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Citation: Taylor, Avram (2019) "We have never employed Jewish people": young Jewish women's experiences of education and employment in Glasgow from the 1920s to the 1950s. *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (4). pp. 467-489. ISSN 1478-0038

Published by: Taylor & Francis

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2019.1648164>  
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2019.1648164>>

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This article examines the experience of young Jewish women from the Gorbals district of Glasgow. It discusses their attitude to education and how they dealt with the transition from school to work through the use of oral testimony from ten female respondents. Examining the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, it is both a contribution to the broader historiography of women in Britain during the inter-war years and the years after the Second World War, as well as being a study of the second generation of Jewish women in one particular community. Its central concern is to highlight the particularity of the experience of this group of young women and bring out the significance of specific cultural pressures and anti-Semitism in their lives with a focus on the period when their formal education ended and they entered paid employment. In her 1991 discussion of the historiography of the Jewish community in Britain, Lara Marks drew attention to the relative neglect of the history of Jewish women. As Marks put it, 'The challenge for historians is to unite the vast literature on the history of Jews in Britain and on gender, and to show how issues of class, gender and ethnicity affected not only the settlement and migration patterns of Jews but also the social fabric of British society.'<sup>1</sup> As she says, during the 1980s the omission of Jewish women from the historical record was partially rectified by a number of scholars.<sup>2</sup> However, many of these studies focused on the employment of immigrant women and neglected the contribution of their daughters to the family economy.<sup>3</sup> This study attempts to address the themes that Marks highlighted in her piece through the study of an individual community, the Gorbals, which offers an example of a provincial working-class Jewish community created during the wave of mass migration from Eastern Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

As Marks suggests, the experience of the second generation of Jewish women has been particularly neglected by historians, although they are discussed within some of the general histories of British Jewry.<sup>4</sup> In the years since the publication of Marks's piece a number of studies have considerably enhanced our understanding of the experience of Jewish women in Britain. However, the focus of the recent scholarship which directly addresses the significance of gender in the history of Jews in Britain has also been on the first generation of immigrant women.<sup>5</sup> The studies that have specifically dealt with the experience of the second generation of Jewish women in Britain have also tended to focus on London to the neglect of the provinces, with one notable exception, as we will see below.<sup>6</sup> There are also some useful provincial studies of the second generation that deal with various aspects of their experience, but not through the prism of gender.<sup>7</sup> As a result, there has not yet been a study that has dealt with the working lives of the second generation of Jewish women in any depth, and it is precisely this deficiency that the current article seeks to correct.

Glasgow has been chosen as a case study because it offered particularly good opportunities for educational mobility and employment outside of the traditional immigrant economy. The community expanded considerably during the period of mass migration from Eastern Europe. Many of these new immigrants settled in the Gorbals and worked in traditional immigrant trades, such as tailoring.<sup>8</sup> A number of immigrant Jews took up peddling goods in the surrounding districts, and one distinctive feature of the community was that this remained a significant source of employment in Scotland during the twentieth century, which was not the case in other parts of the country.<sup>9</sup> Glasgow is also a particularly good location to study the impact of the expansion of clerical work on patterns of women's employment. Although there was an increase in office work nationally from the late

nineteenth to the early twentieth century, this trend was particularly noticeable in Glasgow. As R. Guerriero Wilson points out, 'In the census category 'commercial clerks', Glasgow's numbers nearly trebled in the period 1881-1911, a rate of increase slightly above that of London.'<sup>10</sup> Thus, there were new opportunities for young working-class women in Glasgow that represented an alternative to the established immigrant economy by the early twentieth century. Also, as we will see below, there were opportunities for social mobility through higher education in the city, as Glasgow University offered opportunities for working-class students. Although there were other British universities with a small percentage of Jewish students by the 1930s, the presence of working-class Jewish students was a distinctive feature of Glasgow University.<sup>11</sup> It is, therefore important to consider the extent to which the women in this study benefited from that opportunity.

The contemporary study of the history of Jews in Glasgow was pioneered by Kenneth Collins.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent scholars in the field have built upon his work, adding much to our knowledge of this community. Ben Braber's study of the immigration and integration of Jewish immigrants to Glasgow provides a valuable account of the lives of both the immigrants and their children, which also explores the experience of women within the community. In particular, he discusses the education of Jewish girls, and considers the factors that determined when they left education, which is particularly relevant to the present discussion.<sup>13</sup> However, this is not the main focus of Braber's study, therefore he does not discuss young women's transition from education to employment in depth. The closest study to the present one is Linda Fleming's unpublished thesis on Jewish women in Glasgow. However, although Fleming's study does include much useful material on the second generation of Jewish women in the Gorbals, its focus is on immigrant women and the move from the Jewish quarter (i.e. the Gorbals) to the suburbs.<sup>14</sup> As Fleming says, 'The distance created by suburban relocation... heightened estrangement from traditions carried over from Eastern Europe.'<sup>15</sup> Thus, Fleming's discussion of the educational opportunities and career aspirations of young Jewish women is based on the experience of upwardly mobile families in the suburbs of Glasgow, not those young women who grew up in the Gorbals, which clearly differentiates the current study from Fleming's work.<sup>16</sup> Fleming also highlighted the significance of class, gender and ethnicity in the experience of the Jewish community in Glasgow.<sup>17</sup> The current article builds on this insight by developing a theoretical framework specifically for the understanding of young Jewish women's experience of education and work incorporating these three dimensions. As Fleming makes clear in her discussion of Jewish family life in the Gorbals, girls had less freedom than boys, they were encouraged to undertake domestic tasks from an early age, and their families sought to minimise their contact with the world beyond their own community.<sup>18</sup> However, this attempt to confine young women within the home and the community was not always successful, as they were able to circumvent some of the strictures imposed upon them, and they were also shaped by the culture of the Glaswegian working class of which they formed a part.<sup>19</sup> Thus, young Jewish women had to navigate between two cultures and also attempt to resolve the tensions between them for themselves.

The current study is not only concerned with the pressures their families exerted on young Jewish women, but also the manner in which their class, gender and ethnicity structured their interaction with wider society, and their experience of education and work, in

particular. As Marks pointed out, the discussion of the relationship between these three forms of division is more advanced in the United States than it is in Britain where the focus of women's historians has been more on class and gender than ethnicity.<sup>20</sup> Once again, this omission has partially been rectified since the publication of Marks's piece, but historical studies of the operation of these social divisions in British history are often lacking in a theoretical dimension.<sup>21</sup> American scholars may have devoted more attention to these issues but, as Henry Srebrnik argued, their discussions have focused on race and colour, and thus do not address the experience of Jewish women.<sup>22</sup> Srebrnik's piece on working-class Jewish women in Stepney explicitly attempted to rectify these deficiencies, partly through drawing on some of the insights offered by American scholarship, particularly the notion of an 'ethclass.'<sup>23</sup> This term was coined by Milton M. Gordon to identify, '...the subsociety created by the intersection of the vertical stratifications of ethnicity with the horizontal stratifications of social class... Thus a person's ethclass might be upper-middle class white Protestant, ...and so on.'<sup>24</sup>

The article will also draw on the notion of an ethclass to argue that the experience of the Jewish women in this study broadly follows the contours of their non-Jewish working-class sisters, but that it differs from it in some significant respects. However, it is also important to recognise the differences between the experiences of young Jewish men and women, which draws our attention to gender alongside the significance of class and ethnicity. The new concept of 'gendered ethclass trajectories of social mobility' will thus be introduced here in order to denote the particularity of the experience of the young Jewish women who form the subject of this study. This concept has been developed by the author of this study as a means of explaining the complexities of the social divisions that it describes. Class, gender and ethnicity have been seen as additive forms of oppression in a scheme 'which "adds together" the effects of each system of oppression as static, equal parts of a whole.'<sup>25</sup> This model has been criticised for being too simplistic, and the approach adopted here will start from the position that: 'Hierarchies of domination are constructed and experienced simultaneously, their dynamics permeating one another.'<sup>26</sup> In particular, it will be argued that the role of agency needs to be foregrounded, as individuals are not simply crushed by the weight of multiple hierarchies of domination. They are also active participants in the process of shaping their own destiny.

This piece is also a contribution to the growing literature on young women's employment in the interwar years and the years after the Second World War. Both Teresa Davy and Kay Sanderson have investigated the expansion of opportunities for young women in office work during the interwar years. During this period the opportunities for shorthand-typists expanded, women were recruited into the Civil Service to perform routine clerical work, and office work became an increasingly attractive option for young women from lower-middle-class and working-class backgrounds.<sup>27</sup> As Kay Sanderson points out, 'The main feature of the inter-war period was the great increase in lower-level white collar work and the parallel decline in semi-skilled and skilled manual work. It was (single) women who were recruited to the clerical jobs in the expanding financial, business and government bureaucracies.'<sup>28</sup> Rosemary Crompton has brought out both the further expansion of opportunities for women in office work in the post-war period, as well as the continued perception that particular occupations in this sector, such as typing, were 'women's work.'<sup>29</sup>

The work of Miriam Glucksman and Selina Todd is particularly pertinent to this article. Glucksman's study of women's assembly-line work identified some of the main trends in women's employment during the interwar period, such as a restructuring of their industrial employment from the textile and clothing industries to metal, engineering, electrical and vehicle manufacture. There was also more employment in retailing, the food and new industries, and a decline in domestic service.<sup>30</sup> Todd further explores the relative attractiveness of these employment options to young women during this period, which were partly dependent on individual circumstances. Although domestic service became increasingly less appealing as new opportunities became available during the interwar years, for some young servants from poorer homes it still had some attractive aspects.<sup>31</sup> Factory work expanded between 1918 and 1951, but the change from textiles to light manufacturing was slow, and working conditions often remained very poor and formed a source of complaint for young industrial workers. However, factory employment gradually became more attractive to young women during the 1940s as working conditions began to improve.<sup>32</sup> The appeal and status of retail employment also changed over the period. Before the 1930s, much of the work in this sector was in small local shops in working-class areas with poor pay and conditions. It was only after the expansion of department stores and multiple stores in the 1930s, which offered better wages and additional benefits to their employees that the status of shop work increased.<sup>33</sup> The most desirable and respectable form of employment for young working-class women was clerical work, and conditions in this sector also improved during the 1930s.<sup>34</sup> Todd's work has added much to our understanding of young women's experience of employment in the interwar years and the years after the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> Her discussion of young women's entry into employment is particularly relevant to this piece as it deals with the transition from school to work, which is the central concern of this study.<sup>36</sup> As Todd points out, it is necessary to investigate, 'the importance of kinship and friendship networks, and particularly mothers, in shaping employment opportunities and wider social aspirations.'<sup>37</sup> Todd's work has highlighted the diverse influences that shaped young women's choice of employment, such as family members, wages, status, and the 'respectability' of a particular occupation.<sup>38</sup> Although class and gender identities are central to Todd's discussion, she does not deal with ethnicity and, as a result, does not discuss the experiences of young Jewish women.

The transition from school to work is important because it is a decisive moment in an individual's life course in which the social mechanisms of class, gender and ethnicity have one of their most salient effects. This process has long been the subject of study in the social sciences, which has resulted in several large-scale studies of the experience of young people during this crucial phase in their lives.<sup>39</sup> As Todd says, young working-class women aspired to a 'respectable' job, and the notion of 'respectability' has been expanded on by Beverly Skeggs. She brings out the manner in which female respectability became linked with particular notions of femininity, '...which defined appropriate and acceptable modes of behaviour, language and appearance...'<sup>40</sup> This manifests itself in a strong desire to avoid feelings of shame, which places limits on women's actions. However, as Skeggs says, 'Within these constraints they deploy many constructive and creative strategies to generate a sense of themselves with value.'<sup>41</sup> It is, thus, important to recognise the manner in which the

performance of the particular forms of femininity that the women in this study were expected to conform to both constrained and enabled them.

The approach adopted here to the transition from school to work has much in common with that adopted by Pearl Jephcott in her pioneering study *Girls Growing Up* (1942).<sup>42</sup> Working in the social science tradition, Jephcott foregrounded individual narratives of young women's experiences of school, work and leisure during the Second World War. Her work identifies some of the central factors governing young working-class women's choice of employment in this period. These can be summarised as: a limited range of opportunities, limited expectations of employment on the part of both the young women and their parents, and a limited range of ambitions.<sup>43</sup> All of this is underpinned by the necessity of earning a living immediately after leaving school, which often led young women to take the first job they were offered.<sup>44</sup> Jephcott's work has recently been reassessed by John Goodwin and Henrietta O'Connor, who highlight the value she places on the views of the individuals she portrays, as well as her early adoption of an approach which places autobiographical and biographical insights at the centre of the research process.<sup>45</sup> This study also aims to place the individual experiences of the young women it describes at the centre of historical explanation.

### **From Peddler to Typist: Jewish Women's Work in perspective**

As Harold Pollins points out, the Jewish immigrants who came to Britain from Eastern Europe from the 1880s to 1914 tended to choose an occupation that would shield them from contact with the non-Jewish world: 'The characteristic pattern was to take up an independent occupation, such as peddling, to work for another Jew, or to set up as an employer.'<sup>46</sup> As he says, although the immigrants worked in a diverse range of trades, the most significant occupation was clothing for both men and women. Other significant forms of employment were the furniture trade, the tobacco industry and those who served the Jewish community itself.<sup>47</sup> Jewish immigrants were used as a source of cheap labour and often worked in appalling conditions despite the fact that they were generally employed by their co-religionists.<sup>48</sup> The Jews that settled in Glasgow conformed to this pattern of employment. There were about 15,000 Jews living in Glasgow by the 1930s, of whom 7,000 to 8,000 lived in the Gorbals.<sup>49</sup> The 1891 census of the Gorbals and the surrounding district revealed that the clothing industry was the biggest employer of Jewish workers while hawking was the next most significant occupation.<sup>50</sup>

Employment patterns amongst the children of Jewish immigrants nationally displayed elements of both continuity and change during the interwar years. Essentially, although there was a degree of both occupational and social mobility, which continued into the postwar era, employment in trades traditionally associated with the Jewish community remained high, at least until the end of the Second World War.<sup>51</sup> As Harold Pollins point out, although the limitations of the evidence make it difficult to measure the extent of this phenomenon, more Jews entered the professions during this period.<sup>52</sup> The significance of education in the social mobility of the second generation was also limited, as most children left school at fourteen, and the number of British-born Jews who attended university remained low as a result.<sup>53</sup> The pattern of employment of young Jewish women in London, where there was a decline in the

number employed in tailoring and an increase in those working in 'white-collar' occupations, can be seen as typical of trends in the country as a whole.<sup>54</sup>

In Glasgow during the interwar years there were still many small workshops where Jewish workers were employed in the traditional immigrant trades, although wages and conditions were poor. Ben Braber argues that conditions in these workshops were little better than those in the sweatshops of the late nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> As well as the survival of the old trades, there was also considerable employment available in Jewish shops in the Gorbals during the interwar years.<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, there is a dearth of secondary literature which specifically deals with the working lives of the second generation of Jewish immigrants in Glasgow, although there are references to it within some of the existing studies. Once again, as we might expect, the evidence is rather sparse, and we are largely reliant on autobiographies and oral testimony for this period. However, there would seem to have been a similar pattern of continuity and change in the education and employment of the children of immigrants in Glasgow to that which developed elsewhere in the country. Firstly, although many Jewish children left school at fourteen, some also continued their education beyond the minimum school leaving age, although the lack of available statistics means that it is impossible to say how many were in either category.<sup>57</sup> Some of those who stayed on at school also made it to university, as it is apparent from the available evidence that some of the Jewish students at Glasgow University were the children of immigrants. According to one contemporary survey there were 102 Jewish students at Glasgow University in the academic year 1936-7 about a third of whom came from the Gorbals.<sup>58</sup> Collins has shown that not only was medicine the most popular subject chosen by Jewish students in the interwar years, but also that the numbers studying medicine steadily increased during this period. He also demonstrates that after 1925 Jewish medical students in Glasgow were increasingly drawn from the lower echelons of the Jewish community, and a number of them came from the Gorbals.<sup>59</sup> However, as we will see, gender had a significant impact on university attendance, as few women from the second generation made it to university.

The postwar era continued the trend of geographical and social mobility, the most notable feature of which was the movement of Jews from the old immigrant areas to the suburbs, which had also begun before the war.<sup>60</sup> As V.D. Lipman puts it, 'Since 1945, the 1881-1914 picture of a largely proletarian community of manual workers has virtually disappeared.'<sup>61</sup> However, this transformation was fairly gradual, the occupational patterns of the interwar years persisted into the postwar era and there were still some districts where Jews lived in poverty in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>62</sup> Once again, there are some deficiencies in the available data, so it is difficult to be precise about the employment pattern of the Jewish community in Britain after the Second World War as a whole, and it is even harder to generalise about the children of Jewish immigrants. However, the surveys of the occupational structure of the Jewish community which were undertaken from the 1950s onwards confirm that there was a gradual movement out of the working class, and that increasing numbers of Jewish children were attending university or college by the early 1960s.<sup>63</sup>

The interviews on which this article is based were conducted by the author himself and the interviewees' names have been anonymised. The respondents were found through both personal connections and Jewish Care Scotland, which provides various services for elderly members of the Jewish community in Glasgow. A comparison of the occupations of

the women that were interviewed for this study and their mothers is necessary to assess the degree of continuity and change within this group of respondents. The employment histories of the mothers of the ten female respondents varied considerably and, in the case of Mrs Danzig, Mrs Friedlander and Mrs Greenberg, their mothers had no experience of paid employment, as they did not work outside the home either before or after their marriage. Mrs Abrahams' mother worked in the tobacco industry before she was married and Mrs Adler's mother was a seamstress when she was single, but neither continued in paid employment after their marriage. Two of the respondents' mothers did not work before they were married, but worked in the family business after their marriage: a grocers' shop in the case of Mrs Rosenberg's mother, and a sweet shop in the case of Mrs Berkowitz's mother. Two of the respondents' mothers worked in the tailoring trade both before and after their marriage: Mrs Cohen and Mrs Laski. Finally, Mrs Solomons' mother worked in a restaurant both before and after her marriage. Thus, the occupations of the respondents whose mothers had experience of paid employment are reasonably typical of their community.

The occupations of the ten female respondents display a high level of continuity with those of the previous generation. Seven of the respondents had traditional occupations: Mrs Abrahams (born 1912, left school at 14, furrier and retail worker), Mrs Adler (born 1917, left school at 14, retail and warehouse worker), Mrs Berkowitz (born 1926, left school at 14, tailoress and waitress), Mrs Danzig (born 1931, left school at 14, furrier and retail worker), Mrs Greenberg (born 1918, left school at 14, dressmaker), Mrs Laski (born 1929, left school at 14, retail and warehouse worker), and Mrs Solomons (born 1926, left school at 14, retail worker, tailoress and buyer in the millinery trade). In addition, five of these women worked exclusively for Jewish firms: Mrs Abrahams, Mrs Adler, Mrs Danzig, Mrs Laski and Mrs Solomons. Only three of the respondents were clerical workers: Mrs Cohen (born 1931, left school at 17), Mrs Friedlander (born 1936, left school at 15) and Mrs Rosenberg (born 1932, left school at 16), and thus worked in non-traditional occupations. We should now examine respondents' experience of the transition from school to work in order to understand the factors that influenced their decision to leave school and seek paid employment, and also to evaluate the extent to which they were able to exercise agency in their choice of employment.

### **'I loved school. I would have stayed there forever!' The experience of leaving school**

The first issue to consider in the process of becoming a wage earner is how and why the decision to leave school was made in the case of the individual respondents. In 1918 the school leaving age was raised from twelve to fourteen, where it remained until 1948, despite the government's stated intention to raise it to fifteen.<sup>64</sup> Todd brings out the obstacles to the education of working-class children beyond the minimum school-leaving age: 'Most secondary schools charged fees before 1944. Under 7 per cent of 15 to 18 year olds attended school in the interwar years. Even if a scholarship was obtained, families faced the cost of uniform, travel expenses, and, indirectly, loss of juvenile earnings.'<sup>65</sup> In addition, as Glucksmann points out, working-class girls in this period expected to leave school at 14, and were usually virtually compelled to do so in order to contribute to the family income.<sup>66</sup>

This brings us to a significant similarity between the experience of the women in this study and that of working-class girls in general in the period. Seven of the ten respondents

left school at 14: Mrs Abrahams (born 1912), Mrs Adler (born 1917), Mrs Berkowitz (born 1926), Mrs Danzig (born 1931), Mrs Greenberg (born 1918), Mrs Laski (born 1929) and Mrs Solomons (born 1926). Of the other three, Mrs Friedlander (born 1936) left school at 15, Mrs Rosenberg (born 1932) left school at 16 and Mrs Cohen (born 1931) left school at 17. Mrs Greenberg represented it as something that was totally in accordance with her own wishes: '[Interviewer: Why did you leave school?] Because everyone was leaving school and I wanted to leave school. [Interviewer: You wanted to?] Yes, all ma pals were leaving school and I wanted to leave school.'<sup>67</sup> Mrs Laski's attitude to leaving school provides a marked contrast to that of Mrs Greenberg: 'I loved school. I would have stayed there forever if I had got the chance. I loved education. I have always thought about doing Open University but it is very difficult...'<sup>68</sup> For Mrs Laski, and some of the other respondents, leaving school was driven by economic necessity: 'I had to go out and earn. It was a case of money was needed at home. Already by 14 I was into the war. I mean the boys were in the forces. Money was tight. (Laughs.) Tighter than usual.'<sup>69</sup>

Other respondents had more ambivalent feelings about leaving their education. Mrs Friedlander also had to leave school to earn money for her family. However, she did not have a good experience at school as a result of being separated from her friends in the Gorbals as she went to a secondary school in nearby Crosshill. She explains that she attended a primary school in the Gorbals, but then:

went to Strathbungo, which I was sorry about, because I was the only one that passed the exam. I worked very hard to get to a higher school, and my teacher at that time said to me, 'Yes that was very good, but I would have preferred that you had gone with your friends to Apsley School. You would have been more comfortable and happier.' And I didn't know what he was talking about, but I did when I went to Strathbungo School, and the first person I met was a *Yiddisher* girl, and I said to her, 'Could you and I be friends, because we are the only *Yiddisher* people in the class?' [She replied] 'I will choose my own friends.' So she came from round about the school, which was Alison Street, which was quite well off compared to the Gorbals.' [Interviewer: Do you think she looked down on you?] Oh she did... That was my first experience of that.<sup>70</sup>

Mrs Friedlander's experience illustrates the significance of class in the lives of the respondents. Although her school was not far from the Gorbals in terms of its location, it was a world away socially, and even her shared ethnicity with her classmate could not overcome this social distance. As a result, even though she was compelled to leave school, she was not sorry to go, particularly as she had quite clear ideas about the type of employment she wanted, as we will see below.

Although, as we noted above, the interwar years were a period of social mobility for some of the second generation only a handful of Jewish women made it to university in the period covered by this study. In 1906 Vera Dagmar Reis became the first Jewish woman to graduate in medicine in Scotland when she qualified at Glasgow University.<sup>71</sup> However, very few women followed in her footsteps during the interwar years and, of the tiny minority that did, even fewer originated from the Gorbals.<sup>72</sup> Kenneth Collins brings out some of the reasons for this: 'Jewish parents were protective towards their daughters and sought to keep them from university influences, and the contacts they might meet there. There was also the

worry that long years spent in studies would make their daughters unmarriageable, a serious concern in a community where family life was so pivotal.<sup>73</sup> Protectiveness was patriarchal in character, and this often manifested itself in forbidding contact between young Jewish women and their non-Jewish peers.<sup>74</sup> For some young Jewish women this protectiveness could seriously limit their educational opportunities. Mrs Abrahams' mother's concern about her meeting non-Jewish people of her own age prevented her from fulfilling her educational aspirations: 'I asked to go to Art College. My mother said no, too many *Goyim* [i.e. non-Jews] there, and that's how life was.'<sup>75</sup> The testimony of one of Fleming's respondents, who left school in 1923 at fourteen, brings out the lower value placed upon girls education:

...my mother never paid much attention to our education, she didn't think it was important because she says [sic] you get married and you have families and what good is your education and that was her philosophy if you can call it that... Well, I don't know. I'd have liked to have stayed on at school. I'd have liked to have done commerce, even teaching, which I think I had a good chance because I wasn't silly. I mean I was clever enough you know, I wasn't brilliant but I was clever enough to pass any exams, and that was that. But you took it, your mother said do this and you did it.<sup>76</sup>

Both of these women left school in the 1920s, thus the above examples demonstrate that young women's educational aspirations were quite extensive in this period, despite the limitations placed upon them. The evidence also suggests that attending university remained a distant prospect for most young women, even in the immediate postwar period, as it is notable that none of the respondents in this study went to university or knew of any Jewish girls who did so. However, it is also important to point out that Fleming's respondent's ambition to attend commercial college was not realised and it would seem that this became much more achievable after 1945. Thus, we can identify a distinctly gendered trajectory of social mobility in which family and religion can be limiting factors, and which becomes more pronounced over the period under consideration here.

The last respondents to leave school were Mrs Cohen and Mrs Rosenberg, who both left in 1948. Mrs Rosenberg clearly expressed a sense of her ambition being thwarted by her family's economic circumstances:

I had planned to be a teacher, or do something, but there were no grants in these days. So my mother she said one day I am going to give you money, you must go and learn shorthand typing. Because she thought this would be a great idea.<sup>77</sup>

She recalls learning shorthand typing and finding it 'very very easy'. She worked in Cooks' Travel Agency as a shorthand typist for two years and then in Remington-Rand for nine months before getting married, stating 'That was the extent of my working life'.<sup>78</sup> This is a very good example of the influence of both maternal aspiration and economic circumstances on the girls' choices. In the case of Mrs Rosenberg, her mother actively encouraged her to take up a non-traditional occupation that was seen as being suitable for a 'respectable' working-class girl, but her family's circumstances prevented her from fulfilling her own ambitions.

Mrs Cohen was the only respondent in the sample whose parents went as far as even considering the possibility that she could attend university. However, like Mrs Rosenberg, she too went to college to learn shorthand and typing as she eventually decided that

university was not right for her. One of Mrs Cohen's two brothers did go to university, and she commented that:

I think it was mostly boys that went to university. Girls seemed to go in for shorthand typing and general clerical work like I did... [Interviewer: Did you think that was discrimination?] No, It just happened. You see a lot of parents didn't believe in the girls having more education than the shorthand typing because they said when they are married they can carry on with that kind of work, but they got married and they had to give up work for a little while, and sometimes they gave up work altogether. Some did.<sup>79</sup>

Clearly this illustrates the complexity of the way young women's choices were made and raises questions about the role of agency, and how career choices were shaped by gendered notions of what was appropriate, or how they 'just happened,' as this respondent put it. Although Mrs Cohen and her parents discussed the possibility of her going to university, she said that she was glad that she did not go because, 'It would have been too much for me.'<sup>80</sup> This can be related to the concept of 'composure' in oral history narratives, or '...the process by which subjectivities are constructed in life-story telling,' as elaborated by Penny Summerfield.<sup>81</sup> Through the construction of this narrative of her life Mrs Cohen was able to achieve a sense of '...personal equanimity or psychic comfort...'<sup>82</sup> Mrs Cohen felt that she made a positive choice to leave school and seek paid employment rather than attend university. However, her parents were divided over this issue, and it could also be argued that her lack of confidence in her academic ability was a result of the patriarchal culture she inhabited which placed a lower value on the education of girls.

A brief comparison with the experience of the seven male respondents who were interviewed for this study can help to clarify the influence of gender on educational opportunity in this period. Of the seven male respondents interviewed for this study, two left school at 13, four left at 14 and one went straight from school to university. Thus, apart from the respondent who went onto higher education, the experience of this group of men is very similar to that of the women who form the subject of this study. However, even though only one of the male respondents in my sample attended university he is representative of a wider trend that we noted above which enabled a small minority of working-class men to participate in higher education. The chances of this opportunity arising for their female contemporaries were much more remote. The above discussion demonstrates that class, gender and ethnicity all played a role in determining young Jewish women's educational opportunities. Thus, we can see the how a particular gendered ethclass trajectory of social mobility shaped the options available to the women in this sample at a crucial stage in their lives. In the discussion that follows we will examine the role that ethnicity and religion, in particular, played in the respondents' working lives, and we will try to come to an assessment of its significance. The respondents' choices were primarily determined by their class and gender, but this did not prevent them from also actively shaping their own destiny.

### **Finding a job: Between the immigrant economy and the White-Blouse Revolution<sup>83</sup>**

The impact of religion and ethnicity upon the respondents' employment history chiefly manifested itself in the anti-Semitism that was directed towards them and the

requirement for any potential employment to enable them to conform to the requirements of religious observance. The latter presented some difficult dilemmas for the respondents just as it had done for the first generation of immigrants. This centred around the need to keep the Jewish Sabbath, which requires Jews to refrain from working on Saturdays. As Bill Williams has pointed out, for the first generation of immigrants in Manchester during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: ‘Sabbath observance, far from being sacrosanct, soon gave way to the necessity of earning a living. Nor was it by any means certain that Jewish immigrants would find the Sabbath observed in workshops owned or managed by their co-religionists.’<sup>84</sup> It is also apparent that this continued to be an issue that concerned community leaders during the interwar years. For example, in 1938 the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council discussed the problem of ‘seven-day trading’: ‘Mr Arthur Rose raised the question of seven-day trading and suggested that pressure should be brought to bear on some 25 Jewish shopkeepers who were observing a seven-day trading week.’<sup>85</sup> In response to this problem, the Jewish community created an employment bureau for ‘boys and girls between the ages of 14-17’ which only carried vacancies where the Sabbath and Jewish holidays would be observed.<sup>86</sup> However, its impact seems to have been limited, as none of the respondents seemed to be aware of it. Given the fact that this was such a longstanding source of tension within the Jewish community, it is not surprising that it was also an issue for the respondents in this study when they started work, as we will see.

The influence of anti-Semitism on the respondents’ choice of employment is very clear in those instances where prejudice either prevented them from gaining employment in the first instance, or it resulted in them leaving or losing their job. On the other hand, it is more difficult to explain its significance for the respondents themselves. Firstly, it would be misleading to say that the respondents overtly stated that they expected to encounter prejudice if they applied for a job with a non-Jewish employer and, as we noted above, only half of them worked exclusively for Jewish employers. It will be argued here that the respondents experienced anti-Semitism as a porous phenomenon. It was both tangible and insurmountable on occasion but the expectation of encountering it had very little influence on their actions. The respondents only cited one example of a company that they believed to have a policy of not employing Jewish people, and that was a well-known chain of department stores with a branch in Glasgow city centre. Although five respondents worked exclusively for Jewish employers their reasons for this were more to do with their immersion within their own community than a conscious attempt to avoid encountering prejudice. This relates to the notion of an ethclass as source of *participational identification*, in other words the idea that individuals feel most comfortable with those who are ‘of the same ethnic group and same social class,’ as Gordon points out.<sup>87</sup> This meant that, for some of the respondents, working in a Jewish workplace could be seen as an advantage in itself, regardless of the economic implications of remaining within the immigrant economy.

The experience of the young Jewish women in this study was similar to that of non-Jewish women of their generation in some respects, but in others it differed from it. Todd pointed to the importance of family connections in finding employment as well as the limiting effect that this could have on a young woman’s employment options.<sup>88</sup> As we will see, this was also true of the manner in which the young women in this study found their first job. Both Glucksmann and Todd’s studies demonstrate that young (non-Jewish) working-

class women played a more active role in determining their own employment within the choices available to them in their choice of subsequent employment. The job choices of the women in Glucksmann and Todd's studies were motivated by a number of factors such as: achieving the best conditions of employment, maximising their earning potential, finding more pleasant company, and more interesting work.<sup>89</sup> Once again, the women in the current study shared similar motivations and also played an active role in finding their own employment, particularly after their first job. The main points of divergence with the experience of their non-Jewish contemporaries were: the limiting effect of anti-Semitism upon their choices, the impact of the immigrant economy on their employment options, and the related issue of the role that religion played in their job choices. The latter is a rather complex issue because, in theory, working for a Jewish employer should have enabled the women to meet the requirements of their faith but this was rarely realised in practice. In addition, it will be argued here, that remaining within the immigrant economy was not necessarily the most economically rational decision for these women, as it drew them back into the old immigrant trades which, by that time, were unlikely to have been the most financially rewarding options available to them. Four of the respondents found jobs through their immediate family, three found jobs for themselves through their personal contacts in the Jewish community and the other three found jobs for themselves outside the Jewish community. Therefore, we can see that personal and family connections tended to keep the respondents within the immigrant economy, at least for their first job. However, they did not passively accept the first positions they found, and they went on to shape their own futures.

In the case of Mrs Danzig, she obtained employment through her brother's initiative in the first instance, which enabled her to learn a trade and make choices for herself. Her older brother was a furrier with a Jewish firm in the centre of Glasgow, and he got her a job, also as a furrier, with this firm after she left school. Mrs Danzig welcomed this opportunity because, as she put it, 'I like a challenge, and when I was at school the teacher said that I would never be able to sew, and I became a furrier.'<sup>90</sup> Mrs Danzig was trained as a hand sewer in her first job, which she stayed in for six months. She then moved to another furriers in the Gorbals itself, as not only was it better paid than her previous employment but there were also no travelling expenses. This was also a Jewish firm, and she continued to work for them after she got married, only leaving when she became pregnant with her first child. In addition, when she first started work she had a second job in a Jewish cap shop, which meant that she worked seven days a week, which was contrary to religious law, as she put it: 'I worked on a Saturday afternoon and a Sunday at the 'Barras' [i.e. Barrowlands] - a market place [in a shop selling caps]. During the week I worked in a furriers. I finished work at lunchtime on a *Shabbos* [i.e. the Sabbath], came home and had my dinner and took a tram car to work.'<sup>91</sup> Mrs Danzig's employment history provides a good example of a respondent who never worked for a non-Jewish employer, which she felt was the reason that she had a relatively happy working life, although it is notable that, particularly at the beginning of her working life, it did not enable her to keep the Sabbath.

Mrs Adler's account of her employment history provides another good illustration of the manner in which an individual who was embedded in the Jewish community was able to make the best of the opportunities it offered. Her first job was in one of the shops downstairs from the family home. Mrs Adler recalled first working 'in a shop that used to sell all the

*Yiddisher* stuff. [i.e. skull cups, prayer shawls and other religious items.] I only had to go downstairs into the shop, I got five shillings a week, and I thought that was marvellous! But then after a few months, a lady across the road, another *Yiddisher* shop, she said, 'I can see you are good, and smart in the shop.' She gave me eight shillings a week in a fruit shop.' Mrs Adler's next opportunity arose after seeing 'an advert for a wholesale Jewish warehouse... and I went to get an interview, I was fifteen and a half I think, and she gave me an interview, and she said she would give me fifteen shillings a week, and I nearly died when she said she would give me fifteen shillings a week!'<sup>92</sup>

She then found a job with a Jewish clothing company, where she worked until she got married. Her explanation of why she only worked for Jewish employers is also quite revealing:

[Interviewer: These are all Jewish firms?] Yes, all *Yiddisher* I worked with. It's funny that, isn't it? I never worked with non-Jewish. '[Interviewer: Was that deliberate?]' No, just the way it happened. Well I don't know, maybe it was, I kind of...I mean we knew the people so well. I only mixed with Jewish people. I never mixed with non-Jewish people. Not like today, they are all mixing. In my day, we were all Jewish friends.<sup>93</sup>

In Mrs Adler's case her immersion in the Jewish community meant that she never considered what options might have been open to her outside of it. This was coupled with a perception that, as long as they were part of the community, employers were benign as they were 'all Jewish friends.' For women like Mrs Adler, their employment history was shaped, firstly by notions of what was suitable employment for 'respectable' young Jewish women that were prevalent in their community, thus demonstrating the influence of gender on her options. In addition, due to her absorption into the Jewish community, her choices were determined by the options that it offered. This demonstrates how a gendered ethclass trajectory of social mobility operated in the case of women who were deeply embedded in the community We should now move on to consider the impact of anti-Semitism on the working lives of the respondents.

This perception of the generous, paternalistic employer is clearly expressed in the following description of Mrs Abrahams' first job, which was with a Jewish employer:

My mother got us jobs, the four of us [i.e. her sisters and herself.] Mister X had a big furrier's business in Jamaica Street and he was a very nice man, and he gave the Jewish people, boys and girls, jobs. In winter you left half an hour before *Shabbos*, but you didn't have your hour and a quarter for lunch... you had your lunch meal in twenty minutes and then started work again, but you went home half an hour before *Shabbos*, and you did not work on *Shabbos*. These are the kind of jobs we had until I was about 27, I think.<sup>94</sup>

There are two notable things about this example. Firstly, it was a relatively rare example of a Jewish employer who actually did ensure that his employees could comply with the requirements of the Jewish Sabbath. Secondly, although he may have been 'a very nice man,' this employer also ensured that he recouped some of the time he lost on Friday night and Saturday morning by curtailing his employees' lunch hour. As we have seen, most Jewish businesses did not close on Saturday so, for those young Jewish women who wished to keep the Sabbath, their options were fairly limited. Mrs Cohen pointed out that not all of the

Jewish shops in the Gorbals closed on Saturdays. This tended to mean that, in practice, Jewish girls who worked in retailing (like Mrs Danzig) would usually be called upon to work on Saturdays. Mrs Cohen said that many of the more religiously observant girls tended to work for wholesalers in warehouses, as these firms closed on Saturdays and all Jewish holidays.<sup>95</sup> The importance of warehouses as a significant source of employment for Jewish girls is also mentioned by one of Fleming's respondents, who cited two large warehouses that enabled their employees to keep the Jewish holidays.<sup>96</sup> However, most young Jewish women had to accept the necessity of working on the Sabbath whether they liked it or not.

The following incident illustrates the importance of not transgressing the requirements of their religion in the minds of some of the respondents, in this case, Mrs Abrahams:

I was working for a Jewish man when I first started working on *Shabbos*, because the kind of work that I did, it was seasonal. When were busy, we were very very busy, and he took on staff, but when he didn't need the amount of staff he had we weren't given the sack, we were given our books and we had to register at the Bureau, and then you got back again... So I said to mum, 'It's time for me to go back to work, but he won't take me unless I work on *Shabbos*.' She said, 'I can't tell you what to do, you're old enough, but you know my opinion.' Anyway, I went back on *Shabbos*, I will never forget it as long as I live. I came out [from her place of employment] and the heavens opened! It was a downpour! And I walked slowly home. I was sure it was a punishment from upstairs. I will never forget that as long as I live.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, this example highlights the extreme reluctance of some respondents to work on the Sabbath, as it is clear from Mrs Abrahams' description of this incident that it was an extremely traumatic experience. This relates to the concept of 'composure' in oral history narratives in a different way to the example discussed above. In the case of Mrs Abrahams, observance of her religion was an integral part of her identity, as was her sense of herself as a 'good Jewish girl,' and together they formed part of her composure. This incident is so memorable for her, as the retelling of it involves 'discomposure,' or '...personal disequilibrium, manifest in confusion, anger, self-contradiction, [and] discomfort...' which makes it difficult to maintain a particular narrative of the self.<sup>98</sup> For Mrs Abrahams, this event was uncomfortable because it transgressed both religious law and parental authority. In addition, it also indicates the sporadic nature of employment in some of the immigrant trades.

Those respondents that chose to work exclusively for Jewish employers did not do so purely in order to avoid encountering anti-Semitism at work. In addition, as the other respondents all worked for non-Jewish employers at some point in their working lives, fear of encountering anti-Semitism did not prevent them from moving beyond the boundaries of the Jewish community. Mrs Cohen's attitude towards this issue can be seen as broadly representative of those respondents who worked for non-Jewish employers: '[Interviewer: Didn't you worry about encountering anti-Semitism at work?] It never occurred to me. Let me put it this way. You know there are cars and buses in the street but it doesn't stop you crossing the road. Anti-Semitism is like that. It's just there. I just thought that, if anti-Semitism did turn up I would have to deal with it.'<sup>99</sup> In fact, it did sometimes 'turn up' in the respondents' lives but this did not lead them to conclude that they should retreat into their own community in order to protect themselves from it.

Mrs Friedlander described her first experience of anti-Semitism at work which, significantly, was also her first experience of anti-Semitism *per se*:

I wanted to be a typist or a secretary or something, but we couldn't afford me to go to evening classes or anything like that. So I had to start off where my father worked in tailoring and I didn't like it, then a hairdresser's, and I didn't like that. Then I went to work in in a factory but in the office in the factory. I liked that, but unfortunately one of my bosses was German, and I was always getting into trouble. He was always complaining to the director about me, and I couldn't fathom it out because I was always too frightened to misbehave because I would lose my job and my mother would lose the money. Then the director told me, 'Do you know that Mr X is German and he has found out that you are Jewish.' And that was my first experience of anti-Semitism. We didn't have it in the Gorbals.<sup>100</sup>

Although Mrs Friedlander's assessment of the Gorbals is a personal one based on her own experience, it does also reflect the experience of some of the other respondents in the study. Kenneth Collins has argued that anti-Semitism was rare in Glasgow, 'even in the Gorbals where the Jews formed a significant and visible minority.'<sup>101</sup> Similarly, William Kenefick has asserted that there was a harmonious relationship between the Jewish and Irish residents of the Gorbals.<sup>102</sup> Although neither scholar claims that the Gorbals was free from anti-Semitism, they do see it as an example of successful integration.<sup>103</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, 'divisions within the community were, to some extent, suppressed in daily life, but rose to the surface on particular occasions and also within the semi-private space of the tenement itself.'<sup>104</sup> Thus, the Gorbals was not free from anti-Semitism, but there was also quite a high degree of integration between the Jewish and non-Jewish residents of the district.<sup>105</sup> The evidence presented in the current piece also suggests that the Gorbals was probably not typical of Glasgow as a whole as, once the respondents' moved beyond its boundaries, they seemed to have been more likely to encounter anti-Semitism. This conclusion is supported by the success of the anti-Semitic Protestant League in areas outside the Gorbals in 1933, as well as the appearance of anti-Semitic posters in Shawlands and the city centre in 1934.<sup>106</sup>

In some cases, anti-Semitism could be an obstacle to finding employment as the following example illustrates. Here is Mrs Rosenberg's account of applying for a job in 1949: 'Another instance, I went for a job, and it was with a theatrical agency and I was very keen, and the interviewer asked me questions, and then he said, 'What church do you go to?' And I said, 'I don't go to church I go to Synagogue.' I never heard again from him and I am quite sure he didn't want to employ Jews.'<sup>107</sup> In the case of Mrs Greenberg she only appeared to have been offered a job as an apprentice tailoress in 1932 by a non-Jewish employer because they did not realise that she was Jewish:

[Interviewer: What did you do after you left school?] ...I just saw an advert in the paper and I went to this place where it was to learn dressmaking, and I came back and told my mother and she said, 'They will never take you on, you never ever finished a pair of knickers at school.' There was quite a few interviewed, and I did get the job, and I was the only *Yiddisher* person there, which I didn't realise, but not that it made any difference...But I remember the first *Yontov* [Jewish holiday] that I told her that I wasn't coming in at *Yontov* and the forewoman saying to me, 'I never knew you were Jewish, we have never employed Jewish people,' and I just said, 'Oh well, I'll leave

then,' and she says 'Oh no, no, you are a very good apprentice.' [Interviewer: So you do you think they took you on because they didn't realise you were Jewish?] 'Well I think they didn't, because that's what she said to me.'<sup>108</sup>

Mrs Cohen had quite a complicated employment history during which she had eight jobs. She moved between Jewish and non-Jewish employers and, although she identified other reasons for changing jobs, she felt that she lost two jobs because of anti-Semitism. In contrast, Mrs Berkowitz said that she did not experience any anti-Semitism at work. She initially went to work in a tailoring firm as a presser at 14, a job which her mother got her, after which she moved to a non-Jewish firm:

I worked there for quite a while until I got fed up with the factory, and so did this other girl. We went to the boss, and I said to him, 'We are going to leave,' and he said, 'If you leave, you will get called up.' Because it was during the war... Anyway, I didn't believe him, I thought he was kidding, and I got a wonderful job... in an Italian café. And you should see the money I made there! In tailoring, I was lucky if I got £2 a week.'<sup>109</sup>

She noted her enjoyment working in the café, stating: 'I am easy to mix. I don't know if it was because I am a middle child. I loved it! I had so many tables for myself, and the Italian couple were very good with us, and they gave you a pot, and you just took the money. The Americans had a lot of money, not like the British soldiers and sailors, and they used to give me tips, £1, £2 every day.'<sup>110</sup>

These examples demonstrate that anti-Semitism was clearly present in a number of workplaces in the period but it was not universal and, if an individual was fortunate in their choices, they could escape it altogether. In addition, although young Jewish women could face discrimination because of their ethnicity this did not prevent them from seeking employment outside their community, and they were also able to assert themselves when they encountered anti-Semitism. As was pointed out in the discussion of the central organising concept of this piece (i.e. gendered ethclass trajectories of social mobility), individuals are not simply crushed by the weight of multiple hierarchies of domination. Mrs Berkowitz's account also clearly demonstrates that employment in the traditional trades was not always the best way for young women to maximise their earning potential, as she was able to make more money as a waitress than a tailor. On the other hand, she was obviously very fortunate in her choice of workplace, which enabled her to earn a lot from tips, which would not necessarily have been possible elsewhere. So, while it would clearly not be wise to generalise from this case, it is indicative of the opportunity cost of remaining within the traditional economy.

If we place the respondents' experience in a broader context by comparing women's average earnings in the clothing trade and the leather and fur industries nationally between 1938 and 1947 with that of women working in other industries, then we can see that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the evidence. The level of pay in these sectors was above the national average in 1938, subsequently dropped below it in 1943, and then achieved virtual parity with it by 1947. In addition, although the pay in these industries remained relatively low, there were also other industries that paid even less. On the other hand, the eventual wage increases in clothing, fur and leather were insignificant compared to those experienced by women working in transport or in government-owned industries.<sup>111</sup> The

problem with national data, though, is that it does not tell us about the wage rates or opportunities that were available locally, so it is not necessarily that helpful in helping us to understand the choices available to the respondents. For most of the period covered by this study no data on the relative difference between earnings in Glasgow and elsewhere in the country was collected.<sup>112</sup> However, there is information in the relevant censuses about the occupational distribution of women in Glasgow between 1931 and 1951. This shows that, contrary to what we might expect, there was actually an increase in the number of women working in the clothing industry between these years. However, there was a much greater increase in the number of female clerical workers in the same period while the numbers working in domestic service also declined significantly. The number of women in clerical jobs increased by 14,000 between 1931 and 1951, some of which was a result of women replacing male clerks. In addition, there was an increase in the number of unskilled women workers, partly as a result of opportunities in new industries.<sup>113</sup> The data on comparative rates of pay in the same period is rather incomplete, so it is difficult to be precise about wages in different sectors of the economy. In addition, a comparison of average rates of pay in different sectors does not reflect working conditions, hours of work, instability of employment or the chances of career progression. Guy Routh has gathered the available statistics on the earnings of women in this period, which enables us to attempt a comparison of the wages of skilled women manual workers and clerical workers. His figures display considerable variation between different industries and different grades and types of clerical work. However, if we just compare the average salary for each year in each sector, skilled women manual workers earned £87 in 1924, £86 in 1935 and £317 in 1955. The pay for women clerical workers in the same years was: £106, £99 and £317 respectively.<sup>114</sup> This suggests that it is likely that there were better opportunities in purely economic terms for the respondents in this study than those offered in the traditional immigrant trades, at least during the interwar years, and, as we saw, some of them took advantage of these opportunities whilst others chose to remain within the Jewish economy.

## **Conclusion**

In many respects, the experience of the women in this study does not differ that greatly from that of their non-Jewish contemporaries. As we have seen, the respondents' choices were primarily determined by their class and gender, which provided limiting factors within which they had to operate in much the same way as with the non-Jewish girls of their generation. Both groups suffered from a lack of educational opportunity and, even though some of the Jewish girls' male contemporaries did go on to higher education, none of the women in this sample went to university. The choices of both Jewish and non-Jewish girls of their generation were also limited by gendered notions of what was suitable employment for them. Another clear point of similarity is the influence of family members on the employment choices of both groups. However, the impact of maternal aspiration is not straightforward, as the contrasting examples of Mrs Rosenberg and Mrs Greenberg illustrated as the former was directed into office work by her mother, and the latter ignored her mother's wish that she worked in an office and became a tailoress instead. The argument that has been presented in this piece is that the respondents were not simply passive victims of economic,

patriarchal and religious authority, but that they actively shaped their own destiny, which brings us to the question of the significance of class, gender and ethnicity in their lives.

As the earlier discussion of the history of immigrant labour indicated, historically, the first generation were used as a source of cheap labour, often by their co-religionists and we have seen that this exploitation was largely continued into the next generation by the durability of the immigrant economy, which was further sustained not just by economic necessity, but also by ties of religion and community. To put in its starkest form, as long as the immigrant community and economy existed it exerted a magnetic pull on the second generation which could, arguably, have prevented them from maximising their economic potential. On the other hand, it could also be argued that the traditional economy provided a virtual guarantee of employment for the children of immigrants in a potentially hostile environment where anti-Semitism was latent. Although it is not possible to adjudicate on the absolute benefit in economic terms of the Jewish economy to the second generation, it seems likely that it was beginning to outlive its usefulness by the interwar years and it diverted young people's attention away from opportunities outside their own community.

However, this would suggest that class, gender and ethnicity operates in an additive manner triply oppressing the women described in this study in a system which simply restricts and exploits them. This is not, in fact, the argument being presented here, as we have seen that, although class and gender can be seen to discriminate and disadvantage the respondents, when one attempts to assess the impact of ethnicity within this equation of oppression, one and one and one does not make three. Although parental protectiveness could limit their educational opportunities and anti-Semitism could have an impact on their employment opportunities, this was not the only manner in which ethnicity impacted upon their lives. Religion was important to all of the respondents, although to varying degrees and, for the more religiously observant, this shaped their choice of employment, and thus their jobs were not viewed in purely instrumental terms.

The original concept of 'gendered ethclass trajectories of social mobility' was introduced above in order to denote the particularity of the experience of the young Jewish women who form the subject of this study. As we have seen, their experience can be characterised by a very gradual movement out of the traditional Jewish economy into white-collar employment, but the women did not achieve the same level of social mobility as some of their male contemporaries. Those respondents who remained within the immigrant economy tended to see it as a positive choice as it enabled them to live and work within their own community. This was a benefit in itself, and not one that can easily be weighed against the opportunity cost of forfeiting potentially more lucrative employment. It also brings us to what is probably the key difference between the Jewish girls described in this piece and their non-Jewish contemporaries: for young Jewish women their choice of employment was linked to questions of identity and religion which were also influenced by their degree of integration with wider society. This meant that their decisions were primarily shaped by the limitations of their class and gender, but were also shaped by their ethnicity in a manner that could both disadvantage and enable the respondents as its impact was contingent upon a number of surrounding factors, not least the individual agency of the young women themselves. The original conceptual framework developed in this article could also be applied to other immigrant groups in different locations and other time periods. The transition from school to

work is a decisive moment in an individual's life course in which the social mechanisms of class, gender and ethnicity have one of their most salient effects, and we can see the continuing impact of these social divisions in the employment choices of the women in this study. However, it has also been argued that the women exercised individual agency in these processes and their lives were not solely shaped by structural factors.

Word Count: 12,963

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<sup>1</sup> Lara Marks, 'Carers and Servers of the Jewish Community: The Marginalized Heritage of Jewish Women in Britain', in Tony Kushner, (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London & Portland, Oregon, 1992), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920* (London, 1980), pp. 200-49; V.D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858*, (Leicester, 1990), pp. 207-13; David Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Suburbs: Social Change in Anglo-Jewry Between The Wars, 1914-1945', *Jewish Culture and History*, 1 (1998), pp. 10-11; Todd M. Endelman (2002) *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles, California, 2002) pp.196-9, 205-7.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: Lara V. Marks, *Model Mothers: Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870-1939* (Oxford, 1997); Henry Srebnik, 'Class, ethnicity and gender intertwined: Jewish women and the East London rent strikes, 1935-1940', *Women's History Review*, 4 (1995), pp. 283-99; Daniel J. R. Grey 'Almost Unknown amongst the Jews' Jewish Women and Infanticide in London 1890-1918', *London Journal*, 37 (2012), pp. 122-135; Anne Summers, 'Gender Religion and an immigrant Minority: Jewish women and the suffrage movement in Britain c.1900-1920', *Women's History Review*, 21 (2012), pp. 399-418.

<sup>6</sup> Iris Dove, *Sisterhood or Surveillance?: The Development of Working-Girls' Clubs in London 1880-1939* (London:, 1996); Nadia Valman, 'Jewish Girls and the Battle of Cable Street', *Jewish Culture & History*, 1 (1998), pp. 399-418.

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<sup>7</sup> Rosalyn Livshin, 'The Acculturation of the Children of Immigrant Jews in Manchester, 1890-1930', in David Cesarani, (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 79-96; William Kenefick, 'Comparing the Jewish and Irish Communities in Twentieth Century Scotland', in David Cesarani et al (eds.) *Place and Displacement in Jewish History and Memory Zakor v' Makor* (London & Portland, Oregon, 2009), pp. 53-68; William Kenefick 'The Jews and Irish in Modern Scotland: Anti-Semitism, Sectarianism and Social Mobility', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 31 (2013), pp. 189-213; Avram Taylor, 'Remembering Spring through Gorbals Voices': Autobiography and the Memory of a Community', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 28 (2010), pp. 1-30; Avram Taylor, 'Street Gangs in the Interwar Gorbals: The Jewish Experience', *Contemporary British History*, 27 (2013), pp. 214-231; Avram Taylor "Are you a Billy or a Dan or an old tin can?' street violence and relations between Catholics, Jews and Protestants in the Gorbals during the inter-war years', *Urban History*, 41 (2014), pp. 124-140.

<sup>8</sup> William D. Rubinstein et al, (eds.), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp.323-4.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Collins, *Be Well! Jewish health and welfare in Glasgow, 1860-1914* (East Linton, 2001), p.37.

<sup>10</sup> R. Guerriero Wilson, 'Women's work in officess and the preservation of men's breadwinning jobs in early twentieth-century Glasgow' *Women's History Review*, 10 (2001) p.466

<sup>11</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p.198; Benjamin Braber, *Jews in Glasgow 1879-1939: immigration and integration* (Edgeware:, 2007), pp. 71-2.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry* (Glasgow, 1990); Collins, *Be Well!*

<sup>13</sup> Braber, *Jews in Glasgow*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Fleming, 'Jewish Women in Glasgow c.1880-1950: Gender, Ethnicity and the Immigrant Experience' (Ph.D. diss., University of Glasgow, 2005) available online at: <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/953/> accessed: 29.9.11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.336.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.336-341

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,pp. 145, 177, 181.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>20</sup> Marks, 'Carers and Servers', p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example: Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, class and ethnicity* (London & New York, 1994); Mary Davis, (ed.), *Class and Gender in British Labour History: Renewing the Debate (or Starting it?)* (Pontypool, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Henry Srebrnik, 'Class, Ethnicity and Gender intertwined: Jewish women and the East London Rent Strikes 1935-1940', *Women's History Review*, 4 (1995), pp. 283-4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>24</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (New York, 1964), p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> Georgina Waylen et al, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (New York, 2013), p. 81.

<sup>26</sup> Gay Young & Bette Dickens, (eds.), *Color, Class & Country: Experiences of Gender* (London, 1994), p. 5. There are a number of critiques of the additive approach. However, the most notable is probably: Patricia Hill Collins, 'Toward a New Vision: Race, Class and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection', *Race, Sex & Class*, 1, (1993), pp. 25-45.

<sup>27</sup> Teresa Davy, 'A Cissy Job for Men; a Nice Job for Girls': Women Shorthand Typists in London, 1900-39; Kay Sanderson, 'A Pension to Look Forward to...?' Women Civil Service Clerks in London', 1925-1939, in Leonore Davidoff & Belinda Westover, (eds.), *Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words*, (Totowa, New Jersey, 1986) pp. 124-44 & 145-160.

<sup>28</sup> Sanderson, "A Pension to Look Forward to...?", p.150.

<sup>29</sup> Rosemary Crompton, 'The feminization of the clerical labour force since the Second World War' in Gregory Anderson, *The white-blouse revolution*, (Manchester & New York, 1988), pp. 121-143.

<sup>30</sup> Miriam Glucksman. *Women Assemble: Women Workers and the New Industries in inter-war Britain*, (London, 1990), pp. 46-66.

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<sup>31</sup> Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950* (Oxford, 2005), p.33-7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.41-3.

<sup>35</sup> Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family*; Selina Todd 'Young Women, Work and Leisure in Interwar England', *The Historical Journal*, 38 (2005), pp.789-809; Selina Todd 'Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass*, 4. (2006) , pp. 715-730.

<sup>36</sup> Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family*, pp.85-112; Selina Todd 'Poverty and Aspiration: Young Women's Entry to Employment in Inter-war England', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15 (2004), pp. 119-42.

<sup>37</sup> Todd, 'Poverty and Aspiration', p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-142.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example: John Goodwin & Henrietta O'Connor, 'A Critical Reassessment of the 'Complexity' Orthodoxy : Lessons from existing data and Youth 'Legacy' Studies', in Peter Kelly & Annelies Kamp, (eds.), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Leiden & Boston, 2015), pp. 38-43

<sup>40</sup> Beverly Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London & Thousand Oaks, California, 2002), p.46

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.162

<sup>42</sup> A.P. Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up* (London, 1946).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68-75.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.74-5.

<sup>45</sup> John Goodwin & Henrietta O'Connor, 'Pearl Jephcott: the Legacy of a Forgotten Sociological Research Pioneer', *Sociology* , 49 (2015), p.143, 146-7.

<sup>46</sup> Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (London & Toronto, 1982), pp.142-3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-4.

<sup>48</sup> David Englander, (ed.), *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840-1920* (Leicester, 1994), pp.p.109-10; Drew D. Gray, *London's Shadows: The Dark Side of the Victorian City* (London & New York, 2013), p.71.

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<sup>49</sup> Kenneth Collins, *Go and Learn: the international story of Jews and Medicine in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1998) p.87. The estimate for the Gorbals was provided by Harvey Kaplan, the director of the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre in Glasgow who has worked on the 1901 and 1911 censuses for the Gorbals.

<sup>50</sup> Braber, *Jews in Glasgow*, p. 86.

<sup>51</sup> Pollins, *Economic History*, p.196.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.197.

<sup>53</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 197-8.

<sup>54</sup> Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain*, p. 211.

<sup>55</sup> Braber, *Jews in Glasgow*, pp.100-1

<sup>56</sup> Adele Conn, (ed.), *Glasgow Jewish Journeys* (Glasgow, 2006), p.6-7.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69-70.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71-2

<sup>59</sup> Collins, *Go and Learn*, pp.86-92.

<sup>60</sup> Pollins, *Economic History*, p.210; Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p.229-30; Lipman, *A History of the Jews*, p.234; Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened', pp. 5-26.

<sup>61</sup> Lipman, *A History of the Jews*, p. 237.

<sup>62</sup> Cesarani, 'A Funny Thing Happened', p. 21; Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 240-1.

<sup>63</sup> Pollins, *Economic History*, pp. 210-13.

<sup>64</sup> Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910-2010* (London, 2014), p. 32, 112.

<sup>65</sup> Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family*, p. 67.

<sup>66</sup> Glucksmann, *Women Assemble*, p. 35.

<sup>67</sup> Tape: Mrs Greenberg, 24 July 2005, 1900-1915.

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<sup>68</sup> Tape: Mrs Laski, 21 July 2005, 1575.

<sup>69</sup> Tape: Mrs Laski, 21 July 2005, 1730.

<sup>70</sup> Tape: Mrs Friedlander, 20 July 2005, 1255-1275.

<sup>71</sup> Collins, *Second City*, p. 175

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. & Fleming, 'Jewish Women in Glasgow', pp. 340-1.

<sup>73</sup> Collins, *Second City*, p. 175

<sup>74</sup> Avram Taylor, "In Glasgow but not quite of it'? Eastern European Jewish immigrants in a provincial Jewish community from c.1890 to c.1945', *Continuity and Change*, 28 (2013), pp.468-70.

<sup>75</sup> Tape: Mrs Abrahams – 19 July 2005, 0374-0394

<sup>76</sup> Fleming, 'Jewish Women in Glasgow', p. 240.

<sup>77</sup> Tape: Mrs Rosenberg, 18 July 2005, 1030-1040.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Tape: Mrs Cohen, 26 April 2002, 580-590.

<sup>80</sup> Tape: Mrs Cohen, 26 April 2002, 595-600.

<sup>81</sup> Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, 1, (2004), p.69.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> For a discussion of the expansion of opportunities in clerical work for women, see: Gregory Anderson, (ed.), *The white-blouse revolution: Female office workers since 1870* (Manchester & New York, 1988); Helen Glew, *Gender, Rhetoric and Regulation: Women's Work in the Civil Service and London County Council, 1950-55* (Manchester, 2016).

<sup>84</sup> Bill Williams, 'The Jewish Immigrant in Manchester: The Contribution of Oral History', *Oral History*, 7 (1979), p. 44.

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<sup>85</sup> Minutes of General Meeting of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council held within the Board of Guardians Rooms, Thistle Street, Glasgow, on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1938 (Scottish Jewish Archives Centre) p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Fleming, 'Jewish Women in Glasgow', p. 340.

<sup>87</sup> Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, p. 53.

<sup>88</sup> Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid* pp. 113-25; Glucksmann, *Women Assemble*, pp. 29-35.

<sup>90</sup> Tape: The Danzigs – 28 August 2003, 1650

<sup>91</sup> Tape: The Danzigs, 28 August 2003, 16555-1670

<sup>92</sup> Tape: Mrs Adler, 24 July 2005, 2052-2068.

<sup>93</sup> Tape: Mrs Adler, 24 July 2005, 2070-2084.

<sup>94</sup> Tape: Mrs Abrahams, 19 July 2005, 2070-208.

<sup>95</sup> Tape: Mrs Cohen, 26 April 2002, 485-500.

<sup>96</sup> Fleming, 'Jewish Women in Glasgow', p.339

<sup>97</sup> Tape: Mrs Abrahams, 19 July 2005, 1515-1545.

<sup>98</sup> Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', pp.69-70.

<sup>99</sup> Tape: Mrs Cohen, 26 April 2002, 520-530.

<sup>100</sup> Tape: Mrs Friedlander, 20 July 2005, 1295-1315.

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth Collins, (ed.), *Aspects of Scottish Jewry* (Glasgow, 1987), p. 52.

<sup>102</sup> William Kenefick, 'Comparing the Jewish and Irish Communities in Twentieth Century Scotland' in David Cesarani, Tony Kushner and Milton Shain, (eds), *Place and Displacement in Jewish History and Memory Zakor v' Makor* (London & Portland, Oregon, 2009), pp.55-7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 57-60; Collins, *Second City Jewry*, p.10;

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<sup>104</sup> Taylor, 'Are you a Billy or a Dan or an old tin can?', p.139.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-140.

<sup>106</sup> Braber, *Jews in Glasgow*, pp.37-8.

<sup>107</sup> Tape: Mrs Rosenberg, 18 July 2005, 1895-1905.

<sup>108</sup> Tape: Mrs Greenberg, 24 July 2005, 1920-1940.

<sup>109</sup> Tape: Mrs Berkowitz, 21 July 2005, 1030-1056.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ian Gazeley, 'Women's pay in British industry during the Second World War', *Economic History Review*, 15 (2008), p. 660.

<sup>112</sup> C.E.V. Lesser, 'Working Conditions: Occupations, Unemployment and Earnings', in J. Cunnison & J.B.S. Gilfillan, (eds.) *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1958), pp. 588-9.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 584-5.

<sup>114</sup> Guy Routh, *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-79* (London & Basingstoke, 1980), pp. 90;104.