

MARKETS AND MORALS:  
A STUDY OF ECONOMIC CHANGES  
AND PROSTITUTION-RELATED DISCOURSE  
1920 - 1940

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1991

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
in the School  
of  
Criminology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

August, 1996

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Markets and Morals: A Study of Economic Changes and

Prostitution-Related Discourse, 1920-1940.

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite the importance that scholars have attached to the relationship between economic conditions and prostitution, a minimal amount of research has been done on prostitution during the 1920's and the 1930's. Perhaps one of the most egregious periods in the history of North America regarding financial failures was the 'Great Depression,' or what is sometimes referred to as the 'Dirty Thirties.' During this decade of scarce market resources, the rhetoric concerning prostitution altered substantially from the relatively opulent 'Roaring Twenties.' The object of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between economic changes, the construction of prostitution as a problem and law enforcement of prostitution-related offences.

Quantitative data that was gathered from the *Vancouver City Archives* demonstrates a serious drop in arrest rates for all prostitution-related offences during the 1930's in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Yet this data reveals a precipitous increase in arrest rates for procuring offences during the same period. How can this change in law enforcement practices be explained considering that no legal reforms were initiated during this decade? Did the economic changes affect the construction of prostitution as a problem?

The above questions will be answered through a qualitative analysis of newspaper reports. It will be suggested that the rhetoric of the time shifted from talk about the horrors of venereal disease to dialogue about the repugnance of organized pimping operations. It will be demonstrated how severe changes

in financial security affected what the middle class perceived to be threatening to their virtues. In this case, it will be shown how the 'moral panic' concerning social hygiene was transformed into a discourse against the private or underworld profit-seeker. Furthermore, it will be argued that law enforcement officials altered their tactics when the bourgeois virtues of chastity and purity were outweighed by appeals to the Protestant Work Ethic and the subsequent denunciation of pimps and procurers accused of monopolizing vice. Finally, it will be suggested that the decline in arrest rates for prostitutes is the result of a law enforcement strategy that is still used today as a surveillance technique.

**DEDICATION**

To Aniko Inouye

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of the ideas in this thesis were sharpened in conversations with my senior supervisor, Dr. Dany Lacombe and my other supervisor, Dr. Margaret Jackson, whom I wish to thank for their interest in my work and for their valuable suggestions. This thesis has benefited immensely from their critical readings.

I have been fortunate in having access to the police files at the *Vancouver City Archives* and would like to thank all the employees there, especially Donna MacKinnon and Elaine Burton for their helpfulness and recommendations.

Thanks are also extended to the administrative staff in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University for their advice in administrative matters. I would especially like to thank Eileen Sams, Deborah Palliser, Sharon, Liz and Heidi.

Finally, I would like to thank my good friend, Anita Beaulieu for her encouragement and unqualified support. Also, I would like to thank Mom and Bill for believing in my dreams for a better tomorrow.

Linda Houseman



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## INTRODUCTION

The will to knowledge embodied in the proliferation of discourses about sex in the West, Foucault insisted, nonetheless masked a fundamental will to ignorance about its 'political economy' - the conditions of the emergence and operation of its deployment.<sup>1</sup>

Prostitution is considered as anathema to the capitalist economy ostensibly because of its association with destruction of the work ethic and the middle class values of chastity and purity. While several scholars have written about Canadian prostitution law,<sup>2</sup> the socioeconomic bases for entrance into prostitution,<sup>3</sup> and the discourses surrounding law enforcement practices in Canada around the turn of the century,<sup>4</sup> there is a relative dearth of information concerning prostitution in Canada during the inter-war years. Academics have theorized connections between capitalism, patriarchy, and prostitution;<sup>5</sup> however, no one has examined two economically dissimilar decades such as the 1920's and 1930's. Moreover, despite the intensity of moral rhetoric about the 'social evil' of prostitution and the consequent enactment of severe criminal law sanctions at the turn of the century, a minimal amount of attention has been given to the aftereffects of this era.

It is rather surprising that there is an omission in the academic research on prostitution during the 1920's and the 1930's considering the importance that scholars have attached to the relationship between economic conditions and prostitution. The 1920's have often been referred to as the

`Roaring Twenties' because of the relative prosperity of society and the perceived success of capitalism. By contrast, the 1930's were coined the `Dirty Thirties' because of the effects of the `Great Depression' which began with market failure in October, 1929 and wrought severe financial hardship upon North American society in general. Because the 1920's and the 1930's have been characterized by affluence and impoverishment respectively, the possible impact of such drastic economic changes merits consideration.

This thesis will remedy the situation by focusing on the `Roaring Twenties' and the `Dirty Thirties' to examine whether the extreme changes in the economy may have influenced the corresponding rhetoric on prostitution, and whether the changes in discourse may have subsequently affected public policy and law enforcement practices involving prostitution-related conduct. In other words, as Canadian society began to experience the paucity of financial resources during the `Dirty Thirties,' and the social hygiene crusades ceased to capture the public's attention as economic rhetoric seemed to replace the eugenicist discourse of the `Roaring Twenties,' did the economic changes impact on the construction of prostitution as a problem? Furthermore, what is the relationship between the problematization of prostitution and law enforcement techniques?

Since this thesis will investigate how a large structural force such as the economy may influence public reactions to prostitution, it is necessary to substantiate this macro-level claim with an in-depth analysis of a city that experienced radical shifts in its economy. I chose to study the city of Vancouver for the following reasons. Firstly, Vancouver was one of the first large cities to experience significant economic changes in the late 1920's.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, it is a port city. Since port cities are gateways to traffic from other countries via ocean passages, they are notorious for their ostensible traffic in women and the collateral servicing of sailors and travellers by prostitutes. Thirdly, a detailed analysis of Vancouver's prostitution politics promises to shed light on the interrelationship between social, economic and political forces, hence revealing their effects on the public reaction to prostitution and prostitution law enforcement. Finally, another reason why Vancouver is an interesting case study for investigating the impact of the economy on the problematization of prostitution during the 1920's and the 1930's is the radical change in prostitution law enforcement practices Vancouver experienced in this period.

#### Prostitution and Law Enforcement Practices

Technically, prostitution is legal in Canada, yet this is mere sophistry when one considers the vast array of offences in the *Canadian Criminal Code* which encompass prostitution-related conduct. Bawdy house and soliciting

offences subject the prostitute to criminal sanctions both in private and public realms respectively. These were status offences since just being in a bawdy house or out on the street could result in arrest if law enforcement officials suspected that prostitution was possibly involved. Arrests for these offences during the 1920's were relatively constant and usually resulted in fines, which were recognized as quasi-licenses to prostitutes.

In contrast to the relatively innocuous fines for bawdy house and soliciting offences, offences against procuring or living off the avails of prostitution were rarely enforced in the 1920's, because damning evidence was necessary before the exploiters of prostitutes could be prosecuted. Moreover, the punishment for procuring was brutal.<sup>7</sup> For example, in 1909 the maximum punishment for procuring was raised from two to five years' imprisonment and in 1917 whipping was introduced for second and subsequent offences.<sup>8</sup> This situation towards the procurers was to change during the 'Great Depression.'

Although several authors have written about the effects of the 'Great Depression' on society, none have concentrated on its influence on prostitution law enforcement. Huzel (1986) had recognized a decline in arrest rates for prostitution-related offences in Vancouver between 1922 and 1937. Yet he was more interested in the increase in robberies and petty theft during the 'Great Depression'.<sup>9</sup> However, his findings about prostitution and his suggestion

of further research piqued my curiosity. When exactly did this decline begin? More importantly, what forces were responsible for this decline? A subsequent investigation of the *Police Court Calendars* at the *Vancouver City Archives* was used to gather quantitative data about prostitution. Only prostitution-related arrests were counted, with a further breakdown of this quantitative arrest data to reveal the arrest rates of those charged specifically with pimping or procuring. (See Appendix 1).<sup>10</sup>

What is most notable about the arrest rates for all prostitution-related offences is the seventy per cent decline beginning in the late 1920's and continuing throughout the 1930's. Because Huzel's research was from 1922 until 1937, it did not show when the decline in arrest rates for prostitution began. Moreover, my further extraction of arrest rates for procuring and pimping offences reveals a simultaneous surge in arrests for exploitative offences in the 1930's. The information provided by the graphs indicates both a *quantitative* and *qualitative* change in law enforcement practices. This change did not result from any legal precedents or reforms. In fact, most legal precedents and reforms that did have an influence on law enforcement practices occurred before 1920 and after 1939. How then can we explain this change from arresting prostitutes to procurers in the 1930's? What does this shift mean? Has the traditional source of 'social evil' - the prostitute - suddenly become a victim?

Prostitution and Its Evil:

From the Prostitute to Her Procurer

Historically, arresting the prostitute has been the main objective of law enforcement officials.<sup>11</sup> The procurer, however, was rarely the target of arrest or prosecution. Even when the government responded to a Canadian hysteria over 'white slavery' by amending the *Criminal Code* in 1920, no increase in arrests of pimps or procurers followed.

With the new amendments, anyone suspected of being involved in 'white slavery' could be charged with procuring or living off the avails of prostitution. The punishment for procuring had increased from five to ten years' imprisonment. Section 23 of the *Canadian Criminal Code* even provided for arrest without warrant because it had been argued that numerous escapes would be facilitated by the necessity of obtaining a warrant.<sup>12</sup> Yet, my graphs show that those amendments did not succeed in changing law enforcement practices. The amendments did not succeed in reforming judicial practices, however, they may have influenced judges to be more lenient when dealing with suspected pimps and procurers. An examination of *Police Correspondence* at the *Vancouver City Archives* suggests that police were reluctant to arrest alleged procurers during the 1920's in Vancouver because of the bourgeois beliefs that the sanctions were too stringent for men gaining financially from the services of already 'fallen women.' Although the

police occasionally charged men with procuring, the cases seemed unable to 'run the gauntlet' from arrest to conviction.

Commenting on a similar type of reform in the United Kingdom, Smart (1989) asserts that the "conservative law and order argument which demanded harsher punishments" had been ineffectual since the judiciary was hesitant "to convict men for doing 'natural' manly things."<sup>13</sup> Instead of being concerned about the protection of women, they were more interested in preventing men from being unjustly convicted for exploiting women. Canadian procurers were similarly protected. The Canadian judiciary responded to the 'white slavery' legislation by immediately delineating acrimonious requirements for conviction. For example, in the case of *R. v. Anderson* (1920), it was decided that specific evidence had to be given to show that the accused had no profession and that he was living off the avails of prostitution.<sup>14</sup> Also, in the case of *R. v. Nyshimura* [1920], the courts came to the conclusion that a procurer had to be in the "habitual receipt of such earnings" and that, if he had only received such earnings twice, it was not sufficient evidence to support a conviction.<sup>15</sup>

It will be argued in this thesis that the lenient attitude towards procurers was sustained in the 'Roaring Twenties' because Vancouver's patriarchal society viewed prostitutes as mentally retarded, deviant, diseased, and therefore, not worth the severe sanctions meted out to



pimps. When the head of Vancouver's Morality Squad was examined during an inquiry in 1927 to discover, *inter alia*, why exploitative prostitution offences were not enforced, his reply was that it was "next to impossible" to convict a pimp if he owns another business or has any other source of income."<sup>16</sup> Yet as the depression proceeded in the 'Dirty Thirties', the arrest rates for procuring offences increased significantly despite the absence of any formal law reforms. It will be suggested in this thesis that the more attuned consciousness towards financial security of the middle classes awakened them to the wealth being amassed over the exploitation of prostitutes. As the threat of financial success through commercialized vice superseded the menace posed by social purity concerns, law enforcement officials developed new enforcement strategies to appease the public's concern over underworld profiteers.

A comparison of both Graphs 1 and 2 demonstrates a visible contrast between overall arrests for prostitution-related conduct mostly targeting the prostitutes, and specific offences involving pimping and procuring. An examination of the bourgeois rhetoric during the 'Roaring Twenties' and 'Dirty Thirties' will illustrate how economic interests transformed public attitudes towards prostitutes and procurers. These findings will help explain why law enforcement personnel gradually began to arrest significantly fewer prostitutes. Furthermore, it will aid in understanding why the police began taking into custody

more procurers, who had been relatively immune from the legal authorities during the 'Roaring Twenties'.

It will be suggested in this thesis that Vancouver's legal authorities purposely overlooked the severity of the exploitative offences in the 'Roaring Twenties,' because of the trenchant rhetoric against 'fallen women' by the relatively prosperous middle class. However, with the onslaught of the 'Great Depression,' the stark contrast in wealth between the barely surviving middle class and the conspicuously rich procurers altered discursive strategies on prostitution from eugenics to economic considerations. Politicians, criminal justice personnel, and the general public increasingly blamed the evils of prostitution on the procurers.

This perceived shift from the prostitute to the procurer in the public allocation of blame for prostitution raises several questions concerning the relationship between the economy, law enforcement practices and middle class rhetoric. For instance, did the change from a discourse promoting social hygiene in the 'Roaring Twenties' to one castigating commercialized vice in the 'Dirty Thirties', as represented through the media, influence the categorization and regulation of prostitution-related conduct? If language is prominent in the construction of meaning in society and social reality is produced through language,<sup>17</sup> then an examination of the discourses of prostitution might shed some light on the shift in law enforcement practices and the

public reaction to prostitution. Newspaper accounts are suitable mediums for examining the discourses concerned with prostitution, because, after all, most of the people during the inter-war years got their information about what happened in the world and their community from the newspapers.

Caution must be advised, however, as newspapers tend to ascribe to the dominant cultural ideology which has the effect of producing hegemony. Since most of their information evolves from accredited institutions such as the police and courts, the data presented by the media are surrounded by an aura of objective knowledge. Additionally, it should be noted that, in most cases, the persons who articulated the newsworthy events were men, because the 'knowledge' of prostitutes and others directly involved in prostitution was silenced and marginalized.

Through a qualitative analysis of newspaper reports during the 1920's and the 1930's from the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Globe & Mail*, several questions will be explored. For example, how can the change in law enforcement practices be explained? Did the social purity concerns of the population alter during the desperate changes in the economy? Only an in-depth study of the municipal politics of prostitution can illuminate the relationship between prostitution rhetoric, economic changes, and law enforcement practices. For the above reasons, I have done a search of newspaper articles during the 1920's and 1930's and have extracted any items

that mention prostitution, white slavery or venereal diseases. By reading all the reporters' stories, letters to the editors and editorials, two conspicuous themes emerged. It was discovered that, during the 'Roaring Twenties,' the media was concerned with public health and that, during the 'Dirty Thirties,' the focus had shifted to the issue of financial exploitation of prostitutes by pimps.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's ground-breaking work on the way that sex is regulated through public discourse, it is suggested that, when dominant interests altered from a concern for social hygiene to financial matters, the discursive strategies about the 'social evil' of prostitution implicated the procurer, rather than the prostitute, as the culprit responsible for the degeneration of moral, social and economic order. This is not to suggest that the prostitute was vindicated; however, it does imply that appeals to bourgeois virtues were sustained through the discursive production of 'knowledge' about the underground accumulation of illegal wealth and the consequent vilification of the private profit seeker.

#### The Problematization of Prostitution:

##### From Social Hygiene to Economic Vice

During the 'Roaring Twenties', there was an abundance of wealth sustaining the middle classes, which afforded them the opportunity to lobby for utilitarian objectives that would result in the greatest good for the greatest amount of

people. Perhaps the major issue that concerned North American society during this decade was eugenics. The middle classes feared that propagation by undesirables would lead to degeneration of the human race.<sup>18</sup> Although all immigrants were perceived as less intelligent than white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Canadians, female immigrants were considered to present an extensive threat because of their abilities to reproduce ostensibly defective progeny.<sup>19</sup> However, the ultimate object for censure was the prostitute, who was blamed for the transmission of venereal disease. The social hygiene movement concentrated on the rehabilitation of novice prostitutes through rescue homes and the incarceration of hardened prostitutes if they were diseased and able to produce allegedly feebleminded children. The middle class rhetoric advocated 'education' for the eradication of the venereal disease problem and this message was spread through social hygiene crusades.

Foucault, in his work on the construction of sexuality, suggests that power was exercised through a discursive constitution of the body and the development of a 'science of sexuality'. Although Foucault is talking about the emergence of sexuality in the West since the seventeenth century, prostitution-related discourse during the 'Roaring Twenties' shifted from moral purity to social hygiene or, in other words, from religion to medicine. Since the most powerful discourses were the ones supported by professionals and other middle class interest groups, bourgeois virtues

were easily imbricated and subsequently adopted by the majority of individuals. The shift from preachers to doctors as the bearers of 'knowledge' of venereal diseases demonstrated the burgeoning reliance on 'scientificity' rather than the supernatural power of God. Therefore, when the 'scientific' rhetoric of the 1920's declared that almost all prostitutes were feebleminded, governments attempted to take action to eliminate the 'social evil' and ultimately cleanse society.<sup>20</sup>

Foucault emphasizes the importance of sex as a discursive mechanism in our society. While a Foucauldian perspective does not employ economic arguments as the determining factor in class relations and power, it is suggested that middle class rhetoric and, hence, law enforcement strategies change along with economic circumstances. However, with the market failure of the 1930's in North America in general, and Vancouver in particular, the moral rhetoric concerning prostitution-related conduct shifted from viewing the prostitute as the social problem to a perception of the pimp or procurer as the evil force creating moral turpitude. While it is not suggested that measures taken against pimps were less utilitarian in nature than the sanctions against prostitutes, it will be argued that the discourse surrounding prostitution shifted from an argument that aimed at purifying all individuals to economically-based rhetoric

with the objective of eliminating those who were capitalizing on vice.

Although politicians and other elite explicitly benefited from the eradication of underworld profiteers, the moral rhetoric of the 1930's appealed to the capitalist virtues of honest and decent employment, since financial concerns appeared to be more likely to invoke public sentiments. Instead of a discourse which appealed to the virtues of pure bodies and a healthy society, the middle class rhetoric of the 'Dirty Thirties' specifically reproached underground pimping operations and other underworld monopolies. This strategy seemed to be a more apparent method of capturing the public's attention at a time when society was suffering from financial insecurity. Through using vice as a political platform for their election campaigns during the 'Dirty Thirties,' mayors in Vancouver were elected and this, in turn, led to attempts at elimination of pimping operations in Vancouver through changes in law enforcement strategies. Because the police were also suffering financial cutbacks, they adapted by changing their arrest tactics so that they were more economical, yet able to still maintain an 'disciplinary eye' over the prostitutes.

This brief introduction suggests that a variety of factors were operating to increase the arrest rate for exploitative offences during the 'Dirty Thirties.' Because there have been no fundamental changes in prostitution law

to the *Canadian Criminal Code* after 1920 or before 1939, nor any significant case law precedents set between 1920 and 1938, the object of this thesis will be to investigate the relationship between economic changes and discourses of prostitution, with an eye on their combined impact on law enforcement strategies. A comparison of prostitution-related discourse between the 1920's and 1930's is necessary in order to examine the possible relationship between changes in bourgeois rhetoric and economic circumstances. The intersection between markets and morality should become clearer when the discourse of a prosperous decade is compared with what was being broadcast during a decade of severe financial restraint. Because the impact of severe economic changes on the problematization of prostitution in Canada has not been studied before, this thesis should advance knowledge in the area of prostitution studies in general, and prostitution law enforcement strategies in particular.



## THE ROARING TWENTIES

The 1920's was a decade when middle class society was undergoing a period of relative affluence and could easily afford to be worried about the purity of the race and the factors that affected its contamination. It was also a period when science had become extremely important in defining how society should properly conduct its affairs. Instead of relying so heavily on religion to censure 'fallen women', middle class society was depending more on the 'truth' of science to castigate prostitutes.

This chapter will begin with an analysis of how the science of eugenics was influential in prostitution-related discourse. This should lead into a discussion of how the middle class viewed races other than White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. An attempt will then be made to contextualize the position of women by an examination of patriarchy and feminism in the 'Roaring Twenties'. This will be followed by a rigorous analysis of the social construction of the prostitute according to how she was perceived from a middle class perspective as evidenced through the bourgeois rhetoric available in the newspapers. Was she considered to be a casualty of circumstances or was she treated as a pariah because of her ostensible moral and social impurity? Finally, a description of law enforcement techniques will be provided of how the police responded to the bourgeois rhetoric of this decade.

In order to see how this discourse was deployed, I will examine the enforcement strategies of a local community. By outlining the organization of the Morality Department in

Vancouver and then examining the results of their methods of enforcement, the reader will be informed as to how the above moral discourses affected law enforcement tactics. Finally, an analysis of the allegations of corruption by the police, subsequent inquiries, as well as some of the other politics of prostitution law enforcement in Vancouver should enlighten the reader as to how bourgeois rhetoric affected prostitution-related conduct.

### The Science of Sexuality

The 1920's were ushered in with intensified discussion of 'scientific' solutions to eliminate prostitution and the ravages of venereal diseases that ostensibly accompanied it. By 1920, the social gospel movement appeared to be waning as the middle class was relying more heavily on the medical profession instead of religion as a source of information for combatting venereal disease. While the 'social gospel' movement had been characterized as a transformation from concentrating on sins of an individual to the collective sins of a society, religious groups such as the evangelical Protestant sects, preached about the importance of moral purity both individually and collectively.<sup>21</sup> Yet a shift in emphasis from personal demoralization to racial degeneration was being fuelled by the eugenics movement. While religion relied on a Supreme Being for its authority, the science of eugenics was grounded in 'scientific' or pragmatic solutions for economically managing the population.

Foucault argues that, historically, the solutions to the problems concerning prostitution were provided for by

"techniques of assistance" that were formally administered by religious organizations, philanthropic and other benevolent societies.<sup>22</sup> However, Foucault states that when the health and well-being of all of society becomes an issue as it did with the introduction of the science of eugenics, then there is a "shift from the narrow context of charitable aid to the more general form of a 'medical police,' imposing its constraints and dispensing its services."<sup>23</sup>

As the site of power for prostitution-related discourse gradually shifted from an accentuation of the bourgeois virtues of moral purity to the values of social hygiene, the importance of religion as the producer of 'truth' about sexuality was systematically usurped by the medical profession.<sup>24</sup> This transformation was particularly noticeable as the composition of moral crusaders altered quite perceptibly from evangelical Protestants, such as Methodists and Baptists with their accompanying moral fervor, to social hygiene crusaders who were mainly doctors and middle class women.

One of the moral entrepreneurs, who was still active in crusades, was Reverend Dr. J.D. Shearer; however, his focus appears to have transferred to a medical concern as the moral connotations of purity were shifting to the medical implications of social hygiene.<sup>25</sup> While the reliance upon science as a way of 'knowing' seemed relatively easy for Reverend Shearer, this was not always the case with other crusaders.

For example, a woman from England spoke at a luncheon about "higher ideals [being] the best way to fight evil" and that "an effort was therefore made to treat the matter in the most

scientific way." She argued that double standards which omitted men from treatment and "prostitution provide a hot-bed for disease" and that they were trying to "arouse sympathy for the sufferers." Perhaps sensing the oxymoronic relationship between science and sympathy, a Toronto doctor replied that the "attitude in England was not the cold-blooded one of science alone, but that it invoked the aid and ideals of religion."<sup>26</sup>

Most of the middle class rhetoric emanating from Vancouver during the 1920's assumed that prostitutes were incapable of controlling their sexual desires. For example, Judge Helen Gregory MacGill of the Vancouver Juvenile Court had been quoted as saying "most social workers prefer to dodge 'desire' as a woman's motive in prostitution."<sup>27</sup> Statements such as this illustrate how the socioeconomic realities of the prostitutes were ignored as the professionals were more concerned with eradicating venereal diseases. At a time when professional occupations such as medicine, social work, and law were expanding and Canadian provinces were "taking the first tentative steps toward the welfare state,"<sup>28</sup> most of the Malthusian arguments seemed to be increasingly combined with a public health discourse<sup>29</sup> cloaked in an aura of 'scientificity'.

Foucault (1980) postulates that a hierarchy of knowledge about sexuality exists with scientific knowledge as the ultimate form, which wields more power because of its greater 'claim to truth'. Since power and knowledge are symbiotic, he argues that power is generated by the abundance of 'expert' knowledge about sexuality. During the 1920's, 'scientific' statistics were used as weapons in several discursive fields including the legal,

social service and religious contexts. 'Experts' in these fields invoked their objectivity and authority which, in turn, established their legitimacy.

Rarely were statistics espoused by moral entrepreneurs questioned as to their reliability or validity and hence, their veracity. Judge Margaret Patterson of the Women's Court in Toronto represented the apotheosis of this trend towards scientificity when she addressed the *Big Sisters Association* about the problems of feebleminded girls. She argued for the protection of moral delinquents, the majority of whom were 'fallen women' or prostitutes,<sup>30</sup> because, out of every case that came before the courts, "not one had a mentality over twelve years and that eighty percent of such cases were diseased."<sup>31</sup> Although the percentage of disease cited may have been empirically based, the link between morality and intelligence would have been fundamentally based upon Dr. Patterson's 'expert' perceptions of these poor and ostensibly illiterate women. Because Dr. Patterson had dealt with most of the prostitutes through Women's Court and had also travelled extensively on social hygiene crusades where she spoke to auditoriums often filled to capacity, the moral rhetoric linking prostitutes to disease substantiated bourgeois appeals to social purity through the ostracism of prostitutes.

Foucault argues that one should study the underlying "mechanisms of exclusion" and how sexuality was medicalized by the middle class to further their own interests.<sup>32</sup> Since prostitutes represented a threat to the purity of the race, defamation of their character in all respects had the effect of

totally excluding prostitutes from mainstream society. By the medicalization of sexuality, the prostitute was declared, not only physically diseased, but mentally deficient too. Yet it has been argued that the underlying motives for ostracizing prostitutes were racist and class-based, an issue which will be discussed in the next section.

#### Discrimination in the 1920's

The aim of this section is to analyze the degree to which the issues of race, class and gender influenced or were affected by the rhetoric concerning prostitution. While some legal historians have argued that the eugenics movement served as a mask for disguising racist ideologies despite evidence that prostitution and feeble-mindedness were not linked,<sup>33</sup> it will be argued that the majority of the middle class were motivated by a desire to 'do good'. They sincerely believed in the connection between prostitutes, venereal disease and the subsequent contamination of the species through mental retardation.

The social hygiene movement in Canada gained momentum as the public health discourse vociferously stressed the threat of venereal disease to the welfare of all Canadians.<sup>34</sup> The groups of social hygiene crusaders were usually doctors and philanthropic middle class women, who journeyed in style from city to city without any financial worries, while they tended to ignore arguments for socio-economic reforms in favor of medical solutions and 'scientific' methods for fighting the ravages of venereal diseases.<sup>35</sup> Because many of the social hygiene crusaders were middle class 'respectable' women, the underlying

message dichotomized middle and lower class women into good/bad, pure/impure and madonna/whore categories.

One of the largest groups in the social hygiene movement was the *Canadian Social Hygiene Council*. Immense crowds attended their meetings as they toured from city to city spreading statistics on venereal disease and denigrating prostitutes as the carriers.<sup>36</sup> By locating the problem of venereal diseases in prostitutes' bodies only, the social hygiene crusaders effectively denied men's role in the sexual exchange.

The middle class also tended to ascribe to Malthusian arguments about the lack of 'self-restraint' of the poor which, in turn, implied that moral failure contributed to the feeble-minded giving in to their natural passions.<sup>37</sup> Because the proponents of eugenics pontificated that feeble-mindedness was hereditary and led to promiscuous behavior and prostitution, most middle class women accepted the notion that prostitutes were incurable as verified by the eugenicists. This belief appears to have led middle class women to reject the exploitative nature of prostitution, while the relative affluence of most philanthropic women seems to have left them unable to recognize that prostitutes had no other means to survive economically.

The underlying message being broadcast at these meetings was that all the professionals such as doctors, ministers, politicians, and other influential citizens had a responsibility to society to eradicate venereal diseases in their cities through the elimination of prostitution. By firmly cementing a

connection between prostitutes and venereal diseases, the Social Hygiene Council excused itself from economic arguments by advocating medical 'education' against disease.

For example, although Mrs. Custance of the Workers Party of Canada argued that minimum wages should be raised for office girls so that they do not turn to vice, the government ostensibly evaded any financial solutions in favor of funding for the social hygiene movement.<sup>38</sup> Another instance of the subterfuge of economic reform was evident after a survey done by the Toronto Social Hygiene Council itself. Despite the substantiality of evidence garnered in their survey which had determined that most prostitutes slipped into vice through economically-based problems, such as "bad environment, lack of opportunity, broken homes, lack of healthy recreation and poorly paid jobs,"<sup>39</sup> medical solutions to venereal diseases were still prioritized over any socio-economic suggestions. Because the middle classes felt financially secure themselves during the 1920's, the bourgeois rhetoric appeared to be aimed at preventing disease and 'undesirables' from entering their territory, rather than improving the economic situations of the poor.

In fact, the interests of middle class women tended to assimilate more with the bourgeois virtues of middle class men than with the concerns of lower class women. Through their valuation of class membership over the importance of gender identity,<sup>40</sup> medical remedies to combat venereal diseases took precedence over economic reforms. The irony was that, through attempting to protect their class from the devastation of



contracting venereal diseases, their policies of subordinating lower class women ensured men had an extramarital supply of sexual commodities readily available. Moreover, this semi-conscious collusion with patriarchal interests helped to secure a healthier, but more oppressed, group of lower class women to satisfy male sexual needs.

Class differences also were apparent when the Labor Party suggested that the Social Hygiene Council should concentrate on the 'white slave' traffic, Orientals and narcotic drugs.<sup>41</sup> While these issues were pragmatically important to laborers and other financially insecure individuals, they were not as pressing for the upper middle class, who did not feel that their jobs were threatened by cheap immigrant labor.<sup>42</sup> However, the threat of venereal diseases passing on to the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants was an undeniable reality that was not immune to their financial standing. Medical solutions offered by doctors were more effective at distinguishing professionals from non-professionals while simultaneously uplifting the status of lawyers, doctors, social workers and the clergy with their respective careers.

In fact, the fear that the white Anglo-Saxon population would be outnumbered by the Orientals had been dampened by legislation in the House of Commons in 1923 that restricted entry to Canada of Chinese wives and children.<sup>43</sup> Although one or two members of Parliament debated that, from a moral and humanitarian standpoint, the exclusion of Chinese wives and children could create serious social problems, little attention was given to this aspect.<sup>44</sup>

In Vancouver, there was an underlying fear that the Chinese would take advantage of white girls and get them involved in the prostitution trade. This issue captured local interest when *British Columbia's Home Paper* published an article alleging that four young white girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen were seen in Chinatown and that certain taxi drivers have the phone numbers of young girls "who are glad to 'make a date' and go out 'for a good time'."<sup>45</sup> The police department responded to these allegations with the statement that "a strict watch has been kept in Chinatown for the past two years for young white girls and very few have been found there."<sup>46</sup> However, the ethnocentric middle class seemed to be more concerned with 'race suicide' and preventing the inundation of immigrants' wives, who could produce enough progeny to suffocate the white Anglo-Saxon population.

In Vancouver, racial bigotry was also present in prostitution-related affairs. On the one hand, many of the bawdy houses serviced mainly Chinese or Hindu customers as evidenced by their names on the *Police Court Calendars* after they were arrested. These houses were usually located in the poorer areas of the city and raided on a regular basis.<sup>47</sup> Since British Columbia had welcomed both Chinese and Sikh laborers for work on the railways while restricting their wives from entry to Canada, many prostitutes satisfied these men in either work camps or downtown Vancouver.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the prostitutes themselves made racist comments when testifying before the police about the preference for Chinese rather than Hindu men.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, some of the women involved in prostitution used their Japanese racial origins to attract a higher class clientele.<sup>50</sup> By utilizing the stereotypical myth that Japanese geishas are more subservient and entertaining than other prostitutes, one resourceful Japanese woman opened a bawdy house and hired Japanese girls to play the role of geishas.<sup>51</sup> According to the 'Madame' of this operation, she was never raided because of free services provided to the police. Although it is difficult to verify the biographical information provided by Kiyoko Tanaka-Goto, the alleged 'Madame', because she was never arrested herself, the address she gave as a bawdy house was subsequently documented through records of various arrests of other prostitutes in the rooms she ostensibly owned. Whether or not her biography is veracious, the information that she has given corresponds with prostitution-related activities and law enforcement techniques in the time frame being studied.

In summary, Vancouver society in the 1920's was afflicted with an ethnocentric bias that located white, Anglo-Saxon males above all persons as the most competent people for guaranteeing a superior society. Since most middle class women adhered to patriarchal rules about superiority of men and their bourgeois notions for a better society, racial and class prejudices were perpetuated through discourse advocating elimination or at least segregation of lower and racially inferior classes. Beliefs about the connection between prostitution and feeble-mindedness led to social hygiene crusades aimed at eradicating venereal diseases and the prostitutes, who were viewed as the main sources of contagion.

Patriarchy and Feminism in the 1920's

Despite the pervasiveness of race and class prejudices in the social hygiene discourse, middle class biases were organized through patriarchal concerns. Separation into public and private spheres by men and women respectively was actively encouraged through denying women many opportunities available to men. This section will examine how the prevailing double standard between men and women during this decade affected women in general and those involved in prostitution in particular.

Women did not legally become 'persons' until 1929 and were socially defined as dependents of men. The ideology that 'woman's place was in the home' was espoused by the middle class as the womanly bourgeois virtues of domesticity and child-rearing competency predominated. Single women were castigated for their apparent inability to find men to support them; furthermore, married women who worked were criticized because they were "driving more [single women] on to the streets."<sup>52</sup>

Several strategies were employed by men to keep women from becoming self-sufficient. For example, single women were unable to get municipal financial relief under any circumstances.<sup>53</sup> What was a woman expected to do to survive if she could not find employment nor a man to depend upon? In addition to being refused welfare benefits, the majority of women were forced to accept only low-paying employment because of the lack of opportunities to obtain job skills through training or schooling.

Many of the middle class women formed groups for the betterment of women's situations; however, the feminism that was

practiced was 'maternal' in nature and did not extend to prostitutes' rights. Instead, bourgeois women concentrated their efforts on rescuing young girls from lives of degradation. In Vancouver, one of the women who fought for social justice for women was Judge Helen Gregory MacGill. When the *Women's New Era League* was created in 1916, she was quoted as saying, "[m]any women felt they should organize... to obtain better laws for women and children."<sup>54</sup> In 1923, the *Women's New Era League* requested a 'Police Woman's Protective Department' with the appointment of policewomen to oversee its operations.<sup>55</sup> This request may have been a reaction to discourse from other cities such as New York, where a social workers' conference hosted speakers on the problem of the feebleminded and suggested that early diagnosis and training could prevent girls from becoming prostitutes.<sup>56</sup>

By contrast, Toronto employed policewomen who wore plain clothes and roamed through the parks, resorts, etc. looking for girls in need of protection and arrested men who tried to pick them up.<sup>57</sup> Their vigilance was highly praised by a letter to the editor of the *Globe & Mail* which advocated the employment of policewomen everywhere to eliminate prostitutes from the streets because policemen were apparently unsuccessful and some of the girls were "scarcely more than children."<sup>58</sup>

One of the women's groups active in the effort to bring women into the police force was the *Women's Christian Temperance Union* or W.C.T.U., an organization concerned with alcohol problems. Although they demanded that a woman be appointed to the Board of Police Commissioners in Vancouver, they were

informed that the Board had no control over this matter since "the composition of the Board was fixed by law, [and it] would have to be changed by the provincial government."<sup>59</sup> Since women were not legally 'persons', this effectively denied them any authority to manage or change policies regulated through the police department. As an *obiter dicta*, the Board conceded that "public halls are [already] supervised by the policewomen of the department," a role that could be justified by the maternal role rather than political participation of women.

Despite the substantial amount of raids and high arrest rates of prostitutes in Vancouver, women's groups continued to request the creation of a women's protective department even though the Vancouver Police Chief refuted the allegations that policewomen were necessary to "protect the young womanhood of the city."<sup>60</sup> A resolution passed by the *New Era League* asked that two matrons instead of one be employed for each shift at the Vancouver Police Department for supervising women in custody. They argued that only three policewomen was inadequate compared to the 225 policemen employed for men and that the present matrons were overworked in cramped offices.<sup>61</sup> The Board of Police Commissioners denied their requests, but decided to install "a laundry [in the women's lock-up] to facilitate in the washing of blankets, etc."<sup>62</sup> While this concession did not ameliorate any of the women's problems, it hinted at the patriarchal notion of 'proper women's work' and relayed the underlying message that policewomen were unimportant and only necessary to supervise the few women prisoners held there.

Other groups such as the *Vancouver Local Council of Women*,<sup>63</sup> the *Canadian Daughter's League*<sup>64</sup> and the *Vancouver Central Ratepayers Association* were denied similar appeals with reasons such as that "young girls are handled by Juvenile Court Officers, who employ a lady officer for that purpose."<sup>65</sup> This reference was probably to Judge Helen Gregory MacGill, who however, was sixty-one years old at the time and hardly capable of handling all the women who became involved with the law.

One issue that women's groups persistently ignored was the socioeconomic aspects for the entrance of girls into prostitution. Women's wages were extremely low when compared to men's. For example, Judge MacGill, mentioned above, earned a salary of \$50 per month.<sup>66</sup> This may be compared with Deputy Police Magistrate Findlay's request in 1923 for a raise from his present salary of \$200 per month,<sup>67</sup> which Chief Constable Anderson defined as a "ridiculous and entirely inadequate salary."<sup>68</sup>

The strong opprobrium against prostitution was obvious when one considers that, while laundresses and mercantile workers were respectively guaranteed \$13.50 and \$12.75 per week under the new *Minimum Wage Act*, "a work week of seventy hours was not uncommon."<sup>69</sup> By contrast, Dr. Haywood, an advocate of the regulation of prostitution, said that "statistics from the United States put the earnings of the women [prostitutes] at \$30 to \$50 a week for themselves, apart from the profits of those who exploited them and got most of the money."<sup>70</sup> These findings may be generalized to Vancouver considering the numerous arrests

and corresponding bail forfeitures resulting in the relative paucity of court appearances of prostitutes and their customers.

According to the *Census of Canada*, men earned an average of \$24.62 weekly whereas women only earned an average of \$14.40 per week.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, most of the jobs available to women were in the service industries doing work that was related to women's domestic capabilities. In fact, the stated occupation of thirty-seven percent of women was "domestic or personal service."<sup>72</sup> Considering that most domestics had relatively no independence or social life, it is surprising that more women did not turn to prostitution which would allow them to be independent plus receive more compensation in one night as an employed woman would receive in a week.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps the main reason that more women did not turn to prostitution was the marginalization and stigmatization attached to this profession - - an issue that will be examined in the next section.

#### The Social Construction of Prostitution in the 1920's

Several academics have written about the social construction of reality or, in other words, how society formulates our definitions of existence.<sup>74</sup> Since the object of this thesis is, in part, to examine and exemplify the transformation of prostitution-related discourse and its relation to the economy and World War II, a discussion of prostitution as a socially constructed reality is warranted. Using this perspective, the rhetoric concerning prostitution is seen to reflect moral, social, and ideological values of the middle class. This section will analyze how prostitution was viewed through the bourgeois rhetoric of the 1920's. The



prostitute, her pimp or procurer, and the rhetoric about 'white slavery' will be examined.

First of all, it should be noted that this ontological view does not suggest that the prostitute does not have her own reality, but rather that bourgeois interests impute their meanings and, in order to extrapolate an epistemological perspective, the underlying motives of the middle class should be considered from an economic and sociological standpoint. Secondly, the above constructionist premise embraces the notion that prostitution itself is meaningless and that its meaning is produced through societal reaction. Finally, the reader should be aware that social components, such as newspapers or other mass media, tend to amplify and magnify prostitution-related conduct so that it is made even more newsworthy.

Because of the connection between prostitutes, venereal diseases, and feeble-mindedness, the prostitute was pejoratively labeled as hopelessly mentally retarded. While resembling the theories of Lombroso and Ferraro, who at the turn of the century, categorized the prostitute as atavistic and a 'born criminal,'<sup>75</sup> the eugenicist discourse was firmly entrenched because of its 'scientific' legitimacy. In most of the social hygiene crusades and newspaper reports, any mention of 'prostitutes' is usually included along with 'criminals, inebriates, paupers', etc.<sup>76</sup> This correlation undoubtedly exacerbated the intense opprobrium already associated with the prostitute.

Due to the threat of venereal diseases raising the specter of social disintegration, the newspapers and social hygiene

crusaders exploited the fear of disease amongst society as an immediate strategic goal towards cleansing the streets of prostitutes. This enabled the middle class to legitimate the community's control over prostitutes under the guise of protective and therapeutic measures. Not only did this strategy assist the burgeoning professions, it restricted the behavior of women and constrained their chances for independence.

Because society relied on Malthusian arguments and the 'scientific' evidence of feeble-mindedness, the lower classes were imperceptibly segregated from the middle classes. By widening the power differentials between the classes, the bourgeois rhetoric preserved the *status quo* by reproducing a hegemonic ideology. Furthermore, the discourse about feeble-mindedness foreclosed most possibilities for prostitutes to rehabilitate even if they so desired. For example, Judge Helen Gregory MacGill of the Vancouver Court argued that "the expert psychiatrist can indicate that probation on certain terms will be useless" [for the rehabilitation of the prostitute]. By intimating the mental retardation of the prostitute, Judge MacGill eradicated most chances for decent job opportunities with comments such as, "Of what use to set terms and conditions predicated on her seventeen years when the girl has the mind of a child of seven?"<sup>77</sup> The particular cognitive imagery of the prostitute that was instilled in society's mind was of not only a criminal type, but also one that was diseased, contagious, and mentally deficient.

Bourgeois rhetoric also dichotomized prostitutes from 'wayward' girls. Whereas prostitutes were denounced for their

inbred lack of 'normal' intelligence, middle class young girls who strayed from strict discipline were only considered errant in their ways and capable of rescue and rehabilitation. Because of the bourgeois belief that prostitutes were feebleminded, efforts at saving young girls were directed towards 'wayward' girls not already hardened by 'the life.' This legitimated and perpetuated the existing hierarchical arrangements in society, and in so doing, reinforced the structural position of the middle class. Additionally, it has been claimed that the emphasis on child prostitution was nothing more than "a moral panic that did not reflect reality" but a strategy of warning the bourgeois to be aware of their daughters' whereabouts.<sup>78</sup>

Several scholars have written about the social construction of 'white slavery' around the turn of the century and how its ambiguous meaning was exploited to spread fear amongst the middle class despite evidence that this phenomenon was rare and usually exaggerated. American feminist Kathleen Barry explains how the white slave trade was a misleading image resulting in the creation of false impressions; however, she compares this illusion to what she considers to be a more realistic version of 'white slavery' which has been created through the bourgeois virtue that insists that women should be submissive to men.<sup>79</sup>

Another author, Frederick Grittner, depicts 'white slavery' in the first few decades of the nineteenth century in the United States as a myth which was embellished in films and fiction because of its ability to attract an audience. He argues that people appear to be captivated by the theme of women being captured by villains and eventually rescued.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, he

contends that the *Mann Act* was enacted to prevent 'white slavery' but resulted in being used mainly in cases when men traveled with women over state boundaries for sexual purposes not involving coercion nor lack of consent.

One legal historian, who has written extensively on the subject of 'white slavery' is John McLaren. He has described how the myth of 'white slavery' was constructed in Britain and substantiated through 'moral panics' around the turn of the century. He argues that "the sensationalism surrounding the 'white slavery' exposes seems to have deflected attention... from the broader economic and social realities of prostitution."<sup>81</sup>

Yet despite all the rhetoric concerning 'white slavery', it did not appear to be a problem in Vancouver during the 'Roaring Twenties.' Internationally, the focus of concern in the early 1920's was that "a workable agreement among nations" was required to combat this problem.<sup>82</sup> At a conference in 1923 of *The International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children*, it was resolved that international laws should be enacted so that this threat could be eliminated.<sup>83</sup> At an annual conference of the *League of Nations* in Geneva towards the end of 1923, it was decided to draft an international standard for the prevention of traffic in women. The Secretariat would send a questionnaire to each government asking for measures to be taken in each country to deal with this menace.<sup>84</sup>

Yet what is particularly notable about 'white slavery' in Vancouver during the 'Roaring Twenties' is the conspicuous lack of cases that involved any tangible form of sexual coercion.

For this reason, it is suggested that the myth of 'white slavery' as described through the media was a newsworthy item even though there was no evidence to substantiate this social construction; however, it probably had the effect of constraining women's freedom while simultaneously embedding patriarchal values about the helplessness of women and their consequent need for protection.

During the 'Roaring Twenties', the existence of pimps and procurers was regarded as an inescapable reality to be on guard against for the daughters of the middle class. This fear prompted the middle class to demand better protection for women and children; however, any pimp or procurer involved with prostitutes was virtually ignored. Despite the fact that the police knew that many pimps were operating in Vancouver, they were seldom bothered.<sup>85</sup> Although the police excused their lack of arrests because of insufficient evidence, the pimps and procurers were ostensibly disregarded as long as they did not invade the territory of the middle class. Because the known procurers operated solely with lower class prostitutes, the pimps were downplayed because the middle class was financially secure and not worried about the pimps earning some nefarious money on the side from women who were already labelled as morally and mentally deficient.

McLaren (1986) suggests that most of the pimps and procurers were of the same socio-economic status as the prostitutes and that most pimps were foreign-born immigrants around the turn of the century.<sup>86</sup> During the 'Roaring Twenties,' the prevalence of pimps or procurers was not

broadcast except in the context of shadowy strangers lurking at the bus depots and railway stations. This suggests that the police are not interested in the exploitation of prostitutes *per se*, but rather on the protection of 'wayward' or even unsuspecting middle class girls. Because of their ostensible inability to gather sufficient evidence against pimps directly involved with prostitutes, police tended to 'turn a blind eye' to their activities unless they received complaints from the middle class that the pimps and procurers had invaded their territory. An example of how a pimp became involved with the justice system will be described in the next section regarding law enforcement techniques in Vancouver.

#### Prostitution Law Enforcement Techniques In Vancouver

This section will outline the organizational structure of Vancouver's police department, how prostitution law enforcement was exercised, the public's reaction to this enforcement, and the effects of allegations of corruption on prostitution law enforcement. By narrowing the focus of law enforcement strategies down to Vancouver, this section will demonstrate how social hygiene discourse in a racist, classist, and patriarchal society influenced the tactics of law enforcement personnel. This information is important because it explains why the arrest rates for all prostitution-related offences were so high during the 'Roaring Twenties' and some of the catalysts for the decreasing arrest rates during the 'Dirty Thirties.'

The Vancouver police department is arranged in hierarchical order with the police working under the direction of the Police Commission. From 1920 to 1929, the Board of Police

Commissioners consisted of the Mayor and two appointed men, one of whom was an alderman. Besides the exclusion of women from the Police Commission, the only prerequisite was that all three owned property in Vancouver. On January 1, 1929, the *City Charter* was amended so that the Mayor became chairman of the Board and the number of other members was increased to four, none of whom had to be aldermen. The terms of office were one year long.<sup>87</sup>

The police force itself is divided into various departments, including the Morality Department which still exists in that form today. In the 1920's, there were four men assigned to the Morality Squad. Two worked from 2 to 6 p.m. east of Carrall Street, and, then again, from 3 to 11 p.m. west of Carrall Street while the other two morality officers covered the area east of Carrall from 6 to 11 p.m., and, then, the entire city after 11 p.m. The Morality Squad were free to arrest any prostitutes they found doing business. Additionally, they handled specific complaints which first went to the Chief Constable, who handed them over to the Inspector of the department, and who subsequently gave them to the Morality Squad to investigate.<sup>88</sup>

During the 1920's, prostitution was flourishing in Vancouver, as evidenced by the numerous arrests for bawdy house offences and soliciting (See Graph 1). For instance, many of the articles in the *Vancouver Sun* in 1925 were boasting about how efficiently the morality squad was doing its job. On January 31, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that 442 arrests were made with 163 of those under the vagrancy sections.<sup>89</sup> Yet on

April 13, this same newspaper states that 429 persons were arrested in the first three months of the year and that 136 of these were vagrancy offences.<sup>90</sup> By the beginning of July, the *Vancouver Sun* indicated that 733 persons had been arrested in the past six months.<sup>91</sup> Towards the end of 1925, this newspaper had switched from recording the number of persons arrested and instead enumerated the financial gains collected through fines for morality offences.<sup>92</sup>

This type of reporting by the *Vancouver Sun* suggests two important points. First of all, it is a good indication of the amount of wealth that was circulating during the 'Roaring Twenties' and, secondly, this type of reporting implies that the newspaper works as an agent for the powerful groups in society through illustrating how well the police are 'protecting' society and enforcing laws against loose morals. Several theorists have argued that the reporters use the newspapers to communicate messages from the politically powerful to ensure the masses that the law is being upheld and that the established social order is being reinforced.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the overwhelming number of raids and arrests attributed to the Morality Squad, there was still a certain measure of resistance to the methods of the criminal justice system in upholding prostitution-related laws. For example, several interest groups criticized the metaphorical (and almost literal) 'revolving door of justice' which allowed the prostitutes and customers to pay their fines and then go reoffend. Two groups that were especially vocal in their criticisms of the justice system were the *WCTU* and the *New Era*



*League*. Both groups specifically requested the abolition of cash bail for prostitutes and both groups were told that the police would investigate this problem. However, in *obiter*, the police added that their "hands were tied" because they could not change the criminal law.<sup>94</sup> It should be noted that neither group criticized the fact that just as many male customers were forfeiting their bail. Perhaps this illustrates the strength of the ideology of 'male sexual needs,' which suggests that the middle class believed that men required extra sexual outlets and that their behavior should therefore be excused.<sup>95</sup>

The ideology of male sexual needs was also apparent in what Mayor Louis D. Taylor (who held office for most of the 1920's) referred to as his 'open policy.'<sup>96</sup> Basically, his policy was that the prostitution trade should be left alone provided that those involved were not being public nuisances, involved in other criminal conduct such as thievery, or spreading venereal diseases. The Mayor argued that the regular raids and substantial arrests by the Morality Squad kept social order and demonstrated to those involved in prostitution that they would be fined for their immoral conduct. Lowman and McLaren have defined the Mayor's attitude towards prostitution as the 'pragmatic tolerance discourse,' a discourse suggesting that some of the politically powerful saw prostitution as a necessary social evil that should be effectively tolerated.<sup>97</sup> However, what had been left unsaid by Vancouver City Council and could be inferred from Mayor Taylor's comments was that fining for prostitution-related offences was beneficial to the city's financial coffers, whereas jailing prostitutes and customers

would be expensive because of the vast number of people involved in this trade.

Yet, as early as April, 1926, rumors had begun to circulate that the Morality Squad was involved in corruption<sup>98</sup> and by September, 1927, any hint of corruption culminated in an investigation of certain Morality Squad members, who were accused of accepting 'protection' money.<sup>99</sup> Within a week, a probe was held at the Police Court because the lawyer alleging the corruption argued that "the Police are taking every occasion that they can to embarrass one or two of [his] clients so that the proposed investigation may be dropped."<sup>100</sup> The plaintiff, who was alleging payoffs to the Morality Squad, was a pimp. He argued that he had been paying 'protection' money for the past five and one half years and that his house was raided nevertheless.<sup>101</sup> The probe was held 'in camera' ostensibly because of the seriousness of the charges and the relative lewdness of the testimony which, it was argued, might offend the public's sensibilities.<sup>102</sup> However, a closer look at the transcripts of the probe reveal that the police used this opportunity to interrogate two pimps and two prostitutes about their underworld activities.<sup>103</sup> Yet what was reported in the *Vancouver Sun* was the defence's argument that the Police Court records had illustrated that the premises of the plaintiff had been raided thirty-four times, that \$4,250 in fines had been collected, and "that the officers charged had arrested the informant often."<sup>104</sup>

Despite an overwhelming amount of incriminating testimony given by the pimps and prostitutes, who had been granted

immunity from prosecution under the *Canada Evidence Act*, the Police Court found in favor of the defendant police. In rendering their decision, the Board of Police Commissioners opined that "no corroborative testimony was adduced to support such allegations" and that "no witness who had not been previously arrested and convicted" had been present; therefore, the Board found "the charges to be not supported by the evidence."<sup>105</sup>

Although this probe and its final decision was obviously meant to pacify the public, the issue of corruption was still simmering in the citizens' minds as evidenced by a letter sent to the Police Commissioners from the secretary of the *Union Committee on Law Enforcement of the B.C. Prohibition Association* requesting the Board to discuss the "laxity of law enforcement in Vancouver"<sup>106</sup>, and an article in the *Vancouver Sun* reporting that the *Central Ratepayers Association* was urging a Royal Commission into the activities of the Morality Squad and the "lax enforcement of the law regarding houses of ill-repute."<sup>107</sup>

Rumors of corruption reached a boiling point when a letter was received from Commissioner Fletcher demanding a Royal Commission to investigate the police force because the *Trades and Labor Council*, the *Ministerial Association*, the *Central Rate-payers Association* and the *Kiwanis* were demanding one. Fletcher argued that prostitution in disorderly houses was being openly utilized and that the "police organization is wholly incompetent to deal with the situation or is corruptly permitting these practices to go on" and he suggested that "the

entire Morality Squad be suspended, with power in those officials to apply for reinstatement."<sup>108</sup>

In response to these criticisms, the Board of Police Commissioners passed a resolution to hire "a Barrister-at-law to investigate all matters in the Police Department under section 215 of the *Vancouver Incorporation Act*."<sup>109</sup> Mr. Lennie was appointed to the position and the Morality Squad was "relieved of duty until the inquiry had been terminated."<sup>110</sup> It was decided that evidence given by "people of the underworld" should not be "discarded" and that hearsay evidence should be admissible since it was just a police enquiry.<sup>111</sup>

When the final analysis of the enquiry was issued, the Mayor's "open policy" on prostitution law enforcement was stated emphatically to be the essential core of the problem. Yet despite this pernicious finding, Commissioner Lennie exonerated the police of corruption and declared that no alleged payments of protection money were received by either the Mayor or the police.<sup>112</sup> Reactions from the citizenry of Vancouver were visible in the *Vancouver Sun* as the letters to the editor debated whether or not prostitution was a 'necessary evil' to be tolerated or a flagrant social problem to be eliminated.

One letter was from a man who complained about "degenerates molesting men" on Granville Street.<sup>113</sup> Two separate women responded to this accusation by blaming men for their solicitous behavior as they were each approached by men offering them money.<sup>114</sup> Another man contended that Vancouver did not have immoral conditions because he had never been approached by a prostitute here; whereas, in "Toronto the Good" he was

propositioned six times.<sup>115</sup> An apparent rebuttal to this letter was received at the *Vancouver Sun* three days later. The writer challenged the other citizen to go down Granville Street from Nelson to Pender where he claims to have counted thirty-four prostitutes.<sup>116</sup>

Within the next couple of weeks, the *Vancouver Sun* published four reactions in which all of the correspondence defended prostitutes albeit in very different ways. One letter to the editor blamed men for the downfall of girls because "it is men who start them and contribute to their calling."<sup>117</sup> The second letter was from a woman who felt that prostitutes are honest when compared to 'respectable' women who will take married men from their families.<sup>118</sup> A third woman asked why "the women of a certain class [were] hounded by police, thundered at from the pulpit, and rallied against by a large section of the public?"<sup>119</sup> A final letter defending prostitutes was from a girl who said that she goes for walks around the area where the prostitutes were counted and that she is pure.<sup>120</sup> This last letter brought a reprimand stating that no apparently respectable girl should have to "take the air alone at 10:30" at night.<sup>121</sup> During the next month, the *Vancouver Sun* was reporting on a candidate for alderman who favored a restricted district with physical examinations for all the patrons<sup>122</sup> and a letter to the editor was subsequently published advocating 'red light' districts because 'good' women are unsafe without them.<sup>123</sup> The common denominator of these newspaper communications appears to be the gradual resignation to the

belief that prostitution cannot be eradicated and, therefore, should be dealt with in a practical manner.

In summary, the politics and discourse about prostitution appear to be a strong indicator of the relative affluence of the middle class during the 'Roaring Twenties'. The first section of this chapter demonstrated how the rapidly growing professions were establishing their power through the use of 'scientific' knowledge as their 'claim to truth' about the problems associated with prostitution-related conduct. Furthermore, it was shown how much of the discourse about prostitution revolved around issues of the body instead of financial concerns, and it was postulated that the social hygiene crusades were popular because the middle class was financially secure enough to be sincerely concerned about saving the health of the city during this decade.

The second section illustrated how the 1920's was a discriminatory society divided according to class, race and gender identification, while still being overshadowed by the influences of a patriarchal society. Moreover, it was suggested that the racial and gender divisions were important justifications employed so that the lower classes did not infiltrate the middle classes.

The third section describing the social construction of prostitution demonstrated how the prostitute was viewed as deviant, diseased, and not even worth the efforts of maternal feminists. Finally, a detailed analysis of prostitution law enforcement in Vancouver demonstrated how the wealth of the middle class influenced the *laissez faire* attitude of the

politically powerful and their methods of using inquiries to placate the public about prostitution-related conduct and its enforcement. Although the public debated the entire conundrum of how to deal with the plight of prostitution, the general consensus was that prostitution was a 'necessary social evil' which, if it had to be tolerated, should be in restricted areas with compulsory medical examinations.

In closing, it should be noted that, in his final monthly report for 1929, the Chief of Police wrote that there was a significant increase in the unemployed since the stock market crash in October.<sup>124</sup> Would the attitudes of the middle class towards prostitution transform with the changing state of the economy?

## THE DIRTY THIRTIES

In the preceding chapter, several issues concerning the rhetoric surrounding prostitution-related conduct during the 'Roaring Twenties' were examined. More specifically, the bourgeois rhetoric was organized around the concerns of social hygiene crusades and reflected the discriminatory attitudes of the middle class. It was also shown how prostitution was socially constructed according to middle class values, and the effect that this may have had on law enforcement techniques.

This chapter on the 'Dirty Thirties' will focus on the prostitution-related discourse of the 1930's and will examine how the bourgeois rhetoric changed from an emphasis on society's health to a concern for profit-making from prostitution. First of all, it will be argued that the bourgeois rhetoric shifted imperceptibly from a discussion of social hygiene to economic concerns as the 1930's and the 'Great Depression' began to take its toll. Because Vancouver society had turned its attention to the failing economy, it is suggested that the bourgeois virtues of social purity became less important than the middle class values concerning the 'Protestant Work Ethic' or, more specifically, the importance of decent employment for honest wages.

Secondly, the categories of race, class, and gender in the prostitution discourse will be examined and contrasted with the way they were used in the 1920's. For example, did the racial slurs become more explicit when the middle class felt more financially insecure? Did the gap between the middle and lower



classes narrow or widen? Finally, were middle class women more or less sympathetic toward the plight of lower class women?

This analysis should lead into a discussion of the patriarchal nature of society in the 1930's and an examination of the effects of the disastrous economy on women in general and prostitutes in particular. Although women gained from the struggles of the women's movement in areas such as the right to vote and to be legally declared as 'persons', it will be argued that prostitutes were still not recognized as women *per se* because of the deviant nature of their actions.

The next issue to be examined will be whether the social construction of prostitution in the 1930's altered with the changes in economic circumstances. It will be suggested that the economic rhetoric eschewing syndicates and corporations intersected with moral discourse when the severe financial difficulty facing the middle class threatened its existence. Instead of blaming the prostitute for the social disorder and moral decay, the pimps and procurers were accused of usurping their unfair share of the scarce market resources through the monopolization of vice.

Finally, this chapter will investigate prostitution law enforcement techniques. Several factors concerning the arrest rates of prostitution-related offences will be addressed. For example, what are some of the reasons why the arrest rates for prostitution-related offences in Vancouver decreased approximately seventy per cent during the 1930's?

From The Body To The Pocketbook

During the 1920's, economic considerations were not part of middle class concerns since most people believed that, if they worked hard and spent their money judiciously, then capitalism would ensure their security. This gave them time to worry about their physical health and the `scientific' methods of protecting it. Because of the market failure in October of 1929, society's attention turned to the economy. The public felt disillusioned that the perceived success of capitalism had dissolved with such alacrity. Everywhere businesses were going bankrupt and the numbers of unemployed were substantially increasing. Even the essential services were reducing pay rates and cutting back on staff and the Police Department was no exception to this trend.

In January of 1932, the Board of Police Commissioners passed a resolution asking City Council "to allocate 25% of the Police Department's contribution to Unemployment relief to the Women's Hostel...".<sup>125</sup> A month later, notification of a ten per cent reduction in salaries of \$100 or more and a five per cent cut to all salaries of less than \$100 was given to all police officers.<sup>126</sup> The police force was also reduced with most officers being placed on superannuation; however, when Ada Tonkin retired, another woman immediately replaced her as Police Matron.<sup>127</sup> Although this may suggest that the police viewed this position as necessary, it should be noted that all policewomen's salaries, including the Police Matron's, were given an additional seven per cent reduction.<sup>128</sup> This information is added to highlight the severe economic circumstances facing everyone during the `Dirty Thirties' and to

demonstrate how the economic conditions had an impact on prostitution-related discourse.

Foucault argued that "if sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power established it as a possible object."<sup>129</sup> As the politically powerful began to realize that certain groups involved in vice were becoming more economically secure than some members of the respectable middle class, their bourgeois rhetoric about prostitution changed. The long time scapegoat of vice, the prostitute, was increasingly replaced by those who exploited vice, the pimps and procurers.

Two important reasons are posited as to why the public health discourse gradually disappeared from the landscape. One of the theories is that, despite the impression that the public health of the nation was not totally under control, most of the venereal disease propaganda faded when the federal government announced that funding for crusades would be cut, since funding was perceived as too expensive during the current financial crisis - even though several provinces tried to continue with provincial funds.<sup>130</sup> The other theory is that public apathy contributed to the closure of the federal government's *Division of Venereal Disease* because of the "moralizing" nature of the discourse.<sup>131</sup> In other words, it is argued that the middle class interests in the body and its social purity were superseded with economical interests and financial survival.

Irregardless of the reasoning for the decline in the social hygiene crusades, appeals to bourgeois virtues needed another avenue to capture the public's sentiment. Throughout North

America, many citizens believed that the market failure could be blamed on monopolies and this resulted in stronger anti-trust legislation in the United States and its counterpart in Canada, *The Combines Investigation Act*.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, the prostitution-related rhetoric altered from the horrors of venereal disease and the need for social hygiene to the corruption from commercial vice or organized pimping operations that were taking their unfair share of the markets.

Twice during the 1930's, new mayors were elected by condemning vice conditions as a political platform. Indeed, towards the end of 1934, Mr. McGeer, a lawyer who had represented a police officer in 1927 at the Lennie Inquiry which alleged corruption in the Morality Squad, was elected with the largest majority that Vancouver had ever experienced in civic elections.<sup>133</sup> Mayor McGeer replaced Mayor Taylor, who had advocated an 'open policy' towards prostitution law enforcement. The *laissez faire* attitudes of the 'Roaring Twenties' were being rapidly renounced as the moral rhetoric of the politically powerful announced new 'get tough' policies aimed at eliminating exploitative prostitution offences and underground profit-making.

Towards the end of 1937 and an entire year before civic elections were to be held, there were intimations that the major campaign issue would once again be the problems associated with vice in Vancouver. Dr. Telford, the next candidate for Mayor, broadcast claims that a certain hotel in Vancouver was the center of 'white slave' traffic in British Columbia.<sup>134</sup> When Mayor Telford was elected at the start of 1939, the newspapers

published how "[t]he old crusading fervor was in his voice as he denounced the `ravages of anti-social monopolies' and preached his distaste for the `private profit seekers'.<sup>135</sup>

The effects of this rhetoric were apparent when *The Vancouver Sun*, was deluged with letters to the editor as the public responded to the conundrum of the most appropriate method for eliminating pimping operations. When the mayors campaigned against the operations of pimps and procurers, they intimated their concern for society's best interests while maximizing the political and economic utility of bourgeois interests. In other words, by involving the citizens of Vancouver in the discourse against vice, the Mayors displayed their pastoral powers while simultaneously engaging the public in the battle against illegal profit-making operations.

Many of the letters written to the editor of *The Vancouver Sun* suggested places where the police could arrest alleged pimps through raiding their operations. Moreover, most of the letters contained xenophobic undertones and derogatory comments. The next section will examine how discriminatory concerns were expressed in the discussion of prostitution in the `Dirty Thirties'.

#### Discrimination in the 1930's

This section will describe the pervasiveness of racial discrimination towards those involved in prostitution during the `Dirty Thirties' and analyze how this may have been exacerbated by the financial insecurity of the middle class. This section will start with a description of the letters written to the editor of the *Vancouver Sun* criticizing pimping operations and

the people involved in this conduct. This will be illustrated with an example of a pimping operation that was raided and which subsequently resulted in some of the longest sentences in Canadian history for prostitution exploitation offences. A final review and analysis of this section should reveal the incessant discrimination and definite switch in bourgeois rhetoric from blaming the prostitute to vilifying the pimp or procurer.

As mentioned in the last section, the citizens of Vancouver reacted to the rhetoric of the incumbent Mayor with vigilante-type action through the enumeration of several examples of pimping operations that were carrying on business in Vancouver. Interestingly, all of the brothels that were listed in these citizens' complaints had pimps that were of non-white Anglo-Saxon origins. Moreover, all of the letters to the editor of the *Vancouver Sun* criticized the fact that young white girls were the prostitutes. For example, one writer recommended closure of "Japanese owned brothels who [sic] are living off the avails of white girls and have got away with it for years."<sup>136</sup> Another racist letter criticized the police for ignoring a bawdy house operation "where young white girls are catering to Chinese... [while] this business is controlled by 'Southern Italians'."<sup>137</sup>

Two significant points are worth mention here. First of all, the reference to prostitutes appears to have mellowed out so that most of the rhetoric suggests that they are not to blame for their predicaments. It should also be noted that the citizens of Vancouver only seem to be concerned about Caucasian

girls. Secondly, the ethnocentrism of the public becomes apparent: only foreigners are perceived as the ones responsible for the exploitation of prostitutes.

Whether or not an event that happened in 1935 contributed to this racial bias should be considered. Two days after Mayor McGeer took office in 1935, the same police officer that McGeer had defended in 1927 arrested a man who had a reputation as the leader of an enormous pimping operation in Vancouver.<sup>138</sup> Meanwhile, several others were being simultaneously raided and charged with procuring.<sup>139</sup> Within two months, nine persons had been convicted of living in part off the avails of prostitution or procuring.<sup>140</sup>

The heightened awareness of the public towards this 'war on vice' and the prosecution of procurers was intensified by the headlines splashed regularly across *The Vancouver Sun* for the first half of 1935. The public was not allowed admittance to the trials of the suspected 'white slavers' because their testimonies were considered to be too offensive for the public's morals. Yet, it appeared that the newspapers broadcast almost every lurid detail of the court's proceedings.

This was especially noticeable for the three egregious accused, two men and one woman, who were charged and tried together.<sup>141</sup> The ringleader of the alleged pimping operation was an illiterate Italian immigrant named Celona, who was accused of "bossing the police" and paying inordinate amounts of 'protection' money to members of the Morality Squad.<sup>142</sup> During most of the trial, Celona was free on \$70,000 bail which, according to his lawyer, were sureties that had been personally

raised.<sup>143</sup> One may understand the exorbitancy of this bail when compared with the prices at which Celona's properties were assessed. His Maple Hotel was worth \$14,000 for the building and \$10,000 for the land, while his house was estimated at \$5000 for the building and \$1200 for the lot.<sup>144</sup> The 'Great Depression' would have been at its height during these trials; therefore, it would have been relatively simple to comprehend how enraged the public must have been to realize that a foreigner, who could neither read nor write, had supposedly exploited young girls for such enormous gain while the majority of Vancouver's population was barely surviving financially.

Indeed, the implicit condemnation of all pimps and procurers through the explicit castigation of Celona published in the newspapers allowed the readers to use their imaginations as the Crown's closing arguments were enunciated. Celona was described as "an octopus of sin, spreading his evil tentacles over the fair city of Vancouver." Moreover, the prostitutes, who had been targeted in the 'Roaring Twenties' as the villains spreading disease and moral decay, were now portrayed as the victims of evil 'white slavers' as the Crown included xenophobic arguments such as how "these little children" were taken to the Chinese and "had to endure the embraces of crawling yellow vermin and beasts."<sup>145</sup>

The other procurer named Bancroft, who was tried and convicted with Celona, was visualized as the source of venereal disease among the prostitutes.<sup>146</sup> The newspapers explained how three girls testified that they had been "talked into" prostitution after being seduced by Bancroft, who was described



as unemployed and suffering from a severe case of venereal disease which had left him partially blind and deaf.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, the media characterized the coldheartedness of both Celona and Bancroft by illustrating how Bancroft had "made faces" at the girls when they were testifying and how Celona told the disease-ridden girls that they could continue working for him "[a]s long as he got his share of the money."<sup>148</sup> Although venereal disease was still a public issue, the reference to financial greed at a time when society was feeling financially insecure demonstrated how bourgeois virtues had altered subtly, but substantially, from purity of the body to the importance placed on earning a living honestly and decently.

Even though the public was banned from the trials, it was allowed in to hear the verdicts and sentences. The court was crowded both inside and out as people congregated to hear the sentences.<sup>149</sup> It only took the all-male jury half an hour to find them guilty.<sup>150</sup> Celona was sentenced to twenty-two years (ten years each for procuring and living off the avails plus two year for keeping a bawdy house).<sup>151</sup> Bancroft was also given two ten year maximum sentences for both procuring and living off the avails of prostitution. The woman, who had been tried with them, was only sentenced to two years because the judge believed that she was the "victim of wicked men."<sup>152</sup>

Although Celona's sentence was eventually reduced to eleven years, the public had received the message that such behavior was not to be tolerated in Vancouver.<sup>153</sup> In fact, the reduction in sentence did not appear to be published in Vancouver's newspapers, but located as a filler story in the *Toronto Globe &*

*Mail*. While these may have been the longest sentences ever handed down in Vancouver for exploitative prostitution offences, the trials did not mark the end of the rhetoric criticizing underground profit making, which continued through until the declaration of the second World War.

The foregoing anecdotal information demonstrates not only the racial prejudice inherent in the bourgeois rhetoric but also the fear of racial domination by uneducated immigrants. In his article on narcotics legislation in Canada, Neil Boyd stresses the importance of economic and racist ideologies while cautioning against "succumb[ing] to the ogre of positivist correctionalism."<sup>154</sup> He then refers the reader to Dolinski, who has argued that the "labor/capitalist relationship" should be investigated to determine the importance of the way in which social problems are constructed by the politically powerful.<sup>155</sup> Although Boyd's analysis is about narcotics legislation, the same may be said for prostitution related issues. The threat of other races usurping financial control through commercialized vice appeared to be the predominant factor governing moral discourse in the 'Dirty Thirties'. Another factor which should not be ignored is the influence of the newspapers in shaping public awareness and conceptions of prostitution-related conduct. The *Vancouver Sun's* descriptive displays of racism in the above-mentioned case study tend to legitimate racist behavior while they simultaneously reproduce the hegemonic domination of powerful groups in society.

Class based differences appeared to be closely tied to racial prejudices during the 1930's. Bourgeois rhetoric seemed

to be more focused on racial origins than on class. Because most of the lower classes were immigrants, the issue of class differences was inextricably tied to their racial origins. Because no mention is made of lower class, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants being involved in commercialized vice, it is assumed that any involvement by them was ignored or that differences were not as discernible between the working class poor and the middle class who were barely surviving themselves.

Despite the growing sympathy for the plight of their 'fallen' sisters, most middle class women still tended to identify with middle class men because of the deviant nature of prostitutes. It was felt that prostitutes had abdicated their maternal responsibilities and social respectability through their 'abnormal' sexual behavior. Yet, it appeared that middle class women in the 1930's suddenly believed that white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant girls were still capable of rescue. For instance, out of sympathy for the nine girls who had become implicated in Celona's 'white slavery' operation, a special grant was created by the *Vancouver Welfare Federation* to "re-establish themselves in 'normal' community life."<sup>156</sup>

While most middle class women castigated sexual immorality by all women, suffice it to say that the most obvious discrimination in the 1930's surrounded racial origins, which they believed were responsible for "foreign importations like white slavery and oriental concubinage."<sup>157</sup> More will be said about the women's situations and protective legislation against other races in the next section which will examine the patriarchal nature of society in the 'Dirty Thirties.'

Patriarchy and Feminism in the 1930's

Women are from their very infancy debarred those advantages, with the want of which they are afterwards reproached, and nursed up in those vices which will hereafter be upbraided to them.<sup>158</sup>

The above quote from Mary Astell (1694) is over three hundred years old and still representative of patriarchy in the 1930's. It was describing male power and how women are socialized into believing that they should be 'blamed' for the social arrangements that men have created. As this section will demonstrate, women were castigated in their quests for independence, whether as prostitutes or politicians, by men who barred them from many forms of employment and eventually criticized those who were able to survive financially. The bourgeois patriarchal rhetoric and racial prejudices of the 'Dirty Thirties' had an oppressive effect on women because of the enforcement of protective legislation designed to keep women and young girls away from possible pimps and procurers. This section will outline how the discriminatory middle class rhetoric restricted women's movements and denied them opportunities for independence.

Despite the fact that the *Local Council of Women* was still requesting that a woman be appointed to the Board of Police Commissioners, the police virtually ignored this entreaty even though they did eventually assign some policewomen to preventative work.<sup>159</sup> These duties were only used as a measure to placate the women's groups as evidenced by the policewomen's lack of authority to arrest alleged procurers. Instead, they were only allowed to refer 'wayward' girls to the *Social Service*

*Exchange Committee* which, in turn, assigned the girls to the proper agencies. This had the effect of capturing those who were deemed to be potential prostitutes within the 'carceral network.' The social work and mental health agencies designed to 'rescue' young girls could effectively classify and control deviant groups.<sup>160</sup>

Foucault describes how the various institutional agencies used this 'carceral archipelago' to create a form of indirect supervision and surveillance over a non-institutionalized population which, in the case of prostitutes, had the effect of identifying and classifying them for the authorities.<sup>161</sup> Because policewomen were employed for this duty, it was also a method of dichotomizing women in what may be referred to as a 'divide and conquer' disciplinary technique. Besides achieving optimal political and economic utility for the middle class, the marginalization of deviant groups through classification restrained women's actions, thereby increasing the patriarchal control over their bodies.

One of the issues that gained notoriety during the 'Dirty Thirties' was the problem of white women working for the Chinese. Whether or not the xenophobic reaction to the Chinese was exacerbated by Celona's vice trials in 1935, the police force were criticized for not enforcing the provisions of the *Women's Protection Act*, which banned Caucasian girls from working in Chinese cafes. Ironically, the Police Chief was criticized for driving white prostitutes off the streets and into Chinese restaurants.<sup>162</sup> With such criticism, one has to

wonder whether middle class attitudes against Orientals were more overpowering than their repugnance against prostitution.

While police enforcement practices seemed to be concentrating more on the apprehension of pimps and procurers, the misogynistic attitudes towards the prostitutes still prevailed in the courts. For example, a husband was acquitted of living off the avails of prostitution after his wife admitted to being involved in occasional prostitution. The judge suggested to the husband that he should "drop [his] association with this woman" despite her appearance at the police station with a torn dress and black eye after he beat her.<sup>163</sup>

Larsen (1992) also found from his research into *Canadian Criminal Cases* reported in the 1930's that most males, who were charged with either pimping or procuring, were released by the courts even though more men were arrested and charged with exploitative prostitution-related offences.<sup>164</sup> This reluctance to convict also happened when Chinese men were arrested and charged under the *Women's Protection Act* for allowing white girls to work in their cafes. In one case, three men had been arrested but one had his charges withdrawn, the second one had his charges dismissed, and the third was convicted but allowed to go on a suspended sentence.<sup>165</sup>

Overall, the situations of working women had not changed drastically. In a report to the Board of Police Commissioners, it was decided "that conditions were once more becoming grave" because, even though employers were only hiring white girls, the scarcity of available employment was significant.<sup>166</sup> This racist concern for Caucasian women only could easily imply that,

if non-white or immigrant women were not supported by their families, then they would be suitable candidates for prostitution. Besides demonstrating the relative worthlessness of foreign women, the patriarchal society seemed to guarantee its own supply of prostitutes.

Ethnocentric attitudes were also apparent amongst middle class women as evidenced by representatives of the *Local Council of Women* when they appeared before the Board of Police Commissioners to request employment of more policewomen. They specified that all new employees should be Vancouver women and that seniority be contemplated. The Chairman of the Board denied their appeals because he did not believe that it was financially feasible with a scarcity of local women trained in social work.<sup>167</sup> This example illustrates the differences expected between policemen and policewomen. While most policemen only required minimal education and had a union that guaranteed their seniority, women were required to have special training and even then would not be given rights to seniority. Not only is this an example of men attempting to exclude women from any satisfactory employment, it suggests the belief that women are useless as police officers unless they assume the nurturing role that social work ostensibly required. With the exclusion of women from many forms of employment, one wonders why many more of them did not turn to prostitution.

It was argued by a number of people that married women should not work and suggested that, if married women stayed home, then prostitutes could find work. Most of these persons were middle class citizens, who were writing letters to the

editor of the *Vancouver Sun* in response to a plea to society for methods for eliminating prostitution from Vancouver.<sup>168</sup> While some people blamed housing and others advocated training for young girls, the majority felt that married women were the main problem. It is interesting to note how society still attached the blame to women, instead of men, for the social problem of prostitution.

One woman, who bore the brunt of the criticism about married women working, was Alderman [sic] Helena Gutteridge. When she had argued in a City Council meeting that "provision should first have been made for these girls [prostitutes] to earn an honest living," another Alderman objected with the argument that prostitutes could earn decent livings if married women stayed home.<sup>169</sup> This provoked an editorial from the *Vancouver Sun* which suggested that Helena Gutteridge be evicted from City Council because of her support for married women. The editor stated that he could see "no difference between a man who lives off the avails of prostitution or a man who lives off of his wife's earnings."<sup>170</sup>

In closing, it should be noted that although misogynistic attitudes towards women still prevailed during the 'Dirty Thirties', most of the bourgeois rhetoric on prostitution focused on economic factors instead of social purity as was noted about the previous decade. Because a capitalist society is premised upon individual competition and the accumulation of wealth, much of the discourse was aimed at criticizing all those who were seeking to gain what was considered to be their unfair share of the resources. While pimps and procurers were the main



targets of their criticisms, even the prostitutes and married women who dared to work were severely chastised. Although venereal disease propaganda was mentioned sporadically, the public health discourse would not become prevalent again until during World War II, when prostitutes would again be blamed for its transmission.

### The Social Construction of Prostitution in the 1930's

During the 'Roaring Twenties', the prostitute had been constructed as diseased and mentally retarded, the pimp or procurer virtually ignored, and the threat of 'white slavery' as chimerical. In the 'Dirty Thirties,' the prostitute emerged as a victim (though not entirely vindicated), the pimp or procurer became an underground profiteer monopolizing vice, and the ostensible illusion of 'white slavery' became a 'reality' in Vancouver. This section will investigate how the change in prostitution-related discourse took place.

According to Chambliss and Seidman, the larger political, social and economic forces should be examined when one tries to understand "the way the law responds to the problematics of a particular historical era."<sup>171</sup> While their main focal point is the creation of laws, they demonstrate with various examples how fundamental contradictions in the political economy influence the construction of what is considered 'good' or 'bad'. In a capitalist society, the politically powerful attempt to legitimize existing class relations through manipulation of social control agencies such as the media and law enforcement personnel.

During the 'Dirty Thirties', one important contradiction was the wealth being accumulated by the pimps and procurers while the rest of society was experiencing financial hardship and becoming skeptical of the relative success of capitalism with the failing economy. The media could be seen as a voice for the objectives of the middle class by characterizing the pimps and procurers as the evil forces responsible in part for the destruction of the economy. It has been stated that "news stories seem unobtrusive enough, but they carry the power to imprint particular versions of reality as acceptable wisdom."<sup>172</sup> By blaming pimps and procurers for society's woes, the middle class rhetoric helped to socially construct an atmosphere where the method of earning money was more important than the previous emphasis on social purity, a value that was now considered a luxury during severe financial crisis.

Ericson et al also note that newspapers are pivotal agents in the construction of social reality because they define the social order through suggesting what behavior is proper or improper.<sup>173</sup> Because the values that the middle class wanted to emphasize during tough financial times concerned decent employment or honest work habits, the pimps were targeted. This scapegoating had the domino effect of stigmatizing the prostitutes who worked for them more as victims than as villains.

Financial excuses were provided for prostitutes by those in authority who appeared to concede the inevitability of prostitution as an economically viable option for women and a 'necessary social evil' for men. For instance, when writing his

annual report, the Police Chief stated that "[c]ivilization, however, has failed to find any solution to prostitution" and that while some believe that prostitution is necessary "as a natural result of normal sexual matters," he argues that "the law lays down penalties for the offence of prostitution" and that, until employers pay more, prostitution is inescapable.<sup>174</sup> More will be said about this subject in the next section about law enforcement techniques in the 'Dirty Thirties'.

This new image of the prostitute as victim provided the impetus for the police to actively enforce the laws already in place against the exploitation of prostitutes. According to Hall et al, the bourgeois rhetoric, which characterized behavior exploiting prostitutes as deviant, was expressed in the newspapers to bestow the police with the authority to arrest and charge pimps and procurers.<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, the heightened awareness of the public through the newspaper features encouraged the courts to mete out more severe punishment to those involved in pimping or procuring.

Because most of the pimps and procurers were immigrants, this would have significantly increased the racial prejudices against foreigners, who were already experiencing discrimination. Not only do the newspapers substantiate the perspectives and values of the politically powerful, they demonstrate to society the ostensible 'deviance' of immigrants and provide rationalizations for curtailing immigration.

In addition to vilifying foreigners as the problem group responsible in part for economic corruption, the newspapers verified the existence of 'white slavery' by publishing the

details of Celona's vice trials and portraying the prostitutes as helpless girls, who had been seduced by wily men and forced to serve the sexual needs of other foreign men. The vituperation of pimps influenced the criminal justice system towards stricter enforcement of prostitution-exploitation laws that had been relatively abandoned during the 'Roaring Twenties'.

In his article on the origins of the legislation to combat the threat of 'white slavery,' McLaren suggests the racial biases against foreigners and non-Christians when he describes how Jewish procurers were rumored to be living off the avails of English Christian girls.<sup>176</sup> The emphasis on 'white' slavery captured the attention of the middle class during the economic downswing of the 'Dirty Thirties' because it reinforced the notion that their daughters could fall prey to unscrupulous men at a time when everyone was trying to 'make ends meet.'

By assigning a criminal status to pimps and procurers, the bourgeois rhetoric on prostitution was able to justify the implementation of punitive and repressive measures against immigrants involved in the exploitation of prostitutes. Although the justifications advanced for these actions were phrased in terms which appear to represent the interests of society as a whole, they ultimately preserved existing hierarchical arrangements through legitimating further discrimination of foreigners. Moreover, the newspaper's conceptions of 'social reality' invariably reflected the values and interests of the economically powerful. Through their trenchant criticism of commercialized vice, the existing

political-economic system was honored as citizens were encouraged to be repulsed with illegal profiteers while simultaneously warned to be wary of men of different cultures.

One of the groups, which was significantly affected by the transformation in discourse, was the police. Their strategies for containing prostitution-related behavior alternated from concentrating their efforts on arresting prostitutes to dissuading pimps and procurers through strict enforcement of the exploitation offences. The next section will analyze the changes in law enforcement techniques.

#### Prostitution Law Enforcement Techniques in Vancouver

The last section illustrated how law enforcement personnel in Vancouver shifted from targeting the prostitute population to directing its attention to underworld pimps and procurers profiting from commercialized vice. While it has been argued in previous sections that arrest rates for offences involving the exploitation of prostitutes increased significantly because of transformations in bourgeois rhetoric and subsequent alterations in law enforcement strategies concerning pimps and procurers, it does not explain why arrest rates for prostitution-related offences decreased overall by seventy per cent during the 'Dirty Thirties'. This section will provide some reasons for this decrease.

To begin with, a brief perusal of Graph 1 clearly demonstrates the significant decline in arrest rates for prostitution-related offences in Vancouver. Three reasons are proposed for this declivity. First of all, the obvious and probably most logical explanation is that, as less money was

available to men for paying for prostitutes' services, the decline represents the economic shortfall of Vancouver's citizens. While this suggestion may appear to be a rational exegesis, it does not explain why the arrest rates began their descent as early as 1926, a time when the economy was relatively stable. Furthermore, as the economy recovered it would stand to reason that the arrest rates should increase. However, this did not happen.

The second justification for the apparent ebb in arrest rates is suggested by Huzel, who states that it might be attributed to "the unwillingness or inability of the police to arrest."<sup>177</sup> While Huzel does not rule out the impact of the major investigations into police corruption between 1928 and 1935 on the declining arrest rates of prostitutes, he urges that more research be carried out before any definite conclusions may be reached regarding this possibility. Huzel's argument appears to be quite convincing since the Lennie Report written in 1928 does state that the police department was demoralized because of undermanning and inadequate pay.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, the market failure in 1929 did result in salary cuts and reductions in the number of police officers. However, this explanation is deficient in that it does not go far enough to describe how or why the arrest rate reduction was achieved.

The third reason hypothesized for the decreasing arrest rates is that the police altered their prostitution law enforcement techniques due to changes in bourgeois rhetoric. Although this third reason may sound confusing, the effects of the prostitution discourse will be analyzed in greater detail so

that the reader may comprehend how it combined with the lack of economic resources and the demoralization of the police force to result in a decreasing rate of prostitution-related arrests.

Although the police force was undermanned and underpaid, its demoralization was also influenced by the power struggles between the Mayors and Police Chiefs. Since the Mayor had authority as the Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners, conflicts appeared to arise when the Mayors and Chiefs disagreed on the best law enforcement techniques. This could have resulted in demoralization of the police as they were unsure who they should be loyal to.

For example, as the New Year of 1931 rolled in, Louis Taylor was re-elected as Mayor.<sup>179</sup> By January 14, the members of the Morality Squad and ex-Chief Long (who had all been suspended for alleged corruption) were re-appointed.<sup>180</sup> The combination of Chief Bingham's 'public order' stance and Mayor Taylor's 'open policy' appeared to be an issue as evidenced by Chief Bingham's monthly report in April.<sup>181</sup> The mounting tension became apparent when, in September, Chief Bingham resigned.<sup>182</sup>

Colonel Edgett was Chief Bingham's successor; however, within five months a conflict ensued when Mayor Taylor informed Chief Edgett "that [Mayor Taylor] was boss, had always been boss, that the Chief Constable had to take orders from him and [the Mayor] did not intend to have any outsider come in and deprive him of his authority...."<sup>183</sup> By 1933, the Board members voted to suspend Colonel Edgett and four Morality Squad detectives for tolerating vice,<sup>184</sup> after the Mayor had hired

three men to investigate vice conditions.<sup>185</sup> Colonel Edgett tried to sue Mayor Taylor because the affidavits of the investigators listed non-existent addresses or addresses of ostensibly reputable businesses.<sup>186</sup> Since no further articles could be found in the *Vancouver Sun*, it is assumed that Colonel Edgett lost his case because both the Mayor and the new Police Chief remained in office until Mr. McGeer, who had been one of the lawyers alleging corruption during the probe in 1927, was elected as Mayor in 1935.

According to Foucault, the regulation and categorization of behavior is secured through an 'apparatus of knowledge' of individuals which, in turn, is applied towards transforming deviants.<sup>187</sup> Despite the fact that Foucault was referring to prisons in his book, he makes it abundantly clear that the disciplinary methods which he describes may be analogized to other forms of domination such as armies, schools, hospitals, and various other institutions where discipline is warranted.

Foucault (1977) suggests that, in order to exercise power in an economical fashion, a system of 'hierarchical observation' is necessary so that the observed will feel constantly visible. Because continual observation is practically impossible in some situations, Foucault shows how the 'disciplinary gaze' works through a strategy of surveillance that produces compliance, as well as knowledge. This strategy of power was used by the Vancouver police to categorize and regulate prostitution-related conduct.

Due to the wage reductions and cutbacks in manpower of the Vancouver police during the 'Dirty Thirties,' the scarce police



resources were used to investigate pimps and procurers instead of the prostitutes. Instead of arresting as many prostitutes, the Morality Squad used their power to arrest only the prostitutes who were new to the area, were creating a nuisance, and, most importantly, other prostitutes at random. By exercising these tactics, the Vancouver police were able to maintain control over the prostitutes' behavior and use this power to acquire knowledge of underworld activities. By arresting other prostitutes at random, the police were ensuring compliance from prostitutes, while simultaneously appeasing the public through making prostitution less visible.

Hilary Evans (1979) describes how, when this law enforcement strategy of only 'randomly' arresting prostitutes was employed in Britain, it "gave the police a good deal of room to manoeuvre... but it had the merit of preserving a measure of control."<sup>188</sup> She argued that the prostitutes did not mind because they became familiar with the police on their beat and were not arrested as often.

Since the police force was demoralized because of a shortage of men and a reduction in salaries, it was decided by the Lennie Inquiry that reorganization was necessary to achieve optimum enforcement of prostitution laws. Because the police appeared to view prostitution as more of a 'nuisance' than as an important crime, it would have been more economically feasible to concentrate their efforts on detecting the procurers. It is suggested that law enforcement personnel altered their tactics by arresting fewer prostitutes while encouraging rhetoric that conveyed to the public that coercive prostitution offences were

being eliminated in Vancouver. Yet beneath these exterior arguments, the notion that prostitution was inevitable was being communicated. The evidence for this hypothesis will be outlined below.

First of all, a close investigation of the *Police Court Calendars* and *Board of Police Commissioners Correspondence* files at the Vancouver Public Archives demonstrate that prostitution law enforcement strategies gradually changed towards the end of the 'Roaring Twenties'. When arrests rates for prostitution-related offences were over one thousand per year, the records show that an average of between five and ten persons were being arrested for each bawdy house; however, by the late 1920's these numbers had decreased so that the average bawdy house arrests consisted of one prostitute, one customer and, in many cases, one keeper who was usually female.

Although it may be argued that the arrest rates changed because of the dispersion of prostitutes to single bawdy houses, the evidence demonstrates that many of the bawdy house addresses were the same. Police behavior, however, changed: instead of raiding the entire house, they only raided one or two rooms at a time. The relative shortage of police officers might have necessitated this change of tactics. Furthermore, drawing on Foucault's arguments about the growth of surveillance techniques in modern society, it could be argued that the police were only randomly arresting prostitutes to leave the impression that they were being watched and that they could be the next ones to be arrested under the police officers 'watchful eye.' Once the prostitutes were arrested, the Morality Squad had more power

because they knew which prostitutes worked in their areas, which prostitutes were trouble-makers, and which prostitutes were working for pimps. Consequently, this extra knowledge increased their power of surveillance. The symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power enhanced their control over the prostitution-related population.

The bourgeois rhetoric influenced the change in arrest strategies because it created a concern for the prostitute as victim, thereby shifting the investigative efforts of the Morality Squad from harassing the prostitutes *per se* to detecting pimps and procurers. Since citizens of Vancouver had become more aware of the possibilities of 'white slavery' in their cities, the public concern affected police strategy by arresting the exploiters of vice rather than their victims. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the prostitution-related discourse, which was now directed towards pimps and procurers, was also influenced by the beliefs of law enforcement personnel that prostitution was predestined and could not be eliminated because of the 'normal' sexual needs of men.

Yet it should be emphasized here that the rhetoric being broadcast through the newspapers about prostitution law enforcement was contradictory. While reassuring the citizens that prostitution was being eliminated, another version was being told at the Police Commissioners' meeting where there were arguments about the impossibilities of eradicating vice. This appeared to be the new strategy for tolerating prostitution: decreasing its visibility and impressing upon the people of

Vancouver that the police were doing their job when, in effect, the Morality Squad was only controlling the problem.

On the one hand, the Chief of Police reported in the *Vancouver Sun* that street walking was almost eliminated and claimed that "with the present police vigilance there is little chance of any house of commercialized vice doing any business without being soon detected."<sup>189</sup> Thus, the decreasing arrest rates could appear to suggest that vice, in fact, was being gradually eliminated. However, one of the Police Chief's new rules was that "all reports are to be closed to the press and that information is to be given out by the inspector in charge or in his absence by the sergent [sic] in charge."<sup>190</sup> This policy coupled with the fact that the police force had been reorganized would lead one to infer that enforcement practices toward prostitution-related offences had changed drastically. Perhaps the police had orders only to arrest for vice if it were visible, thereby sending prostitutes into the clutches of pimps for protection? By not informing the public of the actual strategies employed, the police were able to concentrate on more pressing matters such as theft which, according to Huzel, had increased significantly during the economic downswing.<sup>191</sup>

On the other hand, at a meeting of the Police Commissioners it was conceded that, since Vancouver is a seaport town, "you can't put the lid on vice, but you can control it."<sup>192</sup> Yet when one of the Police Commissioners stated that vice was at its worst in forty years and that Mayor Taylor knew of some ninety-five bawdy houses that operated in Vancouver, the police

retorted that "there is vice in every city" and that "you can't stamp it out."<sup>193</sup>

The combination of the impecunious situation at the police department in Vancouver, the relative demoralization of the police, and the bourgeois rhetoric against pimps and procurers led to significant changes in law enforcement patterns of prostitution-related offences. By concentrating their efforts on arresting those involved in the exploitation of prostitutes and using a different disciplinary strategy for controlling prostitutes, the police were able to placate the public while being more cost-effective. By only arresting a few prostitutes per day, the police could assuage their own beliefs about the inescapability of prostitution, yet still maintain that they had the problem under control.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated how, during two economically distinct decades, the bourgeois rhetoric shifted the emphasis from prostitutes to procurers which, in turn, influenced the law enforcement policies in Vancouver. By introducing two graphs depicting the variation in arrest rates for prostitution-related and exploitative offences in Vancouver, it was noted that arrest rates for prostitution offences over these two periods declined overall by seventy per cent and significantly increased in arrests for exploitative offences. Because of the lack of correlation in arrest rates with prostitution law reforms, this thesis set out to examine whether, during the 1920's and 1930's, there was any connection between arrest rates and prostitution-related discourse. An examination of what was being said in the newspapers about prostitution illustrated that the bourgeois virtue of moral purity had altered to social hygiene during the 'Roaring Twenties', while the virtue of 'honest work' took precedence in prostitution-related discourse during the 'Dirty Thirties.'

Since it was argued in this thesis that bourgeois rhetoric and changes in economic circumstances may have affected law enforcement strategies, a contextualization of discriminatory and patriarchal relations in Vancouver during the 1920's and 1930's was necessary. By viewing prostitution as a historical product, these findings led to an analysis of differences between how prostitution was socially constructed during an economically stable decade compared with almost ten years of financial uncertainty. Finally, an exploration into

prostitution law enforcement strategies in Vancouver revealed that they may have possibly been linked with economic circumstances and the corresponding middle class interests.

This chapter will begin with a brief synopsis of some of the important findings from the research and a summary as to their significance. This will be followed by an epilogue of prostitution-related discourse during the 'Warring Forties.' By including this epilogue, it will be shown how the bourgeois rhetoric reverted back to social hygiene from the emphasis on financial concerns in an effort to promote the safety of soldiers from diseased prostitutes. Because the 1940's is beyond the scope of this thesis, the epilogue will initiate a discussion of areas where further research may be undertaken.

The first important shift in bourgeois rhetoric during the 1920's was when the middle class began to gradually depend on the science of eugenics espoused by the burgeoning professions instead of the moral arguments proclaimed by religious authorities. The greater 'claim to truth' associated with scientific facts allowed doctors, social workers, and middle class philanthropic women to persuade the public about the deviant, diseased, and mentally retarded nature of the prostitute. Although several other groups advocated change to the socio-economic conditions of prostitutes, the middle classes appeared to be more interested in cleansing society of 'impure' races caused by venereal diseases and the ensuing feeble-mindedness. By targeting the prostitutes as the source of transmission of venereal disease, the bourgeois rhetoric seems

to have legitimated their harassment as evidenced by their high arrest rates during the 1920's.

It was also found that Vancouver was a classist, racist, and sexist society as law enforcement strategies aimed at protecting white Anglo-Saxon Protestant girls while indiscriminately arresting all others. The bourgeois virtue that all 'good' women should be sequestered in their homes led to women being offered employment with meager wages and virtually no room for advancement. Yet the relative affluence of the middle class during the 'Roaring Twenties' exacerbated the excoriation of prostitutes as tainted and defective rather than as victims of poor socio-economic conditions.

The substantial resources available to law enforcement personnel during the 1920's was apparent as the police daily arrested multitudes of prostitutes while ignoring the pimps or procurers involved in exploitation. Although the police argued that alleged procurers were basically immune from the law because of the strict evidential requirements, they were willing to forego the harassment of accused pimps because their profits were not discernible in the relatively prosperous society of the 1920's. Since pimps could use the legal 'loophole' of owning a business to cover their nefarious activities, it was logically much easier for the Vancouver police to accept 'protection' money than to arrest and charge the procurers with offences where it was highly unlikely that they would have been convicted.

Because the 'Roaring Twenties' was a time of relative abundance, the middle class could have ostracized prostitutes



for not finding decent employment despite the miniscule wages offered. But they did not. Instead, they castigated prostitutes as carriers of venereal diseases. Drawing on science, the middle class propagated a `truth' linking prostitution, venereal disease, and feeble-mindedness. Furthermore, since the concern for social hygiene was supported by the `science' of eugenics, the veracity of medical claims linking prostitutes to feeble-mindedness was not questioned.

The Vancouver police responded to the social hygiene crusaders by arresting as many prostitutes as possible. The economic success of their endeavors was obvious as the prostitutes consistently paid their fines as if they were licenses and then went straight back to work until arrested again. The significant number of prostitutes and manpower on the Morality Squad allowed the police to arrest many prostitutes and customers each day. Therefore, it was not surprising that, when corruption was alleged in the late 1920's, the police department blamed demoralization of the officers. It could not have been very rewarding for the police to see the futility of eradicating prostitution, while pimps and procurers remained relatively immune from arrest. Nor could their morale have been strengthened as conflicts arose between Mayors and Police Chiefs, who frequently disagreed on the best law enforcement techniques.

As the `Great Depression' descended upon Vancouver society during the `Dirty Thirties,' economic survival took precedence over social hygiene concerns, which lessened considerably as the governments cut funding to crusaders. As businesses went

bankrupt and unemployment surged, the middle classes' aversion to monopolies in the general economy was transferred over to prostitution-related discourse as the bourgeois rhetoric assailed the pimps and procurers for underworld monopolies on vice. Furthermore, evidence was given of how racial prejudices figured predominantly in the vituperation of pimps and procurers, who were mainly foreign immigrants accused of exploiting 'white' girls.

The importance of prostitution-related discourse for politics was noticeable as politicians campaigning for the Mayor's position were elected after using vice problems for their platforms. It was no coincidence that the most publicized 'white slavery' cases began with the arrest of alleged pimps immediately after Mayor McGeer took office. Despite the ban on admission to the trials, Vancouver citizens were bombarded with the horrific details through intensive and meticulous coverage of the trials by the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. The heavy sentences handed down to the alleged 'white slavers' demonstrated the criminal justice system's ability to punish procurers when they were the targets of bourgeois rhetoric despite the absence of any law reforms until 1939.

The instillation by the media of the reality of 'white slavery' in Vancouver led to greater enforcement of protective legislation for women. This translated into greater oppression of women as they were denied employment opportunities. Moreover, it was relatively easy for 'wayward' girls to be caught up in the 'carceral network' of social workers and mental health agencies for any form of deviant sexual behavior.

However, instead of blaming the prostitute for society's ills, the bourgeois rhetoric castigated married women for working and taking jobs away from prostitutes. Although the middle classes appeared to be finally recognizing the socio-economic factors associated with prostitution, women were the ones criticized for not remaining at home so that prostitutes could be gainfully employed.

This thesis has illustrated how what McLaren & Lowman (1990) refer to as the "pragmatic tolerance discourse" about prostitutes took precedence amongst law enforcement officials as the prostitute was viewed more as a victim of poor economic circumstances who provided a 'necessary' sexual outlet for men. As bourgeois rhetoric against 'evil' pimps and procurers intensified, law enforcement personnel redirected their efforts to investigation of the exploitative offences. Since the discouraged police force was dealing with a reduction in manpower and wages, a law enforcement strategy had to be articulated that was cost effective. Perhaps one of the more significant findings of this research describes how police altered their prostitution law enforcement strategies so that their techniques were not only more efficient, but corresponded with what the middle class considered to be more criminal behavior.

Since it was agreed that prostitution could not be eradicated and that the real 'crime' was the exploitation of prostitutes, the police formulated new strategies which involved categorizing and controlling prostitution by only arresting prostitutes who were being 'nuisances' or not already under the

watchful eye of law enforcement personnel. By controlling where prostitutes carried out their business, the police were able to contain visibility of prostitution-related conduct which, in turn, placated the public. Since prostitution was tacitly condoned by law enforcement personnel while still under the purview of the criminal law, police were able to exert their power through efficient surveillance tactics.

This finding is important because it helps to explain how the police handled the contradictory nature of prostitution law by using methods that are still in place today. For example, Vancouver's current vice squad patrols the areas where prostitutes congregate and make their presence known. If there are certain areas where the police do not want the prostitutes to conduct their business because of citizens' complaints, the officers tell them to go to areas where they are less visible. The only ones who are usually arrested are new to the area and have not been categorized. The police keep a photo album of snapshots of prostitutes and use this for identification purposes.

Using a Foucauldian perspective, this thesis showed how the police used disciplinary techniques which gave law enforcement personnel ultimate control over the prostitutes' actions while they could assuage their own beliefs about the inevitability of prostitution. By categorizing and regulating the prostitutes, the police were able to extend their power to arrest or coerce prostitutes when it was deemed to be in the law enforcement personnel's best interest.

Although the bourgeois rhetoric in the 'Dirty Thirties' militated against procurers and pimps who were considered to be the 'real' criminals, the alteration in prostitution law enforcement strategy was just as effective against the prostitutes without reversion back to the previous methods of arresting as many prostitutes as possible. Furthermore, this left police with the room to manipulate the arrest rates if the politicians wanted to use a 'clean up' operation as a political platform. With the help of the media, the politicians could create 'moral panics' over the vice situation and then use this 'knowledge' for election purposes.

Some of Foucault's work addresses the relationships between sexuality, power and knowledge. His conception of power suggests that there is a multitude of power relations in the social body that are exercised from various points. Foucault's insights about power relations have been demonstrated in this thesis through an analysis of eugenics and its 'scientific' claims to truth by the burgeoning professions of medicine and social work. It has shown how knowledge/power was exercised over prostitutes' bodies through the perceived veracity of the science of sexuality as opposed to religious authority. Furthermore, Foucault's arguments about how the government was conceived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as "a form of surveillance, of control which is as watchful as that of the head of a family over his household and goods" are meaningful when one considers how eugenics was instituted to care for the health of the population and how Vancouver's law enforcement strategies were altered to facilitate more efficient methods of

controlling deviant populations such as those involved in prostitution.

Finally, it should be noted that this enforcement strategy would not be possible if prostitution was decriminalized. Even though most law enforcement personnel believe that prostitution cannot be eradicated, the control over prostitutes is important so that police may corral them into less visible, unofficial 'red light' districts while simultaneously classifying them for 'knowledge' of the underworld and its activities. If prostitution was decriminalized, police would lose this important power to regulate the prostitute's conduct.

One has to ask whether or not this law enforcement tactic is hypocritical because it oppresses prostitutes by placing them in a position where their behavior, while deemed criminal, is in essence viewed more of a 'nuisance' than a crime. While this strategy may have been cost effective and efficient during the 1920's and the 1930's, one has to question its contemporary suitability considering the increasing violence against prostitutes. If the implicit assumption among law enforcement personnel is that prostitution is a 'necessary social evil' that should be tolerated and controlled, then it is only logical that prostitutes be charged with other criminal law offences such as 'common nuisance' or 'public mischief.' However, as was also argued in this thesis, the bourgeois rhetoric would have to advocate decriminalization before the police force could rid itself of the hypocrisy created by contradictory prostitution law.

In closing, a brief outline of prostitution-related discourse from 1940 to 1945 will demonstrate how middle class interests and the subsequent bourgeois rhetoric was transformed again as the economy began to revitalize and social hygiene issues overtook economic concerns. The bourgeois virtue of supporting the 'war effort' included denunciation of prostitutes in British Columbia because their "bawdy houses threaten[ed] the armed services."<sup>194</sup> Since public health concerns were under the aegis of the provincial governments, several provinces passed legislation aimed at the treatment of venereal diseases such as compulsory blood tests prior to marriage and mandatory treatment of infected persons.<sup>195</sup>

During the 'Warring Forties,' the public health discourse had re-emerged along with a contiguous problem reminiscent of the Prohibition Era: beer parlors and prostitution.<sup>196</sup> The most persuasive argument appeared to be that beer parlors were the breeding grounds for the spread of venereal disease by prostitutes. While temperance workers in British Columbia were asking Premier Hart for the segregation of men and women in beer parlors,<sup>197</sup> those in Ontario were advocating the abolishment of all women from bars.<sup>198</sup>

Yet as early as 1942, a nation-wide survey found that prevention of social diseases was "a civilian problem and [did] not involve soldiers and prostitutes."<sup>199</sup> By the end of 1945, the City Health Officer argued that only 29 out of 904 cases of venereal disease came from bawdy houses.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, at a forum on venereal disease, Inspector Rae of the Morality Department reiterated that most of the social diseases arose

from non-commercialized promiscuity and that some young girls "appear to be budding prostitutes."<sup>201</sup> Although the prostitute was not entirely vindicated as the carrier of venereal disease, middle class interests and the corresponding rhetoric placed more emphasis on the problem of female juvenile delinquents and their sexual licentiousness.<sup>202</sup> Not surprisingly, divorced mothers were blamed in most cases for having to work and, therefore, not sustaining the bourgeois ideal of the domesticated mother.

Racism was ubiquitous in Vancouver society. The Japanese brothel mentioned in chapter one of this thesis was forced out of business as the self-proclaimed 'madame', Kiyoko Tanaka Goto, was sent to an internment camp in Greenwood for the duration of the war.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, racial bias was still evident in that the majority of pimps and procurers were non-white immigrants charged with procuring white Anglo-Saxon girls. For example, a Vancouver magistrate felt no compunction at sentencing a Chinese man to five years for attempting to induce a sixteen year old Caucasian girl "to lead a life of shame."<sup>204</sup>

One final issue that had not received much attention before 1945 was the ostensible link between prostitution and drugs. An example of this is an article written for the *Vancouver Sun* by a deputy sworn in to observe police work in Vancouver's underworld. While writing about how prostitutes become victimized through drugs, he misogynistically described prostitutes with their "ugliness accentuated by rouge and mascara" but he then illustrated how "one pretty girl became



fallen when a slimy denizen reached up out of the underworld and pulled her down to its unspeakable filth."<sup>205</sup>

Although some of the bourgeois rhetoric relating to juveniles, alcohol and drugs appears to be portentous of future prostitution-related discourse, further research would probably unearth some fascinating observations. Additionally, the effects of the economy and prostitution-related discourse on other social problems could be studied to discover whether any of the same patterns are evident in other locales. Finally, it would be interesting to see if further studies taken in the context of patriarchal, capitalist, and racial relations would yield the same discriminatory biases against poor, non-white women.

In conclusion, prostitution-related discourse in the 1920's and 1930's tended to stigmatize either the prostitutes or their exploiters through the bourgeois rhetoric that blamed them for society's ailments. Since the interests of the middle class and the economic circumstances of these two decades influenced law enforcement strategies, it would be interesting to see what would happen if the customer was marginalized by prostitution-related discourse for his sexual excesses. However, that is not likely to happen since many of the customers are members of the middle class and it is not in their interest to change the rhetoric.

## ENDNOTES

1. Foucault quoted in Stanton, Donna C. (ed.) (1992) Introduction: The Subject of Sexuality in Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to Aids. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p. 1.
2. See for example: Backhouse, C. (1985) Nineteenth Century Canadian Prostitution Law: Reflection of a Discriminatory Society in Social History 53: 387-423.
3. Boucher, G. (1985) The Fallen Woman At Work: Prostitution in Vancouver, 1890-1920 in The Ascendant Historian 3: 130-153 and Nilsen, D. (1980) The 'Social Evil': Prostitution in Vancouver, 1900-1920 in B. Latham and C. Kess (eds.) In Her Own Right: Selected Essays on Women's History in B.C. Victoria: Camosun College, 205-228.
4. See articles by McLaren, J.: (1986) Chasing the Social Evil: Moral Fervor and the Evolution of Canada's Prostitution Laws, 1867-1917 in Canadian Journal of Law and Society 1: 125-165; (1987) 'White Slavers': The Reform of Canada's Prostitution Laws and Patterns of Enforcement, 1900-1920 in W. Pue & B. Wright (eds.) Canadian Perspectives on Law and Society: Issues in Legal History, 329-353, Ottawa: Carleton University of Toronto Press; and McLaren, J. & Lowman, J. (1990) Enforcing Canada's Prostitution Laws, 1892-1920: Rhetoric and Practice in M.L. Friedland (ed.) Securing Compliance: Seven Case Studies, 21-87, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
5. Overall, Christine (1992) What's Wrong With Prostitution?: Evaluating Sex Work in Signs, vol. 17, p. 705-724 and Jagger, Alison (1954) Prostitution in Marcel Mauss (ed). The Gift. Illinois: Free Press both cited in Shrage, Laurie (1994) Moral Dilemmas Of Feminism. New York: Routledge, p. 90-96.
6. Berton, Pierre (1990) The Great Depression: 1929-1939. Canada: Pierre Berton Enterprises Ltd., p. 42. According to Berton, "[w]ithin a month of the stock market crash, mounted police were breaking up a demonstration of hundreds of unemployed men in Vancouver."
7. Supra, note 4, (1986), p. 150. McLaren has argued that such brutal punishment resulted from the socially constructed image of the procurer as a 'white slaver' and "sinister, shadowy figure" coercing innocent women into prostitution.
8. Tremear's Annotated Criminal Code, Vancouver Law Library.
9. Huzel, James P. (1986) The Incidence of Crime in Vancouver During the Great Depression in McDonald,

- Robert A.J. & Jean Barman (eds.) Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History. Vancouver Issue of *B.C. Studies*, p. 211.
10. The statistics for both Graphs A and B were gathered from the *Police Court Calendars* located at the *Vancouver City Archives*, hereinafter referred to as V.C.A. Only data from 1923 onwards could be located.
  11. See for example: *Supra*, note 4, McLaren (1986), p. 142 and McLaren & Lowman, p. 42; *supra*, note 2, p. 388. See also Larsen, E. Nick (1992) Canadian Prostitution Control Between 1914 and 1970: An Exercise in Chauvinist Reasoning in The Canadian Journal of Law and Society, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 140.
  12. *Ibid*. See also McLaren (1986), note 4.
  13. Smart, Carol (1989) Feminism and the Power of Law. London: Routledge, p. 45. Although Smart was referring to the harsh punishments meted out to alleged rapists, it is suggested that the same logic holds for men accused of exploiting women; however, this argument is beyond the scope of this thesis.
  14. *R. v. Anderson* (1920), 32 C.C.C. 177.
  15. *R. v. Nyshimura* [1920], 2 W.W.R. 994.
  16. Police Exonerated in Graft Probe, September 26, 1927, *The Vancouver Sun*, p. 1.
  17. Weedon, Chris (1987) Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory. Cambridge: Blackwell, p.118.
  18. McLaren, Angus (1978) Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920 in Canadian Historical Review, LIX, p. 198; See also McLaren, Angus (1990) Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945. McClelland & Stewart.
  19. Buckley, Suzann & Janice Dickin McGinnis (1982) Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada in Canadian Historical Review, LXIII, 3, p. 350.
  20. *Ibid*, p. 351.
  21. For an analysis of this transformation see: Cook, R. (1985) The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
  22. Foucault, Michel (1980) Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings: 1972 -1977. New York: Pantheon Books, p. 167.

23. Ibid, p. 171.
24. For an articulation of this problem in the United States, see Brandt, Allan M. (1987) No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
25. Supra, note 4, McLaren (1986), p. 147, notes the involvement of religion during the first decade of this century.
26. *Higher Ideals The Best Way To Fight Evil*, August 4, 1920, The Globe & Mail, p. 10.
27. MacGill, H. (1955) My Mother The Judge. Toronto: Ryerson Press, p. 180.
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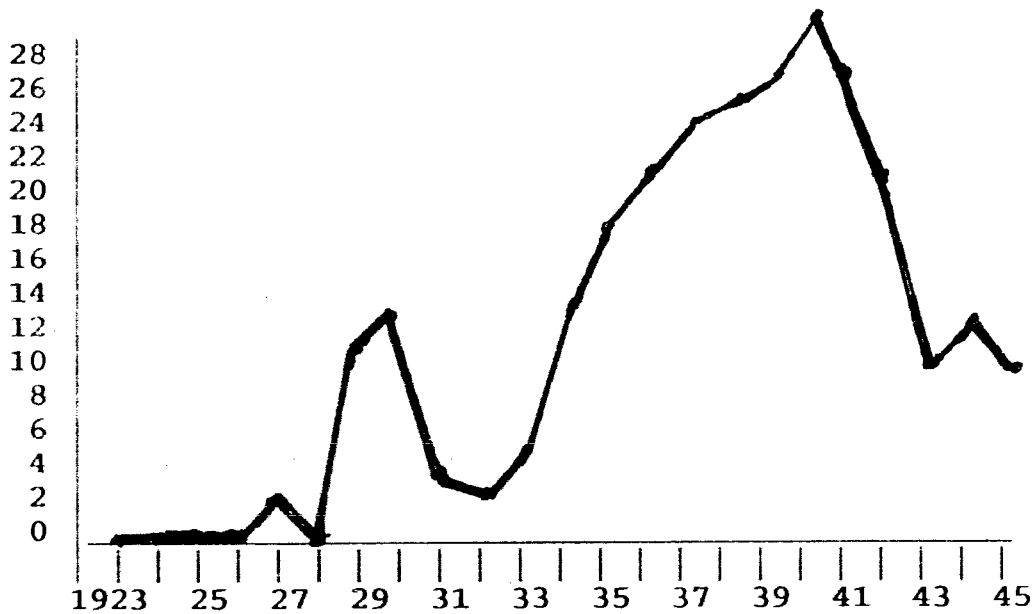
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APPENDIX I



Graph 1: Total Arrest Rates For Prostitution-Related Offences in Vancouver, B.C., Canada 1923-1945



Graph 2: Total Arrests For Procuring-Related Offences in Vancouver, B.C., Canada 1923-1945