublin.

[51] This outbreak gave impetus to the passing of the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1941, which listed a number of diseases that it was compulsory for medical personnel to notify to the Public Health authorities. As well as gastroenteritis, which was particularly dangerous for children, the list included diphtheria, pneumonia, scarlet fever and measles, although the latter was only notifiable if it was the first case in a family within a period of two months.

> He believes that this failure is due to a large extent to some form of malnutrition or diet deficiency and to the increased pace of life conditions in the city but has no relation to housing accommodation.[52]

In a study of infant mortality in the city of Belfast conducted in 1944, James Deeny and Eric Murdock noted that the significance of income as a deciding factor influencing infant mortality is clear, where income was considered as the amount, less rent, available to the mother for household purposes per head per week.[53] They found that certain dispensary areas in Belfast showed an unduly heavy mortality rate and this was associated with the concentration in those areas of a larger number of people with low incomes living in crowded conditions. The disparity between the infant mortality rates in Belfast and Dublin might therefore be attributed to the different levels of economic activity in the cities in the course of the war, with the improved employment opportunities in Belfast in the later years of the war coinciding with a decline in infant deaths.

One of the most serious consequences of the bread shortage was the increase in the cases of rickets in Dublin, which was attributed to the government order to make 100 grammes of bread from 95 per cent extraction flour. While it is generally considered that a wholemeal loaf is more nutritious than a white loaf, the phytic acid contained in the wheat grain and incorporated in the wholemeal loaf operates to destroy calcium in the normal diet.[54] Children from poorer homes were more likely to have bread as a high proportion of their diet and it was estimated that an individual whose bread intake was twelve ounces per day would lose approximately 230 mg. of calcium. In the 1946 National Nutrition Survey carried out by the Department of Health (which covered the Emergency years) 'bread and spread' meals counted for a much larger proportion of the meals eaten by families living in slums than of artisan families and middle class families,[55] as outlined in Appendix 6(1). Classification of families was based on the type of dwelling in which they lived, rather than on the area of residence and the statistical analysis was considered by the surveyors to be sufficiently reliable to apply to the total population of Dublin.[56]

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[52] *Department of Local Government and Public Health Report 1939-1940*, p. 41.
[53] James Deeny and Eric Murdock, "Infant Mortality in the City of Belfast" in *JSSISI*, Vol. XVII, 1943-44, pp. 221-240.
[54] Memorandum from the J.V. Rank bakery to the Taoiseach, dated 29th April 1941, entitled 'White flour v. brown'. (National Archives, SA S12064.)
[55] *National Nutrition Survey, Part I. Methods of Dietary Survey and Results from Dublin Investigation.* Stationery Office, Dublin, 1946, p. 50.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

By 1942, the shortages caused by the war were exacting a heavy toll from many sections of the population in both Belfast and Dublin, particularly for families on low incomes. Although rationing of food and fuel ensured a fairer distribution of vital commodities to the poor and low paid, people involved in providing services often ran into obstacles unrelated to the cost of food:

> [Susan] Oh, at that time, we would have been seeing, well, we would have been seeing the in-patients but we were seeing a lot of the out-patients and helping them make arrangements for the care of their children when they came in to have their babies or various things like that, and arranging for them to have any charitable assistance that they needed. For instance, the St. John's Brigade, they ran dinners in Dublin and it was they we dealt with at that time because a lot of the women really needed the extra food and most of our patients would not take the dinners because they served too much fish and in war time, because of all the people who were being drowned, the fish were feeding on the drowned people, therefore they just would not eat fish. They certainly were very adamant about that, but they also served a lot of cheese dishes and Irish people in those days wouldn't eat much cheese. (90)

Some women had their own methods of ensuring that their families stayed healthy, regardless of the hardships of war. Clare's mother gave her children cod liver oil and a drink called 'Parrish's Food' which was iron based and which she made them take every morning, despite their protests about the terrible taste.

The solution to food shortages during the war, on both sides of the Border, forced the authorities in both states to take a much more proactive approach to devising social policy than had been the case in the 1930s, particularly in Northern Ireland, and rationing and anti-profiteering measures meant that state control was exerted over previously unregulated areas of productivity. In Britain, the concept of total war that characterised the national mobilisation raised domestic problems to the same level as military strategy. The result of this influence on social policy was a recognition that after the war there would have to be important changes. Northern Ireland's role in the war guaranteed that the benefits (embodied in the recommendations of the Beveridge Report) would be extended to that part of the United Kingdom and the kind of poverty and malnourishment that was exposed after the Belfast Blitz would be eliminated. Éire's neutrality did not preclude this radicalisation of social policy and while it was not as wide-ranging in the long term as in the North, the assumption by the state of responsibility for improved nutrition as

part of a number of measures to prevent ill health was not very different from the approach taken by its belligerent neighbour.

V Infectious diseases

For many working-class women, whether employed or unemployed, bad health was the order of the day. Poverty and overcrowding in many areas increased the likelihood of poor health, but women were particularly vulnerable because of the heavy demands made on them by childbirth and their domestic responsibilities. They had to face the problems of raising children, making ends meet, doing most of the housework and often doing paid employment as well, as Moya Woodside observed:

> Interviewed a woman at Welfare Office this morning, whose husband had had no work for the past 7 years. She was 33, tubercular, and had a "bad heart" and was the mother of 9 living children. 4 other children had died. She came to us asking for baby clothes, as she was shortly expecting her 14th confinement, just a year after the last. (18th March 1940)

According to a study conducted during the war, tuberculosis was particularly prevalent among the unemployed, where the two factors that most favoured the development of the disease were very likely to be found – insufficient food and overcrowded housing.[57] In her history of tuberculosis in nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland, Greta Jones[58] found that in the 1930s the Irish Free State had the worst annual percentage reduction in deaths from tuberculosis out of twenty countries in Europe, Australasia and North America. Within Ireland the reduction rate in Dublin was the lowest, coming second only to Rome in a list of major European cities.[59]

Tuberculosis continued to be the most widespread of the contagious diseases into the 1940s, despite the strenuous efforts that were being made to combat infection. Between 1939 and 1941 tuberculosis mortality rose in both Éire and Northern Ireland, increasing from 112 per 100,000 in 1939 in Dublin to 124 per 100,000 in 1945. The Belfast rate was 84 per 100,000 in 1939 to a peak of 104 per 100,000 in 1941 before

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[57] Professor T.W.T. Dillon, "Tuberculosis: A Social Problem" in *Studies*, Vol. XXXIV, June 1943, pp. 163-174.
[58] Greta Jones, *'Captain of all these men of death'. The History of Tuberculosis in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Ireland.* The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine, Amsterdam, 2001.
[59] J.E. Counihan and T.W. Dillon, "Irish Tuberculosis Death Rates: A Statistical Study of their reliability with some socio-economic correlations" in *Journal of the Social and Statistical Society of Ireland*, Vol. XVII, 1943-44, pp. 169-188.

declining to 80 per 100,000 by 1945.[60] Counihan and Dillon concluded that the main operative factory for the difference in the TDR between Belfast and Dublin was the persistence of unemployment in the latter city.[61] Josie was one of the casualties:

> [Josie] I got very sick with TB at the time, and I was about four years in the sanitorium, which at the time [pause] there was an awful lot of people laid low with that, as you might know at the time, with the result then that I was four years away so I wasn't doing much at home. I had it in the hip and I was away four years there. I had to learn to walk again, after that. I would have been about 18 when I got that, you know. Thank God I made a great recovery. I had wonderful care but at the time it was very hard. … But at that time, there was an awful lot of people with ill health and at that time, in those years, when I was out in Crooksling[62] – I think it's an old person's home or something now, it's closed. (179 and 183)

Josie was not living in overcrowded conditions although she was unable to find work in Dublin during the Emergency. None of the rest of her family got the disease, although she had two sisters and her mother at home when she was diagnosed.

In a memoir by Phyllis Browne, widow of Dr. Noel Browne, *Thanks for the Tea, Mrs. Browne*[63], she described how tuberculosis was accepted as 'the will of God', making it difficult to get anyone actively involved in trying to make things better[64]. In November 1942, the formation of the National Anti-Tuberculosis League was announced in Dublin. Its aim was to unite all classes in society in a nation-wide campaign against the disease but it ran into opposition from the Catholic Church in the person of the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. McQuaid, who insisted that the Irish Red Cross should be in charge. Dr. John Shanley, Chairman of the Red Cross at the time, suggested that Archbishop McQuaid was alarmed by the Protestant flavour of the leadership of the proposed league and that the predominantly Catholic Red Cross would be preferable.[65] In any case, measures to tackle tuberculosis were adopted by the government and pushed through under the stewardship of Dr. James Deeney[66], who was appointed Chief Medical Officer in September 1944. The potential for

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[60] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[61] Counihan and Dillon, "Irish Tuberculosis Death Rates" p. 188.
[62] The Crooksling sanitorium was in Brittas, Co. Dublin, in an area well outside the city limits. It was designated for the treatment of early pulmonary cases of tuberculosis. (*Thom's Directory 1941*, p. 805.)
[63] Phyllis Browne, *Thanks for the Tea, Mrs. Browne*. New Island Books, Dublin, 1998.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[65] Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics*, pp. 161-162.
[66] Dr. James Deeney was a general practitioner in Lurgan, Co. Down when he applied for the position of Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Local Government and Public Health in Éire. He had an impressive record of research and publications on socio-medical problems, including a study on "Poverty as a Cause of Ill-health" which he presented to the JSSISI in May 1940, in which he studied the health of a group of low income women in Lurgan. (*JSSISI*, Vol. Vol. XVI, 1940, pp. 75-89.)

conflict between the Church and the state emerged as other schemes for over-hauling the health system were proposed. These would give the Minister a more direct role in allocating services. An alliance developed between the Catholic Church and the medical profession in resisting what they saw as the encroachments of politicians and bureaucrats.[67]

Medicines were also in short supply and the Department of Local Government and Public Health concentrated on controlling outbreaks of the most infectious diseases. In addition to the problem of widespread tuberculosis, other dangerous diseases, such as diphtheria[68] and scarlet fever[69], were particularly dangerous in overcrowded housing conditions because they were passed on by personal contact, but even without overcrowding, once a virulent infection got into a family it could spread very quickly:

> [Catherine] I had one little girl when I lived in another house, far away from here, and she died. Well, actually, through neglect – the doctor – she got scarlet fever and he left me to look after her and I was expecting another baby at the time and the little girl, four years old, she died. .... Then she was buried this day and I got the scarlet fever and of course, I was expecting a baby that very day. So when they took away the hearse and the funeral went off I was taken in the ambulance to Cork Street fever hospital[70] and I had a baby girl. Of course, I had to stay there till the scarlet went off, the scarlet fever. They treated it and that, and then when I came home there was a couple of the other children after getting it too. (5 and 7)

In 1941, the year that Catherine's little girl died, there were 32 deaths from scarlet fever in the Dublin County Borough.[71] Betty also remembered the way the disease swept through their family, partly because she associated the event with another trauma in the family:

> [Betty] We all got the scarlet fever together. My sister got it first and they didn't treat her properly for it. Now my brother, my eldest brother that's away, he was ten years old then, and he was about twelve months before she died he fell off a wall and broke his neck and he was in plaster of paris from

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[67] Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: the Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society*. Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1987. Also, J.H. Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923-1979*. Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1980.

[68] Diphtheria is a highly contagious infection, which causes severe respiratory problems and a swelling of the throat which can cause the patient to asphyxiate. A vaccine was developed in the United States in the 1950s but until that development, it was very widespread.

[69] Scarlet fever is a disease caused by an infection of the throat with streptococcal bacteria. It is highly infectious and in years prior to the wide availability of antibiotics, was a very serious childhood illness.

[70] The full name of the hospital was the House of Recovery and Fever Hospital in Cork Street and it was founded in 1801. It had 276 beds for the relief of patients suffering from fevers and other infectious diseases. (*Thom's Directory 1942, p. 827*)

[71] Annual Report of the Department of Local Government and Public Health 1939-1941.

> here to here and all you could see was his two eyes, his nose and his mouth. … Now the day he got the plaster off his neck my sister died of scarlet fever. That was on the Saturday, and she was buried on the Monday morning, And my sister that's away now, she was born in Cork Street fever hospital, she was the only baby ever born in Cork Street. (157 and 159)

Betty and the other children had to be quarantined when they got the fever and she remembered being in Sir Patrick Dun's hospital[72] over Christmas and a doctor playing Santa Clause for the benefit of the patients.

Quarantine regulations were very strictly enforced and could lead to very difficult situations for a family. Clare was sent to hospital when she contracted diphtheria after sharing a friend's lollipop. Her friend developed the infection just before her and Clare was put into quarantine and was unable to see her family:

> [Clare] I was in for eight weeks. It was isolation, in the Hardwicke Hospital[73]. I was in it for seven weeks without contact with my family. I thought they had died in a fire in the house and they were all gone. After one month I used to be allowed to go down to the garden where my father could see me. My mother never came, because she might have brought it back to the rest of the family. And two years later, my sister, who was two and a half, got diphtheria and was isolated for fourteen weeks, which was [pause] she was isolated in Beneavin Hospital[74], which was in Finglas. Her hair was cut short, she had lovely long hair, it was cut short and she had no contact with her family, which must have been very damaging. (89)

In 1940 and 1941, the government was concerned about the possibility of invasion and plans were drawn up plans to evacuate 70,000 children from the Dublin County Borough and Dun Laoghaire. It was intended that eligibility for evacuation would include the condition that children be inoculated against diphtheria. Clare had been released from hospital by this time but in any case, immunisation appears to have been the key to eradication of the disease and the decline in the number of deaths was directly attributable to the inoculation programme.[75]

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[72] Sir Patrick Dun's hospital is in Grand Canal Street in Dublin. It was one of the hospitals approved by the Minister for Local Government and Health to treat tuberculosis cases that required surgery. The hospital provided a screening service for tuberculosis and presumably had quarantine facilities available to deal with the possibility of contagion.

[73] The Hardwicke Hospital was one of the House of Industry Hospitals in North Brunswick Street. The others were the Richmond Surgical Hospital and the Whitworth Medical Hospital.

[74] Beneavin hospital was described as an Auxiliary Branch of Cork Street Fever Hospital. In Thom's Directory, the address is given as Glasnevin, which is very close to Finglas. (Thom's Directory 1942, p. 827)

[75] Altogether 57,616 Dublin children were vaccinated in the year 1943-1944 and at the end of the year the greatest decrease in incidence and mortality nation-wide was in the city. Cork Street Fever Hospital treated 438 of the city's cases and none of the 39 patients who subsequently died had been immunised. (Fee, *The Effect of World War II on Dublin's Low-Income Families*, p. 177.)

When Nancy finished her nursing training in England, she returned to Dublin for a while to take up a job in the Cork Street Fever Hospital. She was horrified by the conditions in the hospital but she did not know if they were typical of Irish hospitals or just the result of the fact that the hospital was nearly one hundred and fifty years old:

> [Nancy] The conditions were terrible. … You know, the facilities for the children and the rest of it [pause] but I don't know what other hospitals in Ireland were like because I didn't know them and I couldn't compare at all. … . It had been there for donkey's years. It was in very bad shape and the Medical Superintendent of the hospital, he said [pause] you know, there was a diagram in the front hall of the new [pause] a model of the new hospital. And he said do you see that laundry down there, and all that steam going to waste up the chimney there, that should be piped up into the hospital for poor children with the croup and what have you. But he said I'll never live to see that. But they started building soon after I left, out at Cherry Orchard. The poor man had a heart attack so he didn't get to see it. (95, 97 and 101)

Most of Nancy's patients were from the slum areas of Dublin and having to go out to collect patients in an ambulance gave her an insight into the dreadful conditions in which some people in the city were living:

> [Nancy] They came from [pause] if you saw some of the houses, because they were all infectious diseases, or reputed to be infectious diseases, we had to go out and collect them in our own ambulance from Cork Street and there we had two drivers who also were a pantomime [laughs]. So we had to go out and bring them in and you couldn't even bring in their clothes because you might [pause] so you had to wrap them in a blanket and bring them in so that nothing came in. (123)

Nancy did not share Clare's concern about the psychological effect on a child of isolation from family. In the Selly Oak hospital in Birmingham where she had trained as a nurse, the hospital policy on visiting was based on the belief that having parents come and go was very upsetting for a child but the children's wards in the hospital were made as cheerful and welcoming as possible so that the children would be happy to stay.

The Northern Irish health authorities were equally concerned to contain any outbreaks of potentially epidemic diseases. The Executive Sanitary Officers, later known as Public Health Inspectors and Environmental Health Officers, were responsible for the purity of the water supply, as well as working with the Medical Superintendent Officer of Health in carrying out whatever measures were necessary to

prevent the spread of disease[76]. A diary entry by Moya Woodside refers to an epidemic of scabies[77] that swept through Ulster in late 1940 and which she felt the authorities were slow to deal with, possibly on account of embarrassment about the extent of the epidemic and their uncertainty about how to deal with it. While her response is a personal one, she does highlight a problem that was consistent with the Northern Ireland government's cautious approach to taking action:

> Apropos of this epidemic, a refugee doctor from Vienna, who for years had made scabies his special study, and who had been in charge of a Viennese hospital with one block set apart solely for the treatment of this disease, went off recently (after months of idleness and in spite of an English degree) to waste his talents doing G.P. in the Midlands. What might not a progressive public health administration have done with this man, cast up on their own doorstep just when his knowledge and experience were needed? (4th October 1940)

Scabies was very common in Dublin as well and the public health authorities seem to have adopted very strict methods to deal with an outbreak, as Clare recalled:

> [Clare] In this period, children developed a disease called scabies and every family had to go to the Iveagh Baths to be washed down with a white liquid, immersed in the public bath, to our absolute shame and horror to be stripped down in front of everyone[78]. We had to be immersed in this solution because scabies became rampant. (10)

There was a shortage of cleaning materials, for personal and domestic hygiene, because so many of those products had to be imported and there were no ships to bring them. Scabies became widespread throughout the city. The infection was particularly likely to appear where families were crowded together and where clothing was not regularly laundered. This did not necessary apply only in very poor households, as Clare explained, because her mother used a local laundry for bed linen and regular cleaning did not help them escape either the scabies mite or the fleas that infested the turf that was burned for heat:

> [Clare] Our soap was very basic. Sunlight soap that we buy today, that was the main soap, you'd to wash your face in that. Then there was carbolic soap, that was like a red soap and the soap that was supposed to be for washing floors - that was called 'Dirtshifter', a grey soap. You could wash the clothes in it if you hadn't got the other one. … All the bed linen went to a laundry and it got what they called a 'full finish', which meant it came back ironed and

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[76] Dr. Roger Blaney, *Belfast. 100 Years of Public Health.* Belfast City Council and Eastern Health and Social Services Board, Belfast, 1988.

[77] Scabies is an itchy condition of the skin caused by a tiny mite which may be passed easily by close contact and commonly starts at the wrist, presumably having been picked up through holding hands. The itching is due to an allergic reaction to the tiny mites, and is associated with a rash of red, raised spots. The itch is worse at night, and may often affect more than one family member.

[78] The Iveagh Baths is a public bath-house with a swimming pool, on Bride Street in Dublin.

> starched. The bed linen went and table cloths, and I think, maybe towels, anything of that nature. The rest then was just personal clothing. (46 and 81)

Although during the early years of the Emergency scabies was not a notifiable disease under the terms of the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) regulations, the government was forced to deal with the outbreak as a matter of urgency because the British government decided that every Irish immigrant would have to undergo a health inspection before being allowed to enter the country. Both scabies and lice were treated at the same time. Clare's recollection of the shame associated with the cleansing procedure was based on the lack of personal dignity in the treatment, during which the infected person was subjected to washing and shaving of the under-arm and pubic areas and then painted with Benzyl Benzoate, a noxious blue dye.[79] In October 1943, the government made scabies a notifiable disease under the Public Health regulations.

VI General practitioner care

Being ill was a very expensive business and particularly so for a family with children. Clare's mother paid a retainer to her local doctor to cover regular attendance by her six children and to ensure that he would come promptly if needed for a home visit. Many families were unable to afford such an outlay and the dispensary doctors who operated local clinics in both Northern Ireland and Éire were severely overworked and sometimes unable to see all the patients registered with them. Similarly, as there were no vaccination programmes against childhood diseases in either jurisdiction, these could often develop into serious illness, as Minnie's family discovered to their cost:

> [Minnie] She was three years old when we went down the country for our summer holidays. Every year when we got our school holidays Mam took us down to her mother's and Catherine, as she was known, was with us and she got pneumonia and died. She got measles and took the pneumonia from the measles. She died down there; she's buried in Castleblayney.[80] … It was very hard on Mam and on my Dad too, and on the rest of us. I thought I had a sister, but I didn't. There was just me and the five brothers, then, that's it. (13 and 15)

Most of the women who were interviewed remembered family members who died prematurely but they did not think that they could have been saved, given the level of medical knowledge during the Second World War period, although Catherine blamed

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[79] Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland*, p. 139.

[80] Castleblayney is a small town in Co. Monaghan. According to the 1936 Census it had a population of 1,725.

the doctors treating her husband's ulcer for causing his death. He was being treated for the pain, when it seems that the ulcer burst and he was taken to hospital, where he was operated on and died three days later. The situation was made worse for the family because Catherine had no way of calling for help in the middle of the night when her husband was seriously ill, other than sending her two young sons out into a very bad storm to find a doctor:

> [Catherine] Dr. O'Connell[81], he came up by bike, he had a bike, he came and he was drowned and the two children were drowned. And he was in an awful way over it. He said this is terrible and he cried, really, when he saw all the young children. … Anyhow, the ulcer had burst and that was eleven o'clock on the Friday night and by the time the man next door came in and sat with us and by the time we got an ambulance [pause] he went to the Adelaide Hospital[82] and they never done a thing for him until the next morning, they brought him up to the theatre for an operation [pause] left the poison going through him all night, instead of operating immediately, you know. (21)

The doctor in Guinness's Brewery, where Catherine's husband worked as a cooper, had initially cared for him and she felt that insufficient attention had been paid to his condition. She was convinced the doctor was only concerned with keeping her husband at work, although Betty disagreed with that belief and thought her father had simply been too ill to be cured by the treatment available at the time. The Guinness Brewery had a very well resourced medical centre for staff and employees, where free medical and dental care was offered to family members as well as workers. It is not clear how usual that sort of service was at the time, even in large companies, although Anne enjoyed free medical care in the Ormeau Bakery, even though it seems that sick pay was not extended to all members of staff. When she had an accident on her bike, she went into work the next day, despite feeling very unwell:

> [Anne] There was a doctor, not on the premises but just in the next block. Dr. Young, he was the bakery doctor and another … I was so scared I wouldn't get out on the bike again I got up and went to work the next morning. When I went in and Mr. Curson, one of the managers, came in on business into the chocolate room and he saw me. So when I told him what had happened he sent me to the ambulance room and then Dr. Young was sent for and I was sent home. I was concussed, he said, that was my experience of one of the landmine holes, over the handlebars of the bike, so it was. But I was well

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[81] There is no reference to a Dr. O'Connell in the lists of registered medical practitioners in the south Dublin area in the 1940s.

[82] The Adelaide Hospital is in Peter Street, Dublin. Although it was an institution designed for Protestants, the hospital admitted all accident and emergency patients and the Outpatients' Department was open to anyone needing help. It had 163 beds and patients were expected to pay for their treatment according to their means. (David Mitchell. *A 'peculiar place': The Adelaide Hospital, Dublin. Its times, places and personalities.* Blackwater Press, Dublin, 1989.)

> taken care of in the bakery – it was in the middle of the week and they told me to stay off until the following Monday. … Yes, I was paid for that, I was. Everybody wouldn't be, but if you were running a department like myself, you know, yes, you would be. (164, 166 and 168)

The Women's Voluntary Services called upon women who were not normally employed in the health service to train in elementary first aid as part of the W.V.S. brief to assist the local authorities. In Northern Ireland, the organisation worked under the general direction of the Ministry of Public Security until its dissolution in May 1944, since when it operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The W.V.S. volunteers also trained in fire fighting techniques and assisted with local air raid precautions, although their most common occupation was running canteens and administering evacuation services and rest centre services. Voluntary work seems to have been undertaken mainly by middle class women, who claimed it was their patriotic duty. Moya Woodside felt that their eagerness to do 'jobs which at home they would have left to maid or charwoman' would have been better given to unemployed women who needed the work and could be paid for doing it.[83] Her observation underlines the difficulty in securing improved pay and conditions for women health workers, particularly in time of war, when the traditional argument that nurturing was its own reward could be combined with appeals to the national interest.

VII Conclusion

In a comparison of life expectancy in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Italy and France between 1925 and 1956, Cormac Ó Gráda showed that in the years from 1925 to 1927, there was very little difference between men and women on both sides of the Irish border, compared to Britain where women could expect to outlive men by an average of 7.1 years.[84] Up to the 1940s, women in Northern Ireland had a shorter life expectancy than women in Éire but this situation was reversed in the period 1950 to 1952, when Northern Irish females could expect to live to an average of 68.8 years, compared to 67.1 years for women in the south. It seems likely that the reversal was a result of the significantly increased level of investment in Northern Ireland in public services that followed the Second World War, and in particular, the National Health Service. Generally, the health services in Belfast and Dublin in the inter-war years

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[83] James Hinton. *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War. Continuities of Class.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.
[84] Ó Gráda, *A Rocky Road. The Irish Economy since the 1920s*, p. 208.

seem to have been equally beset by problems of funding and dealing with the legacy of domination by special interest groups. In this regard, women were no worse off then men and in fact, when attention was paid to the need for improvements, it was the areas of maternal and child welfare that benefited first from reforms in both practice and funding, although with considerably greater success in Northern Ireland than in Éire, and later in the Republic.

The public health system in the inter-war years in both Belfast and Dublin was based on local dispensaries for general practitioner care and on a limited number of public hospitals, mainly connected to the Poor Law system. Proposed improvements were hindered by a certain confusion about where the money would come from to pay for them, accompanied by a reluctance to put any additional pressure on ratepayers. While the Fianna Fáil government that came to power in the Irish Free State in 1932 did immediately attempt to reform the health service, in Northern Ireland there were no wide-ranging efforts to improve matters until after the war, when the impact of the Beveridge Report and the willingness of the Westminster government to provide funding combined to facilitate the setting up of an efficient National Health Service in the province.

In terms of access to decent health care, women were no more systematically discriminated against than men, although the additional demands of their domestic lives tended to take a greater toll on their health. Their increased vulnerability was recognised in the North in that the first major improvements to the public health service were based on maternal and child welfare. In Éire, while reforming impulses were devoted particularly to dealing with universal threats to health, such as tuberculosis, Lindsay Earner-Byrne's research demonstrates that maternal and child health were also of considerable concern in Dublin.[85] The influence of the Catholic Church was manifested in various ways, not least in maintaining control of appointments to many hospitals and other positions associated with the health service and insisting on conformity to Catholic teaching and practice in the running of such institutions.

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[85] Earner-Byrne, *'In Respect of Motherhood': Maternity policy and provision in Dublin city, 1922-1956.*

Interviewees from Belfast and Dublin were reluctant to discuss such intimate areas of domestic life as sexual relations and birth control methods and there was plentiful evidence to suggest that this stemmed from society's attitudes to such issues during the war years. This reticence was also discernible in governmental approaches to sensitive topics, particularly in the necessity to publicise the danger of sexually transmitted diseases. The Westminster government's information campaign was deemed sufficiently urgent to overcome pre-war taboos on public discussion of the subject. While the official policy in approaching the subject was intended to be even handed, in practice the regulations about inspection and reporting of sexually transmitted diseases were focussed primarily on women and most of the publicity tended to suggest that women were mainly responsible for the spread of infection.

The marriage bar forced many married women from the nursing profession but there was less institutionalised discrimination in terms of pay and conditions for women health workers than in other types of employment, because it was rarely the case that men and women were doing similar work. Nursing, in particular, was seen as a natural job for a woman, an extension of her traditional caring role in life, and as such it was not considered appropriate to fight for decent terms, even by many of the women employed in the health service. The marriage bar for nurses was maintained on both sides of the border. Interestingly, there was no marriage bar for doctors, but this may have been because there were so few women employed in that capacity during the war years.

In Belfast, a variety of poor health conditions were attributed to the war. Nervous exhaustion was to be expected during and after the Blitz, but the Mass-Observation diarist, Dr. Trennick, identified many of his female patients as suffering because of the absence of their husbands in the forces and consequent anxiety about their safety. Overcrowded conditions in housing, but also in the close confines of bomb shelters, contributed to an increase in respiratory diseases. Similarly, contagious skin diseases, such as scabies and impetigo, were more easily passed on when large numbers of people were forced to come together in small spaces for hours at a time. Poor nutrition was identified as the cause of the poor infant mortality rates in both cities, and the fact that improved economic performance in Belfast in the later years of the war coincided with a decrease in infant mortality, particularly compared

to Dublin, underlines the cause and effect. Rationing of food certainly evened the burden for poor families and contributed to an improvement in nutrition, but the evidence of malnutrition and related illness that was revealed after the Blitz, in particular, provided considerable impetus for post-war changes in social policy in Northern Ireland, not least in terms of the benefits of the implementation of the Beveridge Plan. In Éire, while the changes were not as dramatic, social policy was focussed more directly on improving nutritional standards for poor families and consequently health overall. In both Northern Ireland and Éire, tuberculosis was a scourge before the war and continued to be throughout the war years with the mortality rate actually increasing between 1939 and 1941. The relationship between poverty, overcrowding, and the disease was manifest when improvements in access to work in Belfast in the second half of the war was accompanied by a decrease in the mortality rates, whereas in Dublin they continued to rise. Concern about the ravages of the disease was widespread and led to a post-war determination to eradicate it and the conditions that helped it to flourish

The impact of the war, or the Emergency, was considerably less in Dublin than it was in Belfast, in terms of the changes to the health service and women's interaction with it. The reforms that were undertaken during the 1940s had been in train since the previous decade, and they did not meet any major obstacles until the battle over the Mother and Child scheme in the early 1950s. In Belfast, the state of health of many of the slum dwellers was made impossible to ignore following the bombing raids of 1941 and led to demands for massive change. The involvement of Northern Ireland in the Allied war effort was rewarded by extension of the National Health Service funding to the Stormont government, removing the qualms about demands on the ratepayers that had obstructed reform in the years before the war.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose?

> My Dear President [of the Executive Council]
> I am sorry to observe that you are disposed to take the clamour of those suffragettes so seriously. In this attitude you are wholly misinterpreting the mind of the country. ... As one who has had some experience in sensing the mind of the ordinary man or woman I can positively say that the most popular thing you could do, as well also as the very best thing nationally, would be to make it known that your desire was to send women back to the home where they belong.
>
> That there is general regret if not resentment at the intrusion of women in the spheres of men is not an exaggeration. ... I would beg of you to take a strong stand in this matter and you will have the support of the people. You will solve the male unemployment problem at once if you direct that definite occupations must employ men and men only.[1]

Mr. J. Walsh may not have spoken for the people of Ireland in quite the universal terms that he claimed, but the attitude to a woman's place in society that is explicit in his letter reflected the widely held conviction in the period prior to the commencement of the Second World War that women's primary role was a domestic one. This identification of women with the private world of the family unit provided a context for this project as it set out to answer the questions raised in the first chapter. Were Irish women, in both Northern and Southern Ireland, subject to institutional discrimination regarding employment, social welfare and equality of opportunity as were women in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States in the years before the Second World War? To what extent was the war's impact on them differentiated by the fact that Northern Ireland was actively at war, while Southern Ireland remained neutral? Did the war have an effect on all aspects of their lives - on their domestic responsibilities as well as their paid employment?

There has been little specific research on the impact of the Second World War on women in Éire (an omission that it is hoped this dissertation will contribute to redressing) while the section on the Second World War in Alison Morrow's excellent

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[1] Letter from J. Walsh, Ulster Bank Buildings, 3 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin to Eamon De Valera, 15 May 1937. Department of the Taoiseach, File S 9880, Position of women under the Constitution.

Ph.D. dissertation on women and work in Northern Ireland[2] has not been followed up by more detailed investigation of the period. There has been an increasing awareness of the need to include women as a separate category in the examination of history. Women's responses to major events or to social and economic changes may not necessarily be fairly represented by the predominantly masculine interpretations that have shaped the official reports and documentary sources on which the writing of history has been focussed. While this is also true of other marginalised groups, it is particularly problematic in the case of women, who comprise at least half the population but whose specific interests and concerns have not received a corresponding level of attention. The evidence of a female centred approach to the history of the Second World War demonstrates the extent to which the traditional view of men as combatants and women as the symbols of the 'home front' - the protective focus for which the war was being fought – both dominated the integration into the war effort of the social policies of the Allied governments and survived into the post-war years. The wartime role of women in a belligerent state like Britain described in the work of Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield[3], for example, shows that many women overcame the boundaries of those social policies and broke through the barriers of social expectation, even if it was only for a limited period of time.

Research clearly shows that there were women who wanted to emerge from the confines of assumptions that a maternal destiny precluded the possibility of other ambitions for themselves. While they were encouraged to seek a wider role during the war, it was also within constraints. Oral history interviews have been particularly valuable in illustrating the ambivalent feelings that women experienced, particularly if they were concerned that aspiring for a wider range of opportunities might damage their chances for domestic happiness, by making them somehow less feminine. Research into the wartime experience of women in the United States came to similar conclusions, as demonstrated particularly by the findings of Karen Anderson in her

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[2] Alison Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland 1920-1950*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ulster at Coleraine, 1995.

[3] Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*. Pandora Press, London, 1987; Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing women's wartime lives. Discourse and subjectivity in oral histories of the Second World War*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998 and *'My Dress for an Army Uniform': Gender Instabilities in the Two World Wars*. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lancaster, 30th April 1997; Gail Braybon (Ed.), *Evidence, History and the Great War. Historians and the Impact of 1914-18*. Berghahn Books, New York, 2003.

book on women who took up work in traditionally 'male' areas, like engineering and munitions works.[4] Other valuable research into women's wartime work that made use of oral history interviews considered the influence of class in defining female roles and how the concept of femininity was safeguarded by the content of propaganda aimed at women, such as the 'Rosie the Riveter' campaign.[5] Similar work on the lives of women in occupied countries has shown how the patriarchal structures of pre-war societies carried over into the wartime years, and in many cases, women who played combatant roles were for many decades written out of the post-war record. In Margaret Collins Weitz's history[6] of women *résistantes* in France, she noted how difficult it was for many of those women to adjust to 'normal' life after the war, not least because the war experience had done so little to change women's status. The question of class and its connection to social standing and attitudes to gender has not been considered in any detail in this project, and much remains to be done even in countries where there is a longer history of research into women's involvement in the Second World War.

Even in the belligerent states that did not have to deal with occupation by hostile forces in the course of the war, the public rewards for the valuable role played by women, on the home front and in war work, were of a temporary nature. After a sustained campaign to persuade women into traditional male areas of work during World War I, inequality in pay and conditions continued to be a feature of the workplace in the post-war years, so far as women workers were concerned. The potentially liberating outcome of such employment for women was offset as soon as the Great War ended by reiteration of the notion that women's 'natural' place was in the home. There was no public acknowledgement of the paid employment that many women had undertaken to provide or supplement their family income and the dismissal of the work of many other women under the Census heading of 'engaged in home duties' denied the value of such activity to the household and the public

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[4] Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations and the status of women during World War II.* Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1981. Also see Caroline Lang, *Keep Smiling Through. Women in the Second World War.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989; Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s.* Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1982.
[5] Maureen Honey. Creating Rosie the Riveter. Class, Gender and Propaganda during World War II. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1984.
[6] Margaret Collins Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance. How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995;

economy. The work of Elizabeth Roberts in researching women's role within the family[7] showed that those women who took on wage-earning activities outside the home tended to do so to improve their families' standard of living, rather than for personal fulfilment. Roberts' use of oral history interviews supplemented an empirical approach to her research and enabled her to access information that did not appear in any official records. Other work carried out in Ireland and in Britain underlined the extent to which women's contribution to the domestic economy far exceeded what was publicly acknowledged. In this regard, the work of Caitriona Clear and Jane Lewis is particularly helpful.[8]

The demand by the belligerent governments during World War II that women should continue to play their private domestic role while they were called upon to make a public contribution to the war effort resulted in a heavier workload for many women. Considerable effort was invested by belligerent governments in creating recruitment propaganda that called for women's service in terms of a patriotic duty but carefully avoided any suggestion that a response to that call should be met with post-war changes in social or employment policies. Women in Northern Ireland were formally excepted because conscription was not imposed on the state but the wartime conditions still created problems for them in their domestic lives, as evidenced by Moya Woodside's observations of her own household.

Most of the recent research that focussed primarily on women's role in both world wars, such as that by Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield referred to above, refuted the claim by Arthur Marwick[9] referred to in the introduction to this dissertation that those wars acted as liberating forces for women. Nevertheless, the evidence of specialised research on this topic, such as that carried out by Jean Bethke Elshtain[10] and Dorothy Sheridan[11] is that many individual women welcomed the

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[7] Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890-1940.* Blackwell, 1984.
[8] Caitriona Clear. Women *of the House. Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922-1964* and Jane Lewis. *Labour and Love: Women's experience of Home and Family 1850-1940*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.
[9] See especially Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*, Macmillan, 1974 and *Total War and Social Change*, Macmillan, 1988. Marwick has been quoted extensively in work on both world wars where women's role and position has been examined briefly as part of more general surveys, usually with no question about his conclusions.
[10] Jean Bethke Elshtain. *Woman and War*. Harvester, New York, 1987.

opportunity to become part of the war effort and expand their personal horizons. Alison Morrow's research in Northern Ireland also supports this finding.[12] Oral history interviews were instrumental in airing positive interpretations of women's wartime experiences in much of that research. In a similar vein, the testimonies of most of the women who took part in this research subvert the conclusion that the absence of economic and legislative change suggests that the war made no difference to women in Ireland in either jurisdiction. Their stories show that the effect of the war on their individual lives was mainly positive, particularly for those women who grasped the improved opportunities for personal development, employment, friendship and travel that were offered by the wartime situation. This is an impact of the war as it affected Ireland that has not been considered in Irish historiography.

Looking only at the evidence of economic hardship, particularly for the poor of Belfast and Dublin, belies the more constructive experience that was the case for many women. This is not to deny the extent of the hardship, particularly as it is described in Gerard Fee's groundbreaking thesis[13] on disadvantaged families in Dublin during the Emergency, because his findings are complemented by the evidence of some of the contributors to this project. The discussion of the urbanisation of formerly rural families in Dublin raised by Alexander Humphreys in *New Dubliners*[14] was very specific to the particular cohort of Dublin families that he was interested in studying i.e. first generation city dwellers with rural backgrounds. However, the questions he raised in examining the lives of that cohort, in particular the Dunn family who were made the focus of a lengthy section of the book, were useful in providing insights into post-war family dynamics that were not markedly different from those described by many of the interviewees in this project. He was more concerned about the family as a unit, rather than the individuals within it, but his work was the first of its kind in its analysis of working-class life in Dublin. The responses of the women who participated in my research could almost be said to offer a preface to Humphreys' work in the areas where there was an overlap, particularly in

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[11] Dorothy Sheridan (Ed.). *Wartime Women. A Mass-Observation Anthology 1937-1945*. Phoenix Press, London, 1990.
[12] Morrow, *Women and Work in Northern Ireland 1920-1950.*
[13] Gerard Fee, *The Effects of World War II on Dublin's Low Income Families*. Ph.D. Thesis, University College Dublin, 1996.
[14] Alexander J. Humphreys. *New Dubliners. Urbanisation and the Irish Family*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966.

terms of family life, the 'home front' and the distribution of authority within the family. Alison Morrow work also came to similar conclusions about the relationship between women and the workplace. While her study covered a longer period and the whole of Northern Ireland, her conclusions about the impact of the war on women's work complement my findings on Belfast specifically.

The immediate impact of the war on the daily lives of women in Belfast and Dublin was manifested in the effect that state responses to the situation had on both their domestic role and their paid employment. The government in Éire declared a state of emergency and assumed wide-ranging powers to secure territorial and political integrity while ensuring the continuation of essential services. Although there were some instances of the Fianna Fáil government using these emergency powers to restrict the activities of their political critics and dissident elements, the enabling Offences against the State Act 1939 (which had been continued each year during the Emergency) was allowed to expire when its term ran out in June 1946. Similarly, the Emergency Powers Act 1939, under which such security measures as the blackout regulations, censorship and travel restrictions had been passed, as well as the contentious Wages Standstill Orders, was not renewed when it expired in September 1946.

The pressure on Dublin women created by the rising cost of living and shortage of household goods was a result of the presumption that budgeting and allocation of family resources was their responsibility, regardless of changes in income that accompanied higher levels of unemployment and the restrictions on pay increases dictated by the Wages Standstill Act of 1941. Although employment opportunities for women improved in Belfast in the course of the war, and consequently offered increased incomes, the difficulties caused by rationing and other wartime restrictions contributed to a much heavier workload for women. Although the war provided opportunities for some women to broaden their horizons by travelling outside Ireland to work (and this was the main reason for the positive recollections of some of the interviewees in this project) for the majority of women in Ireland, north and south of the border, access to paid employment continued to be governed by pre-war conceptions about appropriate occupations and levels of pay. Nevertheless, it is clear that the pride in survival and 'making do' is an element of the wartime

experience that cannot be ignored. It is consistent with research in other countries, particularly in Britain, where investigation of the 'People's War' relates as much to the collective memory of resistance to attack and invasion as to the actual narrative of the war on the Home Front.

The vigour of the popular belief in the cohesive response of the British people to the war survives because it reflects a genuine sense of national pride and it has withstood the evidence of research that the Home Front was by no means patriotically homogeneous.[15] This was apparent also in studies of Edinburgh during the Second World War, as illustrated by the work of Andrew Jeffery, who examined the city's wartime experience in terms of its impact on the daily lives of the citizens.[16] The city was very similar to both Belfast and Dublin in terms of population size and its encounter with hardship that was related directly to the wartime conditions. It was different from the other two cities in that its citizens were subject to conscription, both for the armed forces and for work in war industries. Edinburgh shared the experience of inadequate defence preparations by the local authorities and the disproportionate suffering of the poorer areas that Belfast endured, even without the complications of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. There were also notable similarities to the wartime situation in Dublin, despite Éire's neutrality.

The emergency powers adopted by the British government that were extended to Northern Ireland concerned most areas of civilian life and had a similar impact on women's lives as similar statutory instruments did in Éire. Wartime measures such as rationing of food and other commodities, blackout arrangements and billeting of armed forces were all put in place by the Northern Ireland government, but the politically motivated decision not to extend conscription to the state was probably the most important one made by the Stormont and Westminster authorities. In terms of its impact on women, it meant that there was no need for the kind of ongoing debate about recruiting women that engaged the Ministry of Labour in Britain, when the determination not to offer hostages to fortune in terms of definite promises of post-war legislation to change women's status had to be balanced with the immediate need

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[15] See, in particular, Angus Calder, *The People's War. Britain 1939-1945*. Pimlico, London, 1992.
[16] Andrew Jeffery. *This Present Emergency. Edinburgh, the River Forth and South-East Scotland and the Second World War*. Mainstream Publishing, Edinburgh, 1992.

to persuade women to adopt both a public as well as their usual private and domestic role.[17] Nevertheless, the Stormont Ministry of Labour did consider the question briefly in 1943, when recruitment of married women to war industry became urgent for a time.

John Blake's officially commissioned history of the war in Northern Ireland postulates a united response to the war by the loyal Unionist population of the State. He included women's voluntary engagement in war work as evidence of the commitment of the majority of the population and claimed that the post-war prosperity of Northern Ireland, in comparison to the economic situation south of the border, was a reward for widespread involvement in fighting for a just cause.[18] Even writing in 1956, this was a considerable stretching of the truth of the matter, but more recent research, particularly that of Brian Barton, has shown just how divided was Northern Ireland's response to the wartime conditions.[19] Barton used oral history to supplement other sources in his research but he did not examine the experience of women specifically or whether gender had any influence on the nature of the wartime experience. A common theme that emerged in the interviews for this research was the extent to which Ireland now is a poorer place in non-material terms than the country inhabited by the women when they were younger, regardless of whether they came from Belfast or Dublin.[20] Several of the women referred to their belief that hardship benefited the formation of their characters and their value systems. The 1941 bombing raids on Belfast caused enormous death and destruction but they also led directly to recognition of the levels of poverty in some parts of the city that resulted in major post-war changes to the physical fabric of Belfast, as well as widespread social welfare reform. The sectarian divisions in the city were not changed by the shared hardship, although some temporary identification of interests seems to have occurred. Nevertheless, all of the women remembered the war years as a time of positive social

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[17] Penny Summerfield. *Women Workers in the Second World War. Production and Patriarchy in Conflict.* Croon Helm, London, 1984.
[18] John Blake. *Northern Ireland in the Second World War.* HMSO, Belfast, 1956.
[19] Brian Barton, *The Blitz. Belfast in the War Years.* Blackstaff, Belfast, 1989 and *Northern Ireland in the Second World War.* Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 1995.
[20] Specialists in therapeutic memory recovery have found this kind of nostalgia to be a very common feature of life story recall and have related it in particular to anxiety about the present and the imminence of death that colours the past in more positive light than might have been the case at an earlier stage of a person's life. (Alan Baddely. *The Psychology of Memory*, Harper and Row, New York, 1976; Joanna Bornat. *Reminiscence Reviewed: Achievements, Evaluations, Perspectives*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993;

cohesion when there was a much greater impulse for neighbours to look after each other. While the target of the bombs dropped on Dublin remains open to question, the consequence was a strengthening of support for the State's policy of neutrality that was seen as a significant contribution to establishing an international and independent identity in the post-war years.

But what were the opinions of the women whose stories have provided a previously unconsidered perception of a momentous period in Irish history, whether it was from the point of view of involvement in a world war or the more peripheral impact of the Emergency? How do their memories of their youth and young adulthood, which have been filtered by the subsequent sixty years of understanding, compare with the testimony of Moya Woodside, also a young woman in 1939 but writing about her daily experience of wartime as a self-conscious recorder for the Mass-Observation organisation? Woodside's political interests and social outlook[21] were just as important to her as her domestic responsibilities[22] and they influenced her diary entries. While she was no better informed or educated than some of the interviewees, she did have a viewpoint that was shaped by the circumstances of her life at the time. So did the interviewees, but their lives have changed in the intervening years and their concerns now are not necessarily those that preoccupied them during the war years, whereas Woodside was writing about the city in which she was actually living at the time. While her diary entries generally supported the evidence given in the interviews, particularly when they referred to the practical impact of aspects of the situation, her opinions were also formed by the immediacy of her observations. On the other hand, most of the interviewees needed to be prompted by specific questions about different aspects of their experiences during the war years simply because so much has happened in the intervening period that it cannot be as vital to them as it was Woodside, writing her observations on an almost daily basis through 1940 and 1941. Although their memories were very clear about the issues that interested them, these varied according to how they defined themselves at the time – as housewives or workers, schoolgirls or independent figures.

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[21] Woodside was a Labour Party activist who was also a home visitor for the Belfast Welfare Committee, and an activist for the Marie Stopes organisation. She was also a member of the Eugenics Society in Britain and following the war, wrote a series of papers for them.

[22] Woodside was married to a doctor and her social circle was financially secure and well educated. She had a maid to help her with housework but she seems to have done all the household shopping by herself.

Most of the women grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, when most western European countries were preoccupied with the declining birth rate.[23] Ireland was an anomaly in this regard, because even with one of the highest rates of births per marriage in the world, it still had a very low average birth rate, not least because of the high rates of maternal and infant morality. In Éire, while there was genuine concern about women's health, the role of the Catholic Church complicated the measures that were taken to relieve the problem because of clerical concern about interference in family units. In this regard, Lindsey Earner-Byrne's research[24] showed that the Catholic hierarchy's determination to maintain control of the ethos of the health service actually empowered some Catholic Dublin mothers who were able to trade off their allegiance in exchange for better services. Although sectarian concerns were of considerable influence in Belfast, discussion of maternal welfare tended to focus much more on suggestions that the women were culpable of a failure to look after themselves and their children, mainly tending to ignore the role of family income in the prevalence of poor health.

While it is clear that the women who contributed to this project were aware that there was workplace gender discrimination in terms of pay and conditions, this is not something that concerned them very much at the time they are recalling or that is of much more than peripheral interest now. The recurrent theme in most of the women's recollections of their entry into their various workplaces is of satisfaction about securing a job and earning a wage that would allow them to keep themselves and contribute to the family income. The women's sense of self-worth was linked to their capacity to earn, although most of them had considerable pride in the high standard of their work, which they pointed out often exceeded the demands of their employers. It is also important to note that most of them agree that even if they had been conscious of structural gender discrimination in the workplace, due to the exigencies of the period they would have been much less concerned to do something about it than simply getting on with the task at hand. This finding is consistent with

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[23] Gisela Bock and Pat Thane. *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European Welfare States, 1880-1950*, London, 1951.
[24] Lindsey Earner-Byrne. *'In respect of Motherhood': Maternity policy and provision in Dublin city, 1922-1956.* Ph.D. thesis, University College Dublin, 2001.

other research into women's work in western countries, both in peace and wartime, like that of Harriett Bradley[25] and Elizabeth Roberts.[26]

Recollection is a process of selection. Psychologists agree that information about a specific event is interpreted in the light of a person's general background knowledge and interests.[27] In Alistair Thomson's *Anzac Memories* he refers to the phenomenon recognised by psychologists as 'life review'[28], when the desire to remember is accompanied by a candour that goes with the belief that life is nearing its end and achievement is completed. In this phase of life, informants display great continuity between their past and present in their basic activities, interests, and values. Most longitudinal studies have demonstrated stability of attitudes in older people that have followed them over a number of years[29]. This suggests that the interpretation of events that the women in this project included in their testimonies can be acceptable as evidence of their outlook in the earlier period of their lives. In this regard, therefore, it was not surprising to find that the interviewees mainly remembered the war years in terms of their own personal and family stories and had not thought of that time in the context of a more general bearing on the status of women in society, either Irish or international, because that was not something in which they were especially interested. To the extent that they are the products of the society in which they were educated and in which they reached adulthood, their growing realisation over the years that they had been discriminated against in the past was synchronised with changing social attitudes.

> In one sense we compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of our culture. In another sense we compose memories that help us to feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities, that give us a feeling of composure.[30]

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[25] Harriett Bradley. Men's Work, Women's Work. *A Sociological History of the Sexual division of Labour in Employment.* Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989.
[26] Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* and *Women and Families. An Oral History 1940-1970*. Blackwell, London, 1995.
[27] Peter Coleman, *Ageing and Reminiscence Processes. Social and Clinical Implications*. Wiley, London, 1986; Joanna Bornat. *Reminiscence Reviewed: Achievements, Evaluations, Perspectives;* David Middleton and Derek Edwards, *Collective Remembering.* Sage, London, 1990.
[28] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories. Living with the Legend.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994.
[29] Alan Baddely, "The Limitations of Human Memory: Implications for the Design of Retrospective Surveys" in Louis Moss and Harvey Goldstein (Eds.), *The Recall Method in Social Surveys*. University of London Institute of Education, 1979, pp. 13-30.
[30] Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p. 8.

In examining this aspect of their memories, the immediacy of Moya Woodside's diary provides a double contrast, not just in terms of the lapse of time, but because she was a political campaigner and her observations were filtered through the prism of her activism.

Even though it was not responsible directly for increasing the availability of divorce and contraception, women's involvement in both world wars in the twentieth century eventually contributed to changes in the sexual division of roles within the family unit. This is evidence in the wide ranging research into post-war women's lives, which has not been examined in this dissertation.[31] It was not immediate, but the public recognition of women's emergence from the home to the workplace for the duration of the war eventually undermined the idea that a woman's place was in the home and a man's job was to enable her to stay there to fulfil her maternal destiny. This did not happen after the First World War but there was much less time for such a process to occur, with only twenty years between the two conflicts. After the Second World War, too, technological developments in many areas diluted the need for strength in many traditionally male areas of work so that women were more attractive to employers. Technological developments also changed the home front, with better access to labour saving domestic appliances giving even married women and mothers more time. Technological developments in the area of health also contributed to change, particularly in the area of pregnancy and childbirth, with improved access to contraception Changes in familial organisation and the allocation of domestic responsibilities were much slower to change in Ireland than in the rest of Europe but one consequence of the wartime concern of both governments with the poor state of public health was the increased attention paid to maternal and child welfare and the state's acceptance of a measure of responsibility for providing adequate nutrition for all citizens. The latter concern was of particular importance in Éire because the method adopted – the implementation of a Children's Allowance payment – outlasted the Emergency and was passed by the Dáil despite the prevailing economic privation. It was not only popular with the electorate but it complied with the Catholic social teaching that was so influential on policy makers at the time.

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[31] A recent useful example of research in Ireland is Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O'Shea and Carmel Quinlan (Eds.). Ireland *in the 1950s. The Lost Decade*. Mercier Press, Cork, 2004.

Many of the women's attitudes to self-discipline and behaviour were derived from the certainties of their religious beliefs, which had been inculcated through church attendance from an early age, in both Catholic and Protestant churches. The extent to which their religious education influenced the women seemed to depend on the fervour of their families. The women who maintained the certainty of their youth had mothers who were considered to be very 'religious' and had faithfully passed on religious principles and values to their children. Olive came from a border town where her family was very much in the minority because they were Protestant. Her religious affiliation did not interfere with her loyalty to Ireland, and she describes herself as a republican but she and her family were still concerned about the well being of some of her co-religionists who enlisted in the British armed forces because they thought it was their duty. On the other hand, the Protestant women who lived in Belfast were firmly committed to the war effort and their concerns were based on national and political allegiance as well as personal connections to members of the armed forces.

Ita remembered being very proud of de Valera's defiance of British pressure to surrender the Treaty ports during the Emergency but she said that was a retrospective point of view because she had not been aware of what was happening at the time. From the perspective of the only one of the interviewees from Dublin who was involved in actively involved in trying to change social conditions[32], she did not believe that the Second World War had any special impact on women's lives, more than would have resulted from the hardships that everyone shared. Similarly, while Marie was active in the trade union movement on a broader stage than that represented by her workplace, she thought that it was not until relatively recent years that there had been any success in persuading women workers that they were entitled to the same pay and conditions as men. While this assessment is consistent with the women's belief that nobody in the Second World War years was interested in change, it is not the whole truth because there were sporadic efforts to raise questions of equality, as in the successful strike in the Ewart linen manufacturing company in 1940.

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[32] In the late 1950s, Ita and her sister became involved in the organisation of a summer school that was focussed on finding solutions for some of the difficult social problems in Ireland at the time. Prominent speakers from politics, economic and academic institutions, and other influential areas were invited and scholarships were organised for participants who could not afford to fund themselves.

Despite the general agreement among the interviewees that life was materially harder during the war years, they all agreed that the pace of life is more difficult now. Nancy thought that times had certainly changed but not necessarily for the better for women, because of the heightened expectations of them. Josie referred to her daughters and how they take it for granted now that they are entitled to the same opportunities as men. She laughed at Eamon de Valera's desire for a country full of 'comely maidens' with 'loads of children round the fire'. She said 'that was your place there, at the cooker and the sink' but at the same time, she considered that mothers had considerable authority attached to their place in the home. Despite the fact that few women in the 1930s and 1940s saw the workplace as their 'natural' habitat, and despite the inequality in their pay and conditions, paid labour could also be a source of pride and accomplishment for them. Again, this is entirely consistent with the findings of similar research in other western countries. This aspect of women's lives was untouched by the war because it had nothing to do with the particular jobs they were doing and many of them had a pride in their labour that provided compensations other than the weekly wage.

Their family relations shaped many women's consciousness about their place in society, particularly where they saw their mothers assuming authority in the home that they might not have been able to command outside it. Most of the women who took part in this research remembered their mothers as strong characters who shouldered responsibility for their family's welfare. Some of the mothers were single parents as a result of early widowhood or their husband's illness and their daughters grew up with a keen awareness of women's capacity to surmount personal and financial difficulties. Many of the interviewees showed gratitude to their mothers for the example they had set them in life. Although the school system in which they were educated generally prepared them to assume a domestic role in adulthood, in which their position was defined as being secondary to the male bread-winner, the personal experience of most of the women (especially the example of their mothers) inculcated in them the determination to do their best in whatever role they assumed. The curricula in both educational systems were designed with the domestic role of women as a basic tenet, regardless of the religious ethos of individual schools.

When Anne was comparing the war years to the present, she echoed most of the other women in believing that the dangers of modern life have also made it more restrictive, for young people in particular. They remembered the war years with nostalgia, despite the physical hardships, not least because of the increased freedom of movement and opportunity to do something different that was afforded them. Pat remembered how much she enjoyed the freedom from her parents' concern about her if she was out at night. One of the advantages of wartime for her was that being in the A.T.S. meant that she was not answerable to them, although in retrospect she is more sympathetic to their state of mind than she would have been at the time. Although Kathleen travelled to England during the war to be with her husband she could have stayed safely in Northern Ireland waiting for him to be released from the army. The thought does not seem to have occurred to her and she went off to live with her husband's family without knowing them or anything about the sort of life she would live in England. The issue of personal freedom was one where the experience of the women who lived and remained in Dublin differed from that of women in Belfast who were similar to them in most other respects. Anne's mother was usually quite strict but she allowed her daughter to socialise with soldiers who were billeted near them because she saw it as part of the war effort and contributed her own share to the entertainment. While this kind of hospitality was probably restricted to the Unionist community, it contradicts accounts from Britain, where parents (and the authorities) indicated concern for the moral impact on their daughters of joining the forces or associating with them, particularly after American troops were present in large numbers. Sonya Rose's work[33] suggests that this was primarily a middle-class preoccupation but the ubiquity of this apprehension emphasises the perceived threat to social stability that was the driving force of much anxiety about women's increased freedom from parental and communal moral scrutiny.

Since the oral history interview is a social process, what emerges is the result of the interaction between the interests of the interviewer and those of the subject. In the course of this research project I have been constantly aware of the discrepancy between my enquiry into the impact of the war on women's daily lives and the concerns and experiences that shaped the narratives that emerged in the interviews.

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[33] Sonya O. Rose. *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003.

This divergence proved to be a source of additional value for the women and for me. It opened new perspectives for the women at the same time that it reminded me that an exercise in patterning human behaviour, no matter how scrupulously conducted it might be, must always be subordinate to the feelings that the interviewees have for the details of their own stories.

This research project was inspired by similar work carried out in countries that had a belligerent role in the Second World War. If the impact of the war on women in those countries is assessed only by an examination of the economic and legislative consequences of women's emergence into a public role in the course of the war, the conclusion must be that the reward for answering the call of their governments to participate in the war effort was very limited and did not result in significant change until several decades later. Women in Northern Ireland were not called upon in the same way as the women in other belligerent states so that there was no question of a specifically female oriented *quid pro quo* from the Stormont or the Westminster government, but the war did affect their status as workers and citizens because of the altered employment situation and the increased opportunities to broaden their horizons. Women in Éire were similarly affected and it is clear from the travel records in the war years that significant numbers did avail of those opportunities.[34]

All of the interviewees who chose to travel to England during the war were enthusiastic about their experience, so much so that some of them did not return to Ireland. Most of the interviewees who remained in Ireland, whether in Belfast or Dublin, were nostalgic for what they recalled as the more caring and ethical communities to which they belonged then and they regret the loss of the moral certainties that they remember as governing the country of their youth. While it may have been that the impact of the war was not apparent in terms of immediate change in the culture and society of mid twentieth century Ireland, the positive memories of most of the women suggest that it had a very beneficial effect on their lives.

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[34] Enda Delaney. *Demography, State and Society. Irish Migration ot Britain, 1921-1971*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000.

Remembering the past is crucial for our sense of identity. Self-continuity depends wholly on memory; recalling past experiences links us with our earlier selves, however different we may since have become. When I found it difficult to find women from Northern Ireland who had travelled to England during the war, using my usual combination of personal contact and letters to local newspapers, I sent out an appeal on the Internet, through Indymedia[35] and through several history-related websites. I said I wished to interview women who had travelled to England from Belfast or Northern Ireland to take up war work and explained what my interest was in their stories. The response was considerably in excess of my expectations and I had messages from family members of women who had moved to England from various parts of Ireland during the Second World War years. In each case, the women had remained in England but they were eager to tell me of their experiences. One of them had taken part in a previous history project but all of the others were excited by the opportunity to talk about their experiences. Only two of them fit the parameters I had set but I replied to all of the messages and suggested that I would get back to them in the near future to arrange interviews. A common thread of all the messages was the belief that these women had broken out of the 'mould' that they believed Irish society had shaped for young women at the time. It was evident that their families were familiar with their stories from the fact that the first contact in each case was made by a close relative, rather than the women themselves but when I made contact directly with the women, they were genuinely eager to be interviewed. They are proud of the qualities that enabled them to go to another country in wartime and to make successful lives for themselves. Similarly, the women who took part in this project are justifiably satisfied with their achievement of long and rewarding lifetimes.

Marie referred to the small numbers of trade union activists who took responsibility for fighting the battles of their fellow workers. While she acknowledged that there can be frustrations attached to seeing the majority of people sitting back while a few people do the work, it had never prevented her from fighting for the rights of her fellow workers and she can look back on her years as a shop steward knowing that she helped to bring about beneficial change in her workplace.

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[35] The Independent Media Centre is an independent global network of collectively run media outlets mainly operating through websites based in a large number of countries.

Moya Woodside also fought for change, although there are fewer references to that aspect of her life in the Mass-Observation diaries than there were to the more immediate concerns occasioned by the war. Nevertheless, people like her and Marie provided the context for the wider social changes that came about because of the efforts of other small numbers. These changes could not have happened without the impetus created by women who survived and even thrived within the institutionalised inequalities that they faced simply because of their gender.

The women whose testimonies formed the core of this research did not focus on the rights of women as a social category and they did not actively fight for social change. They did, however, grasp whatever opportunities did come their way, including those created by the Second World War, and in doing this they helped to erode the legal and social barriers that had been erected around them. The richness of the testimonies reproduced in this dissertation is evidence of the enormous possibilities for extending our knowledge of the way our society has been shaped, not just by 'significant' individuals and events but also the relationship of so-called 'ordinary' people to that society. It would be easy to say that the Second World War had little impact on the lives of women in Belfast and Dublin because there is little objective evidence to indicate what that impact might have been. There were few legislative or social changes and neither the Northern Irish government or the government of Éire paid any more attention in the immediate post-war years to the rights and status of women than they had in the period between the two world wars. Nevertheless, it is clear from the stories told by the women interviewed for this research that subjectively the war did have an impact on their lives and those of other women, even if it was not reproduced in a neatly packaged set of memories that supported or undermined theoretical speculation about the nature of that effect.

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Appendix 1(1) Short biographical notes

ANNE is now 90 years of age. Anne grew up in Belfast with her widowed mother and sister and brother. Her mother worked as an office cleaner to keep her family and the children all worked as soon as they left primary school. Anne is now a widow, living alone in Saintfield, Co. Down. During the Second World War, she worked in the Ormeau Bakery in Belfast. She started as a chocolate maker and she was promoted to supervisor of her Department after several years. She remembers her years in the Ormeau Bakery as "amongst the happiest years" of her life. She did not have children and worked in various public sector offices after returning from Canada, where she and her husband emigrated in the early 1950s. She was very informative about the Ormeau Bakery and her social life during the war years and the interviews were carried on in two sessions amounting to just over three hours.

BETTY is now 73 and still living in her mother's (Catherine's) house in Dolphin's Barn. She never married and looked after her mother until Catherine's admission to hospital. She participated in the interviews with her mother, in order to 'keep her straight' and she had some interesting memories of the wartime period. She believes that the difficult circumstances in which she grew up left her with a concern not to spend too much money even when her pay as a shop worker improved over the years. Betty has a gentle line in mockery about her mother's insistence that men have to be looked after before anyone else but seems genuinely not to notice her mother's lack of appreciation of her daughter's lifelong devotion to her. The interviews were carried on over three sessions, producing over five hours of tape.

CATHERINE is 95 and has recently been moved to St. James's Hospital because of her failing health. She was born in Dolphin's Barn in Dublin and she worked in Dollards Printers from when she was thirteen. She left when she married and she subsequently had six children. Her husband was a cooper in Guinness's and he died from a duodenal ulcer in 1943. Catherine then went to work as a cleaner in the Brewery, walking from her home in Dolphin's Barn to St. James's Gate very early in the morning. She gave this up after two years and started taking washing home from the Brewery to keep up her income. Catherine was a keen follower of horse racing until very recently and even when arthritis prevented her from leaving her home, she always made sure her bets were placed for her.

CLARE was eleven when the war began in 1939. She lived in both the Drumcondra and Phibsborough districts of Dublin during the war years, with her parents and her two sisters and three brothers. She has very clear memories of the domestic impact of the Emergency and of the various methods used by her mother to overcome the stringencies imposed by rationing. Clare went to secondary school on a scholarship but had to leave when the scholarship was finished. She secured another scholarship to a commercial college, from where she got a place in the Civil Service, when she was seventeen years old. Her mother was an independent woman who ran a small business and took in lodgers to supplement the family income.

COLETTE is 82 this year. She was born in Dublin and grew up with her brother on the south side of the city, where she still lives. Her father was a journalist who

was frequently out of work and her mother was a semi-invalid. Colette went to secondary school in St. Louis, Rathmines. She is a single woman who spent practically all her working life in Guinness's Brewery, which she remembers with great fondness and admiration. She is still active in fund-raising for the Guinness Choir, of which she was a member for many years. She entered Guinness's as a lady clerk and was promoted to a senior position in the administrative staff in the course of her career. The interview lasted over two hours but Colette did not want to do a follow-up.

ELIZABETH died since she was interviewed when she was 90. She lived in Belfast and had lived on or near the Falls Road all her life. She worked as a clerk in the N.A.A.F.I. during the war and remembered that pay for that work was considerably greater than any comparable work she had done in the pre-war period. She wanted to be a nurse but family circumstances did not allow this, as they could not afford the training fees. Her daughter Maureen was present in the house but Elizabeth did not want her to be present in the room. The interview was quite short, approximately one hour, as Elizabeth seemed to be quite tired.

FRANCES is 78. She was sent to a Convent Boarding School in Birmingham when she was only fifteen years old, because her mother thought she was too wild to keep at home. Frances worked as a cleaner and launderer in the convent until she was sixteen when she was sent to a family in Lincolnshire to work as a maid. She enrolled for training as a nurse but did not pass the examination although she continued to work as an auxiliary nurse in various hospitals in the Lincolnshire area until after the war ended. She has lived in London since moving there with her husband in the early 1950s. The interview lasted about one and a half hours. After telling her wartime experiences, she said her capacity to survival is one of her talents.

ITA is now 78 and living with her older sister in Booterstown. She came from Mountmellick originally and moved to Dublin in 1941 to work as an Executive Officer in the Department of Supplies. She progressed steadily through the Civil Service during her working lifetime and eventually retired as Assistant Secretary of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs with particular responsibility for broadcasting. The interview was quite short, partly because she was so definite in her responses, and was completed in less than two hours.

JEAN was nearly 90 at the time of this interview but sadly she has since passed away. She lived in Belfast, although she was born in Scotland, coming to Northern Ireland with her parents when she was a young woman. She helped her husband run a small grocery store during the war years. She did the accounts and seems to have played quite an important role but is very vague about specific conditions. She had one daughter and she was very informative about the Belfast Blitz but the interview suggested that she had told those stories many times. She was unable to remember very much about social or employment conditions at the time because she had not been asked about them before the interview. The interview with Jean took place in Susan's home. Jean was in a wheelchair and seemed to tire quite easily so that most of the time was devoted to Susan's recollections. Nevertheless, the session lasted more than three hours, as Jean was eager to continue despite her poor health.

JOSIE lives in Dublin with her husband and her sister Lettie who is about ten years older than her. She was a schoolgirl when the war started and although she left school in the course of the Emergency, due to the shortage of work she remained at home helping her mother. She has very clear memories of the Emergency years and her sister's absence in England made a big impression on her, so much so that she frequently elaborated on Lettie's recollections in the course of the interview. Although she is the younger sister, she seems to have taken charge, although this may be due to Lettie's failing health.

KATHLEEN has lived in Northern Ireland since the mid-1990s although she spent most of her adult life in the south of England, after moving there during the war to be with her husband, who was a member of the British army. She met her husband in a W.V.S. canteen in Portstewart during the war and they married shortly after meeting. She was very diffident about her usefulness to the research and it emerged that she had been persuaded to take part by her friend Joan, who had known Kathleen before she left for England and with whom she had corresponded regularly over the years. Joan was very informed about Kathleen's work during the war, suggesting that they had discussed it many times, but Kathleen's nervousness about being recorded made her very responses to questions to be very brief. She was much more confident and informative in conversation after the interview.

LETTIE is in her late eighties and she has been living with her younger sister Josie for several months, since her health began to fail. She was born in Dublin and went to work in a sewing factory when she left school at fourteen. When work became scarce during the Emergency, she was laid off, and she applied for a place in a munitions factory in England, where she worked for three years until the war ended. She was very clear about her experiences in England but she tired quite easily and Josie began to dominate the interview, quite often correcting and elaborating on statements made by Lettie.

LILY, who is 81, lives with her sister Nancy in a house in Belfast that used to be Nancy's marital home before her husband's death. Lily worked in the Blackstaff Mill after she left school at fourteen but when she was in her twenties she left to go and live with an aunt who needed a housekeeper and for whom Lily worked for board and keep rather than pay. The interview was conducted jointly with Nancy but Lily did most of the talking. The session lasted about one hour because the women had to go out and they were not interested in a follow-up.

MARIE is 74, a widow who lives in Castlewellan. She was born in Belfast, on the Falls Road, from which she only moved in the last few years. She worked in a sewing factory after leaving school at the age of fourteen. Marie had three children and she went to work as a catering worker in the Royal Victoria hospital when her children were at school. She became a shop steward in that job and is still involved in trade union activities on behalf of retired members of UNISON. The interview lasted about two hours, but most of Marie's responses were very short and it was difficult to elicit information from her about her working life. This was disappointing because I expected that she might be helpful, given she was used to public discourse. In discussing this with her after the interview, over

tea, she said she had been conscious that she was sparing with her responses but she was used to watching what she said in union work and could not get out of the habit in the interview.

META was born in Coleraine to a farming family. She was educated in the town up to secondary level and she took a secretarial course after completing school. She could not get work locally and she went to Liverpool to help her older sister with her young baby. Meta loved the city life and trained to become a nurse. During the war she spent some years running an evacuation centre for children until her own son was born and she had to give up. Her husband was moved to Richmond, just outside London, and Meta followed him and took up work in the Accident and Emergency Department of Richmond Hospital. She clearly enjoyed being interviewed and was very fluent in responses to questions. The interview lasted two hours and was followed by informal conversation for about an hour afterward.

MINNIE was eleven when the war began. Her father was in the Irish army throughout the Emergency and rarely at home, so that the main responsibility for the family of five brothers and Minnie fell on her mother. Minnie's sister had died at a young age and she was always conscious of being the only girl in the family. She has vivid memories of the Emergency period and she remembers the war as being the start of a change in the status of women, after they had been able to take up traditional 'men's work'. She feels that she was disadvantaged in her family because the assumption that she would get married and have children meant that she did not get the same educational opportunities as her brothers did.

NANCY O. went to Birmingham during the war to study nursing because it would have been too expensive to do her training in Dublin. Although her mother would have preferred her to go to a Catholic hospital she was offered a place in the Birmingham public hospital at Sellyoak and in the absence of an offer from a denominational institution, she took the place. She returned to Dublin after the war to train in Cork Street Fever Hospital and following further training, she joined the World Health Organisation in the early 1950s and was posted all over the world in subsequent years. Her final posting before retirement was a senior one in the W.H.O. operations in the Middle East.

NANCY M, aged 87 years, went to work in the Blackstaff Mill when she was 14 and she continued there until her marriage some years later. She never went back to work in the Mill after the birth of her first child because she says the work was too hard. She believes that conditions for people now are so improved that it's like talking about two different worlds, although she is disappointed that community feeling and neighbourhood networks have disintegrated with increased prosperity. The interview was conducted in Nancy's home, with her sister Lily present. They sisters had a washing machine going in another room, which they did not want to switch off, and there are many sections of the tape that are indecipherable.

OLIVE was born in Drogheda, the second daughter of two and she is now in her late seventies. She came to Dublin when she was 18 to become a student nurse and she qualified in 1943. She went to England at the end of the war to work with

burn victims, mainly pilots from the R.A.F. She returned to Dublin in 1948 to get married. Olive was very conscious of the hierarchical structures in hospital staffing and feels a certain amount of guilt that she did not fight against what she perceived as overly authoritarian attitudes. She remembers quite a lot of bullying going on, which she attributed to the effect of having a completely female workforce. She describes her family as the "relics of auld decency" and admires her mother for providing as rounded an education as possible for her daughters, despite a lack of financial resources. The interview lasted about two hours and Olive gave me further information over tea after the session.

PAT was born in Liverpool to Irish parents who brought their children to live with the mother's family in Carlow when the war began and Pat was still at school. Their father stayed in England where he was an Air Raid Warden. When Pat turned eighteen, she returned to England and signed up for training in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in Liverpool, where she was trained as an office worker supporting the armed forces. She found the experience very liberating although she was unable to take up an offer of secondment to the United States after the war because her parents did not want her to leave.

ROSE was born in Belfast and is now 82, living in sheltered housing off the Falls Road. She went to work as a counter girl in Woolworths in 1937 and worked for the company for 43 years, eventually retiring as a supervisor. For four years after she left school at the age of 14, she stayed at home helping her mother with housework. Rose's memory is very clear about pay and conditions throughout the years she worked in Woolworths and she was always a union member, although she never became a shop steward. She is an outgoing person who remembers the war for the social opportunities rather than the hardships, although she says she never had any time for the U.S. troops, unlike many of her co-workers. This interview was quite short, less than one hour, but very informative. Rose had prepared notes in advance and the interview did not seem to spark any new recollections.

SALLY was christened Sheila and said her childhood nickname could be used to distinguish her from another participant in the project. She did not want her family name to appear in extracts from the interview. Sheila never married and spent most of her life working as a university administrator, although she trained as a Froebel teacher and her first job was working as a children's nanny in England. She worked as a cook in the Women's Auxiliary at a barracks in Belfast and later in Ballymena. Sally was very keen to talk about her family rather than her work and gave me a lot of information relating to family background. The interview lasted about two hours but continued informally over tea for another two. When I returned for a second interview to follow up on some points, she told me that she did not want information about her family to be made public and I agreed to edit the interview transcripts accordingly.

SHEILA is 67 and most of her interview is devoted to memories of her mother's working life in the Guinness Brewery, the stories of which Sheila heard as a child and young woman and which left a lasting impression on her. She was born in Dublin, in Marino and now lives in Walkinstown with her husband and two of her five children. She was at secondary school during the war years and was the first

person in her family to sit the Leaving Certificate, after which she secured a job in the Land Registry. Her mother worked as a cleaner in the Brewery after Sheila's father suffered a stroke in 1938, leaving him unfit for work. Sheila is very conscious of the huge workload that her mother carried for many years. The interview lasted over two hours. Sheila's sister contributed some additional information when she read the transcript of the interview.

SUSAN, who is in her eighties, was born in Gorey but went to boarding school in Dublin because there was no Methodist secondary school in the area. She taught music for several years and then went to London University to train as a medical social worker, or almoner as the job was called then. She worked in the Rotunda Hospital with extremely poor patients from Dublin's inner city until she moved to Belfast in 1944 to work in the Royal Victoria hospital, where she was also dealing with very deprived patients, as well as British and American troops stationed in Northern Ireland. The interview was conducted with Jean present, but Susan dominated the session. She was extremely precise in her recollections and spoke to the point throughout.

Interviewees whose responses do not appear in the text:

CHRISTINE was 89 when I interviewed her and she was very eager to talk about her working experiences during the war. Unfortunately, she could only remember the First World War period when she was very young and she was not interested in the Second World War period. I went on with the interview when I realised the problem and sent her the transcript but there was nothing in it I could use for this research project. Her daughter told me that Christine was delighted to have the transcript and showed it to all her grandchildren.

NANCY was an 85-year-old woman whom I interviewed in three sessions amounting to about six hours of tape. She died in 2002. Nancy was a junior civil servant during the Emergency who retired when she married another Civil Servant. He achieved considerable seniority and he interrupted the first interview with the suggestion that it would be more useful to speak to him. After the transcript was sent for Nancy's approval, I got a letter from her insisting that I should destroy the work. No reason was given although I did contact the family to find out but did not get to speak to Nancy again. I explained that I would not destroy the interview because it was my work too but that I would not use it without permission.

Mass-Observation Diarists:

MOYA WOODSIDE was an active member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and a supporter of the Marie Stopes Organisation in Belfast. She did regular work for the Belfast Welfare Relief Committee but she was also a 'woman of the house' whose life was adversely affected by the various emergency measures adopted for the wartime conditions in Belfast. Her diary, which she wrote on an almost daily basis, offers fascinating insights into the impact of the Second World War on the people of the city, including her account of the Belfast blitz. The diary ended in November 1941 when Woodside went to England to study psychiatric social work.

DOROTHY BATES worked as a tax inspector during the war and she lived in Purley in Sussex. She was the single mother of twins and many of her observations are devoted to the difficulty of coping with the wartime conditions. She responded to Mass-Observation directives rather than being a regular diarist, probably because of the pressures on her time. In 1941 she was posted to Belfast for five months and she wrote several reports during that time.

R.H. TRINICK was a General Practitioner in Belfast. He responded to Mass-Observation Directives about specific subjects but he did not keep a diary.

Appendix 1(2) The Mass-Observation Organisation

Mass-Observation was founded in 1937 by Tom Harrisson (a self-taught anthropologist and sociologist), Charles Madge (a poet who later left Mass-Observation to become a Professor of Sociology) and Humphrey Jennings (a documentary photographer). The work began with 'Day Surveys', the original purpose of which was 'to collect a mass of data without any selective principle, as a preliminary to detailed studies of carefully chosen topics.'[1] Between January 1938 and the outbreak of war in 1939, they concentrated on the recording of activities on special holidays, like Easter, and the collation of responses to directives on specific topics. In September 1939, they resumed the collection of diaries from the panel of volunteers.

> Mass-Observation has always assumed that its untrained Observers would be *subjective* cameras, each with his or her own distortion. They tell us not what society is like but what it looks like to them.[2]

By the late summer of 1939 Mass-Observation was well known throughout Great Britain although it was the following year before observers were recruited in Northern Ireland. Initially, the male panel members outnumbered female by two to one but by the latter half of the war, this ratio had been reversed. Most of the panellists described themselves as middle or upper class, with fewer than one in six judging themselves to be working-class.[3] Mass-Observation at its peak had recruited less than 2,000 observers and some of these reported very irregularly. Although diarists and directive respondents remained amateur, Mass-Observation tendered for contracts to secure its financial existence and in early 1940 was secretly commissioned to supply reports on national morale to the Ministry of Information, in particular on civilian reactions to being bombed.

Harrisson and Madge outlined the determining philosophy of the founders of Mass-Observation[4] as follows:

> Basic in Britain is the right to say what you think or at the least think what you think and express it privately through the secret ballot. This right of each adult is essential and total in democracy. It is also essential and total in science. On democracy plus science our industrial civilisation is now inescapably founded. And while we can in the future reject a good deal of the democracy, the material circumstances and consequences of science are inescapable. .... It is, of course, a job of science, which has caused so much of this chaos, to illuminate and analyse our own relations, forgetting all about ideals and abstractions, describing and arranging only ascertained facts. .... To be of any use, of course, this sort of social science has got to go on all the time, with an immediate and constantly changing programme, coping daily with working problems.[5]

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[1] Harrison, T. and Madge, C., *First Year's Work*. Lindsay Drummond, 1938.
[2] Harrison and Madge, *First Year's Work*. p. 66.
[3] Calder, A. and Sheridan D., *Speak for Yourself. A Mass-Observation Anthology 1937-1949*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
[4] Harrisson T., and Madge C., *Britain by Mass-Observation*. Hutchinson, 1986. (First published in 1939).
[5] Harrisson and Madge, *Britain*. pp. 226-227.

Appendix 1(3) Article 45 (2-4) of Bunreacht na hÉireann

Article 45 (2-4) of the Constitution sets out the State's social policy as follows:

2. The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing:

i. That the citizens (all of whom, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood) may through their occupations find the means of making reasonable provision for their domestic needs.

ii. That the ownership and control of the material resources of the community may be so distributed amongst private individuals and the various classes as best to subserve the common good.

iii. That, especially, the operation of free competition shall not be allowed so to develop as to result in the concentration of the ownership or control of essential commodities in a few individuals to the common detriment.

iv. That in what pertains to the control of credit the constant and predominant aim shall be the welfare of the people as a whole.

v. That there may be established on the land in economic security as many families as in the circumstances shall be practicable.

3.1° The State shall favour and, where necessary, supplement private initiative in industry and commerce.

3.2° The State shall endeavour to secure that private enterprise shall be so conducted as to ensure reasonable efficiency in the production and distribution of goods and as to protect the public against unjust exploitation.

4.1° The State pledges itself to safeguard with especial care the economic interests of the weaker sections of the community, and, where necessary, to contribute to the support of the infirm, the widow, the orphan, and the aged.

4.2° The State shall endeavour to ensure that the strength and health of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children shall not be abused and that citizens shall not be forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their sex, age or strength.

Appendix 2(1)
Éire - Statutory Instruments issued in response to the Emergency conditions 1939-1945 (Not including Statutory Instruments that were simply continuations of Orders made in the previous year, unless the terms included an amendment of the earlier S.I.)

1939

AIR NAVIGATION (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1939.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES) REGULATIONS, 1939.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SCHEMES (PRESCRIBED PROVISIONS) REGULATIONS, 1939.
ALIENS ORDER, 1939.
CUSTOMS (LAND FRONTIER) REGULATIONS, 1939.
DEFENCE FORCES (BILLETING REQUISITIONS) ORDER, 1939.
DEFENCE FORCES (REQUISITIONS OF EMERGENCY) ORDER, 1939.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD (MINIMUM PRICES FOR MILK) ORDER, 1939.
EMERGENCY IMPOSITION OF DUTIES (NOS. 168-203) ORDERS, 1939.
IRISH NATIONALITY AND CITIZENSHIP REGULATIONS, 1939.
IRISH RED CROSS SOCIETY ORDER, 1939.
MECHANICALLY PROPELLED VEHICLES (CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT AND USE) ORDER, 1939.
MERCHANT SHIPPING (WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY) RULES, 1939.
MILITARY SERVICE PENSIONS ACT, 1934, REGULATIONS, 1939.
MINISTER FOR FINANCE (AGENCY) ORDER, 1939.
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (AGENCY) ORDER, 1939.
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH (AGENCY) (No. 2) ORDER, 1939.
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH (AGENCY) ORDER, 1939.
NIGHT WORK (BAKERIES) (EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR LIMITED PERIODS) REGULATIONS, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE (INTERNMENT COMMISSION) ORDER, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE (SCHEDULED OFFENCES) (No. 2) ORDER, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE (SCHEDULED OFFENCES) ORDER, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) REGUALTIONS, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (PART VI) (DETENTION) REGULATIONS, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939. ADDITIONAL RULES OF SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ESTABLISHED ON THE 24th DAY OF AUGUST, 1939.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939. RULES OF SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT, 1939.
SUGAR (PROHIBITION OF IMPORT) ORDER, 1939.
UNLAWFUL ORGANISATION (SUPPRESSION) ORDER, 1939.

1940

ACQUISITION OF DERELICT SITES REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR NAVIGATION (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS (REGISTER OF DESIGNATED PREMISES) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ACT, 1939 (APPEALS UNDER SECTIONS 22 AND 25) RULES, 1940.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ACT, 1939 (GRANTS UNDER SECTION 58) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS EQUIPMENT (IMPORTATION AND SALE) ORDER, 1940.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE BY ESSENTIAL UNDERTAKERS) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (ESSENTIAL UNDERTAKER'S) SCHEMES (PRESCRIBED PROVISIONS) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS ACT, 1939 (GRANTS UNDER SECTION 58) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS EQUIPMENT (STORAGE AND LOAN) REGULATIONS, 1940.
AIR-RAID SHELTERS (SALE) ORDER, 1940.
BOARDED OUT CHILDREN (CONTRACTS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1940.
BREAD (STANDARD PRICE OF FLOUR) (No. 13) ORDER, 1940.

BREAD (STANDARD PRICE OF FLOUR) (No. 14) ORDER, 1940.
BUTTER STOCKS (LEVY) ORDER, 1940.
CHEESE (LEVY) (AMENDING) ORDER, 1940.
CHEESE (PROHIBITION OF EXPORT) ORDER, 1940.
CIVIL SERVICE (STABILISATION OF BONUS) REGULATIONS, 1940.
CREAMERY BUTTER (MINIMUM PRICES) ORDERS, 1940.
DEFENCE FORCES (BILLETING DURING A PERIOD OF EMERGENCY) REGULATIONS, 1940.
DEFENCE FORCES (BILLETING REQUISITIONS) ORDER, 1940.
DEFENCE FORCES (PENSIONS) (AMENDMENT) SCHEME, 1940.
DEFENCE FORCES (REQUISITIONS OF EMERGENCY) ORDER, 1940.
DEFENCE FORCES (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) (No. 2) ACT, 1940 (STATE OF EMERGENCY) ORDER, 1940.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD (MINIMUM PRICES FOR MILK) ORDER, 1940.
ELECTORAL ACT (ALTERATION OF REGISTRATION RULES ORDER, 1940.
EMERGENCY IMPOSITION OF DUTIES (NOS. 204 - 214) ORDERS, 1940.
FIRE BRIGADES ACT, 1940 (DATE OF COMMENCEMENT) (NO. 1) ORDER, 1940.
FIRST AID REGULATIONS, 1940.
GAS REGULATION (SPECIAL ORDERS) RULES, 1940.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA ALLOWANCES ORDER, 1940.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA PAY ORDER, 1940.
MECHANICALLY PROPELLED VEHICLES (CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT AND USE) ORDER, 1940.
MILITARY SERVICE PENSIONS ACT, 1934, REGULATIONS, 1940.
MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS UNDER CONTROL OF PRICES ACT, 1937) ORDER, 1940.
NIGHT WORK (BAKERIES) (EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR LIMITED PERIODS) REGULATIONS, 1940.
NON-CREAMERY BUTTER (PROHIBITION OF EXPORT) ORDER, 1940.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE (SCHEDULED OFFENCES) (No 3) ORDER, 1940.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) (AMENDMENT) (No. 3) REGULATIONS, 1940.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1940.
OFFENCES, AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS, 1940.
SHOPS (HOURS OF TRADING) ACT, 1938 (PART II) (EXEMPTED BUSINESSES) ORDER, 1940.
SHOPS (HOURS OF TRADING) ACT, 1938 (PART III) (EXEMPTED BUSINESS) ORDER, 1940.
SHOPS (HOURS OF TRADING) ACT, 1938 (PART IV) (EXEMPTED BUSINESS) ORDER, 1940.
SUGAR (PROHIBITION OF IMPORT) ORDER, 1940.
THE TELEGRAPH (FOREIGN WRITTEN TELEGRAM) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS, 1940.
WIRELESS (RECEIVING LICENCES) (AMENDMENT) (No. 1) REGULATIONS, 1940.

1941

AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1941.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SCHEMES (PRESCRIBED PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1941.
ALIENS ORDER, 1941.
CATTLE (REGULATION OF EXPORT) ORDER, 1941.
DEFENCE FORCES (BILLETING DURING A PERIOD OF EMERGENCY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1941.
DISTRICT COURT RULES (No. 1), 1941.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD (MINIMUM PRICES FOR MILK) ORDER, 1941.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD REGULATIONS, 1941.
EMERGENCY IMPOSITION OF DUTIES (Nos. 216 - 224) ORDERS, 1941.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA (APPLICATION FOR COMPENSATION) REGULATIONS, 1941.

HOSPITALS COMMISSION (DUBLIN HOSPITALS BUREAU) REGULATIONS, 1941.
HYDROCARBON OIL REGULATIONS, 1941.
LOCAL AUTHORITIES (OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1940 (DATE OF COMMENCEMENT ORDER, 1941.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1941 (DATE OF COMMENCEMENT) No. 1 ORDER, 1941.
MECHANICALLY PROPELLED VEHICLES (CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT AND USE) ORDER, 1941.
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1906 (VARIATION OF SEAMEN'S PROVISIONS) ORDER, 1941.
MILITARY SERVICE PENSIONS ACT, 1934, REGULATIONS, 1941.
MILK (RETAIL PRICE) ORDER, 1941 (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1941.
MILK (RETAIL PRICE) ORDER, 1941.
MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 52 OF THE MILK (REGULATION OF SUPPLY AND PRICE) ACT, 1936) ORDER, 1941.
MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS UNDER THE SCRAP IRON (CONTROL OF EXPORT) ACT, 1938), ORDER, 1941.
NEUTRALITY (WAR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY) (ACQUISITION OF LAND) REGULATIONS, 1941.
NEUTRALITY (WAR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY) ACT, 1941 (COMPENSATION FOR DOCUMENTS) ORDER, 1941.
NIGHT WORK (BAKERIES) (EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR LIMITED PERIODS) REGULATIONS, 1941.
SUGAR (PROHIBITION OF IMPORT) ORDER, 1941.
TRADE UNION ACT, 1941 (COMMENCEMENT OF SECTION 6) ORDER, 1941.
TURF (USE AND DEVELOPMENT) ACT, 1936 (DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS) ORDER, 1941.

1942

ADDITIONAL RULES OF SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ESTABLISHED ON THE 24TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1939.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SERVICES (COMPENSATION FOR PERSONAL INJURIES) SCHEME, 1942.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD (MINIMUM PRICES FOR MILK) ORDER, 1942.
LOCAL ELECTIONS ORDER, 1942.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1941 (DATE OF COMMENCEMENT), No. 2 ORDER, 1942.
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1906, ADAPTATION ORDER, 1942.
MILK (RETAIL PRICE) ORDER, 1942.
NIGHT WORK (BAKERIES) (EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR LIMITED PERIODS) REGULATIONS, 1942.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) (AMENDMENT) (No. 4) REGULATIONS, 1942.
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE ACT, 1939 (MILITARY CUSTODY) (AMENDMENT) (No. 5) REGULATIONS, 1942.
PUBLIC BODIES ORDER, 1942.
SUGAR (PROHIBITION OF IMPORT) ORDER, 1942.
TRADE UNION ACT RULES, 1942.
TELEPHONE REGULATIONS, 1942.
TRADE UNION (INSPECTION OF REGISTER OF MEMBERS) REGULATIONS, 1942.
TRADE UNION ACT, 1941 (APPLICATION FOR NEGOTIATION LICENCE) REGULATIONS, 1942.

1943

AIR NAVIGATION (INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENTS) REGULATIONS, 1928 (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1943.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS, 1943.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SCHEMES (PRESCRIBED PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) (No. 3) REGULATIONS, 1943.
AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS SERVICES (COMPENSATION FOR PERSONAL INJURIES) SCHEME, 1942 (FIRST AMENDMENT) SCHEME, 1943.
ALIENS ORDER, 1943.

BREAD (STANDARD PRICE OF FLOUR) (No. 16) ORDER, 1943.
CIVIL SERVICE (EMERGENCY BONUS) REGULATIONS, 1943.
CUSTOMS (LAND FRONTIER) REGULATIONS, 1943.
DUBLIN DISTRICT MILK BOARD (MINIMUM PRICES FOR MILK) ORDER, 1943.
FANCY BREAD (PRICES) ORDER, 1943.
FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST AMENDMENT (No. 4) WARRANT, 1943.
GENERAL ELECTIONS (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) (FORM OF WRIT) ORDER, 1943.
GENERAL ELECTIONS (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) (POLLING) ORDER, 1943.
GÁRDA SÍOCHANA PAY ORDER, 1943.
LAND BOND ORDER, 1943.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (OFFICERS) REGULATIONS, 1943.
LOCAL OFFICERS (REMOVAL BY LOCAL AUTHORITY) REGULATIONS, 1943.
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (AGENCY) ORDER, 1943.
PUBLIC HEALTH (INFECTIOUS DISEASES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1943.
SAVINGS CERTIFICATES (FIRST ISSUE EXTENSION) RULES, 1943.
SHOPS (CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT) ACT, 1938 (SECTION 21) AMENDMENT ORDER, 1943.
TRADE UNION ACT, 1941 (COMMENCEMENT OF PART III) ORDER, 1943.
TRADE UNION ACT, 1941 (TRADE UNION TRIBUNAL AND APPEAL BOARD) REGULATIONS, 1943.
TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATION AND FUNCTIONS (TURF) ORDER, 1943.

1944

AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS (APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE BY ESSENTIAL UNDERTAKERS) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS, 1944.
CENSORSHIP OF FILMS ACT, 1923 (FEES), ORDER, 1944.
CIVIL SERVICE (BONUS) REGULATIONS, 1944.
CIVIL SERVICE (EMERGENCY BONUS) REGULATIONS, 1944.
CREAMERY BUTTER (LEVY) ORDER, 1943 (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1944.
FANCY BREAD (PRICES) ORDER, 1943 (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1944.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA ALLOWANCES ORDER, 1944.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA PAY ORDER, 1944.
LAND BOND ORDER, 1944.
LOCAL ELECTIONS (ADAPTATION) ORDER, 1944.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH (DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS) ORDER, 1944.
MILK BOARDS (ELECTIONS) REGULATIONS, 1944.
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (AGENCY) ORDER, 1944.
NIGHT WORK (BAKERIES) (EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR LIMITED PERIODS) REGULATIONS, 1944.
SUGAR (PROHIBITION OF IMPORT) ORDER, 1944.

1945

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE (EGGS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1945.
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE (POTATOES) REGULATIONS, 1945.
ALLOTMENTS (UNEMPLOYED PERSONS) REGULATIONS, 1945.
APPLES (REGULATION OF IMPORT) (REVOCATION) ORDER, 1945.
CIVIL SERVICE (EMERGENCY BONUS) REGULATIONS. 1945.
ELECTORAL ACT, 1923, ADAPTATION ORDER, 1945.
GAS FUND (CONTRIBUTION) ORDER, 1945.
GÁRDA SÍOCHÁNA PAY ORDER, 1945.
LOCAL ELECTIONS ORDER, 1945.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH (DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS), ORDER, 1945.
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS, 1894 TO 1921, ADAPTATION ORDER, 1945.
MINISTER FOR SUPPLIES (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS) ACT, 1945 (APPOINTED DAY) ORDER, 1945.
MOTOR CARS (TEMPORARY IMPORTATION) REGULATIONS, 1945.

OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1940 (INTERNMENT COMMISSION) ORDER, 1945.
ORDER REVOKING DELEGATION OF POWERS AND DUTIES UNDER BREAD (REGULATION OF PRICES) ACT, 1936.
THE DUBLIN COUNTY BOROUGH (LOCAL ELECTORAL AREAS) ORDER, 1945.
THE PRESIDENTIAL AND LOCAL ELECTION REGULATIONS, 1945.
TRANSPORT ACT, 1944, REGULATIONS, 1945.

Appendix 2(2) List of Coupons required for a range of goods 1939 – 1940 (United Kingdom)

First Schedule Pt. 1 – Appropriate Number of Coupons

Hand knitting yarn ½ coupon required per oz.

Item	Coupons Required	
	If subject to Purchase Tax	If not subject to Purchase Tax
Wearing apparel and footwear for men and boys		
Mackintosh, raincoat, overcoat, cape or like garment	9	7
Ditto but woolen, leather, fur or imitation fur	18	11
Ditto but other than above	16	10
Detached lining for any of the above	7	4
Trousers – unlined and not wool	5	4
Ditto – lined and woolen	11	8
Other trousers	8	6
Shirt – unlined and not woolen	5	4
Ditto – other than above	7	6
Wool socks	3	1
Socks other than wool	1	1
Shoes, slippers, sports shoes	4	2
Boots, overshoes	7	2
Special wearing apparel (uniform clothing) for Officers of the British, Dominion and Allied Forces (including Women's Services) and of the Merchant Navy (British and Foreign)		
Trench-coat	30	
Overcoat (including "British warm")	25	
Battle-dress	20	
Tunic or naval jacket – woolen	17	
Tunic or naval jacket – other	9	
Trousers/breeches	8	
Kilt	16	
Skirt	6	
Shorts	5	
Forage cap	1	
Other cap	2	
Wearing apparel/footwear for women and girls		
Mackintosh, overcoat – not woolen	9	7
Ditto – woolen or leather, fur or imitation fur	18	11
Ditto – other	15	10
Detached lining for above	7	4
Dress – woolen , sleeves any length	11	8
Ditto, not woolen, sleeves any length	7	5
Blouse – woolen	6	4
Blouse – not woolen	4	5
Suspender belt, not more than 10" wide at widest part,	1	1
Brassiere, bust bodice, modesty vest		
Boots, shoes, slippers, sandals	5	2

In the Second Schedule (goods excepted from rationing) the list included such items as Blackout material; carpets; infants' napkins made of muslin and infants' waterproof knickers; jock straps and shin guards/leg guards; sanitary belts and towels. In the Third Schedule, the maximum price for each coupon or the number of coupons was set as follows:

Hand knitted yarn, cloth or stockings and woolen socks for men and boys	8d
Undergarments, stockings and socks other than those in the preceding item	1s
Boots, bootees, shoes, overshoes, overboots, slippers and sandals	1s
Other rationed goods	2s

Source: 1941 No. 2000.

Appendix 3(1) **Destination of pupils after attendance at public elementary schools in Belfast County Borough**

Year	Gone to work (as % of total ceased)	Employed at home (as % of total ceased)	Left for other reasons (as % of total ceased)	Total pupils who ceased attendance	Day education continued	Continuing students as % of total enumerated
1937	68.44	11.41	20.15	7,354	1,467	16.63
1938	69.30	12.21	19.49	6,653	1,579	19.18
1945	82.51	4.55	12.94	5,625	2,003	26.26
1947	71.68	4.63	23.68	5,460	1,923	26.05
1948	78.55	4.39	17.06	4,280	1,449	25.29

Source: Government of Northern Ireland, Reports of the Ministry of Education for the years 1937-38, 1938-39, 1945-46, 1947-48 and 1948-49, H.M.S.O. Belfast.

Appendix 3(2) Occupied Population aged 14 years and over (excluding persons out of work).

Industrial Group	1926		1951		1926-51	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Percentage Increase/decrease	
Agricultural occupations	1,290	38	476	38	-63	No change
Chemical Processes	425	63	672	225	+58	+257
Clerks, draughtsmen (not civil service), accountants; Typists	6,075	5,483	5,237	6,920	-14	+26
Commercial, finance and insurance	14,753	6,281	2,117	920	-86	-85
Entertainment and sport *	844	227	5,491	8,765	+551	+3761
Foods, Drinks and Tobacco	4,243	1,692	7,472	3,941	+76	+133
Leather/skin workers	209	62	74	97	-65	+56
Makers of textile goods/dress	3,467	16,247	1,796	10,132	-48	-38
Makers of watches, clocks etc.	219	4	349	166	+59	+4050
Metal (not precious metals)	19,699	32	254	7	-99	-78
Other undefined workers; distributive trades *	8,638	600	17,168	9,915	+99	+1553
Others working with unspecified materials	163	23	580	225	+256	+878
Paper, Printers, books	1,907	1,596	1,954	1,505	+2	-6
Personal Service (including catering)	3,511	13,321	Not defined	Not defined		
Public administration and defence (not typists)	4,963	482	7,754	2,545	+56	+428
Textile workers	7,369	25,663	9,003	22,544	+22	-12
Transport and communication	15,014	413	14,565	1,219	-3	+195
Wood workers and furniture	7,498	182	1,681	259	-78	+42

Source: *Census of Population of Northern Ireland, 1926 and 1951.*

*These groups were re-categorised between 1926 and 1951.

Appendix 3(3) Rates of Wages set by Northern Ireland Trade Boards from 1939-1945, showing earliest and latest changes in the period in weekly time rates for female and male adults.

Trade Board	August 1940			September 1942		
	Female	Male	% Male : Female Rate	Female	Male	% Male : Female Rate
Aerated Waters (N.I.A. 10-20)	26/5¼	43/9½	**1.62:1**	35/3	48/11½	**1.38:1**
	November 1940			**August 1944**		
Baking trade (N.I.Bk. 8-32)	47/0	80/0	**1.70:1**	50/6	87/0	**1.72:1**
	May 1940			**January 1945**		
Boot and shoe repairing (N.I.B.S. 28-45)	43/6	66/0	**1.52:1**	52/3	81/0	**1.55:1**
	March 1940			**February 1945**		
Dress-making/women's clothing (N.I.W.D. 32-47)	34/0	51/0	**1.50:1**	37/2½	60/8½	**1.63:1**
	December 1941			**September 1943**		
General waste materials (N.I.W.R. 12-20)	31/4	53/10¼	**1.72:1**	39/2	60/8½	**1.55:1**
	May 1940*			**No change before 1946**		
Hat, cap and millinery trade (N.I.H.M.15-16)	30/4¼	53/10¼	**1.77:1**	-	-	-
	December 1941**			**No change before 1946**		
Linen & Cotton Hand-kerchief (N.I.H.H.G. 62-74)	30/4¼	47/6	**1.56:1**	-	-	-
	December 1941			**January 1945**		
Laundry trade (N.I.L.10-24)	35/3	58/9	**1.68:1**	46/0¼	72/5½	**1.57:1**
	May 1940			**April 1944**		
Paper Box trade (N.I.B.17-33)	29/6	45/0	**1.53:1**	38/6	60/0	**1.56:1**
	April 1940			**March 1945**		
Rope, Twine and Net trade (N.I.R.30-44)	29/0	44/0	**1.52:1**	50/0	70/0	**1.40:1**
	March 1941			**October 1944**		
Shirtmaking trade (N.I.S.20-30)	37/0	66/0	**1.78:1**	42/0	80/0	**1.90:1**
	March 1941			**November 1944**		
Sugar Confectionery Food Preserving (N.I.F.11-21)	30/0	49/0	**1.63:1**	41/0	64/0	**1.56:1**

Source: Northern Ireland Ministry of Labour, Orders under the Trade Boards Acts.

* These rates were the average wage for adult general workers. Female knife cutters or blockers who had three years experience or more could earn up to 43/1 per week, whereas male workers did not do this skilled work. In this case, the difference between the female rate and the male rate was 20%.

** This rate was last changed in February 1938 when female workers were paid 24/5¾ for a 47-hour week and male workers were paid 41/1½ for the same hours. The percentage excess in the male rate was 68%.

Appendix 3(4) Rates of Wages in relation to Emergency Powers Order 260 – Weekly time rates for male and female adults 1939 – 1945.

	1 September 1939			7 May 1941 Standstill Order			28 April 1944 Present rate		
Trade Board	**Female**	**Male**	**Percentage male excess**	**Female**	**Male**	**Percentage male excess**	**Female**	**Male**	**Percentage male excess**
Aerated Waters	29/4½	50/11	**73.33**	29/4½	50/11	**73.33**	37/2½ *	58/9 *	**57.89**
Boot and Shoe repairing	40/6	65/-	**60.49**	40/6	65/-	**60.49**	46/7	74/9	**60.47**
Brush and broom other than twigs and birch	31/-	66/-	**112.90**	40/-	84/-	**110.00**	#	#	-
Button-making	22/6	No rates	-	27/6	61/6	**123.64**	32/6	66/6	**104.62**
General waste materials	22/6	46/-	**104.44**	22/6	46/-	**104.44**	30/-	54/-	**80.00**
Handkerchiefs and household piece goods	25/8	-	-	28/5	-	-	32/1	-	-
Packing	29/4	50/-	**70.45**	29/4	50/-	**70.45**	33/-	53/8	**62.63**
Paper box making	34/8¼	54/4½	**56.76**	34/8¼	54/4½	**56.76**	37/6	57/2¼	**52.50**
Shirt-making	26/-	54/6	**109.62**	29/4	64/2	**118.75**	33/-	71/2	**115.66**
Sugar Confectionery	30/-	54/-	**80.00**	30/-	56/-	**86.67**	36/6¾ *	67/6 *	**84.62**
Tailoring	34/10	68/3	**95.93**	34/10	68/3	**95.93**	44/-	82/3	**86.93**
Tobacco	32/6	50/6	**55.38**	35/-	55/6	**58.57**	40/-	63/6	**58.75**
Twigs and birch	32/-	68/-	**112.50**	40/-	82/-	**105.00**	#	#	-
Women's clothing and millinery	31/2	55/-	**76.47**	37/3¼	60/6	**62.33**	40/6½	71/6	**76.36**

* For 12 months only

Increase since Standstill Order by way of Bonus Order

Source: Department of Labour, File TIA 321, Trade Boards.

Appendix 3(5) Civil Service grades differentiated by sex - comparison as to wage scales and reasons for restriction.

Grades confined to women	Justification for confinement of grade
Typists (20/- to 30/- per week, plus bonus	These grades are engaged on work which experience has shown to be particularly suitable for women and for which very few men are qualified. Outside employers have the same experience as Government in this respect. The work on which these grades are engaged is of a routine character and it requires a dexterity in the handling and counting of document (e.g. Money Orders, Postal Orders, Licences) which is possessed in a great degree by women then by men.
Shorthand typists (24/- to 38/- per week, plus bonus	
Superintendent of Typists. Scale varies according to office. Dept. of Finance scale £135 to £160 per annum plus bonus	
Writing Assistants (19/- to 34/- per week, plus bonus	
Sorting Assistants (15/- to 33/- per week, plus bonus	
Telephonists (employed on day work) Scale varies according to office, Dublin 16/- to 35/0 per week, plus bonus. Outside Dublin, 15/- to 33/- and 14/- to 31/- per week, plus bonus.	The voice of females is more fitted for telephone work than that of males, and they also possess the dexterity required for telephone switchboards.
Girl Probationers (Class I, Dublin 6/- to 13/- per week plus bonus; Class II, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, 5/- to 12/- per week plus bonus; Class III, other areas, 5/- to 11/- per week plus bonus.	These girls are trainees for posts as Telephonists, and the same reasons apply in their case as in that of the Telephonists.
Women Investigation Officers, Revenue Commission (£100 - £230 per annum plus bonus)	These women are employed mainly on the investigation of claims for Old Age and Widows' and Orphans pensions in large cities where considerable numbers of women claimants reside.
Organisers in Domestic Economy (Head Organiser £200 - £300 per annum; Assistant Organisers £170 - £250 per annum)	The reasons for confining these posts to women are obvious.
Organisers of Kindergarten (Head Organiser £200 - £300 per annum; Assistant Organiser £170 - £250 per annum)	These posts are confined to women because of their peculiar suitability for dealing with small children. In fact, men qualified in the subject are not available.
Woman Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools (£450 per annum plus bonus)	The duties of this officer include the inspection of the cleanliness, food and general conditions of Reformatory and Industrial Schools and are regarded as peculiarly suitable to women.
Grades confined to men	**Justification for confinement of grade**
Customs and Excise Officers (Unmarried scale £110 - £250 plus bonus; Married Scale £110 - £350 plus bonus)	These officers are liable to frequent night duty and also to working in breweries, distilleries and at the ports and the duties are not regarded as suitable for women. It would obviously be objectionable to employ women on these duties.
Veterinary Inspectors (£300 - £500 plus bonus)	For obvious reasons, women are regarded as unsuitable for these posts.
There are also other grades confined to men which, as in the case of Warehousemen and Messengers in Government Offices, involve the carrying of heavy loads and which are regarded as unsuitable for women.	

Source: Department of the Taoiseach, File No. S 6834A, Equal Pay for Men and Women. Memorandum from Department of Finance, 9 June 1937.

Appendix 3(6) Cost of Living Index 1938 – 1945. Base is July 1914 = 100

(i) Food

Year	February	May	August	November
1938	159	156	159	163
1939	160	157	158	178
1940	177	180	182	194
1941	196	197	201	212
1942	209	208	223	250
1943	243	237	249	261
1944	263	256	263	264
1945	263	259	261	271

(ii) Clothing

Year	February	May	August	November
1938	226	226	226	225
1939	225	225	225	246
1940	270	289	295	299
1941	305	308	311	317
1942	326	340	348	372
1943	393	421	427	439
1944	443	444	445	438
1945	438	438	437	431

(iii) Fuel and Light

Year	February	May	August	November
1938	183	179	179	184
1939	184	180	180	207
1940	217	236	243	244
1941	263	275	304	314
1942	318	319	322	325
1943	331	335	332	338
1944	336	337	338	335
1945	333	3332	330	327

(iv) All Items

Year	February	May	August	November
1938	173	171	173	176
1939	174	172	173	192
1940	197	204	206	214
1941	218	220	229	237
1942	237	240	250	273
1943	273	275	284	294
1944	296	292	296	296
1945	295	292	293	298

Source: Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin, Vol. XXI. No.1. March 1946, p. 37.

Appendix 3(7) Average prices of essential foodstuffs (based on returns from 120 towns, large and small, in Ireland) between 1939 and 1945.

Date	1. Eggs (Per dozen)	2. Butter (creamery) (Per 1lb.)	3. Cheese (Per 1lb.)	4. Fresh Milk (per quart)	5. Bread (per 2lb. loaf)	6. Potatoes (Per 14 lbs.)	7. Tea* (Per 1 lb.)	8. Sugar (per 1lb.)	Total cost of items 1-8	Percentage fluctuation from previous measurement
Nov. 1938	2/4¼	1/5¾	¼	0/5¼	0/5	0/9¾	2/8	0/3¼	9/9¼	-
Feb. 1939	1/5½	1/6½	¼	0/5½	0/5	1/1¼	2/8	0/3¼	9/3	-5.63%
Nov. 1939	2/8½	1/6½	1/4¼	0/5½	0/5¼	0/10½	2/8¼	0/4½	10/3¼	+11.04%
Feb. 1940	1/10	1/6½	1/4¼	0/5½	0/5½	0/11	2/8½	0/4¾	9/6	-7.51%
Nov. 1940	3/2	1/7½	1/4½	0/6	0/5¾	1/2½	2/8	0/4¾	11/3	+18.42%
Feb. 1941	2/2¾	1/7¾	1/4¾	0/6	0/5¾	1/2½	2/9¾	0/4¾	10/8	-5.19%
Nov. 1941	3/3¾	1/7½	1/4¾	0/6	0/5¾	1/0¼	3/3	0/4¾	11/11¾	+12.30%
Feb. 1942	2/9¼	1/7½	1/4¾	0/6¼	0/5¾	1/1¼	3/3	0/4¾	11/11¾	0.00%
Nov. 1942	3/10¼	2/0½	1/6¾	0/6¾	0/6¼	1/5	3/11½	0/4¾	11/4½	-5.04%
Feb. 1943	2/9	2/1	1/7	0/6¾	0/6½	1/5¾	3/11¾	0/5	13/4	+17.22%
Nov. 1943	3/9	2/0	1/7½	0/7½	0/6½	1/8½	3/11¾	0/5	14/8¾	+10.47%
Feb. 1944	2/10	2/4	1/8¼	0/7½	0/6¾	1/9	3/11¾	0/6	14/3¼	-3.11%
Nov. 1944	3/6¾	2/4	1/9	0/7½	0/6¾	1/6¼	3/11¾	0/6	14/10	+3.94%
Feb. 1945	3/2	2/4	1/9	0/7½	0/6¾	1/9½	3/11¾	0/6	14/8½	-0.84%
Nov. 1945	4/1	2/4	1/9	0/7½	0/6¾	1/9	4/0	0/6	15/7¼	+6.09%

Source: Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin, Vols. XIV-XXI, 1939 – 1945.

Appendix 4(1) Total Number of Passengers Leaving/Arriving from Éire by Sea, Rail, Road (bus) and Air 1949 – 1946

Year	Outwards to Great Britain	Outwards to Northern Ireland	Outwards All other destinations	Inwards from Great Britain	Inwards from Northern Ireland	Inwards All departure points	Total Outwards All destinations	Total Inwards All departure points
1939	432,529	880,785	10,203	448,419	878,533	50,530	1,323,517	1,377,482
As % of total passengers	**32.68**	**66.55**	**0.77**	**32.55**	**63.78**	**3.67**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1940	94,504	816,341	3,379	106,138	825,210	44	914,224	931,392
As % of total passengers	**10.34**	**89.29**	**0.37**	**11.40**	**88.60**	**0.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1941	126,831	1,132, 248	847	108,998	1,126,773	760	1,259,926	1,236,531
As % of total passengers	**10.07**	**89.86**	**0.07**	**8.81**	**91.12**	**0.06**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1942	168,397	1,260,839	3,111	142,925	1,231,104	4,983	1,432,347	1,379,012
As % of total passengers	**11.76**	**88.03**	**0.22**	**10.36**	**89.27**	**0.36**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1943	209,190	1,392,019	3,865	183,208	1,378,933	5,537	1,605,074	1,567,678
As % of total passengers	**13.03**	**86.73**	**0.24**	**11.69**	**87.96**	**0.35**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1944	136,545	1,410,164	3,106	137,853	1,414,505	4,019	1,549,815	1,556,377
As % of total passengers	**8.81**	**90.99**	**0.20**	**8.86**	**90.88**	**0.26**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1945	282,444	1,556,179	6,757	276,889	1,560,526	5,620	1,845,380	1,843,035
As % of total passengers	**15.30**	**84.33**	**0.37**	**15.02**	**84.67**	**0.31**	**100.00**	**100.00**
1946	552,092	1,599,797	7,011	482,770	1,594,116	73,041	2,158,900	2,149,927
As % of total passengers	**25.57**	**74.40**	**0.33**	**22.46**	**74.15**	**3.39**	**100.00**	**100.00**

Source: Ireland Statistical Abstract 1939-1946.

Appendix 4(2)

Travel permits issued for employment in Britain, classified by sex 1940 – 1946

Year	Dublin Males	Dublin Females	Total Dublin	Éire Males	Éire Females	Total Éire
1940	6,094	1,564	7,658	17,080	8,884	25,964
As % of Total	**79.58**	**20.42**	**100.00**	**65.78**	**34.22**	**100.00**
1941	10,576	1,068	11,644	31,860	3,272	35,132
As % of Total	**90.83**	**9.17**	**100.00**	**90.69**	**9.31**	**100.00**
1942	10,525	4,201	14,726	37,263	14,448	51,711
As % of Total	**71.47**	**28.53**	**100.00**	**72.06**	**27.94**	**100.00**
1943	6,111	4,344	10,455	29,321	19,003	48,324
As % of Total	**58.45**	**41.55**	**100.00**	**60.68**	**39.32**	**100.00**
1944	2,013	1,011	3,024	7,723	5,890	13,613
As % of Total	**66.57**	**34.43**	**100.00**	**56.73**	**43.27**	**100.00**
1945	2,305	1,373	3,678	13,185	6,094	19,279
As % of Total	**62.67**	**37.33**	**100.00**	**68.39**	**31.61**	**100.00**
1946	1,246	2,352	3,598	10,829	19,205	30,034
As % of Total	**34.63**	**65.37**	**100.00**	**36.06**	**63.94**	**100.00**

Source: Ireland Statistical Abstract 1947-48, p.21

Appendix 4(3)

A comparison between the wage rates and cost of living in Éire and Britain from 1939 to 1945

Britain	Wage Rates Sept. 1939 = 100	Official Cost of Living Index Sept. 1939 = 100	Weekly Earnings Oct. 1938 = 100
1939	104	104	-
1940	113-14	121	130
1941	122	128	142
1942	131-2	129	160
1943	136-7	129	176
1944	143-4	130	181.5
1945	150-1	133.5	180.5

Éire	Wage Rates 1 January 1939 = 100	Official Cost of Living Index September 1939 =100
1940	100.6	118
1941	105.4	130
1942	106.9	144
1943	109.8	162
1944	118.1	170
1945	121.6	169

Source: Department of Industry and Commerce, *Some Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work in 1946 with Comparative Figures for Certain Previous Years* (November, 1946) and *Report of Ministry of Labour 1939-46*, pp. 304-5 quoted in Gerard Fee, *The Effects of World War II on Dublin's Low Income Families*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University College Dublin, 1996, p. 65.

Appendix 5(1a) Total population and total number of houses (by Wards) in Belfast County Borough 1926-1937

Wards	Total Population		Total Number of Houses		Intercensal change (+/-) in population		Intercensal change (+/-) in No. Houses	
	1926	1937	1926	1937	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Belfast Co. Borough	415,151	438,086	84,667	106,535	22,935	+5.52%	21,868	+25.83%
Clifton	34,501	46,584	7,462	12,185	12,083	+35.02%	4,723	+63.29%
Court	20,218	17,698	3,919	3,948	-2,520	-12.46%	29	+0.74%
Cromac	25,850	23,896	5,528	5,877	-1,954	-7.56%	349	+6.31%
Dock	20,970	17,473	3,702	3,629	-3,497	-16.68%	-73	-1.97%
Duncairn	30,762	34,882	6,535	8,802	4,120	+13.39%	2,267	+34.69%
Falls	29,604	31,746	5,636	6,666	2,142	+7.24%	1,030	+18.28%
Ormeau	39,528	45,390	8,636	11,959	5,862	+14.83%	3,323	+38.48%
Pottinger	42,541	45,637	8,830	11,584	3,096	+7.28%	2,754	+31.19%
St. Anne's	22,645	30,357	4,074	6,744	7,712	+34.06%	2,670	+65.54%
St. George's	18,974	15,770	3,479	3,472	-3,204	16.89%	-7	-0.20%
Shankill	35,654	33,298	7,480	8,453	-2,356	-6.61%	973	+13.01%
Smithfield	12,637	10,840	2,329	2,316	-1,797	-14.22%	-13	-0.56%
Victoria	30,111	33,724	6,218	8,433	3,613	+12.00%	2,215	+35.62%
Windsor	25,640	27,014	5,564	6,561	1,374	+5.36	997	+17.92
Woodvale	25,516	23,777	5,275	5,926	-1,739	-6.82	-651	+12.34

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Population 1926 and 1937.

Appendix 5(1b) Total population and total number of houses (by Wards) in Belfast County Borough 1937-51

Wards	Total Population		Total Number of Houses		Intercensal change (+/-) in population		Intercensal change (+/-) in No. Houses	
	1937	1951	1937	1951	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Belfast Co. Borough	438,086	443,671	106,535	110,619	5,585	+1.3	4,084	+3.8
Clifton	46,584	51,538	12,185	12,731	4,954	+10.6	546	+4.5
Court	17,698	16,970	3,948	3,638	728	-4.1	310	-7.9
Cromac	23,896	22,810	5,877	6,081	1,086	-4.5	204	+3.5
Dock	17,473	14,702	3,629	3,140	2,771	-15.9	489	-13.5
Duncairn	34,882	36,259	8,802	9,469	1,377	+3.9	667	+7.6
Falls	31,746	33,213	6,666	7,052	1,467	+4.6	386	+5.8
Ormeau	45,390	45,040	11,959	12,473	350	-0.8	514	+4.3
Pottinger	45,637	46,024	11,584	12,189	387	+0.8	625	+5.4
St. Anne's	30,357	30,832	6,744	6,686	475	+1.6	58	-0.9
St. George's	15,770	14,847	3,472	3,391	923	-5.9	81	-2.3
Shankill	33,298	31,566	8,453	8,476	1,732	-5.2	23	+0.3
Smithfield	10,840	10,539	2,316	2,186	301	-2.8	130	-5.6
Victoria	33,724	37,042	8,433	9,548	3,318	+9.8	1,115	+13.2
Windsor	27,014	26,977	6,561	7,054	37	-0.1	493	+7.5
Woodvale	23,777	25,312	5,926	6,505	1,535	+6.5	579	+9.8

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Population 1937 and 1951.

Appendix 5(2) Total population and religious affiliation (by Ward) in Belfast County Borough, 1937 and 1951

Wards	1937 Roman Catholic population (as % of Total)	1937 Presbyterian population (as % of Total)	1937 Church of Ireland population (as % of Total)	1937 All others (as % of Total population)	1951 Roman Catholic population (as % of Total)	1951 Presbyterian population (as % of Total)	1951 Church of Ireland population (as % of Total)	1951 All others (as % of Total population)
Belfast County Borough	104,372 **(23.83)**	137,939 **(31.49)**	140,310 **(32.03)**	44,465 **(12.65)**	115,029 **(28.11)**	134,831 **(32.95)**	131,855 **(32.23)**	27,422 **(6.70)**
Clifton	13,989 **(30.03)**	14,368 **(30.84)**	11,952 **(25.66)**	6,275 **(26.55)**	17,465 **(36.27)**	14,822 **(30.79)**	12,531 **(26.02)**	3,332 **(6.92)**
Court	4,343 **(24.54)**	4,752 **(26.85)**	7,403 **(41.83)**	1,201 **(6.78)**	5,045 **(4.57)**	4,141 **(34.74)**	6,775 **(56.83)**	460 **(3.86)**
Cromac	5,135 **(21.49)**	7,804 **(32.66)**	7,613 **(31.86)**	3,344 **(13.99)**	5,460 **(26.01)**	6,886 **(32.80)**	7,105 **(33.85)**	1,541 **(7.34)**
Dock	7,841 **(44.87)**	3,811 **(21.81)**	4,306 **(24.64)**	1,515 **(8.68)**	7,376 **(54.20)**	2,877 **(21.14)**	2,917 **(21.44)**	438 **(3.22)**
Duncairn	3,610 **(10.35)**	15,343 **(43.99)**	10,832 **(31.05)**	5,097 **(14.61)**	4,744 **(14.70)**	14,787 **(45.82)**	10,308 **(31.94)**	2,435 **(7.54)**
Falls	29,056 **(91.53)**	977 **(3.08)**	1,269 **(4.00)**	444 **(1.39)**	30,849 **(93.86)**	730 **(2.22)**	1,053 **(3.20)**	235 **(0.72)**
Ormeau	3,830 **(8.44)**	18,470 **(40.69)**	14,638 **(32.25)**	8,452 **(18.62)**	4,390 **(10.83)**	18,471 **(45.47)**	12,704 **(31.34)**	4,972 **(12.27)**
Pottinger	6,278 **(13.76)**	16,543 **(36.25)**	15,664 **(34.32)**	7,152 **(15.67)**	6,744 **(15.95)**	16,714 **(39.54)**	14,689 **(34.75)**	4,126 **(9.75)**
St.Anne's	11,311 **(37.26)**	6,424 **(21.16)**	9,708 **(31.98)**	2,914 **(9.60)**	12,541 **(44.21)**	6,425 **(22.65)**	8,307 **(29.29)**	1,093 **(3.85)**
St. George's	673 **(4.27)**	4,593 **(29.12)**	8,596 **(54.51)**	1,908 **(12.10)**	661 **(5.03)**	4,381 **(33.31)**	7,390 **(56.19)**	719 **(5.47)**
Shankill	1,677 **(5.04)**	12,919 **(38.80)**	13,478 **(40.48)**	5,224 **(15.68)**	2,011 **(7.11)**	11,730 **(41.46)**	12,378 **(43.75)**	2,173 **(7.68)**
Smithfield	9,865 **(91.01)**	148 **(1.37)**	734 **(6.77)**	93 **(0.85)**	9,613 **(91.40)**	136 **(1.29)**	710 **(6.75)**	58 **(0.55)**
Victoria	1,596 **(4.73)**	12,989 **(38.52)**	14,292 **(42.38)**	4,847 **(14.37)**	1,947 **(5.72)**	13,792 **(40.52)**	15,613 **(45.87)**	2,683 **(7.88)**

Appendix 5(2) Continued

Wards	1937 Roman Catholic population (as % of Total)	1937 Presbyterian population (as % of Total)	1937 Church of Ireland population (as % of Total)	1937 All others (as % of Total population)	1951 Roman Catholic population (as % of Total)	1951 Presbyterian population (as % of Total)	1951 Church of Ireland population (as % of Total)	1951 All others (as % of Total population)
Windsor	4,091 **(15.14)**	9,500 **(35.17)**	9,535 **(35.30)**	3,888 **(14.39)**	4,181 **(16.93)**	9,588 **(38.83)**	8,972 **(36.34)**	1,951 **(7.90)**
Woodvale	1,077 **(4.53)**	9,298 **(39.11)**	10,290 **(43.28)**	3,112 **(13.08)**	2,002 **(8.71)**	9,348 **(40.66)**	10,433 **(45.38)**	1,206 **(5.25)**

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Population 1937 and 1951

Appendix 5(3) Persons in Private Families in the Dublin County Borough classified according to size of dwelling occupied - 1941.
***Figures in bold represent percentage of persons in private families per category of dwelling.**

Wards or District Electoral Divisions	Total Pop-ulation	Total Persons in Private Families	1 Room	2 Rooms	3 Rooms	4 Rooms	5 Rooms	6 Rooms	7 Rooms
Dublin	468,103	424,988	80,997	67,279	76,204	65,223	50,293	32,970	52,022
*			**19.06**	**15.83**	**17.93**	**15.35**	**11.83**	**7.76**	**12.24**
Arran Quay	33,241	27,715	4,931	4,441	6,162	6,276	2,090	2,169	1,646
*			**17.79**	**16.02**	**22.23**	**22.64**	**7.54**	**7.83**	**5.94**
Ballybough	11,535	10,849	2,208	2,145	2,363	2,050	921	887	275
*			**20.35**	**19.77**	**21.78**	**18.90**	**8.49**	**8.18**	**2.53**
Cabra	19,119	18,078	185	388	6,993	5,645	1,453	1,330	2,084
*			**1.02**	**2.15**	**38.68**	**31.23**	**8.04**	**7.36**	**11.53**
Clontarf East	7,051	6,756	66	284	633	501	701	1,803	2,768
*			**0.98**	**4.20**	**9.37**	**7.42**	**10.38**	**26.69**	**40.97**
Clontarf West	19,103	18,369	267	681	807	3,601	9,465	1,605	1,943
*			**1.45**	**3.71**	**4.39**	**19.60**	**51.53**	**8.74**	**10.58**
Drumcondra	21,142	19,017	292	743	3,099	2,806	5,152	3,430	3,495
*			**1.54**	**3.91**	**16.30**	**14.76**	**27.09**	**18.04**	**18.38**
Glasnevin	9,348	8,409	178	384	428	1,067	1,799	1,582	2,971
*			**2.12**	**4.57**	**5.09**	**12.69**	**21.39**	**18.81**	**35.33**
Inns' Quay	22,805	19,992	6,633	3,774	4,152	2,677	1,512	777	467
*			**33.18**	**18.88**	**20.77**	**13.39**	**7.56**	**3.89**	**2.34**
Mountjoy	15,363	14,666	8,339	3,638	1,007	866	312	377	127
*			**56.86**	**24.81**	**6.87**	**5.90**	**2.13**	**2.57**	**0.87**
North City	6,401	5,725	2,442	1,771	535	477	177	202	121
*			**42.66**	**30.93**	**9.34**	**8.33**	**3.09**	**3.53**	**2.11**
North Dock	29,839	28,147	7,819	4,651	6,720	5,082	2,404	832	639
*			**27.78**	**16.52**	**23.87**	**18.06**	**8.54**	**2.96**	**2.27**
Phoenix Park	750	258	3	6	31	83	46	37	52
*			**1.16**	**2.33**	**12.02**	**32.17**	**17.83**	**14.34**	**20.16**
Raheny	3,078	3,039	26	60	414	762	1,271	215	291
*			**0.86**	**1.97**	**13.62**	**25.07**	**41.82**	**7.07**	**9.58**
Rotunda	18,085	15,818	7,669	4,567	1,499	862	294	406	521
*			**48.48**	**28.87**	**9.48**	**5.45**	**1.86**	**2.57**	**3.29**
Chapelizod	619	613	29	147	76	222	37	43	59
*			**4.73**	**23.98**	**12.40**	**36.22**	**6.04**	**7.01**	**9.62**
Crumlin	2,967	2,934	12	32	545	262	734	1,301	48
*			**0.41**	**1.09**	**18.58**	**8.93**	**25.02**	**44.34**	**1.64**
Fitzwilliam	13,865	11,252	3,001	2,545	1,614	1,929	446	477	1,240
*			**26.67**	**22.62**	**14.34**	**17.14**	**3.96**	**4.24**	**11.02**
Mansion House	10,410	9,119	4,065	2,344	1,191	658	304	131	426
*			**44.58**	**25.70**	**13.06**	**7.22**	**3.33**	**1.44**	**4.67**
Merchants' Quay	25,126	24,009	5,768	5,072	3,791	3,223	3,929	1,137	1,089
*			**24.02**	**21.13**	**15.79**	**13.42**	**16.36**	**4.74**	**4.54**
New Kilmainham	16,806	16,484	785	2,081	3,966	4,351	3,626	1,041	634
*			**4.76**	**12.62**	**24.06**	**26.40**	**22.00**	**6.32**	**3.85**
Pembroke East	16,703	15,713	1,037	2,003	3,335	1,815	1,229	1,365	4,929
*			**6.60**	**12.75**	**21.22**	**11.55**	**7.82**	**8.69**	**31.37**
Pembroke West	19,975	17,983	1,137	2,224	3,109	4,180	1,332	1,403	4,598
*			**6.32**	**12.37**	**17.29**	**23.24**	**7.41**	**7.80**	**25.57**
Rathfarnham	4,449	3,977	25	261	418	901	190	900	1,282
*			**0.63**	**6.56**	**10.51**	**22.66**	**4.78**	**22.63**	**32.24**

Appendix 5(3) Continued

Wards or District Electoral Divisions	Total Pop-ulation	Total Persons in Private Families	1 Room	2 Rooms	3 Rooms	4 Rooms	5 Rooms	6 Rooms	7 Rooms
Rathmines/Rathgar E.	22,074	20,187	1,591	2,744	2,531	2,091	1,954	2,818	6,458
*			**7.88**	**13.59**	**12.54**	**10.36**	**9.68**	**13.96**	**31.99**
Rathmines/Rathgar W.	23,555	21,211	1,207	1,867	2,727	1,929	2,849	2,540	8,092
*			**5.69**	**8.80**	**12.86**	**9.09**	**13.43**	**11.97**	**38.15**
Royal Exchange	4,693	4,102	1,930	1,039	484	276	121	127	125
*			**47.05**	**25.33**	**11.80**	**6.73**	**2.95**	**3.10**	**3.05**
Simmonscourt	550	541	-	4	62	60	9	27	379
*			-	**0.74**	**11.46**	**11.09**	**1.66**	**4.99**	**70.06**
South City	2,860	2,455	701	686	547	276	95	59	91
*			**28.55**	**27.94**	**22.28**	**11.24**	**4.93**	**5.17**	**5.09**
South Dock	15,571	13,721	4,317	3,873	2,661	1,514	428	370	558
*			**31.46**	**28.23**	**19.39**	**11.03**	**3.12**	**2.70**	**4.07**
Terenure	14,273	14,086	134	358	6,488	2,788	510	1,055	2,753
*			**0.95**	**2.54**	**46.06**	**19.79**	**3.62**	**7.49**	**19.54**
Trinity	9,595	8,347	3,468	2,361	961	810	176	223	348
*			**41.55**	**28.29**	**11.51**	**9.70**	**2.11**	**2.67**	**4.17**
Usher's Quay	26,884	22,875	5,287	4,990	3,731	3,530	3,375	1,310	652
*			**23.11**	**21.81**	**16.31**	**15.43**	**14.75**	**5.73**	**2.85**
Wood Quay	20,468	18,541	5,445	5,115	3,124	1,653	1,352	991	861
*			**29.37**	**27.59**	**16.85**	**8.92**	**7.29**	**5.34**	**4.64**

Source: Register of Population, 1941. Department of Industry and Commerce, Stationery Office, 1944, pp.90-91.

Appendix 5(4) Number of private dwellings/flats and tenements classified according to sanitary facilities and nature of occupancy – 1946. (The Census of 1936 did not provide this information.)

Sanitary Facilities			Nature of Occupancy		
	Total Number	**As % of total**		**Total number**	**As % of total**
Number of private dwellings	110,914	100.00	Number of flats/tenements	48,296	100.00
Flush lavatory	109,953	99.14	Rented unfurnished	40,219	83.28
Chemical closet	70	0.06	Rented furnished	4,429	9.17
Privy or dry closet	576	0.52	On special terms/caretaker	953	1.97
No special facilities	315	0.28	Owned	2,458	5.09
Shared sanitary facilities	39,425	35.55	On hire purchase system	237	0.49
Unshared facilities	70,439	63.51	With fixed bath	13,312	27.56
No statement	1,050	0.94	Shared sanitary facilities	36,170	74.89
Indoor lavatory	66,085	59.58			
No indoor lavatory	43,484	39.21			
No statement	1,345	1.21			

Source: Census of Population 1946, Vol. IV, Part II Social Amenities, p.112, p. 188 and p. 208.

Appendix 6(1) **Percentage of total meals eaten as 'bread and spread' and as 'cooked' meals by persons of various age-groups in slum, artisan and middle-class families in Dublin, classified according to income.**

Slum

Income per head weekly	Age 3-14 years		Age 15-19 years		Over 20 years	
	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked
Under 10/-	48	31	(a)	(a)	54	30
10/- - 15/-	48	33	50	28	52	31
15/- - 20/0	40	42	47	41	45	41
20/- - 30/-	38	45	42	41	40	47
Over 30/-	38	54	(a)	(a)	34	54
All slum families	44	38	47	37	44	42

Artisan

Income per head weekly	Age 3-14 years		Age 15-19 years		Over 20 years	
	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked
Under 10/-	50	36	50	40	48	41
10/- - 15/-	40	37	48	34	41	42
15/- - 20/0	34	43	39	48	32	52
20/- - 30/-	31	46	37	48	33	53
Over 30/-	22	52	31	52	27	60
All artisan families	36	42	40	45	33	53

Middle-class

Income per head weekly	Age 3-14 years		Age 15-19 years		Over 20 years	
	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked	Bread and spread	Cooked
Under 10/-	-	-	-	-	(a)	(a)
10/- - 15/-	(a)	(a)	-	-	(a)	(a)
15/- - 20/0	-	(a)	-	-	-	(a)
20/- - 30/-	19	51	(a)	(a)	34	55
Over 30/-	17	51	23	59	25	58
All Middle-class families	18	52	25	60	27	58

Source: *National Nutrition Survey, Part I. Methods of Dietary Survey and Results from Dublin Investigation.* Stationery Office, Dublin, 1946, p. 50.

(a) = Insufficient numbers of meals to give trustworthy data.