“The Thin Edge of the Wedge ” ?

Tea-shop waitresses, the British press and the Women’s Suffrage Movement

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Abstract

Whereas during the great labour unrest before the First Word War, militant suffragists (suffragettes) sometimes addressed rallies of striking women workers, an earlier strike by waitresses in a Piccadilly tea-shop was exceptional for their hands-on support. That strike and its consequences is the focus of this article that uses digitised press archives to consider the working lives of tea-shop waitresses between 1890-1914 within the context of the women’s suffrage movement. The first widespread attention the press gave to the new occupation of tea-shop waitresses was in 1896 when they were hired to replace waiters to serve tea on the terrace of the House of Commons, an event amusingly described as ‘the thin edge of the wedge of women’s suffrage’. Interest in tea-shop waitresses subsequently peaked in 1908 when media-savvy members of the recently established Women’s Freedom League helped transform the Piccadilly tea-shop strike into a cause celebre. Analysis of press archives relating to women’s industrial militancy during the five years prior to 1911, indicates the Piccadilly strike as unique for suffragist involvement in a dispute between women workers and employers.

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As MPs passed through Westminster Hall on their way into the Commons on a May afternoon in 1896, they observed ladies standing by trestle tables draped in white cloth. According to the

Daily News it was initially thought that the ladies guarding the tables had something to do with the waitresses who were to replace waiters that summer in serving tea on the terrace of the House of Commons. Yet, 'It turned out that the display had nothing to do with afternoon tea'.[1] The ladies in Westminster Hall belonged to suffrage societies and their tables displayed a quarter of a million signatures petitioning votes for women. They had arranged their exhibition to coincide with the Second Reading of a private member's bill for women's suffrage. [2] The press seized upon this tenuous link with the suffrage movement to make great play, both serious and humorous, of the decision by the catering manager in the House of Commons to increase sales by introducing waitresses onto the terrace.[3] The *Glasgow Herald* claimed anti-suffragist MPs saw the waitresses as 'an insidious and deep-laid scheme....Once admit a woman even in cap and apron, and merely to look after the tea cups and the spoons, and she may wish to thrust her intrusive finger into the greater matters of legislation'.[4] *Punch'*s fictional Henry Howarth MP gloomily surveyed the scene - 'Robert, who used sometimes to bring you the tea you had ordered but generally to take it to someone else, has been superseded. In his place trips neat-handed Phyllis in black frock, white apron and spotless cambric cap... "This engagement of waitresses on the Terrace is opening the door of the House itself to the thin edge of the wedge of Female Suffrage"'. [5]

Whereas, Harmsworth's new *Daily Mail* joked about the susceptibility of young MPs to the charms of pretty waitresses, the weekly *Spectator* was serious when it wrote, 'It is sure to lead to flirtations and scandals, not at all likely to increase the political repute of the House of Commons ...It may possibly help women's suffrage but will certainly increase women's suffering'.[6] And in hoping that gentlemen's clubs would not follow suit, the *Spectator* apparently viewed waitresses as a threat to a male ruling class accustomed to running the Empire from exclusively homosocial spaces. Henry Labouchere, MP, editor of the weekly *Truth,* disagreed: although against women's suffrage he saw no reason why women should not serve tea on the terrace because, after all, MPs were familiar with waitresses from ABC tea-shops. [7]

During the summer of 1896 up to five hundred teas and three hundred and fifty pounds of strawberries were consumed daily on the Terrace. 'Under the old system, with male waiters, such a result would have been impossible. The employment of girls has enabled the manager to double the refreshments', related the *Pall Mall Gazette*. [8] It seems the terrace of the House of Commons had become a glorified tea-shop, a heterosocial space where young women served non-alcoholic refreshments. Although not the first appearance of tea-shop waitresses in the press, never before had they attracted simultaneous attention from such a

diversity of dailies and periodicals. This massive media coverage was not repeated until waitresses once again were linked to the suffrage movement, this time less tenuously, when, in 1908, the suffragettes Charlotte Despard and Muriel Matters assisted a tea-shop strike in the heart of London's West End, close to Piccadilly Circus. Their involvement and media skills made the strike a cause celebre at a pivotal moment in the struggle for the Vote when militant suffragists had replaced their failed strategy of private members' bills with highly visual demonstrations and direct action.[9]

Ralph Darlington's proposition that there was greater cross- fertilisation between labour disturbances and the militant wing of the suffragist movement than usually recognised relates to the nationwide great labour unrest before World War One when non-unionised younger women workers, influenced by suffragette methods of spectacular protest, spontaneously walked out from their workplaces, their rallies sometimes addressed by leading suffragettes.[10] Having limited his discussion to the great labour unrest, Darling missed the most interesting and spectacular connection between women strikers and the suffrage movement - the Piccadilly tea-shop strike of 1908. Over-looked in labour and women's suffrage historiographies, that strike and the subsequent establishment of a cooperative café, is the focus of the present article that relies solely on press archives for its primary sources. The British press was booming at the turn of the century, offering a variety of content to an ever-expanding and better educated readership. Items on tea-shop waitresses included factual reportage, humorous essays, opinion pieces and human interest stories as well as, rarely, waitresses' own letters to the press, all accessible today through digitisation.[11] Drawing on these digitised archives, the present article first reviews how the press represented and reported waitresses' working conditions at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and then narrates how a small group of militant suffragists (suffragettes) exploited the popular press interest in waitresses to publicise both the Piccadilly tea-shop strike and their own newly formed Women's Freedom League whose founding members had recently broken away from the Women's Social and Political Union. Like the WSPU, it was learning to cultivate relations with the new, popular press whose catchy headlines, short paragraphs and illustrations had largely ignored the suffrage movement until the WSPU moved to London in 1906.[12] The article concludes by situating the tea-shop strike in the context of both women's industrial militancy and the suffrage movement in the years immediately prior to the great labour unrest.

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That catering workers have until recently been neglected in British and European labour history has been attributed by Paalo Raspadori to historians' productivist bias and by Patricia

Van den Eeckhout to methodological problems in connecting the leisure of one group with the work experiences of another.[13] This latter challenge has since been addressed in the growing literature on employer- domestic servant relations, the parallels and comparisons with waitresses discussed later.[14] Today's meaning of 'waitress' appeared around 1830 as a woman serving food and drink either in chop houses and inns or in domestic service, the latter synonymous with 'parlour maid'. 'Barmaid' appeared about the same time, as a woman serving alcohol in a public house. Barmaids' working conditions, their long hours and the alleged dangers to their virtue divided suffragists as to whether their occupation should be abolished or their conditions improved. [15] 'Barmaids and waitresses' were sometimes represented as a single class of employment that included both waitresses in licensed venues, such as railway station buffets, and also young women who worked in unlicensed venue, tea-shops and restaurants that stayed open to serve early evening meals and closed at 8pm. Although the Royal Commission on the Employment of Women (1893) researched barmaids and waitresses in venues selling alcohol, the new occupation of tea-shop waitresses was not reported upon other than a brief mention in relation to shop assistants. Other than a brief report by labour economist, Barbara Drake, the press is the sole source of information about the employment conditions of waitresses before the First World War.[16]

Whereas the more serious daily press reported factually on their working conditions, Harmsworth's popular dailies, the *Mail* and the *Mirror* adopted a jovial, sympathetic stance that portrayed them as desirable young women: 'She has made the Londoner forsake his chop and his beer ... ogled him into weak tea and coaxed him into crumpets'.[17] Meanwhile, the socialist and labour press represented waitresses as 'struggling and industrious girls' and the suffragists attributed waitresses' long hours and low pay to their working in a world made by men. [18] The suffragette, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence recalled her acquaintance with a tea-shop waitress: 'A quiet gentle creature who made no complaint' who killed herself, leaving a note that she was tired out. 'What a terrible indictment against life as men have made it.'[19] And in a sympathetic commentary about waitresses' low pay, the suffragist weekly, *Common Cause* believed that considering the distance walked daily by waitresses in their workplaces, and 'the number of stairs mounted and descended in an ill-arranged place. Who can wonder that waitresses are sometimes fractious, uncivil and inattentive ?'[20]

Back in 1896, the left-leaning press was disgusted that the newly hired House of Common waitresses received no pay when it rained. Yet, it was common enough for waitresses (and waiters) to be engaged for weddings, garden parties and private balls on what today would be called 'zero hour terms' Young women seeking regular, year-round employment

were advised to work in a tea-shop like those of the Aerated Bread Company whose retail outlets for industrially manufactured bread had evolved by 1890 into a chain of tea-shops. The requirement that their waitresses start at the age of sixteen, live in the parental home and, unless promoted to counter service, leave the business when twenty-one, allowed the ABC to pay low wages. When the company reported 1892 as a highly profitable year, a brave shareholder had the temerity to suggest at the annual meeting that employees should benefit from the increased profits with a wage increase and a reduction in the long hours that prevented them from 'enjoying intelligent leisure'. 'He was howled at ... smashed, pulverised and cast to the winds of heaven but the matter could not terminate with the meeting', observed the *Manchester Times*, 'The whole question and employment of waitresses has been raised'.[21] Interviewed by the daily *Echo* (its owner/editor, the philanthropist John Passmore Edwards), Miss Gough from the YWMCA's help centre for waitresses compared employment conditions in the various tea-shop chains. Additional to the wage (tipping not allowed), an ABC waitress received sick and holiday pay plus a wedding cake should she leave her job to marry. In Miss Gough's opinion, the ABC was a good firm 'that treated the girls like human beings' but the best was Lockharts that targeted 'a lower class of client' where 'the girls are worked very reasonable hours and the whole tone of the place is good'. [22] Other than tea-shop chains, department stores had tea rooms and enterprising ladies with capital set up select establishments that employed young ladies fallen on hard times.[23] And whilst other young ladies from more prosperous families, enjoyed dressing up as waitresses to serve tea at charity bazaars, and later at suffragist fund-raising events as illustrated here, the music hall queen, Marie Lloyd was bringing in the crowds with 'The ABC or Flossie the Frivolous'.[24]

[INSERT HERE FIG.1]

With the 'servant problem' the subject of numerous newspaper articles, novels, plays and dinner party conversations, the *Daily Telegraph* provided an early instance of serious and balanced reportage about the employment conditions of ABC waitresses, compared with those of girls in domestic service.[25] Whereas a servant earnt a greater net income (having no travel or meal expenses) a waitress had more liberty: her Sundays free and work ending at 6pm for three of the six day working week, making it more attractive than domestic service.[26] In a letter to the *Hull Daily Mail*, an anonymous waitress drew the same conclusion, urging employers to give their servants greater freedom with shorter hours, and to treat them with respect: 'We do object to being called by our surnames, but, of course, mistresses never think of asking if we mind not'. Compared with when she had been in domestic service, the writer was better treated as a waitress and 'shop girls and waitresses were considered superior to

servants'.[27] Where exactly a waitress fitted in a hierarchy of women's employment was a moot point. According to Drake's widely-publicised investigation in 1913, the tea shop girl was 'More refined than the factory girl ... less educated than the shop assistant, [and] more independent than the domestic servant. She has thus a social place of her own, demanding from her neat dress and nice manners, and entitling her, on the other hand, to appropriate amusements'.[28] Although unlike barmaids, whose jobs were under threat from parliamentary legislation because of the alleged risk to their morals, tea-shop waitresses' propriety was rarely questioned, nevertheless the popular press pandered to newspaper readers' voyeurism and in the workplace waitresses were exposed to the masher's gaze.[29] According to Miss Gough from the YMCA (quoted above), mashers were less of a nuisance at Lockharts than in the 'better style of places'.[30] Was this, I wonder because waitresses and customers at Lockharts belonged to the same class?

The rise of tea-shops in the 1890s would seem to have been a mixed blessing for their female customers. On the one hand, tea-shops made it harder to find a good parlour maid while, on the other, they helped middle-class women enjoy more fully their new, late nineteenth century, liberty to move unescorted around a city.[31] Compared with a restaurant where she had to rely on her gentleman escort to order her meal from a male waiter, no such companion was needed for a woman in a tea-shop.[32] And as Elizabeth Crawford observes, the tea-shop's toilet 'was a practical element in lining the path to freedom'.[33] Looking back on these changes from the perspective of 1912, an article in the socialist *Daily Citizen* remarked how the waitress had created a revolution by making tea-shops accessible to a female clientele.[34] Arguably, the ABC had deliberately chosen to disguise their tea-shops' revolutionary potential in creating the illusion of middle-class home life by dressing their waitresses in the uniform of parlour maids, while the requirement their waitresses be young and pretty allowed the company to cater to male customers' presumed erotic dreams derived from the long-standing popular association between sex and domestic service.[35] A waitress thus had the dual task of making her women customers feel safe in a public space while accepting the masher's gaze. With male customer experience thus enhanced through an organisationally-driven sexualisation of waitresses' labour, tea-shops reputedly provided their employees with the chance of finding a husband from among the clientele.[36] The ABC chairman regularly boasted how their waitresses were in great demand in the marriage market and she was commonly represented in the popular press as hoping to move up the class system through marriage to a customer.[37] That is until under a headline in 1914, 'No Chance for Cupid in the Café', the *Leeds Mercury* reported the girls interviewed by its reporter considered

such dreams as old fashioned and stupid: waitresses said they were too busy to flirt.[38] Yet, waitresses would have become well acquainted with their regular customers who in turn proved ready to support them should they go on strike.

ABC met its first serious competitor when Lyons opened tea shops in London in 1894. Instead of a regular wage, Lyons paid their waitresses through a five percent commission on each order taken, with tipping permitted. When within a year, this commission was cut to two and a half percent, the waitresses at Lyons' flagship Piccadilly branch walked out on strike. Despite assistance from the labour leader, Tom Mann, already mentoring an embryonic waiters' union, and from Gertrude Tuckwell, Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League, Lyons management refused to negotiate with the strikers.[39] But as was to be the case in 1908, the tea-shop's location in the heart of London's West End made it more newsworthy than a strike elsewhere: the evening *St James Gazette,* promptly researched and published an in-depth enquiry into waitresses' wages; the *Evening News* noted the support male customers were giving the strike, notably London's medical students who threatened to boycott Lyons' tea-shops until the waitresses' demands were met; while the *Pall Mall Gazette*, whose editor WT Stead championed women' rights, interpreted the strike as another manifestation of 'the new woman': 'Even the privilege of striking - in the economic sense, once exclusively masculine, is now assumed by the other sex'. [40]

The strike decided Lyons to abolish the commission system and it switched to the ABC model of a fixed wage with no tipping.[41] Meanwhile Miss Tuckwell tried but failed to unionise the waitresses. According to Julia Dawson writing in the socialist weekly, *Clarion*, not a single Lyons employee attended its first meeting under pain of dismissal. 'In short' wrote Dawson, 'no effort is spared to promote in these carefully-protected maidens the good and simple old English virtue of modesty. Sharing public platforms and noisy public meetings are not conducive to modesty; and these girls must be modest. Everything about them must be modest. Especially their wages'.[42] Miss Tuckwell wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* about how waitresses needed public opinion on their side because 'this class of labour is exceedingly difficult to organize'.[43] Paul Vogel, the energetic German waiter who ran the embryonic waiters union (the Associated Waiters' Society) attempted it a letter to *Reynolds News* that invited waitresses to join his union.[44] Later, when writing to the House of Commons Kitchen Committee about their waiters' employment conditions, he included those of the Terrace waitresses, urging they be paid weekly so as not to be out of pocket in wet weather.[45] Might there be a Terrace waitresses' strike wondered the *Portsmouth Evening Mail*, with honourable members hungrily regretting having introduced 'the thin edge of the petticoat' into the House

of Commons? [46] No waitress however seems to have joined Vogel's union and the press reported no other tea-shop strike in Britain until 1908.

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In a contribution to historians' debates about working class women's involvement in the suffrage movement, Laura Schwartz has shown from the letters they wrote to the suffragist and labour women's press, how some domestic servants sympathised with the campaign. Because of their long hours and working Sundays, they could not easily participate in public demonstrations, their letters thus the principal means of demonstrating support.[47] Some domestic servants also formed their own small union whose leaders were prominent suffragists.[48] There is no similar correspondence in suffragist papers from waitresses; possibly those who sympathised with the movement may have felt no need to write, their greater freedom allowing them to join public demonstrations and meetings, should they so choose. Yet, unlike domestic servants, waitresses never succeeded in establishing a viable trade union before the First World War. Having escaped from domestic servitude and avoided factory work, tea-shop waitresses were reportedly jealous of their status. 'Portia' in the *Labour Leader* reproved the waitresses who had told a *Daily News* reporter that the tea-shop where they worked 'had a better class of girls than in other places'. 'Hoity, toity !' writes Portia, 'It is these unspeakable. ridiculous "class" distinctions ...which have nothing to do with wages, that have stood and stand in the way of the formation of Unions'.[49]

Those employed in independent tea-shops, where according to Crawford, suffragettes chose to congregate were perhaps more supportive of women's suffrage than those working in tea-shop chains.[50] *Votes for Women*, reported that waitresses from the Eustace Miles vegetarian restaurant (a favourite venue for WSPU gatherings) had joined a march in 1910.[51] Middle-class suffragists may however not have helped their cause by dressing up to resemble working waitresses to work without pay when serving tea at the movement's bazaars and fetes. Suffragists may also have had a poor reputation for tipping. When the press debated by how much a waitress could expect to top up her basic wage through customers' tips, the militant suffragist, Muriel Matters, lamented such tips might be contingent on a girls' attractiveness rather than the quality of her work.[52] And an anonymous 'social reformer' told the *Daily Mail* she never tipped because the practice should be abolished.[53] For whatever reason, there are no press reports of suffragist waitresses other than a famous WSPU militant, Mary Leigh, whose self-designation as waitress after her arrest in 1907 has until now been overlooked by the movement's historiography.[54] Yet, even if not supporters, the publicity given to the suffrage

campaign may have decided the Piccadilly tea-shop waitresses to adopt the militants' spectacular tactics when on a busy Saturday afternoon they withdraw their labour.

On Saturday 4 April 1908, just when theatre goers poured out from the West End matinee shows and into the large branch of the Cabins restaurants chain at Piccadilly Circus, all the waitresses stopped working to inform their new manager, Mr Frankenberg, that unless he reinstated a dismissed co-worker they would immediately walk out.[55] With five hundred hungry and thirsty customers waiting to be served, Frankenberg capitulated, scribbling his agreement in pencil on the back of a paper bag taken from the counter. The story made a few brief paragraphs in Monday's *Daily Mail* (headline - 'Waitresses on Strike, Five o'Clock Tea Drama') inserted between 'How to Feed a Husband' and 'The Queen at a Wedding').[56] In the next issue of *Clarion*, the socialist weekly, the waitresses were congratulated for 'The shortest, quickest and most effective strike on record'. [57] Yet, before the Clarion was published the following Friday, the Cabin waitresses were again on strike. Unless she had chanced to be a customer the previous Saturday afternoon, it would have been Monday's item in the *Mail* that decided Muriel Matters to contact the waitresses. An Australian professional elocutionist earning her living in London from recitals of Robert Browning's poems, Matters had recently become a paid organiser for the Women' Freedom League (WFL), a militant suffrage organisation prepared to break the law (albeit non-violently) until the state recognised women as having equal rights as men. More democratically organised and decentralised than the WSPU from which it had very recently broken away, the WFL was also more to the left politically and concerned about the conditions of women workers.[58] Soon to become known for her inspiring oratory and imaginative campaign tactics, Matters' offer of practical support to the Cabin waitresses was to transform their strike into one of the most read-about and discussed news items of 1908.

According to Thursday's *Mail,* Matters' private meeting with the waitresses on the Tuesday evening had led to Wednesday's new strike. Presumably tipped off by Miss Matters, the *Mail* had sent a reporter to the scene and published details in a page-length column, adjacent to the main political news, the new Prime Minister, Mr Asquith's return to London to appoint a new cabinet after an audience with the King in Biarritz. The *Mail* reported how on Wednesday morning the waitresses had presented Mr Frankenberg with a properly drawn-up document for his signature confirming their colleague's reinstatement along with three-months job security for them all. When Frankenberg refused, they waited until the restaurant was at its lunchtime busiest for Emily ('Ken'`) Ware, the head waitress to give the signal -

> In a moment trays were flung down pell-mell and waitresses who were in the act of making out bills stopped in the middle of their task .... Miss 'Ken' Ware - 'a pretty fair-haired girl' with 'a clear ringing voice, a ready flow of words and a persuasive platform manner' mounted a chair to address the customers. 'Does the public know that we work twelve hours a day and that we are paid 6s and 9d a week and 'no gratuities" is printed on the menu. We have no money and no trade union at our beck but we are going to be loyal to each other'. [59]

Had Muriel Matters, a professional elocutionist and public performer, given Ken a quick class in public speaking the previous evening? Then having been immediately dismissed, the strikers promptly formed a picket line outside the tea-shop and that evening met again with Muriel, along with her senior WFL colleague, Charlotte Despard. The *Daily Mail* had meanwhile passed the baton to Harmsworth's other London morning paper, the photo-rich, tabloid *Daily Mirror* that sent a photographer to the picket line and devoted Friday's front page to the results. The young man in the bowler hat was reportedly a Cabins' customer who had donated £20 to the strike fund while at the bottom right of the page is former mill-worker Annie Kenney from the WSPU leadership. Her colleague, Emmeline Pankhurst, was more ambivalent, telling the Mirror that 'Although she had not read both sides of the case, "The girls showed real independent spirit"'. Mrs Pankhurst's lukewarm support was perhaps due to fears that too close an association with a strike risked scaring off the growing number of Conservatives among WSPU supporters.[60]

[INSERT HERE FIG.2]

In 1906, the Women's Trade Union League (that had tried to negotiate on behalf of the striking Lyons waitresses in 1895), had created a separate organisation, the National Federation of Women Workers. Mary Macarthur, the NFWW Secretary would promptly arrive on the scene of an unorganised strike by women workers offering assistance and trade union membership but on this occasion, Macarthur was in hospital recovering from diphtheria.[61] Instead, Gertrude Tuckwell, the Federation's President met with Mr Frankenberg who refused to negotiate or reinstate the strikers: he had had no problem in replacing them and the press publicity had brought a roaring trade.[62] Perhaps because the suffragettes were so evidently already organising the strikers, the NFWW appears to have made no further attempt to intervene. Unlike Despard, her fellow Independent Labour Party member, Macarthur did not support the women's suffrage movement. In a friendly interview given two years later to *Vote*, the WFL weekly, she explained, 'Suffrage is lop-sided until every adult man or woman

has full citizen rights, I will not work for the removal of the sex disability as such, though most certainly I shall oppose it in no way'. [63]

With no apparent possibility of getting their jobs back, the waitresses and their WFL advisers decided to accept an offer from an estate agent, a Mrs Edith Holland, who offered to lend them a vacant premise in Brompton Road, opposite Harrods, there to establish a cooperative-run tea-shop, pending negotiations for a more permanent site in the West End.[64] The idea for a cooperative had perhaps originated with Muriel Matters who had arrived from Australia with a letter of introduction to the author of *Mutual Aid* and had been engaged to give a recital for Kropotkin's family and friends.[65] With the new temporary tea-shop too small to employ all the dismissed waitresses, they agreed to take it in turns to work an eight hour day (instead of the usual twelve) while the remainder continued picketing in Piccadilly. Named 'Ken's Kabin' in honour of the strike leader, the temporary tea-shop opened on Monday morning. Their first customer reportedly put down half a sovereign for a small lemonade, telling the waitress to add the change to the strike fund. When they closed at eight that evening, over one hundred pounds had been taken and a thousand customers served.[66] A deputation of omnibus men had provided a horse-shoe for good luck while a pair of policemen managed the crowds to whom were being sold copies of the strikers' newspaper, *The Tea Shop Girls and Ken Kabin's News*.[67] To quickly establish their identity following their split with the WSPU, the Women's Freedom League was pioneering the use of picture postcards in the suffrage movement and Miss Gregory from WFL had spent the day selling cards promoting the cause of the 'Cabin" waitresses. [68] In the first two hours she reportedly realised £2; 'A very fair stroke of business' according to the sympathetic *Lloyds Weekly*. [69] The card illustrated here shows 'Ken' Ware with Muriel Matters outside Ken's Kabin.

[INSERT HERE FIG.3]

What do we know about Ken? Described by the *Observer* as 'a determined and attractive young woman', the 1901 census records Emily Ware, then aged seventeen, as residing at 16 Bath Terrace, Southwark (according to the Booth survey the households there varied from 'poor' to 'fairly comfortable').[70] Ken was already a waitress, living with her widowed mother, a 'bookbinder' along with her unemployed, older sister. In an interview in April 1908 with a London evening newspaper, Ken explained how she had become the sole breadwinner after her mother had become an invalid and her sister 'lost her reason'. But the tips brought in enough 'to keep a home together'. We also learn that she had read 'standard authors', had attended an elocution class (presumably cockney English would have prejudiced her chances of employment in a West End tea-shop) and attended Baptist chapel. [71] The press

coverage of the strike had made her an instant celebrity. According to the *Mail,* the day following the opening of Ken's Kabin, she had received two hundred letters, many of them offers of marriage from men in positions varying from shop assistants to stockbroker. All received a polite refusal.[72] Mrs Despard addressed that same evening a meeting of the Fulham branch of the Independent Labour Party explaining the interest of the strike lay in its rarity: waitresses commonly endured exploitative working conditions through their fear of unemployment created by the capitalist system. [73]

Meanwhile, a row was brewing among the waitresses' supporters. Mrs Holland, the owner of Ken's Kabin's premises, was unhappy about the suffragettes' role in the tea-shop's management committee, including Muriel's appointment as honorary secretary, despite their having stressed they were acting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the WFL. [74] This same point was made officially by the WFL in its brief item about the strike published in *Women's Franchise* that included, 'It is pleasant to find that two of our members, Mrs Despard and Miss Matters, have, with other friends, helped [the waitresses] in their dark hours.' [75] Their support to the waitresses had certainly brought positive publicity to the women's suffrage movement, if not especially for the WFL. One paper welcomed this instance of suffragettes offering practical help to working women while another commented, 'Those who imagine, in spite of the suffragettes, that women are incapable of organising, will begin to reflect that perhaps they are mistaken'.[76] Mrs Holland however argued that the tea-shop was not being run on proper business-like grounds and just three days after its opening she proposed the management committee be restructured to consist solely of herself and two gentlemen nominated by her with only Ken left to represent the waitresses. Mrs Holland's restructuring proposal was rejected and the waitresses immediately vacated her premises with a dispute lingering on about ownership of the trademark, 'Ken's Kabin'. Mrs Despard meanwhile stepped in with a gift of £50 to fit up a new 'Ken's Kabin in a shop next to the Alhambra Variety Theatre in Leicester Square. She and all the members of the Women's Freedom League, Mrs Despard told them, "would probably make it our favourite haunt". Her only condition that the waitresses join a trade union. [77] Did Ken believe in unions? Perhaps not. In an interview with 'Jill', the women's correspondent for *Justice*, a socialist weekly, she explained she preferred to think of the Piccadilly Cabin waitresses' action as a 'protest' rather than 'strike'.[78]

Surprised by the popularity of the striking waitresses, the socialist press wished them well - 'It is certainly a good sign when even waitresses turn on their oppressors'. [79] *Freedom,* an anarchist newspaper founded by Kropotkin, was enthused, suggesting that the Cabin girls'

strike could become 'the starting-point of a new departure in the economic struggle'.[80] Yet, part of the mainstream press treated the affair as a joke: the London correspondent of an Irish newspaper was reminded of a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera: pretty girls 'coming forth as Amazons to head an industrial war on behalf of their class'.[81] Something of the same tone, was adopted by an amused crowd that came largely to be entertained by the waitresses' march from Hyde Park Corner and their rally in Trafalgar Square. And although most of the press published straight reports of the event, the *Boxing World* published a photo of the 'pretty, striking young waitresses' while another joked about a Cabin waitress having 'complained to a magistrate that a nasty, rude man had put his arm round her - 'When public support is asked for, some men are prone to take it literally'.[82] Yet, the *Observe*r's correspondent was impressed. Miss Ware had aimed high in organising a public demonstration and had 'carried it through with success which marks her as one of the coming women in labour agitations'.[83] *Justice's* Jill was disappointed by the suffragette speakers, Charlotte Despard and Anne Cobden-Sanderson. 'They had missed 'a glorious opportunity ..., of putting the whole question of woman in the industrial world before a crowd that think very little about it'.[84] On the other hand, she admired the waitresses' *sang froid*, perhaps forgetting that unlike young women workers in factories or domestic service, waitresses from a large and busy tea-shop were professional performers, accustomed to the massed gaze of strangers. They had put on a good show, responding with repartee to the demands for 'tea and toast' and when Ken concluded her speech by asking the crowd to support the cooperative tea-shop and was pelted with coins, she joined the laughter. Amidst all this good humour, Ken had made a serious speech. She told the crowd the time had come for English waitresses to better their conditions. They were oppressed by bad food, bad pay, long hours and tyrannical management.[85] They were not dividend-earning machines but individuals and as much entitled to their rights as any director or shareholders (cheers). They wanted to be reasonably paid and treated as human beings.[86] The *Graphic* reflected that unlike some other suffragette activities the tea-shop strike was not likely to disturb the sleep of Cabinet ministers but was nevertheless a sign of the times 'that the young person who headed the uprising of these handmaidens should have actually addressed a real live meeting in Trafalgar Square'.[87]

With Ken as manager, Mrs Despard inaugurated the new tea-shop in early May. Miss Matters then left London for a WFL caravan tour around southern England, thus presumably leaving the café's oversight to her senior colleague whose committee and business management skills were not among her strengths.[88] And although Mrs Despard booked Ken's Kabin to celebrate the release of imprisoned militants, she was otherwise travelling the country

drumming up support for the cause and attending abroad the conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. [89] Within a month of the cooperative café's opening, eight waitresses were made redundant. [90] In early July, Ken resigned from Ken's Kabin seeing 'no prospect of future advancement', alt though Mrs Despard insisted that the other staff remained committed to the cooperative idea. [91] Re-naming it 'the Cooperative Kabin', she used the *Daily News* to appeal for support from 'All those who admire pluck, determination, and the loyalty of comrades and those who believe in the principle of cooperation'.[92] It was the tea-shop's last appearance in the press. The socialist *Daily Herald* was perhaps thinking of Ken's Cabin when reflecting some years later that should waitresses be brave enough to band together, a cooperative tea-shop was a feasible proposition 'but it would be a mistake to experiment with such shops in the West End of London'. [93]

Most papers ignored the debacle. As for Ken, financed by a business consortium, she opened her own tea-shop on the corner of Bedford Street and the Strand. [94] Shortly afterwards - perhaps to gain publicity - someone circulated rumours of her wedding plans that were widely and variously reported: she was to marry either a rich, young lord or a wealthy motor manufacturer from either Birmingham or Barnes. Two years later she reappeared in the news with a brief report of her marriage to an insurance clerk.[95] The couple moved with Ken's widowed mother into a recently built home in a quiet suburban street in north London.[96] Ken had secured what working class waitresses reputedly most desired: a husband with an office job. Not once had she hinted to the press any interest in women's suffrage.

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Ken's Kabin had an afterlife. "A highly diverting and entertaining musical comedy' based on the strike toured the country into the autumn of 1908. [97] The press briefly reported copy-cat strikes in Manchester and Sheffield while in Liverpool waitresses formed a short-lived union; the Labour MP, J R Clynes, asked a question in the House about waitresses and the new, weekly edition of the *Woman Worker* launched in June 1908 included in its first issue an investigative report by CR Andersen on waitresses' employment, while Mary MacArthur the paper's editor explained to a wider readership in the *Penny Pictorial* how waitressing was more exhausting than factory work.[98] Meanwhile, the socialist leadership of the Catering Employees' Union (CEU), the successor to Vogel's Associated Waiters' Society, admitted they had made little effort to bring waitresses into the membership.[99] It is doubtful they would have had much success: most unionised waiters (as they themselves put it) were 'from across the Channel', in contrast to the Ken's Kabin waitresses who stressed their Englishness and sung 'Rule Britannia' at the conclusion of their Trafalgar Square rally. The CEU welcomed

the suffragist revolutionary agitation that 'had awakened the women who were once the despair of reformers and the hope of every reactionist' and hoped that Ken's Kabin would arouse waitresses who were 'sweated and enslaved by people like Lyons &Co'.[100] The WSPU's *Votes for Women* were equally optimistic about the awakened waitresses, encouraging its readers to place on tables of tea-shops they visited, handbills publicising the WSPU's Hyde Park rally at the end of June.[101]

Ken's Kabin had also revived House of Commons' fears about their waitresses acting as a fifth column for the woman suffrage movement. When summer arrived with no tea on the terrace, MPs speculated whether this was a measure to prevent the smuggling into the Commons of suffragettes disguised as waitresses but were reassured that the annual tradition would recommence once the weather improved,.[102] On the other hand, Christabel Pankhurst confirmed that WSPU militants were indeed thinking of finding employment as terrace waitresses. And, as she told the *Daily Mirror,* the Government appeared to have over-looked the possibility of conversion - 'A girl who cared nothing for the vote when she started work on the terrace might become an ardent supporter ... And then strange thing might happen. A waitresses' opportunities are excellent'.[103] A few days later, a small cabin cruiser on the Thames halted by the House of Commons terrace and Mrs Flora Drummond (known in WSPU circles as 'the General') climbed onto its roof with a loud hailer to address those taking tea. Presumably forewarned by the organisers, the *Mirror* next day published a photograph taken from the terrace showing 'Waitresses, members' lady friends, and members themselves' crowding to the parapet to hear Mrs Drummond invite them to Sunday's rally in Hyde Park. 'I am glad to see you have lady waiters' said Mrs Drummond to the MPs, 'Are you not afraid that some of them may be suffragettes?' [104]

Spectacular but peaceful suffragist processions of June were followed by militant action in July after Asquith's refusal to meet a WSPU deputation.[105] With hundreds of suffragettes stopped from their 'rush' into the Commons, two passed through the police cordon by pretending to be terrace waitresses, only to give themselves away when starting to run after passing through the gates. [106] Later that evening, the erstwhile waitress Mary Leigh, along with a friend, broke two panes of glass at the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street, thus escalating WSPU militancy as the first suffragettes to smash windows. [107] Shortly after a second 'rush' on the Commons in October 1908, Muriel Matters from the WFL celebratedly chained herself to the grille of the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons. This action decided the authorities to restrict ladies' access to the Palace of Westminster by requiring they be always escorted by a Member of Parliament. A resultant decline in numbers taking tea on

the terrace continued into the subsequent summer. And in 1913, at the height of WSPU militancy, a provincial newspaper reported rumours of a suffragette plot to instigate a waitress strike when Asquith was guest of honour in a Birmingham hotel. [108] Otherwise, there are no mainstream news reports linking waitresses with suffragettes after 1908.

The suffragist press regularly published items about women worker's struggles, including the famous Cradley chain makers' strike in 1910 when readers were asked to contribute to the strike fund managed by the National Federation for Women Workers. The suffragist press also occasionally published supportive pieces about waitresses' pay and conditions and noted the dramatic improvement to these in Australia and New Zealand following the introduction there of female suffrage.[109] *Common Cause* provided a detailed summary of Drake's report, 'Tea Shop Girls' while *Votes for Women* mentioned a reader who regularly provided a copy of the journal to the waitresses in the tea rooms of a London department store.[110] During the great labour unrest when the waiters' union made an effort to bring waitresses into its membership, journalists visiting tea-shops reported that when asked whether they would ever strike, waitresses replied they would not do so (but perhaps avoiding giving their real opinion within earshot of management). 'Disgust with the idea of joining the union is said to be general among the girls. The waitress prefers to live on in her little world of romance, and she is jealous of her dignity, concluded Harmsworth's *Weekly Dispatch*.[111] In the spring of 1914 the wife of a media-savvy former waiter and self-proclaimed syndicalist founded an ephemeral waitresses union that lasted about three months, its self-congratulatory press releases accepted at face value by a sympathetic suffragist press.[112] The first substantive unionisation of waitresses was to occur during the general labour unrest at the end of the First World War, with several tea-shop strikes across the country.

After British waiters joined the army in the First World War, waitresses' employment opportunities had expanded into gentlemen's clubs and even into the House of Commons where Phyllis eventually replaced Robert in its dining rooms.[113] And after foreign waiters went home or were interned as enemy aliens, waitresses moved also into upper-class restaurants. *Punch* made a joke from it - '" Why", asks a lady, "Should not waitresses take the place of the German waiters whose services are now being dispensed with?" Possibly, we may be wrong but we seem to remember once having seen an announcement on the placard of a feminist journal to the effect that WOMEN CANNOT WAIT'. [114]

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The late nineteenth century chains of teashops - ABC, Lyons and others, including the Cabins Company- were capitalist enterprises that created a mass market in the provision of

non-alcoholic beverages and light meals. Among the expanding employment opportunities for working class and lower middle-class young women in late nineteenth century Britain, the teashop waitress was unique in replicating in a public space a service provided until then by a domestic servant to men and women in a class above her. Other than the summary in the press of Drake's report for the Women's Industrial Council, information about tea-shop waitresses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was generated by the press, some of it well-researched or with good on-the-spot reporting and interviews, some of it from the Piccadilly Cabin strike possibly exaggerated or fanciful, such as the numbers and variety of Ken's marriage proposals.[115] Relatively little was published about waitresses until the excitement engendered when they replaced waiters on the Terrace of the House of Commons in 1896. Although not possible to be exact the frequency of press reportage and commentary about waitresses from that date up to and including to 1914, the broad trend is clear.[116] During the South African War, both 'waitresses' and 'women's suffrage' declined as news topics, both picking up thereafter to reach the highest frequency to date in 1908, the year of the Piccadilly Cabin strike and increasing suffragist militancy. From 1909 until the First World War 'women's suffrage' became an ever-more frequent press item, whereas 'waitresses' were never again given so much coverage as during the Piccadilly strike, including tea-shop strikes in 1919-20. The combination of women's suffrage and waitresses tickled readers' fancy and sold newspapers. Compared with any other women's strike at that time, the Piccadilly tea-shop strike was exceptional for the publicity it received.

In the five years from the beginning of suffragist militancy in 1906 to the start of the Great Labour Unrest in 1911, the press reported a total of fifty-three strikes in the United Kingdom involving 'women' or 'girl' strikers.[117] Apart from the tea-shop strike, there are no reports of suffragist assistance to strikers (speaking at strikers' rallies, helping them organise and negotiate with management). It is worth comparing the interest shown in the tea-shop strike with another women's strike in London that same year. The Corruganza box-makers from the working-class suburb of Tooting were dismissed in August 1908 after they struck following a wage cut. Organised by the NFFW, the box-makers had a sympathetic public who bought postcards to support the strike fund and like the tea-shop waitresses, were showered with coins at their rally in Trafalgar Square. [118] Yet the popular press showed little interest in their cause compared with that of the waitresses who were familiar to a newspaper readership that regularly visited tea-shops - and the Cabins Restaurant in Piccadilly was no suburban or provincial tea-shop but a go-to place in the heart of London's West End. It was just because few newspaper readers would have ever met a box-maker or visited Tooting, that the

Corruganza strikers brought their cause to central London with a march and rally in Trafalgar Square. Yet box-makers were less glamorous than West End waitresses and the principal speakers at their rally were women trade unionists, not suffragettes. [119] On the other hand, the box-makers won their strike. The waitresses lost theirs. The new Women's Freedom League became better known and the press sold more papers but the cooperative café failed.

Other than the Piccadilly Cabin strike, no suffragist involvement, militant or otherwise, was reported by the press for any women's strike between 1906 and 1910, including the Cradley Heath chain makers' strike when a newspaper challenged suffragettes for having left all the organisational work to the NFFW and (unfairly) for not even contributing to the strike fund.[120] *Votes for Women*, *Common Cause* and *Vote* all gave extensive coverage to the chain makers, including a detailed article in *Votes for Women* from its own reporter. It made undoubted sense to leave the practical organising to MacArthur and her colleagues. Matters' and Despard's intervention ultimately proved unhelpful to the Cabin strikers who might perhaps have kept their jobs at the Piccadilly Cabin if they had been content with the manager's initial agreement signed on a paper bag. Yet, as the *Birmingham Mail* reflected, even the waitresses possessed sufficient legal knowledge 'to realise that a document written in pencil is not valid, especially when written on the back of paper bag, such as used for packing delicacies like cream buns, eclairs, and macaroon tarts'. [121]

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1 *Daily News*, 20 May, 1896, 7.
2. See Sophia van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 1999), 67-69.
3. Westminster Gazette, 2 June 1896, 3.
4. *Glasgow Herald*, 18 May 1896, 6.
5. 'The Diary of Toby MP', *Punch*, 13 June 1896, 287.
6 *Spectator*, 6 June 1896, 3.
7. *Truth,* 18 June 1896, 15.
8. *Pall Mall Gazette,* 6 April 1897, 8.
9. Katherine E. Kelly, "'Seeing through Spectacles"', The woman suffrage movement and London newspapers 1906-1913', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 11.no. 4(2004): 327–353.
10. Ralph Darlington, 'The Pre-First World War British Women's Suffrage Revolt and Labour Unrest: Never the twain shall meet?' *Labor History* 61, nos. 5-6 (2020): 466-485. Darlington dates the start of extensive labour unrest from 1910 but see also Yann Béliard, 'Revisiting The Great Labour Unrest, 1911-1914'. *Labour History Review*, 79, no. 1 (2014): 1-17.
11. See Adrian Bingham, 'The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21, no. 2, (2010): 225–33.
The press sources for the present article were accessed from the British Newspaper Archives, Gale Primary Resources and Proquest Historical Newspapers.

12. See John Mercer, 'Making the News: Votes for Women and the mainstream press', *Media History*,103, (2004):187-199; Jane L. Chapman, *Gender, Citizenship and Newspapers, (*New York, Springer, 2013)*,* 117 -141; and Sarah Pedersen *The Scottish Suffragettes and the Press* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
13. Paolo Raspadori, 'Becoming Workers? Strikes by Hotel and Restaurant Staff in Italy (1902-1923)', *International Review of Social History* , 11, no.3 (2015): 379–411; Patricia van den Eeckhout, 'The History of Labour and Labour Relations in Hotels and Restaurants in Western Europe and the United States in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: an Introduction', *Food and History*, 11, no. 3 (2013):199-221.
14. For waitresses, see Frances Steel, 'Waitresses at Sea: Gender, race and service labour on ocean-liners, c.1930s–1960s', *Women's History Review*, 30, no. 2, (2021): 223-240; and Grace Whorrall-Campbell, 'Emotions and Sexuality at Work, Lyons Corner Houses c. 1920-50', in *Feelings and Work in Modern History, Emotional labour and emotions about labour.* eds. Agnes Arnold-Foster and Alison Moulds (London, Bloomsbury, 2022), 19-29.
15. Suffragists were divided over barmaids' right to work; a campaign led by Eva Gore-Booth preserved their jobs in the Licensing Bill of 1908. See Sonja Tiernan, *An Image of Such Politics* (Manchester, MUP, 2012) and for press representation, Allan Boughey, 'The Victorian Barmaid and the British press, *Journalism History,* 45, no.1 (2019): 77 - 93.
16. Barbara Drake, 'The Tea-shop Girl', *Women's Industrial News*, 17, no. 61 (1913): 115–129. The Lyons tea-shop records date at the London Metropolitan Archives date from 1922.
17. 'Hebe of the Bun', Daily *Mail,* 11 December 1897, 7.
18. 'Struggling and industrious girls' *Reynolds News*, 14 June 1896, 4.
19. *Votes for Women*, 12 March 1909, 13.
20. *Common Cause,* 27 December 1912, 3.
21. *Manchester Times* 11 November 1892, 8.
22. *Echo* (London), 1 November 1895, 1.
23. See 'A fashionable West-End tearoom conducted by ladies', 25 July 1900, *Daily Mail*, 7.
24. *Era*, 26 March1898, 13.
25. See Laura Schwartz, 'A Job like any Other', Feminist responses and challenges to domestic worker organizing in Edwardian Britain', *International Labour and Working Class History,* 88 (2015), 30.
26. *Daily Telegraph,* 4 November 1893, 4-5.
27. *Hull Daily Mail*, 11 August 1896, 4.
28. Drake's report, was covered fully in the suffragist and socialist press including the *Labour Leader*,10 April 1913, 14.
29. Suffragists were divided over barmaids' right to work; a campaign led by Eva Gore-Booth preserved their jobs in the Licensing Bill of 1908. See Sonja Tiernan, *An Image of Such Politics* (Manchester, MUP, 2012).
30. 'Masher' meant an idle young man or dandy with a crush on women exposed to the public gaze including actresses, shop assistants and waitresses. See Peter K. Andersson, "'High Collars and Principles": The late-Victorian world of the masher,' *Gender & History*, 31 2: 422-443.
31. See Erika Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure, Women in the making of London's West End*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000), Chapter Five.
32. Although *Punch*'s Robert still lingered on in small, old-fashioned chop-houses - dining and class restaurants was provided by trained waiters from continental Europe.
33 Elizabeth Crawford,'Suffragettes-and-tea-rooms-from-sheltered-anonymity-to-sites-of-protest', https://womanandhersphere.com/2012/09/10/suffrage-stories- (accessed 17 May 2023).
34. Christabel Osborn, 'Revolution by Tea-shop', *Daily Citizen*, 29 November 1912, 4.
35 For the erotic appeal of domestic servants, see Lucy Delap, *Knowing their Place, Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain,* (Oxford, OUP*,* 2011), 173-205.
36. For organisationally-driven sexualisation of labour, see Chris Warhurst and Dennis Nickson, 'Who's Got the Look?' Emotional, Aesthetic and Sexualized

Labour in Interactive Service', *Gender, Work & Organization* 16, 3 (2009): 385-404; for waitresses see Whorrall-Campbell, 'Emotions and Sexuality at Work'.

37. For example, the *Daily Mail*, 'Tea-shop Brides', 3 November, 1903, 3.
38. *Leeds Mercury,* 11 July, 1914, 3.
39. *St James Gazette,* 24 October 1895, 3 and 11; *Evening News*, 25 October 1895. For the Women's Trade Union League, see G. Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840* (London, Routledge, 2005), 60-62.
40. *St James Gazette*, 7, *Evening News*, 3, *Pall Mall Gazette,*10, all 25 October 1895.
41. *Evening News*, 4 November 1895, 3.
42. *Clarion*, 9 November 1895,1.
43. *Pall Mall Gazette* 22 November 1895, 3.
44. *Reynolds News* 10 November 1895,1; for Vogel and the Associated Waiters Society, see . Rosalind Eyben, '"The Moustache Makes Him More of a Man": Waiters' masculinity struggles, 1890–1910', *History Workshop Journal*, 87 (2019): 188-210.
45. *Daily Mail*, 28 January 1897, 3.
46. *Portsmouth Evening News* 4 February 1897, 2.
47. Laura Schwartz, *Feminism and the Servant Problem, Class and domestic labour in the Women's Suffrage Movement,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), 59-89.
48. Laura Schwartz, '"What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have"' The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908–14', *Twentieth Century British History,* 25, no.2 (2014), 182.
49. 'Women and Labour', *Labour Leader*, 10 April 1913, 14.
50. Crawford, 'Suffragettes and tea-rooms'.
51. *Votes for Women,* 29 July 1910, 13.
52. *Manchester Courier*, 23 April 1908, 9.
53. *Daily Mail*, 8 February 1915, 3
54. See Michelle Myall, 'No Surrender: the militancy of Mary Leigh, a working-class suffragette', in *The Women's Suffrage Movement: new feminist perspectives*, eds. M. Joannou and J. Purvis (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998), 173–88. The author would have been unaware of the reports in the *Daily Mirror*, 5, and *St Pancras Gazette*, 4, both 22 March 1907.
55. Newspaper reports give the number of waitresses working at the Piccadilly Cabin as between thirty and forty.
56. *Daily Mail*, 6 April 1908, 5.
57. *Clarion*, 10 April 1908, 6.
58. See Hilary Frances, '"Dare to be Free"! The Women's Freedom League and its legacy' in eds. Sandra Holton and June Purvis, *Votes for Women* (London, Routledge, 2000), 181-202; Claire Eustance 'Meanings of militancy: the ideas and practice of political resistance in the Women's Freedom League, 1907-14' in eds. Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester, MUP, 1998)
59. *Daily Mail*, 9 April 1908, 7
60. For Mrs Pankhurst's Conservative supporters, Sandra Stanley Holton. *Feminism and Democracy: Women's suffrage and reform politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46.
61. *Clarion*, 10 April 1908, 6.
62. *Globe*, 10 April 1908, 7.
63. *Vote,* 2 July 1910, 3. For a detailed analysis of the arguments and divisions among suffragists and socialists, see Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *'One Hand Tied Behind Us' The rise of the women's suffrage movement* (London, Virago, 1978).
64. *Lloyds Weekly*, 12 April, 2. Apart from the electoral register for Kensington and Chelsea, Edith Holland cannot be traced in the records..
65. Robert Wainwright, *Miss Muriel Matters, The fearless suffragette who fought for equality* (London, Allen and Unwin, 2017), 71-72.
66. *Daily Mirror*, 14 April 1908, 5.
67. *Times,* 14 April 1908, 9

68. For the WFL's pioneering of picture postcards, see Ian McDonald, *Vindication: A postcard history of the women's movemen*t (London, Bellew Publishing, 1989) 41.
69. 12 April 1908, 2.
70. *Observer,* 19 April 1908, 7.
71. As syndicated in the *Hull Daily Mail,* 18 April 1908, 2. Regarding Ken's tips, the *Daily Mirror* reported that despite 'No gratuities' printed on the menu, Cabin waitresses earnt between eight to twelve shillings a week in tips, 10 April 1908, 4.
72. *Daily Mail*, 15 April 1908, 3.
73 *Fulham Chronicle* 17 April 1908, 5.
74. *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper* 12 April 1908, 2.
75. *Women's Franchise,* 14 May 1908, 543.
76. *Birmingham Mail*, 9 April 1908, 4; *Western Daily Press* 10 April 1908, 10.
77. *Globe*,16 April 1908, 7.
78. *Justice,* 25 April 1908, 6.
79. ibid.
81. *Freedom*, 1 May 1908,1.
81. *Dublin Daily Express*, 20 April 1908, 4.
82. *Boxing World,* 25 April 1908,14; *Sheerness Times Guardian* 25 April 1908, 2.
83. *Observer*, 19 April, 1908,7.
84. *Justice,* 25 April 1908, 6.
85. *Daily Mail*, 20 April 1908, 3.
86. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 20 April 1908, 8.
87. *Graphic,* 25 April 1908, 3.
88. Andro Linklater, *An Unhusbanded Life. Charlotte Despard, suffragette, socialist and sinner* (London, Hutchinson,1980).
89. Ken's Cabin's parties for released suffragettes: *Henley and South Oxford Standard,* 5 June, 1908, 7; *Greenock Telegram* 13 June 1908, 4.
90. *Daily Mail* 27 May, 1908, 6
91 Despard letter to the *Clarion,* 17 July 1908, 12.
92 *Daily News*, 11 July 1908,
93. *Daily Herald*, 11 April 1913, 9.
94 *Daily Mirror*, 13 August 1908, 4.
95. *Daily Mirror*, 10 July 1910, 4.
96. 1911 census record.
97. *Stage,* 28 May 1908, 14.
98 *Clarion*, 7 August 1908, 2.
99. Minutes of Evidence taken before the Truck Committee, Vol. III, 13 February 1908, 242. UK Parliamentary Papers, ProQuest.
100. *Revue,* Journal of the Catering Employees Union, 20 June 1908, 5 (at International Institute of Social Studies).
101. *Votes for Women* 11 June, 1908.
102. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 5 June 1908
103. *Daily Mirror* 12 June.
104. *Daily Mirror* 19 June 1908.
105. June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst and Votes for Women', eds. Sandra Holton and June Purvis *Votes for Women* (London, Routledge, 2002), 109 -134.
106. *Birmingham Mail*, 1 July 1908.
107. Diane Atkinson, *Rise Up Women*, *The remarkable lives of the Suffragettes*, (London, Bloomsbury 2019), 107.
108. *Bradford Weekly Telegraph,* 25 July 1913, 13.
109. See for example *Vote*, 12 August 1911, 5.
110. *Votes for Women* , 17 February 1911, 10.
111. *Weekly Dispatch*, 13 April 1913, 9.
112. Rosalind Eyben, "The Question of Pratt", A syndicalist conundrum', *Labour History Review*, 85, no.1 (2020): 33-57.

113. Letter from Lord Leigh, *The Times*, 15 July 1915, 7.
114. *Punch* 16 September 1914, 233.
115. The Royal Commission on the Employment of Women (1893) researched barmaids and waitresses in venues selling alcohol but not tea-shop waitresses, other than a brief mention in relation to shop assistants.
116. The search engines of the news archives used for this article (note 16) are not totally reliable for identifying and excluding advertising relating to waitresses.
117. These figures are compiled from a search of the British Newspaper Archives and Gale Primary sources: with a total of 14 strikes in 1906, 12 in 1907, 13 in 1908 (including the Piccadilly strike and the two subsequent waitress strikes) 1 in 1909 and 10 in 1910 (including a waitress strike in Liverpool).
118. For the Corruganza strikers' in Trafalgar Square, see Norbert C. Soldon, *Women in British Trade Unions, 1974-1976* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1978), 57.
119. The speaker were Mary Macarthur of the National Federation of Women Workers that was organising the strikers, and Margaret Bondfield of the National Union of Shop Assistants, *Reynolds News,* 23 August 1908, 1.
120. *Nottinghamshire Evening Post*, 3 September 1910, 3
121. *Birmingham Mail*, 9 April 1908, 4.