Durham E-Theses

A Question of Construction: capital and labour in Wearside Shipbuilding since the 1930's.

Roberts, Ian Paul

"A Question of Construction:

Capital and Labour in Wearside Shipbuilding

Since the 1930's."

Ian Paul Roberts

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham

Department of Sociology
and Social Policy.

Autumn Term
1988

ABSTRACT

A Question of Construction: Capital and Labour in Wearside

Shipbuilding since the 1930's

Empirically the central problematics addressed in this study are twofold. Firstly, an account was sought to explain the apparent retention of control over the division of labour by workers in the 1930's, and their apparent loss of this control in the 1980's. Secondly, the view of the British Shipbuilding Industry presented by those working within the labour process tradition is questioned. Such work, claiming general applicability, was often partial in its geographical focus, upon the Clyde and Tyne, and in its presentation of social action at the point of production, focusing on issues of change rather than routinisation, and on the activist account of labour within the workplace.

In framing a largely non – activist account of the relationship between Capital and Labour on the Wear from the 1930's to the 1980's it was important to develop an adequate theoretical framework. This task is addressed in Chapter One where the issue of the nature of structure and agency are dealt with, and an attempt is made to "unthink dualism" on the basis of a "receding ontology" of material determination. This theory is related to the labour process tradition which is demonstrated to be an unsatisfactory basis for the development of the empirical concerns. Rather, the concept of the employment relationship is shown to be a more satisfactory focus.

On this basis the study looks at continuity and change within the industry and community on the Wear. Extraordinary episodes in the history of the industry, such as the employment of women during the Second World War, are detailed, as well as the more routine aspects of work in a shipyard. In relating these aspects to the wider community the debate engages with general accounts of the nature of the working class. The importance of a "cultural" perspective is developed throughout the work and control is seen to depend not only upon strategies of capital and labour, but also upon the development of moral legitimacy within relations of dominance and subordination.

Contents

Copyright

Declaration

No material in this thesis has been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham, or at any other University.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my mam and dad; they have lived the reality of which this work remains a pale reflection.

Acknowledgements

I owe many debts to people who have helped me, directly or indirectly, in the formulation of this study. I would like to thank all the workers from the Wear yards who gave me the privilege of insight into their lives, in particular I wish to thank my brother, both for his introductions and for "putting me right" on occasions. Of the Sociologists who have influenced me I must single out two individuals. Firstly, I would like to thank Neil Kelly for the most exciting introduction to the subject that anyone could have had. Secondly, I must acknowledge the immense debt I owe to Richard Brown, for his guidance as my supervisor, and for his personal example of what it means to be a good sociologist. I also express my gratitude to Peter Hughes and Gill Blazey for their efforts in deciphering my scrawl and making it presentable. Finally I must thank my wife, Lee, without whose encouragement this thesis would not have been written.

Introduction

This is a study of the changing nature of the division of labour in the shipyards on the river Wear in the 1930s and 1980s. The specific way that I have constructed this object of study has been influenced by two general factors. One stems from my intellectual development as a sociologist and concerns a search for a "valid" or "acceptable" framework with which to analyse complex social forms (about which more will be said in Chapter 1). The second is the general autobiographical development of my life, with both my father and elder brother being shipyard workers and my first job upon leaving school being in this industry.

Whilst there have been few published studies of the industry on the Wear, it is hard to overstate its dominance within the local culture, and, whilst its importance as a major employer had declined substantially in recent years, Sunderland remains a "shipbuilding town". If the existence of the industry gives a specific identity to the town, its impact on individuals within that town is often far greater. It is perhaps pertinent at this point for me to recall some of the past circumstances which have led to my preoccupation with this industry. They are meant primarily as a contribution towards a "natural history" of the research act, although the substance of what I have to say could be seen as deriving from "participant observation" of the most direct kind.

The shipyards in Sunderland physically dominate many panoramas within the town - this remains so even today with the large cranes and fabbing sheds or the covered berths of the Pallion and Southwick yards punctuating the skyline. As a small child one of several rituals to be practised during a bus journey to the "town" was, on crossing Wearmouth Bridge, to look for my father working on one or other of the ships being outfitted in the river below. This, on reflection, was a pointless exercise as they were too far away to identify individuals. However, there was something magnetic about the yards and the ships themselves, which never failed to attract the eye; for, as well as being excited at the flashes of welding or cranes moving huge loads, I always endeavoured to find out the names of the particular ships, especially the ones that "my dad had built". Shipyards prior to the days of covered in yards had the feature of visibility which is absent from factories constructed more with utility than visibility in mind. From where I lived on the outskirts of the borough the yards could not be seen, however, their presence assailed the senses in another form. The rhythmic sound of Doxford's engines being tested on concrete test beds, often over several days and especially nights, is unforgettable.

The importance of the overt physical presence of the industry lies in the effect of reinforcing identity. In this respect I remember being shocked in primary school by other children who either did not know where their father worked or had

only a vague idea of what he did. I knew both where my dad
worked and, as importantly, that he was a craftsman and a
plumber, on no account to be confused with "git big daft
boilermakers". This was an important source of identity, albeit
one that would prove constricting in the years that followed.

Identities are complex and dynamic forms defined in relation
to differing groups at different times. If the importance of a
specific craft identity was paramount at some times, its
importance receded at others. For example, during the strike of
1968 a broader identity was pushed to the fore. This I felt
directly at school, for as craftsmen's sons and daughters we were
placed in the unusual position of having to stand up (literally)
and claim free meals, an onerous task usually reserved for the
sons and daughters of "yackers" [1]. In this situation our
dignity was salvaged by sticking together as children of shipyard
workers, and for the duration of the strike this even had the
effect of altering patterns of playground interaction.

An important point to make is that the capital/labour divide
is not often felt by workers as a clear cut structural opposition
on a day to day basis, it is always mediated through individuals.
However, such relations include moral elements and the conflict
born out of the employment relationship is experienced acutely
when a moral conflict arises. In such a situation inequalities
of power may preclude practical action, but events may serve to
reinforce the validity of the "us" and "them" view of the

relationship. One example of this occurred during an unusual

social event, in what was then Doxfords yard. As a reward for

satisfactory and prompt delivery of several vessels for the

People's Republic of China the new owners laid on a social

evening for the workers in the yard [2]. I recall going along to

Doxfords canteen with my father where food and drink flowed in

profusion. The "price" for this free refreshment was that we had

to sit and pretend to watch a cine film of a ballet portrayal of

the Chinese revolution. At one point my father and I went

outside for some fresh air (the free cigarettes were being smoked

with dedication). At the back of the canteen the door opening

into the kitchen was wide open and several men were loading

crates of beer into cars. These, I was later informed, were

managers, and this event had a significant impact upon the mood

of the people who found out about it. With remarks such as

"they've even got to take part of our present from the

Communists", and "it's the first time I've ever known managers do

labouring work". The point was not the narrow one that the

managers were getting some of the refreshments meant for the

workers, but rather the way they were doing it - effectively

stealing it out of the back door. Thus what was meant for

collective consumption in one almighty "binge" was being driven

off for individual consumption in the privacy of their own homes.

A clear difference was seen between the excessive gluttony of

some of the individuals in the canteen and the behaviour of the

managers. The acts of the individuals inside the canteen were "up front", you and everyone else knew who the "greedy ones" were. The managers were covertly removing the crates of beer whilst attempting to appear aloof from the collective consumption of the workers.

In the past it was always a common understanding within the working class community of Sunderland that if your father was a craftsman in the shipyards you would stand a good chance of being able to get employment there upon leaving school, if he would "speak" for you. It should be understood however that seeking work in the yards is not often a positive choice for such work, but rather is usually seen as a realistic goal and is often compared favourably with other work on the basis of competing deprivations. Thus I remember my father suggesting that I applied because the job was not as repetitive as factory work and you were not stuck behind a desk as in office work (pen pushing), and besides these what other opportunities were there? At the time I knew of none and therefore after a successful application I started as an apprentice plumber at the Deptford yard of Sunderland Shipbuilders (formerly Laings). It became clear after several months that I would only ever be a mediocre plumber. This fact coupled with the increasing realisation that I was not really interested in fitting pipes developed over the weeks until I did something unusual for someone in my position, I left. This act not only created friction within the family, principally

between my father and myself, but also had consequences wider than this. The response from most of my friends is hard to over-state. "You must be f---ing crackers" was probably the most common remark. Giving up a craft apprenticeship is not something one usually does in that community. If the response of my friends was that of bemusement, the response of others was sometimes less tolerant. For example my mother, who at this time was working in a packing factory in Sunderland, was "sent to Coventry" by several of her workmates. Some of these women had sons the same age as me, several of whom had applied (unsuccess-fully) to become apprentices in the yards. For me to give up such a "good job" was not seen as a purely personal decision, but in some senses as contravening an accepted moral code, an act which reflected not only upon me but also upon my parents both for allowing me to leave in the first place, and following from that came the assumption that they could not possibly have given me a correct upbringing.

In relating the above recollections I have sought to establish that part of my interest in the industry and geographical area stems from direct personal involvement. On a more purely academic level the industry has some particularly interesting features. However as an area for research it has, to some extent, been neglected. For example as late as 1967 R.K. Brown et al stated in their proposal for research submitted to the Social Science Research Council that:

> "No study of shipbuilding workers has been carried out, as
> far as we know, in this country, America or elsewhere." (3)

More recently the industry has received attention from those

working within the labour process tradition [4]. Historically

the British industry appeared to offer a null case to Braverman's

"iron law" of deskilling with the retention of the craft division

of labour and the importance of the power of the workgroup [5].

> "Because the work lends itself to self supervision the
> traditions of the industry protect the autonomy of the work-
> group. It is a common feature of the industry that this
> often extends to some control over the times when the work
> actually starts and finishes. It also affects decisions
> about manning and about the allocation and distribution of
> overtime ... the extent and organisation of the craft
> content of the work has led to the emergence of a large
> number of distinct craft specialisations, each with its own
> skill, pride in work and control of much of the work
> process." (6)

Within the labour process tradition general explanations of the

persistence of craft control within the industry have been built

around the notion of the strength of the unions and the

characteristic behaviour of British shipyard workers. Thus,

> "British shipyard workers have characterised themselves in
> resisting at the point of production the expropriation of
> the control they have exercised over the labour
> process." (7)

In a similar vein McGoldrick has suggested that,

> "The Boilermakers in shipbuilding were able to exert
> considerable control over their work because of their
> organised strength and also because of the divisions within
> the ranks of the employers." (8)

Both of these pieces of research address the introduction of the

welding process in the inter-war period. We should however

question the level to which we can generalise from them as they

have an overdependence upon events as they happened upon the
rivers of the Clyde and the Tyne. The degree of specialisation
of production on individual rivers is important as it can impose
a particular pattern of output and can even be seen to hold
implications for the nature of labour relations in a
locality. The fortunes of the industry on individual rivers can
and sometimes does exhibit patterns of development opposite to
that of the industry taken on a regional basis. Thus whilst the
industry in the North East of England has often been spoken of as
a unity,

> " ... the three main shipbuilding rivers in the region have
> had and still have markedly different patterns of output,
> employment and types of ship built ... the North East's
> share of British tonnage fell in bad years and rose in good,
> the Tyneside yards performed in an exactly opposite way
> within the North East's total. In good years the Tyne's
> share fell, in bad it rose." (9)

Clearly then, generalisations about the development of British
shipbuilding drawn from a study of one or even two particular
rivers must be treated warily. The over-representation of the
Clyde and the Tyne in past research further suggests the need for
a study of a river such as the Wear, with its historical
specialisation, until recently, on "tramp" tonnage in marked
contrast to both the above.

    The issue of specific locality involves broader issues than
that of product specialisation alone. The cultural traditions of
labour and capital are clearly built up empirically within both
space and time (10). This is especially important in the case of

industries whose workers are seen to belong to an "occupational community". The specific quality of the local culture can be seen to influence the nature of the social relations of production within the workplace, as well as vice versa. This again points to the importance of seeing the empirical object as a particular historical individual. In this connection the context of shipbuilding upon the Wear would seem to provide a cultural background not only very different from that on the Clyde but also in some important respects different to that of the Tyne.

Moreover an analysis which consciously delineates the local context within the national industry has a potential which radiates in several directions. Firstly, as we have noted above, the analysis indicates the need for a more complex explication of the "structure" of the shipbuilding industry as it does not unconsciously generalise particular empirical instances as evidence of a general type. This does not mean that one cannot say anything about the characteristics of the British Ship-building industry in general. Rather it is to suggest that our characterisations need to have both a wider empirical base and be more theoretically complex. Secondly, following from an approach stressing a more complex understanding of the structure of the industry in its localities, the importance of the social action of workers and capitalists can be more clearly appreciated. Any tendency to subsume complex developments as the unmediated

outcome of the struggle between the structural categories of capital and labour can hopefully be avoided. At the general level this is clearly important in the shipbuilding industry where conflict within both labour and capital has been almost as important for shaping a particular development as conflict between the two "classes". At another level it hopefully allows one to see individual workers (and capitalists) as more than merely bearers of the mode of production, but rather as human agents struggling to make their own history even though under circumstances not chosen by themselves.

The above points are important and they present the possibility for the unification of the two sources of impetus of this work. The personal biographical connection which (hopefully) ensures that I cannot become totally insensitive to the meanings and actions of the individuals in the industry, and the more purely academic concern with the nature of the industry and its implications for current issues within industrial sociology, call for an account adequate at the levels of both structure and action.

The time period involved in this study focuses primarily upon the 1930s and the 1980s. In these periods economic crisis and depression have characterised both the shipbuilding industry and the North Eastern region as a whole. It has been argued that it is during such periods of crisis, when capital accumulation becomes problematic, that there is the greatest pressure upon

Capital to reorganise the division of labour [11]. If such an analysis is valid the periods under consideration in this study should present the best opportunity to witness attempts by capital to restructure the division of labour and possibly deskill the workforce.

It is these processes, or in some cases the lack of them, that form a unifying problematic for the whole study. The analysis of the problems understood by those in the industry to be facing them, theoretical solutions and actual courses of action taken and their effects, form much of the "comparison" between the '30s and the '80s. An initial position adopted after reading the secondary literature questioned why workers had apparently been able to retain control over the labour process in the inter-war period and yet had seemingly so easily lost it in the '80s. Both of these summations of the periods were to prove overly simplistic and that realisation came to dominate the research process as it proceeded. The effects of this realisation fed not only into the empirical account presented here, but also informed the theoretical elaborations outlined in Chapter 1 and are, I hope, evident throughout the work. In this sense the "comparison" between the inter-war period and the 1980s remains a valid one.

However it must be stated that these periods are not self contained, and in order to appreciate that process occurs within the "intersecting planes of temporality" [12] it will be

necessary to include a consideration of processes and events occurring at periods outside those of our primary focus.

The structure of the work can divided into three parts. Firstly a section will be devoted to developing a theoretical approach which can facilitate an account adequate at the levels of both structure and agency. Secondly the inter-war and wartime (World War II) periods will be looked at and the developments on the River Wear will be assessed in the light of the available literature, which deals primarily with the Clyde and the Tyne. Finally the position on the Wear in the 1980s will be looked at and the continuities and the disjunctions with the position in the inter-war period will emerge.

Whilst the formal structure of this thesis can be outlined relatively easily, its empirical and conceptual content is more diverse. The sharp focus on the division of labour in the early chapters becomes increasingly of less importance in later chapters, where issues of the nature of the working class in both the work and non-work spheres assumes greater prominence. In a way this shift of focus represents the changes in the "natural history" of the research project. But it is also indicative of the changes of priorities that I as a researcher underwent during the course of this project. Those changes also represented a shift in methodolgy. From using largely historical sources and official documents for the inter-war period I increasingly relied upon ethnography and "participant observation".

In one sense this represented a natural widening of opportunity as the study moved to more recent times; however it also represented a shift from a detached strategy of research to one of attempting to get as close as possible to the subjects of the study [13]. In this respect I found the strategy of using several key respondents superior to that of attempting to develop a more comprehensive coverage. Not only did this strategy allow for more continuity with respect to following events but it also gave me the opportunity to develop far greater depth to the study. In producing what Geertz has called "thick description" [14] a reliance on key respondents admits a greater degree of control over the validity of the accounts. Thus for example in Chapter 5 one may question the extent to which "sleeping on nightshift" was a routine occurrence, and how much of the accounts were built on exaggeration. My response is that first of all I lived amongst the key respondents and would not expect them to exaggerate to me. But more importantly the objective evidence of the validity of this particular detail was that the men involved, including my father and brother, were around and active during the day [15]. These direct checks on the evidence were a feature of my position within the day to day life worlds of most of the key informants, a fact which also led me to appraise official documents and such things as employer and union minutes far more critically than could otherwise have been the case.

Such a methodology contains its own risks, and the danger of
"going native" was obviously a potential problem in my case.
However I believe that this research is not an uncritical
celebration of the craft worker and I hope that I have avoided
any tendency to sentimentalise the subjects of the research.
How successfully I have avoided these pitfalls I shall have to
let others judge.

Notes to the Introduction

1   Given the relatively low level of unemployment at this time
    those eligible for free school meals were identifiable as
    coming from a distinct "type" of family. Typically one
    where the family was long-term unemployed and would
    supplement the family income by hewing for coal on "pit
    heaps" and railway sidings. These men were locally known by
    the slang term "yackers" - not to be confused with "pit
    yackers", another term for miners.

2   The two vessels were built for the People's Republic of
    China in 1967 and as the Sunderland Echo commented,

    "While in Sunderland for the building of these ships the
    Chinese technical staff and crew distributed badges, copies
    of the thoughts of Chairman Mao and were generally well
    received by the Wearsiders. To show their appreciation they
    staged a film show for the workers and their families. It
    was more propaganda, of course, but the gesture was
    appreciated."

    The Sunderland Echo, 16 June 1972.

3   Brown, R.K. et al Orientation to Work and Industrial
    Behaviour of Shipbuilding Workers on Tyneside, January 1968
    - December 1970, Research Report 1970.

4   Most notably McGoldrick, J. Crisis and the Division of
    Labour: Clydeside Shipbuilding in the Inter-war Period
    and
    Lorenz, E.H. The Labour Process and Industrial Relations in
    British and French Shipbuilding: The Inter-war Years.

5   Braverman, H. Labor and Monopoly Capital, London Monthly
    Review Press, 1974.

6   Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing, Commission on Industrial
    Relations Report, No. 22, H.M.S.O. 1971, pp109-118.

7   Lorenz, E.H. Op.cit. pp1-2.

8   McGoldrick, J. Op.cit. p66.

9   Cousins, J.M. and Brown, R.K. "Shipbuilding", Chapter XXI
    in: Dewdney, J.C. (Ed) Durham County and City with Teesside
    British Association for the Advancement of Science, Durham
    1970, p322.

10   For example the characterisation of Clydeside as "the red
      Clyde".

11   Thus for example Gordon, Edwards and Reich have stated that:

      "Our analysis begins with the observation that the present
      crisis is not the first in our history; U.S. capitalism has
      experienced at least three prior periods of sustained
      crisis.   We argue that the resolution of these crises
      resulted in three major structural changes in the
      organisation of work and the structure of the labour markets
      in the United States."

      Gordon, D.M., Edwards, R. and Reich, M.   Segmented Work,
      Divided Workers, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1982.

12   Giddens, A. A Contemporary Critique of Historical Material-
      ism, London, Macmillan 1981, p19.

13   This, of course, also relates to the shift from the labour
      process and the division of labour as the central focus of
      the study to a concern with the nature of the working class.

14   Geertz, C. "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive
      Theory of Culture" in:
      Rice, K.A. Geertz and Culture, Michigan, University of
      Michigan Press 1980.

15   During this period my father built a greenhouse and dinghy
      as well as spending his time gardening and fishing.

CHAPTER ONE

The Theoretical Underpinnings

Part 1

"The weight of two and a half millenia of treating dualism
as the obvious basis for effective thought is remarkably
oppressive." (1)

It is necessary to enter into the theoretical underpinnings

of this work for several reasons. Firstly, this is a work that

attempts to be both consciously theoretical and empirical. [2]

There are a series of overtly theoretical concerns which

underlie even the "most empirical" parts of the following

account. This leads on to the second reason why an initial

theoretical excursion is necessary. One of the central features

of what follows is an attempt to use a framework which can unite

not only the concepts of structure and action but which takes

seriously the project of "unthinking dualism". To grasp this

point is of profound importance in relation to understanding what

is meant in the analysis. In attempting to use such an approach

I must confess to the adoption of what may be termed "theoretical

opportunism". This work cannot claim an untainted theoretical

pedigree in terms of being able to call upon the legitimacy of a

single theoretical tradition (e.g. historical materialism, or

phenomenology). Rather the eventual theoretical structure must

be seen as an emergent property of the research itself, certainly

as much so as any of the more "empirical" content. The reason

for this lies not only in the wish to respect the authenticity of

the data but is also because, whilst the theory of the

interaction or indeed the unification of structure and action is

quite well advanced, the debate has not so far been too

successful in terms of specifying particular approaches through

which to operationalise these concerns. [3] However, having said

this, it is perhaps useful briefly to review the structure/action

debate in order to develop some of the features of the

theoretical scheme to be adopted.

The first point to make is that the issues now dealt with

under the heading of the structure/action debate are in no way

new discoveries. These problems were wrestled with by the

classic masters of sociology in their time:

> "Durkheim, Marx and Weber each broke with the evolutionary
> theories of their contemporaries in their effort to develop
> an analysis of history which could identify pattern and
> tendency ... without spilling over into a trans-historical
> teleology which discovered possibility and probability in
> the interaction of purpose and structure without
> transforming the structure of action into a supra-historical
> developmental process governing both structure and action
> with law like necessities independent of human agency." (4)

Whilst these concerns are evident in the work of the best

sociologists, the development of the debate in a reflexively

self-conscious manner is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is

important to realise that the structure/action debate as

understood in this connection cannot be reduced to a duality of

micro and macro approaches or the debate over the question of

societal-individual priority. For as Zygmunt Bauman has noted

this is to some extent a "phoney" question:

> "Whatever factor sociological theory will eventually select
> as its central analytical concept, it will be well advised
> to beware of choices innate in the irritatingly barren
> argument over societal-individual priorities. It must be a
> factor operative on both levels. It must account for both,
> inextricably interwoven facets of human existence subjective
> and objective, determining and determined, creative and
> created, socialising and socialised. Then and only then can
> it be utilised in building models at once syn and
> diachronical, and bridging the so far isolated levels of
> individual situation and social structure in a way which
> does not beg the phoney question of the "priority" of one of
> the two modalities of human existence." (5)

Arguably such a movement towards a potential "central

analytical concept" was well underway by the time the above words

were written. The 1960s had seen a re-emergence and development

of theoretical traditions which for some time had been in a state

of relative neglect. Two of the most important of these, for our

purposes, were the increasing influence of phenomenology in its

sociological rather than purely philosophical guise, and the

"flowering" of a wide variety of approaches claiming some point

of allegiance to Marxist analysis. In the first of these

developments two of the most able proponents, Berger and Luckman,

began to sensitise us to the "social construction of reality" in

which, following Schutz, the inter-subjective nature of the

social world is emphasised. This intersubjectivity demonstrates

that our understanding of the social world is not uniquely

individual, but rather through the "reciprocity of perspectives",

meaning is seen as an irreducibly social phenomenon; the

abstraction of the "individual" from "society" becomes absurd.

However Berger and Luckman did more than demonstrate this point -

they emphasised the importance of two phenomena which for later

structure/action theory was to become indispensible, viz. the

notions of language and temporality. Whilst much of their work

amounts to a "popularisation" of Schutz, their real achievement

was to grasp the implications of the Schutzian approach for wider

sociological theory and thereby allowing the potential for a

cross fertilisation of ideas to take place. [6] Whilst their

book is structured around two main chapters entitled "Society and

Objective Reality" and "Society and Subjective Reality", in the

conclusion they state the essentially inter-related nature of

these two abstractions:

> "We are suggesting ... that the integration of the findings
> of such (their) analyses into the body of sociological
> theory requires more than the casual obeisance that might be
> paid to the "human factor" behind the uncovered structural
> data. Such integration requires a systematic accounting of
> the dialectical relation between the structural realities
> and the human enterprise of constructing reality in
> history." (7)

Similarly, at another point they produce a statement which

in many ways prefigures the "developments" occurring in

structure/action theory in the 1980s when they argue that

sociology should be seen as a distinctly humanistic discipline:

> "An important consequence of this conception is that
> sociology must be carried on in a continuous conversation
> with both history and philosophy or lose its proper object
> of inquiry. This object is society as part of a human
> world, made by men, inhabited by men, and, in turn, making
> men, in an ongoing historical process." (8)

The last sentence encapsulates several of the main features

of Giddens' "theory of structuration". The recursive character

of social life is clearly grasped, as is the fundamental importance of temporality and process. Here then we have a work which is, at the very least, attending to some of the same concerns which later became identified under the heading of the structure/action debate, and as will be argued later the contribution from such phenomenologically informed work has great potential as part of an approach to the "paradox of agency". [9]

A second major influence upon the shaping of the problematics that became the structure/action debate has been the work of Marx and later scholars working within a broadly defined Marxian tradition. Marx himself was, as Abrams has pointed out, centrally concerned with the problem of agency. As one of the most quoted passages from "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" makes clear:

> "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." (10)

In another passage in the "Grundrisse", the concerns of agency are located within a framework which overtly recognises both the recursive nature of social reality and the necessity of temporal process:

> "Everything that has a fixed form, such as the product etc., appears as merely a moment, a vanishing moment in ... (the) movement ... (of society). The direct production process itself appears only as a moment. The conditions and object- ifications of the process are themselves equally moments of it, and its only subjects are the individuals, but individuals in mutual relationships, which equally reproduce and produce anew ... in which they renew themselves even as they renew the world of wealth they create." (11)

Perhaps of more influence for the emerging shape of the
structure/action debate of the 1980s than individual passages
from Marx was the post war development of a variety of forms of
"Marxist" theory, and in particular the emergence of "western
Marxism". One of the catalysts in this development was the
rediscovery of some of the works of Marx himself. "The Paris
Manuscripts" (Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844)
were published for the first time in 1932, and the "Grundrisse"
was effectively first published in its original German edition in
1953. Both these works were of considerable importance and
fuelled the debate as to the "true" nature of Marxism. Much
debate centred around the question as to whether or not there was
an epistomological break in the work of Marx considered as a
whole. The argument of those who support the notion of such a
"break" suggests that in his early work Marx was concerned with
man in the abstract, an overly philosophical view in which the
legacy of Hegel dominated, producing a concern with alienation,
whereas the mature Marx aspired to scientific socialism and a
concern with political economy. The 1844 manuscripts were seen
as the turning point between these two phases and as such were
the spur to the debate. The "Grundrisse" on the other hand
seemed to present evidence to back up those who denied that such
a break took place. As Istvan Meszaros pointed out, within the
"Grundrisse" there are many examples of the concerns which were
supposedly those of the young Marx:

"(It shows) not only how wrong they are who assert that "alienation" has dropped out from Marx's later works, but also that his approach to the discussed problems is essentially the same as in the Manuscripts of 1844 ... Here (in the "Grundrisse") we even have the "anthropological" notions of the early Marx, together with the conception of the supersession of alienation as the transcendence of the abstract mediated character of human activity." (12)

It is not our concern at present to enter into the details of this debate; rather what is to be noted is the importance of the "Grundrisse" as outlined in the above quotation (ref.11) and the contribution of both this document and the "Paris Manuscripts" as "cannon fodder" in the developing schism between the "two Marxisms" of critical and scientific Marxists. It is in the practice of the confrontation of these two opposing tendencies that some of the most useful accounts (for the developing structure/action debate) have been produced.

One such confrontation was the debate between E.P. Thompson and Louis Althusser concerning the nature of history and the role of human agency. Althusser, the structuralist, proclaiming that "History is a process without a subject" (13), whilst Thompson insists that history is to be seen as "Unmastered human practice" (14). The position taken by each of the authors would seem to be the exact polar opposite of that taken by the other with the status of structure being seen to be of central importance. Thus for Althusser:

"The structure of the relations of production determines the places and functions occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never more than the occupants of these places, in so far as they are the "supports" of these

functions.   The true "subjects" (in the sense of the
constitutive subjects of the process) are therefore not
these occupants or functionaries, are not, despite all
appearances, the "obviousnesses" of the "given" of naive
anthropology, "concrete individuals", "real men" - but the
definition and distribution of these places and functions."
(15)

Thompson's view of structure and agency is very different

and he widens his attack from "Althussers orrery" to include

other non-structuralist approaches which comprise:

"The sociological section: the elaborate differential rota-
tions within the closure of the orrery; the self-extrapolat-
ing programmed developmental series; the mildly disequilib-
rated equilibrium models, in which dissensus strays unhappi-
ly down strange corridors, searching for a reconciliation
with consensus; the systems analyses and structuralisms,
with their torques and their combinatories; the counter
factual fictions; the econometric and cleometric groovers -
all of these theories hobble along programmed routes from
one static category to the next.   And all of them are
Geschichtenscheissenschlopff, unhistorical shit." (16)

For Thompson and Althusser there can be little agreement,

the authors inhabit different universes of discourse and as such

the gulf between them cannot be bridged. (17) In this context the

emphasis upon structure or agency is exclusive and both positions

are predicated upon opposite ontological and epistemological

bases.   The debate would appear to be sterile in relation to the

further development of the structure/action debate.   However,

this is not the case because of the secondary comment that

Thompson's attack upon Althusser provoked.   In this connection

Perry Anderson has raised several points, one of which is of

particular importance for our purposes and this concerns the

potentially heterogenous character of human agency.   Anderson

suggests that Thompson does not distinguish between "agency"

directed at different types of goals:

> " ... if agency is constructed as conscious goal directed
> activity, everything turns on the nature of the goals. For
> it is obvious that all historical subjects engage in actions
> all of the time, of which they are "agents" in this strict
> sense. So long as it remains at this level of indeterminacy
> the notion is an analytic void." (18)

The author sees a three part distinction of "types" of goals

pursued by agents. Firstly, "private goals" - these are the

goals pursued by the majority of the people for the majority of

the time:

> " ... (the) cultivation of a plot, choice of marriage,
> exercise of a skill, maintenance of a home, bestowal of a
> name. These personal projects are inscribed within existing
> social relations and typically reproduce them." (19)

Secondly there are goals which are "public" in character.

These for example would include such things as religious

movements, political struggles, military conflicts, diplomatic

transactions, commercial explorations and cultural explorations.

Here:

> "Will and action acquire an independent historical
> significance as causal sequences in their own right rather
> than as molecular samples of social relations ... However
> these (goals) too in their overwhelming majority have not
> aimed to transform social relations as such - to create new
> societies or master old ones; for the most part they were
> much more limited in their (voluntary) scope." (20)

Finally, according to Anderson:

> " ... there are those collective projects which have sought
> to render their initiators authors of their collective mode
> of existence as a whole, in a conscious programme aimed at
> creating or remodelling whole social structures ...
> essentially this kind of agency is very recent indeed." (21)

The author goes on to suggest that in this sense the Russian revolution represents the beginning of a new kind of history founded upon an "unprecedented form of agency". The importance of this formulation for the confrontation of structure and agency in the dispute between Thompson and Althusser is that the former conflates the three types of agency, appealing, the vast majority of time, to types 1 and 2 in order to make Althusser's claims about structure look silly. The result of this conflation by Thompson can be seen to be ironic:

> "The conceptual error involved is to amalgamate those actions which are indeed conscious volitions at a personal or local level but whose social incidence is profoundly involuntary with those actions which are conscious volitions at the level of their own social incidence, under the single rubric "agency". The paradoxical result of Thompson's critique of Althusser is thus actually to reproduce the fundamental failing of the latter, by a polemic inversion. For the two antagonistic formulae of a natural human process without a subject and "ever-baffled, ever-resurgent agents of unmastered practice" are both claims of an essentially apodictic and speculative character - eternal axioms that in no way help us to trace the actual variable roles of different types of deliberate venture, personal or collective, in history." (22)

Whilst one may agree with Anderson's conclusions upon the positions adopted by Thompson and Althusser, the question now becomes how far does his own formulation of the three-fold differentiation of goal-directed agency escape the charge of being essentially apodictic and speculative? At first sight the division seems sensible enough; however on closer inspection several problems become apparent and in general these are rooted in the taken for granted dualism between structure and agency

which Anderson accepts uncritically from the polar positions of

Thompson and Althusser.

Firstly, his opposition of "private" and "public" in the

first two "types" of agency seems overly simplistic. Consider

several examples given by the authors of the private goals which

are pursued by:

> " ... the overwhelming majority of people for the
> overwhelming major part of their lives." (23)

These include: the cultivation of a plot and choice of

marriage. In the first example the cultivation of a plot may be

seen as a private goal if the plot concerned is a garden or

allotment cultivated as a hobby or pastime. However, where that

cultivation is the source, either totally or in part, of

subsistence of an individual or group its social significance can

take on distinctly "public" dimensions. For example Perry

Anderson himself has outlined the significance of the

stabilisation of agrarian settlement in the passage from

"Antiquity to feudalism":

> "Once agrarian settlement was stabilised, and military
> campaigns became longer-range and lengthier, the material
> basis for a social unity of fighting and tilling was
> inevitably broken. War became the distant prerogative of a
> mounted nobility, while a sedentary peasantry laboured at
> home to maintain a permanent rhythm of cultivation, disarmed
> and burdened with provision of supplies for royal armies."
> (24)

Whilst it may be objected that such developments are the

unforseen consequences of action and therefore are not part of

agency "consciously goal-orientated action", nevertheless the

goal will vary with the context, in terms of both the absolute

orientation (i.e. cultivation as a pastime, provision of

subsistence or for the production of a surplus product) and

relatively, in terms of the "slippage" that can occur between the

"private" and the "public", for example in times of changing land

use [25]. The second example of a private goal given by

Anderson, that of choice of marriage, also fits rather

uncomfortably under the heading of "personal projects". For as

anthropologists have shown there are differences between cultures

in relation to the "rules" governing who can or will marry whom.

Thus prescribed marriages may be the norm in some societies,

whilst the lesser defined preferential marriage may characterise

others. When other complications such as rules relating to

endogamy and exogamy or formally arranged marriages are

introduced the notion of the choice of marriage partner as an

example of "private" goals involving purely personal projects

becomes increasingly problematic. The "public" element involved

in the "choice of a marriage" should be clearly understood:

> "Since the obverse of any system of marriage prohibitions is
> the necessity of finding a spouse from among those
> permitted, this system itself results in the formation of
> tiers running in every direction through the society, what
> Fortes has called the "web" of kinship and others call a
> network ... It has been remarked of the Nuer that the
> prohibitions on marriage which they recognise, taken
> together, have the effect that a young man looking for a
> wife is pretty well obliged to find her in some other
> village than his own. The advantage of this is not that he
> brings in "new blood", but that every marriage creates a new
> link between the small village groups ... It is no accident
> that in French the word "alliance" still refers to marriage.
> Often marriages form the bond of peace between groups that

would otherwise take hostility for granted; many peoples, in Africa and elsewhere say "we marry whose with whom we fight." (26)

Again, the slippage that exists between the public and private domains is evident. In this sense what Anderson fails to realise is that the very notions of the "private" and the "public" are socially mediated and therefore the position of an individual act can be variously located depending upon the type of society which we are discussing.

Greater problems are evident in Anderson's differentiation between the two "public" types of agency the one in which "the goals pursued have been characteristically inserted within a known structural framework", and the other in which the goal is that of "creating or remodelling whole social structures". Such a division implies an overly simplistic notion of structure and is to a large extent idealist. Thus Anderson appears to suggest that the action of agents either reproduces the given form of social relationships (in his view the structure) within a society or in the third type of agency aims to smash them. This view assumes an extreme polarity (either reproduction or revolution), thus agency that is not directly orientated towards the overthrow of the existing structure of social relationships is seen merely to reproduce them (27). Not only could such a position lead to insensitivity in analysing differing forms of civil society (e.g. Fascism or Democracy) built upon the same mode of production (e.g. Capitalism), but it also trivialises the role of

institutions such as trades unions which in the absence of

revolutionary goals could be seen in this way as "functional" for

the reproduction of the social relations of capitalism. Such a

position has indeed been adopted by some orthodox Marxists, who,

following Lenin's insistence that there is a rigid dichotomy

between trade union consciousness and revolutionary socialist

consciousness, have sought to portray the effect of trades

unionism as leading to the institutionalisation of industrial

conflict and thereby becoming the "junior partners of capitalist

enterprise" [28]. Others who have developed a more thorough going

historical analysis of trades unions (as institutions involving

rank and file members as well as leaders) often adopt a more

historically contingent conclusion. Thus as Tony Lane has

suggested of the trades union movement in Britain in the late

1960s and early 1970s:

> "That the trade unions proved an integrative force did not
> mean that they had been totally absorbed and incorporated
> into the State - despite appearances to the contrary and the
> implications of the standpoints of some right wing trade
> union leaders." (29)

Lane goes on to show how rank and file pressure effectively

frustrated agreements between the T.U.C. and the governments of

the period on incomes policy, thereby ensuring that the unions

could not be used as "instruments of State policy" [30]. The

point to be made here, then, is that the importance of the trades

union movement cannot be reduced solely to the level of

Anderson's first type of public agency, characteristically

serving to reproduce existent social relations, neither is it

totally orientated towards the transformation of those relations;

rather it has potential to be active on either level both as an

agency of reproduction and disruption, a "double tongued sign"

indeed, to use E.P. Thompson's phrase.   In other words the

extreme dichotomy between the reproduction of existent social

relationships or their transformation (one is tempted to write of

factors functional or dysfunctional for the maintenance of social

order) cannot hold - there is historically and empirically little

evidence for the existence of such "pure" forms of agency.

A final problem with Anderson's typology concerns his second

type of public agency - that which "sought to render their

initiators authors of their collective mode of existence as a

whole in a conscious programme aimed at creating or remodelling

whole social structures". Anderson suggests that the Russian

Revolution is the "inaugural incarnation" of a new kind of

history founded on this unprecedented form of agency. However he

goes on to note that:

> "Notoriously, the results of the great cycle of upheavals it
> initiated have to date been far from those expected at their
> outset." (31)

The problem with this kind of analysis defining agency

purely in terms of conscious goal orientation is that it is

idealist. Given the unanticipated consequences of the social

action which were initiated in the Russian Revolution the

question must be how different is this "recent form of agency"?

The efficacy of this "unprecedented" form remains unproven (although still a potentiality). It would be possible to analyse what Anderson is talking about not as a new form of agency but rather as a form of ideology.

Anderson's project of detaching different levels of agency will not necessarily further our understanding. Indeed it may lead to the trivialisation of the everyday life worlds of individuals and groups predicated upon an overly simple conception of the processes of reproduction of social relationships; one which sees conflict and consensus as mutually exclusive rather than as a processual dialectic. However, the debate between Thompson and Althusser and Anderson's comments upon it have been useful in ensuring the development of the structure/agency debate within the Marxist tradition. But to some extent within that tradition this problematic remains marginal and is usually subordinated within the wider concerns of Marxism. Partly because of this the tendency to view structure and agency as two mutually exclusive categories remains. To address the problematic of structure and agency in a more reflexively self-conscious form we need to look at developments outside specifically Marxist social theory.

One starting point for this project is the work of Alan Dawe [32]. His analysis locates the origin of the "two sociologies" as a response to the problematics raised during the enlightenment, the French and the industrial revolutions:

"There are, then, two sociologies: a sociology of social
system and a sociology of social action. They are grounded
in the diametrically opposed concerns with two central prob-
lems, those of order and control. And, at every level, they
are in conflict. They posit antithetical views of human nat-
ure, of society and of the relationship between the social
and the individual. The first asserts the paramount necessi-
ty, for societal and individual well being, of external
constraint; hence the notion of a social system ontological-
ly and methodologically prior to its participants. The key
notion of the second is that of autonomous man, able to
realise his full potential and to create a truly human
social order only when freed from external constraint." (33)

Dawe goes on to suggest that underlying both sociologies is,

in fact, the notion of human agency, in the sociology of social

system such a view predicates the destructive nature of agency,

in the social action approach the view is of creative energy

(34). Ironically in attempting to transcend the division between

the two sociologies the author has merely replicated the problem.

Because his vision of these two opposed doctrines is built upon

other dualities such as those of the individual and the social

(despite the disavowal of this very duality), and his view of

structure and system is one that emphasises constraint, Dawe's

"solution", in his later work, is to opt for a naturalistic

methodology suited primarily to situations of co-presence. His

concern with the "appropriate communal foundation of genuine

moral individuality" has led him in the end to emphasise only one

side of the duality as authentic. Thus he quotes Martin Buber

with approval:

"The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the ind-
ividual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each, considered
by itself, is a mighty abstraction ... The fundamental fact
of human existence is man with man ... All real living is

meeting." (35)

The appeal to naturalism to overcome the increasingly theoretically complex problematic of structure and agency (or system and action) is tempting. However, in this case it is also limiting for instead of achieving a synthesis Dawe has merely opted for one side of the duality and thereby locates agency in what Anderson referred to as "private goals". The result is not only that "structure" is ignored, but in seeing sociology metaphorically as conversation the potentially wider contexts or "reach" of agency is restricted. Thus:

> " ... peoples' lives reside in the details. So, therefore, does human agency. Peoples' lives are the details, the fundamentally communal details, the materials with which they weave their lives, strand upon strand. So, therefore, is human agency:
> "All over the great round earth and in the settlements, the towns, and the great iron stones of cities, people are drawn inward within their little shells of rooms, and are to be seen in their wondrous and pitiful actions through the surface of their lighted windows by thousands, by millions, little golden aquariums, in chairs, reading, setting tables, sewing, playing cards, not talking, talking, laughing inaudibly, mixing drinks, at radio dials, eating, in shirt sleeves, carefully dressed, courting, teasing, loving, seducing, undressing, leaving the room empty in its empty light, alone and writing a letter urgently, in couples married, in separate chairs, in family parties, in gay parties, preparing for bed, preparing for sleep; and none can care, beyond that room; and none can be cared for, by any being beyond that room." (36)

Such an approach may retain its grounding in and articulation of human social experience - the sour and weary modern experience of isolation and privatisation [37], but in resonating to and affirming as authentic such experience there is a risk that the approach will become merely the mouthpiece of

this inevitably particular (historically and geographically) form

of experience. What started as a reflexively self-conscious

statement of the problematic of structure and agency (system and

action) has in the end retreated into a concern with detail and

is thereby restricted to a single modality of human agency. In

order to avoid the "sociology of the single vision" and affirm

the authenticity of (modern) social experience Dawe has almost

prescribed the level and (metaphorical) "type" of approach and

therefore even while pronouncing the importance of ambiguity the

author is producing a single vision of his own:

> "So it is the prime imperative of the sociology of the
> conversation that we ceaselessly listen to and converse with
> the voices from everyday life, wherever and however they are
> to be heard, including our own: that we listen for detail,
> for every nuance, every inflection, every change of tone,
> however slight, in the myriad ways in which people make
> their lives, in order to recognise and understand and artic-
> ulate human agency at work. There is no other way." (38)

Others however have suggested that there is perhaps another

way, and to this end Anthony Giddens has expanded great energies

in order to go beyond a celebration of the tension between

structure and agency and rather to look towards the mutual

dependence of the two concerns based upon his "theory of

structuration" (39). As Giddens puts it:

> "The concept of structuration involves that of the duality
> of structure, which relates to the fundamentally recursive
> character of social life, and expresses the mutual
> dependence of structure and agency. By the duality of
> structure I mean that the structural properties of social
> systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices
> that constitute those systems. The theory of structuration,
> thus formulated, rejects any differentiation of synchrony

and diachrony or statics and dynamics. The identification of structure with constraint is also rejected: structure is both enabling and constraining." (40)

Here then, the imperialism of structure is dealt a severe blow: the emphasis placed upon the production, reproduction of structure understood as a duality, the medium and outcome of agency, ensures that structure is seen to have only a virtual existence. In other words structure is only existent in its instantation and can have no independent ontological status [41]. Crucial to the duality of structure is the concept of agency, which does not consist purely of intentional action. As one commentator has noted:

> "Agency ... "cannot be defined through that of intention, as is presumed in so much of the literature to do with the philosophy of action; the notion of agency as I employ it, I take to be logically prior to a subject/object differentiation." Formulated in this manner "agency" undercuts or transcends the customary bifurcation between subjectvely intended conduct and externally stimulated reactive behaviour." (42)

This provides an expanded account of agency, and as Giddens suggests, one which for the individual actor will include elements of "practical" and "discursive" consciousness. However such an approach does not deny the existence of the unintended consequences of social action, indeed agency as defined in the theory of structuration is inclusive of such unintended ramifications because it is situated in the matrix of differing time space paths within locales and regions. As Giddens states:

> "Human agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description. However, what they do may be quite unfamiliar under other descriptions, and they may know little of the ramified

consequences of the activities in which they engage. The duality of structure is always the main grounding of continuities in social reproduction across time-space. It in turn presupposes the reflexive monitoring of agents in, and as constituting the duree of daily social activities. But human knowledgeability is always bounded. The flow of action continually produces consequences which are unintended by actors, and these unintended consequences may also form unacknowledged conditions of action in a feedback fashion. Human history is created by intentional activities but is not an intended project; it persistently eludes efforts to bring it under conscious direction. However, such attempts are continually being made by human beings, who operate under the threat and the promise of the circumstances that they are the only creatures who make their "history" in cognisance of that fact." (43)

This then is the crux of the structuration theory, that continuities (and discontinuities) in social, as opposed to system, reproduction across time-space are present only in the "moment of their instantation", the medium and outcome of social action. The apparent solidity of "structure" in some social theory appears as a function of distance in time and space and of the disjunction between actors, their action and the "sediment action" of differing time-space matrices. In other words the reification of structure is often a product of a view predicated upon a static and unitary view of time and space, the implicit "location" of such views is always the view from "here" (44). However, once a determined attempt is made to incorporate the "problematic of time-space distanciation", or to put it more graphically "the stretching of social systems across time-space" (45), the potential to understand systems as sedimented social action and social action as implying the mutuality of both agency and structure is possible.

Giddens' theory of structuration is clearly an intricate one

and could not be otherwise given the task with which he is

grappling. For as one reviewer puts it:

> "According to Giddens, the endeavour to avoid the twin
> pitfalls of idealism and the genetic fallacy points up the
> need to develop an adequate theory of human agency or a
> "theory of the acting subject". "The pressing task facing
> social theory today is not to further the conceptual
> elimination of the subject, but on the contrary to promote a
> recovery of the subject without lapsing into subjectivism.
> Such a recovery, I wish to argue, involves a grasp of "what
> cannot be said" (or thought) as practice, a grasp of which
> in turn depends upon stressing the importance of the
> "reflexive monitoring of conduct" as a chronic feature of
> the enactment of social life." (46)

So then, this would suggest that the problematic under

consideration lies inevitably at the boundaries of our language

(and thought). Giddens' attempt to deal with these issues should

be applauded; however it may be that his scheme is in some ways

overly formalistic. The detailed interlinking scheme he outlines

in his book "The Constitution of Society" may be an attempt to

develop a series of "sensitising concepts"; however in so doing

he may risk losing "the sense" of what he means. In some ways

his theory is too tight and indeed by outlining (prescribing) the

nature of the linkages between social action within locales,

regions and systems he has constructed a "grand theory", which

for some observers seems to distance the theory from the study of

empirical aspects of social reality [47]. To some extent this is

perhaps inevitable given the limitations which are built into our

common language, and it is indeed a tortuous route to move

towards "what cannot be said". The attempt to recombine the

dualism of structure and action behind the cumbersome term of

"structuration" and the "duality of structure" bears witness to

the uneasiness that is produced when dualism is rejected. This

indeed constitutes the horns of the dilemma upon which Giddens is

impaled - the problem of structure and action is only one of the

dualities underlying the sociological endeavour.

> "Thus modern society is condemned to exist within a world
> defined by a series of abstract dualisms which reflect the
> inadequacy of its foundations but which nevertheless
> structure sociological debate: structure-action; object-
> subject; positivism-humanism; holism-individualism; society-
> individual; explanation-understanding; order-conflict;
> authority-consent." (48)

A recognition that such dualistic thought patterns

constitute much of the problem in relating a recombined account

of structure and action was advanced by Philip Abrams. Whilst he

suggested that the task facing us is to make a "determined effort

to un-think dualism", he did not underestimate the problems that

such a move would involve:

> " ... although I find the call to abandon dualism (a call
> social scientists have been making to each other since the
> time of Marx) quite comprehensible, sensible and persuasive
> in principal, I must admit to finding it almost impossible
> to accomplish in practice. The weight of two and a half
> millenia of treating dualism as the obvious basis for
> effective thought is remarkably oppressive." (49)

So then, the attempt to conceive of a unification of

structure and action and other pervasive dualities amounts to

attempting to "grasp what cannot be said" and is "almost

impossible to accomplish in practice". However Abrams and

Giddens are united in their advocacy of attempting the almost

impossible. If for Giddens this involves the production of a

formal theory of structuration, for Abrams the sensitising

concepts are more empirically based as evidence in some of the

work of classic sociologists. The endeavour is seen to involve

the "problematic of structuring" and the constitution of an

"historical sociology" which is seen as:

> " ... the attempt to understand the relationship of personal
> activity and experience on the one hand and social
> organisation on the other as something that is continuously
> constructed in time. It makes the continuous process of
> construction the focal concern of social analysis. That
> process may be studied in many different contexts: in
> personal biographies and careers; in the rise and fall of
> whole civilizations; in the setting of particular events
> such as a revolution or an election, or of particular
> developments such as the making of the welfare state or the
> formation of the working class." (50)

This concern is not a new one, then, but what is new is that

the "problem" that the above authors address can no longer be

seen as an implicit concern, whispered at in the work of "good"

sociologists. We can now no longer ignore the problem; to

conceive of the essential unity of social processes must be one

of our consuming aims.

The question of course remains how do we set about this

task? If we are to "unthink dualism" are we not left with little

purchase upon social reality: how can we proceed once we renounce

the "reality" of concepts such as subjective/objective,

structure/action etc.? In order to avoid losing our foothold

altogether we need to address the problem of ontology, the

question of existence in its most basic form. Here perhaps is a

starting point, but again one in which we must be careful to

avoid the invocation of a solitary absolute, thereby structuring

a duality in absence of "the relative". In other words, the

question becomes how we envisage the relativity of the absolute.

This question is perhaps best addressed through the concerns of

other theorists and a useful point of departure is the notion of

the material basis of reality, an issue which is central to the

work of both Marx and Weber. What this involves is, according to

Weber, part of the very essence of the concept of the "social

economic":

> "Most roughly expressed, the basic element in all these phe-
> nomena which we call, in the widest sense, "social econom-
> ics" is constituted by the fact that our physical existence
> and the satisfaction of our most ideal needs are everywhere
> confronted with the quantitative limits and the qualitative
> inadequacy of the necessary external means, so that their
> satisfaction requires planful provision and work, struggle
> with nature and the association of human beings." (51)

Similarly, for Marx the "first premise of human existence" is

that:

> " ... men must be in a position to live in order to be able
> to "make history"." (52)

In both accounts the importance of reproducing human physical

existence is seen as a "fundamental condition of history". The

appreciation of this "fundamental condition" is apparent in

Giddens' attempts to promote a "recovery of the subject". This

theme is demonstrated in his approach to semiotics and his

repudiation of the Cartesian cogito:

> "We must actually repudiate the cogito in a more thorough-
> going way than Kristeva does, while acknowledging the vital
> importance of the theme that being precedes the subject-
> object relation in consciousness.   The route to
> understanding this is not to be found through a sort of
> reconstituted cogito, but through the connection of being
> and action." (53)

At another point Giddens stresses the importance of being in a

way reminiscent of Marx and Weber, referring to existential

contradiction as:

> " ... an elemental aspect of human existence in relation to
> nature of the material world. There is, one might say, an
> antagonism of opposites at the very heart of the human
> condition, in the sense that life is predicated upon nature,
> yet is not of nature and is set against it. Human beings
> emerge from the "nothingness" of inorganic nature and
> disappear back into that alien state of the inorganic. This
> might seem to be an unabashedly relgious theme and as such
> to be the proper province of theology rather than social
> science. But I think it to be in fact of great analytical
> interest ... " (54)

This is perhaps an understatement as the notion of "being" in its

various guises, as "existential contradiction", "the fundamental

premise of history" or the confrontation of physical being with

"quantitative limits and qualitative inadequacy of the necessary

external means", is arguably the central pivot of the

perspectives developed by these theorists. Here then is the

absolute: the physical existence of humankind understood both as

the survival of the species and of the "individual"; the

ontological basis of existence is to be found in "being" itself.

This "reality" has, as we have seen, exercised a profound

influence upon the form of social theory advanced. The

limitations of the struggle with nature are seen to exercise a

greater or lesser determination upon the form of human social organisation. It is perhaps Marxian theory which has suffered most from the "vulgar" application of such determinations mediated through the "means" and "relations" of production and the wider base/superstructure debate itself.

Perhaps there is a need for a reconceptualisation of the problem. It may be that the determinant force of the "fundamental premise of history" is in itself historically contingent. No one can deny the potency of effect of the needs of physical survival when available resources are critical, although the idea that the satisfaction of such needs "requires planful provision and work ... and the association of human beings" would seem to be a rationalisation of the "rise of civilisation" [55]. However, it could be argued that once the productive system has advanced beyond satisfying the basic physical requirements of existence the importance of the ontological base (i.e. being) recedes and thereby the degree of determination of human social organisation by the struggle with nature is lessened. In other words, the absolute is rendered relative by the praxis of human activity, being retains its absolute status however and becomes relational only to the extent that its fundamental requirements are fulfilled unproblematically. Understood in relation to one of the Marxian problematics (defined by Engels), whilst human physical production and reproduction is accomplished "unproblematically" the "moment" of "the last resort" is never reached. In other

words the unchanging scheme of the materialist conception of

history which argues that:

> " ... the ultimately determining element in history is the
> production and reproduction of real life." (56)

needs to understand that the pattern of ultimate causation is

itself historically contingent. In these terms the vast import-

ance of the production and reproduction of real life, to which

Marx and Engels rightly drew our attention, achieves, through the

increasing mastery of nature and increasing production of

surplus, the increasing negation of the determining links of "the

economic factor". The "success" of the productive system in over-

coming the basic "existential contradiction" of the struggle with

nature serves progressively to uncouple the degree of determinat-

ion that this contradiction exercises over social organisation.

Quantity is indeed transposed into quality, the ontology recedes

as far as phenomenal determination is concerned. One is tempted

to echo the sentiments of Nietzsche that "God is dead and we have

killed him". It is here through the relativisation of the

absolute, the partial transcendence of existential contradiction

via the routinisation of the potential satisfaction of the

physical requirements of being, that the historical rise of

agency must be located. It is in this way that the potential for

an integrated view of the idea of agency encompassing all of

Anderson's three "types" arises. The importance of the rise of

the potential of agency is the outcome of the relativisation of

the absolute, the receding ontology, as the upshot of material

<u>processes</u>, not, as in Marx, Engels and Anderson, the idealistic grafting of imputed socialist (true) consciousness of classes in conflict. This potential is evidenced not in grasping the "truth" of scientific socialism in its (static) determinate prophesies (as an ideology) but rather through a more materialist understanding of the "material struggle for existence".

Again, dualistic concepts such as "determinism" and "free will" are emphatically rejected as static absolutes. The single "absolute" category is that of being, and as we have seen that ontology recedes as <u>the</u> determining factor. Our analysis remains materialist but is increasingly less happy with ultimately determining factors. Following from this we can see that "unthinking duality" need not lead to a surrendering of all useful concepts, but rather to the rejection of all static determinate accounts. This holds true when the level of analysis is that of the world system or that of the changing division of labour in an individual shipyard.

The implication that such a "material ontology" holds for epistemology is that it preserves the potential for a kind of "reflection theory" [57]. Here the emphasis is placed not upon the identity of "external object" and object of thought; neither is the idealist position, which sees the external world as being constituted by mind, acceptable; rather the external materiality of being is grasped by and through concepts. However this "grasp" of the world is never simply to be equated with the

"concrete in thought", for several reasons. Firstly, the
ontological basis of reality is most forcefully expressed in the
existential contradiction, to use Giddens' term; as we have
already seen this absolute is rendered relative by the historical
praxis of humans. Therefore the access to the external world
must take account of the drift of the absolute towards the
relative; the external itself is contingent upon the asymmetrical
realisation of the unity (past and present) of conception and
execution, thought and action, in other words the effectiveness
of praxis itself. Secondly, the idea of thought itself is again
to be seen in its historical contextuality, thought is never
totally empty but is always "about" something; however as with
language it is not the individual thought which totally imparts
meaning but rather its relationship to other concepts and words
in either their co-presence or absence. Such a view of "meaning"
represents an established position within linguistic philosophy,
that what is implied by invoking a word is not merely contained
"within" that word but rather also implies a set of relations
which that word conjures up in relation to our view of the world.
This is not meant to imply that we have to know everything before
we can know anything, but rather that meaning is a relational
problem as well as a nomenclative one. As Jost Trier suggested:

> "It is not a single sign which says something but a system
> of the totality of signs which may say something in view of
> single signs." (58)

This relational view of meaning is not only applicable to the use

of language systems, but also represents the apprehension of
meaning through praxis in the world. Not only is this relational
"problem" applicable to the concepts of "thought" and "language"
but it is also evident in relation to the "individual" thinker.
In this sense the Cartesian dictum "I think therefore I am" does
not point to an existential truth but rather is the source of
much of the later confusion over the individual and society
duality. In this sense the "I" of Descartes could have gained
from an infusion of the "me" of Mead. The point to be remembered
is that the "individual" thinker thinking the individual thought
not only implicates an historically contingent system of concepts
in terms of "presences" and "absences", but in doing so he or she
implies the social self. In this sense the unitary form of
language and thought (the difficulty of saying or thinking more
than one word/thought at one "moment") can only grasp meaning
sequentially as presence and absence and this inevitably implies
the problem of the expanding content.

Nowhere is the problem better stated than in the work of
Weber:

> " ... as soon as we attempt to reflect about the way in
> which life confronts us in immediate concrete situations, it
> presents an infinite multiplicity of successively and co-
> existently emerging and disappearing events both "within"
> and "outside" ourselves. The absolute infinitude of this
> multiplicity is seen to remain undiminished even when our
> attention is focussed on a single "object", for instance a
> concrete act of exchange, as soon as we seriously attempt an
> exhaustive description of all the individual components of
> this "individual phenomena", to say nothing of explaining it
> causally. All the analysis of infinite reality which the

> finite human mind can conduct rests on the tacit assumption
> that only a finite portion of this reality constitutes the
> object of scientific investigation, and that only it is "im-
> portant" in the sense of being "worthy of being known". (59)

Again this suggests that there can be no identity between thought

and an "external object", for it cannot be grasped in its

totality. Furthermore, efforts to overcome partially the finite

nature of the human mind by adopting an eclectic approach to any

one phenomenon, and thereby accepting the principle of cumulative

knowledge as an attempt to "fill in the gaps", again introduces

the potential for further "distortion" (or refraction). For all

these reasons, then, the reflection theory of knowledge is

superior either to an identity theory or idealism. It can

accommodate the materialist (receding) ontology as outlined above

whilst not denying the impact and non-neutral effect of the

concepts and language which we use to gain purchase on "reality".

In this way the status of concepts and more formal theory is

seen as that of working assumptions (acknowledged or

unacknowledged) which whilst they are not identical to a

"reality" external to the individual thinker and the "thought"

are nevertheless anchored ultimately in the ontological basis of

the existential contradiction and processually within modes of

temporality and intersubjectively held paradigms. In other words

such "working assumptions" are constrained (and enabled) in their

view of reality (the content of the thought) both existentially

(that is ontologically) and phenomenologically. Such a view

makes a nonsense of the debate over the primacy of the

theoretical or empirical, for our grasp of any social reality should inevitably involve both of these aspects.

A final point to be made in this section concerns the problem of closure [60]. It should be apparent from the foregoing discussion that the point at which closure of study is affected is to some extent an arbitrary decision made by the researcher. The approach taken here is that to some extent the boundaries of closure must be left as permeable as possible. and potential interconnections should be indicated even as they trail off into the void of unstudied reality. This presents stylistic problems; however, to be true to our theoretical approach of following the multiplicity of contexts involved in "unthinking dualism", an effort to sustain the view that no study is ever finally and absolutely complete must be made. The eclectic approach adopted here is then grounded in the (receding) ontology of human "being", its range attempts to span the "reality" of "the small life-worlds of modern man" [61] to that of "the world system" [62]. In so doing, the specific form of the interconnections of these various levels will be indicated without attempting to develop any static hierarchical scheme of interdependence. Again it must be stressed that these theoretical underpinnings are "alive" in the "empirical" body of this work and must be understood as such if the meaning intended by the author is to be recovered.

Part 2

The relationship of the theory to more empirically substantive content is a particulary thorny problem in what is perhaps the most developed approach to the study of the changing division of labour and work organisations, namely the labour process debate. In reviewing some of the main pubications within this debate I shall highlight some of the problems and advantages associated with this approach, and show how some of the more useful insights can be developed.

Since the publication of Braverman's "Labour and Monopoly Capital" in 1974 there has been much interest stimulated in the labour process. Even the most elementary introductions to industrial sociology now being published mention either Braverman directly or the labour process more generally. Therefore whilst Paul Sweezy could claim, in the foreword to Braverman's book, that the work filled a gap in the literature in which there was:

> " ... an almost total neglect of a subject which occupies a
> central place in Marx's study of capitalism: the labour
> process." (63)

this is perhaps no longer the case. However, it must be said that the success of most formulations of the issues dealt with under the heading of the labour process has been strictly limited. Indeed one may fairly address Braverman's comments dealing with the literature that existed before his publication, at later formulations of labour process work:

> "In the course of a fairly extensive reading of this
> literature, I was particularly struck by the vagueness,

generality of working, and on occasion egregious errors of
description of the concrete matters under discussion. It
seemed to me that many widely accepted conclusions were
based on little genuine information, and represented either
simplifications or outright misreadings of a complex
reality." (64)

This is indeed a damning comment, and in order to evaluate

whether it is a justifiable summation of much that goes for

labour process theory and substance we must look at individual

contributions. However, before we go on to that I will explicate

a general framework within which I suggest much labour process

work can be situated. The central problem is that there would

seem to be no agreement as to what the labour process actually

consists of. As Jim McGoldrick has suggested:

"In the Marxist theory of the labour process there is no
unified position which states exactly is meant when the
labour process is being discussed." (65)

Whilst this is true, it is perhaps an understatement. For as the

idea of the study of the labour process has gained popularity it

has been grasped by those working in non-Marxist traditions. In

many of these works a specific notion of what the labour process

involves is either only implied or is left completely

unspecified. In other works the labour process is presented as

the empirical content of industrial sociology, it is seen purely

as the physical work done within an organisation.

Within the Marxist tradition there is equal confusion over

the matter of what the labour process is. This is compounded by

the insistence of its central importance, and whilst this was

given fresh impetus by Braverman it is by no means a new phenom-

enon. For example, as early as 1941 Marcuse was proclaiming that:

> "The labour process, which shows forth as fundamental in the
> Marxian analysis of capitalism and its genesis, is the
> ground on which the various branches of theory and practice
> operate in capitalist society. An understanding of the
> labour process, therefore, is at the same time an
> understanding of the source for the separation between
> theory and practice and of the element that re-establishes
> their interconnection. Marxian theory is of its very nature
> an integral and integrating theory of society. The economic
> process of capitalism exercises a totalitarian influence
> over all theory and all practice, and an economic analysis
> that shatters the capitalist camouflage and breaks through
> its "reification" will get down to its subsoil common to all
> theory and practice in this society." (66)

It is because of this central importance held by the labour

process in wider Marxian theory that its precise definition has

become crucial. This has given rise to a self-perpetuating debate

as to the nature of the labour process. And so, then, if the non-

Marxist appropriation of the notion of the labour process shows

in the main a marked empiricist leaning, many "Marxist"

formulations show a tendency towards formalistic abstraction to

the almost total lack of substantive content. Coupled with this,

many of the reviews are wholly negative in terms of their

critique, content to condemn errors rather than suggesting useful

amendments. However, we are running ahead of ourselves - it is

perhaps useful to begin by looking at "Labour and Monopoly

Capital" itself. Working within a Marxist framework Braverman's

argument bemoans the recent lack of attention which has been paid

to the labour process. This situation, he suggests, arose because

within the Marxist tradition in particular:

> " ... the critique of the mode of production gave way to the critique of capitalism as a mode of distribution. Impressed, perhaps even overawed by the immense productivity of the labour process, baffled by its increasing scientific intricacy, participating in the struggles of workers for improvements in wages, hours and conditions, Marxists adapted to the view of the modern factory as an inevitable if perfectable form of the organisation of the labour process." (67)

Braverman seeks to question the inevitablity of the modern factory by:

> "Recognising that there are very few "eternal" or "inevitable" features of human social organisation." (68)

Having made this point the substance of the book is concerned with charting historically the development of the processes of production and of labour processes in general in capitalist society. That Braverman's study is of labour processes in general is of particular importance, a point not grasped by many of his critics who point to specific labour processes to "disprove" the relevance of the analysis. The conclusion of the study is that there exists within capitalist labour processes a deskilling dynamic: the fragmentation of work processes is accompanied by a shift of knowledge about those processes away from the shop floor and towards management. This movement is formalised primarily in the adoption of the organisational form of scientific management. The increasing degradation of work is seen, then, to have both technical and social organisational forms, the repercussions of which transcend the boundaries of the factory and suggest an increasing homogeneity of condition for an increasing number of employees.

Whilst, on the whole, Braverman's book was received with a good deal of enthusiasm it has also been criticised. That critic- ism comes in may forms, from a general critique of the perspect- ive suggesting that it is based upon a "philosophical anthropol- ogy of humanism" and is therefore less than scientific [69], to specific objections to the deskilling process based upon studies of individual industries at particular historical junctures [70].

It is possible to argue that many objections raised to Braverman's work, based on particular examples which do not conform to a deskilling model in the labour process, miss the point of the work. His analysis was not a summation of deskilling tendencies deduced from all individual labour processes, rather, as he says in his introduction:

> "In this book, we will be concerned with the development of the processes in general in capitalist society." (71)

Indeed at a later point the author denies that subordination of labour will be fully realised, and in as far as it is, it will be unevenly achieved between specific industries:

> "The displacement of labour as the subjective element of the process, and its subordination as an objective element in a productive process now conducted by management, is an ideal realised by capital only within definite limits and unevenly among industries." (72)

So then, we can see that the relationship of Braverman's thesis to empirical situations is more complex than some think. It cannot be "tested" with reference to single situations or even individual industries. The level of its relationship to the

empirical world is at a higher level than individual examples; it attempts to speak of a general dynamic tendency expressed within the capitalist labour process as a whole. Braverman acknowledges his intellectual debt to Marx and seems to suggest that his own project is to update Marx's writings on the labour process in Capital. However it would appear that many of the problems associated with Braverman's analysis are centred upon his partial and illegitimate use of Marx's methodology. For Marx in "Capital" a study of the labour process is only part of the articulation of the capitalist mode of production, whereas Braverman's study seeks to address the labour process as a theoretical object in itself. Here is the source of many of the problems with what is otherwise a stimulating work.

Firstly, however, we must look at the objections which have been raised to the Braverman presentation. Here I will deal with criticisms which are more generalised than those which refute the argument citing individual examples. Many of these critiques have a central theme in common, which is that Braverman's account has on the one hand an over-structural bias, the corollary of which is an over-conspiratorial view of the working of capitalist agency, and in this sense his account is seen not to balance the problematic of the structure/action dichotomy in an acceptable fashion [73]. Thus as David Stack argues:

> "It is not unfair to argue that Braverman portrays the capitalist class as veritably omniscient and the working class as infinitely malleable." (74)

The work of Braverman has however an elusive quality about it. It
has been claimed that it is in some respects in a similar
tradition of Marxist humanism to the Frankfurt school [75];
whilst on the other hand it is suggested that the study relies
heavily upon Marxist functionalism and structural dynamics [76].
Nowhere more so than in relation to this problem of the
omniscience of capital and the malleability of labour is the
tension more apparent. It may be helpful to attempt to simplify
the problem by looking at Braverman's conception of the working
class and the capitalist class respectively.

Firstly, his view of the working class. Perhaps the most
criticised feature of the whole analysis is his limitation to the
"objective" content of class:

> "This is a book about the working class as a class in
> itself, not as a class for itself." (77)

However the author's view of the nature of class seems at points
to be more complex than the advocacy of a purely objective
structure. For example, in a number of passages reminiscent of
the views of E.P. Thompson [78] Braverman argues that:

> "The term "working class" properly understood never
> precisely delineated a specific body of people but was
> rather an expression for an ongoing social process ... We
> are dealing not with the static terms of an algebraic
> equation, which requires only that quantities be filled in,
> but with a dynamic process ... " (79)

However, at a further point he notes:

> "To make this a little more concrete: I have no quarrel with
> the definition of the working class, on the basis of its
> "relationship to the means of production" as that class
> which does not own or otherwise have proprietary access to

the means of labour and must sell its labour power to those
who do. But in the present situation almost all of the
population has been placed in this situation so that the
definition encompasses occupational strata of the most
diverse kinds, it is not the bare definition that is
important but its application." (80)

It is indeed the application of the definition that is important

and it is here that Braverman's analysis is not up to his

theoretical standards. His account of the existence of the

working class given in Part I of "Labour and Monopoly Capital"

through to Part V does give a passive view of the working class,

outlining a progressive deskilling dynamic at work within the

labour process and emphasising a shift in control of these

processes away from labour towards capital. And yet in Part V of

the book the author seems to acknowledge the possibility of an

"active" working class:

"This working class lives a social and political existence
of its own outside the direct grip of capital. It protests
and submits, rebels or is integrated into bourgeois society,
sees itself as a class or loses sight of its own existence,
in accordance with the forces that act upon it and the
moods, conjectures and conflicts of social and political
life. But since in its permanent existence it is the living
part of capital its occupational structure, modes of work
and distribution through the industries of society are
determined by the ongoing processes of the accumulation of
capital. It is seized, released, flung into various parts
of the social machinery and expelled by others not in accord
with its own will or self activity, but in accord with the
movement of capital." (81)

It can be argued that this bracketing of spheres of life

contributes to an over passive view of the working class and an

over emphasis of the efficacy of capitalist agency. The problems

of restricting the analysis purely to the productive system are

considerable and we can say that as far as any conception of the
"agency" of the working class is concerned, this restriction,
coupled with the "objectivist" view of the nature of class, is
treated mechanically in order to "fit" within the twin concepts
of the "formal" and "real subordination of labour".   The
discourse has successfully rendered class as a structural notion
and therefore more conducive to use in a generalised analysis.
This, together with the level of analysis has unfortunately
succeeded in rendering a "subjectless subject" in the
structuralist sense.   The other side of the coin, so to speak, is
the conception of the nature of the capitalist class portrayed in
the analysis.   Whilst there is not as much time devoted to
defining the capitalist class as there is to the working class,
the view that is portrayed is that in the aggregate form the
capitalist is the human embodiment of capitalism.   This view,
because of the insufficient theorisation of the "moments" of the
production and reproduction of society as a whole, leads to the
apparent omniscience of capital.   Where the working class does
not move in accordance with its own will or self activity,
capital is seen to do just that in pursuance of its aim of
accumulation.   It is easy to overstress the dominance of capital,
however it is also easy to underestimate it.   The formal
subordination of labour based upon the very social relationships
of capitalism do ultimately imply an imbalance in what are seen
as legitimate power resources.   As Jean Gardiner has suggested:

"Variation in relative control as between capital and labour
must always be seen in the context of the ultimate power
capitalists have to close a plant or divert investment
elsewhere." (82)

In Braverman's analysis the "ultimate power" of the capitalist

based within social relationships is projected upon the "real"

subordination of labour within the labour process.   In

restricting his analysis to the objective aspect of the working

class at a generalised level and yet still attempting to say

something useful about the changing labour process he is forced

into adopting an undifferentiated concept of agency.   And as his

starting point is the antagonistic social relationships of

capitalism the continued existence of these relationships

inevitably implies the ineffectiveness of working class agency.

In order to have avoided this problem Braverman would have

needed to look at what he referred to as the subjective aspects

of class consciousness and ideology.   In considering such

features a more realistic view of the relationship between the

formal and real subordination of labour can be developed, one in

which the formal subordination of labour, or the structuring of

social relationships does not imply the total progression to the

real subordination of labour in the labour process.   Obviously in

this respect notions of ideology and legitimacy become of prime

importance.   Just what is seen by workers to be within the

legitimate sphere of negotiation and/or resistance?   In this

sense the continued existence of capitalism need not necessarily

imply that the working class does not move "in accord with its

own will or self activity" but rather that its own will or self

activity is not conceived as the overthrow of capitalist social

relationships. This then is precisely the issue and is centrally

a problem of consciousness, and as such is left untheorised in

Braverman's account as a subjective element of class.

Furthermore it is this oversight which projects the formalised

social structuring of relationships into the patterns of change

within the labour process, giving the contradictory position of a

dehumanised working class structure which is directed by a

consciously conspiratorial group of capitalists. In other words,

in Braverman's analysis structure totally dominates action.

Capitalist social relationships are the structural embodiment of

the subordination of labour and therefore deny the possibility of

the self activity of the working class. However in as much as

Braverman remains true to his assertion that:

> " ... there are very few "eternal" or "inevitable" features
> of human social organisation"

he posits the continued existence of capitalist social

relationships in the dominance of capitalist agency. In this way

Braverman can be seen to be advocating a type of Marxist

functionalism in which the dominant form of social relationships

is equated with the total dominance of the agency of the ruling

class.

So far then, what we have criticised in Braverman's

presentation is not the generalised level of his endeavour but

its partial theoretical framework in as far as this is evident in

his adoption of an objectivist view of social class.   We must now

turn our attention to another theoretical closure made in "Labour

and Monopoly Capital" - that of the over-emphasis given to the

primacy of the "moment" of production.   Whilst it is Braverman's

concern to redirect attention away from an over-emphasis on

issues of distribution and towards production, his focus does

seem in this respect to be rather narrow.   In this way his

analysis is unlike that of Marx for, whilst Marx often asserted

the primacy of production, this was in terms of a logical

preliminary "moment" in the reproduction of society as a whole -

as he wrote in "Grundrisse":

> "The conclusion we reach is not that production distribution
> exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all
> form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity
> ... production predominates not only over itself but over
> the other moments as well.   The process always returns to
> production to begin anew." (83)

At a later point, however:

> " ... production is itself determined by the other moments.
> For example if the market, i.e. the sphere of exchange,
> expands, then production grows in quantity and the divisions
> between its different branches become deeper.   A change in
> distribution changes production, e.g. concentration of
> capital, different distribution of the population between
> town and country etc.   Finally the needs of consumption
> determine production.   Mutual interaction takes place
> between the the different moments. This is the case with
> every organic whole." (84)

This is a point of importance, for Braverman's analysis

predicates a general deskilling dynamic within the labour process

as the outcome of capitalists seeking capital accumulation.

However he does not attempt to theorise the linkages between the moment of production and the other moments. It can be argued that this factor contributes greatly towards the over-simplification of the real movements within the labour process. For example, the development of the labour process in the British Shipbuilding industry cannot be made sense of in terms of both structure and action unless the market demand for ships and the existence of the "business cycle" is taken into account. In terms of such examples it is not enough merely to state that the deskilling effect will be uneven amongst industries, or more importantly in the above case amongst national industries. The possible reasons for such anomalies may not lie within the moment of production.

The above problem also indicates another inadequacy in the analysis. Not enough consideration is given to national specficity. And whilst Braverman's supporters may again point to his general level of analysis to suggest that the object of study is the capitalist labour process irrespective of purely national considerations it is clear that his own conception of the changes taking place refer in certain respects to uniquely American features. The importance of recognising particularly national features in analysing social formations was superbly demonstrated by Antonio Gramsci in his "Americanism and Fordism" [85], in which he suggested that the American example was extreme and in some respects foreign to European traditions. Indeed it is this

reliance upon the American example which (wrongly) leads Braverman to extol Taylorist scientific management as the form of control within the developing labour process. That management control strategies in different countries can and do vary in response to common pressures has been demonstrated in the volume edited by Howard Gospel and Craig Littler [86].

We are now in a position to attempt to draw together the above criticisms into a unified whole. Firstly, we can say that the shortcomings of the Braverman analysis are clustered around a unilinear simplistic conception of the deskilling tendency as a dynamic existing within the capitalist labour process in general. This follows from his central reliance upon a perspective based on the notion of a structural dynamic drawn from the labour theory of value. In as far as this dynamic is grounded in actual social relationships it is seen to be expressed in the commodity status of labour [87]. The commodity status of labour, which is the articulation of the formal subordination of labour, is transformed, in this work, through the use of a purely objectivist conception of the working class into a developing real subordination. The structural over-emphasis thus gives on the one hand a totally passive working class structure manipulated on the other hand by a conscious, cohesive and active capitalist class. Had Braverman been a structuralist this problem would not have arisen. It is only because he attempts to relate the theorised structural tendencies within the

"empirically real" development of the labour process that over-
active capitalist and totally passive working class becomes a
problem.   It is here that it is apparent that the
structure/action problematic is left untheorised in his analysis.

The second feature of Braverman's analysis which contributes
to its demise is the insularity given to the labour process.
This would again seem to stem from the adoption of a structural
dynamic developed upon the labour theory of value; the idea that
the necessary features of successful accumulation are contained
solely within the "moment" of production.   This again contributes
to an overall impression of a unilinear development within the
labour process.   This is understandable given that fluctuations
in market demand are only treated in as far as they concern the
demand for labour and the constitution of its "reserve army".
The problem is again seen to be purely one of the control of
"variable capital" within the labour process.   We are given no
appreciation that the operation of the business cycle may
militate against the rationalisation of the labour process in an
attempt to retain the flexibility of variable capital in the face
of a constantly changing market demand for goods [88].

In Braverman's formulation, then, the conception of the
labour process presented starts off looking like an incredibly
wide sweep over the terrain traditionally dealt with, in a
piecemeal fashion, by industrial sociologists on the one hand and
orthodox Marxists on the other.   To the former he presents the

stance that in order to study industry effectively the class

basis of the organisation of production has to be recognised,

both in a formal and real sense. To the latter he brings the

suggestion that the actual process of the transformation of raw

materials into use values must not be conceived merely as a

"black box". However, whilst in one way this does widen the

areas of debate within both industrial sociology and more

generally within Marxist theory, in another way his presentation

is unnecessarily restrictive. As Theo Nichols suggested in a

review of "Labour and Monopoly Capital":

> "The job, and control over the job, is not the whole story
> and to understand the different things which are happening
> in and to the labour process, it is necessary to encompass
> more than Braverman does." (89)

It is in attempting to achieve this that some of the more

interesting work within the labour process tradition has been

completed. In many of these attempts the tensions of the

original formulation have been replicated. In others a more one

sided approach, tending either towards a totally structural

account in general or towards ethnographies of individual work

places, have relieved some of these tensions only at the cost of

again restricting the area of debate even further.

Whatever our reservations with Braverman's formulation may

be, one cannot deny the immense impact that "Labour and Monopoly

Capital" had on all those interested in industrial sociology.

However, the fortunes of the labour process approach have been

various and after a relatively brief explosion of interest, which

saw the boundaries of the debate moving outwards apparently

towards infinity [90], the popularity of the approach has begun

to collapse:

> "It is not perhaps an exaggeration to claim that the labour
> process bandwagon has run into the sand. Indeed the
> catalogue of amendments and criticisms attaching to labour
> process theory has led a number of critics to call for
> little less than the abandonment of labour process theory.
> It has served a useful purpose but it is now holed and
> patched beyond repair." (91)

That this situation should have arisen is unsurprising given that

> "In the Marxist theory of the labour process there is no
> unified position which states what exactly is meant when the
> labour process is being discussed." (92)

Many formulations exaggerated the original tensions in

Braverman's work, concentrating wholly on the structural

tendencies of the productive system [93] or producing more

particular accounts of the individual work place [94]. It is not

that such studies are in themselves unsatisfactory, but rather

that they preclude the approach which is latent in Braverman's

work to see the physical labour process as an activity situated

in a specific set of social relations, the potential for an

analysis which can integrate many levels of social reality. It

would seem that to some extent the most outstanding examples of

empirical accounts or work processes, such as that of Burawoy

[95], are flawed by unnecessary limitations, in this case the

stress placed upon generation of consent at the point of

production. So then, whilst the boundaries of labour process

theory have been moving inexorably outwards, it is rarely the

case that empirical accounts have been able to operationalise
these widening concerns. To some extent the basis of this
problem lies within the tension already outlined, .between
structure and agency as traditionally conceived within Marxist
theory. Not only is there a tendency for the "moment" of
production to dominate in an absolute sense, but also where the
notion of agency is developed it is often done so in a way in
which its efficacy is structurally located and given an over-
homogenised form, therefore producing an over-simplistic outcome.
In other words episodes are represented as mutually exclusive
events, and whilst, as we shall see in a later section, this
moves away from the view of capital as omnipotent, it does so
merely by inverting the equation. In such accounts it seems
obvious that the alternative outcome of a victory for capital
(strong capital - weak labour) is a victory for labour (weaker
capital - stronger labour). Recently there have however been
moves to bring about a cross fertilisation of the labour process
debate and the structure/action debate.

In one essay Giddens draws our attention to what he calls
the "dialectic of control" [96]. In criticising Braverman's over
passive view of the working class Giddens suggests that it is the
very nature of human agency which militates against such a
passive representation:

> " ... Braverman's study is about "alienated labour" ...
> although he barely mentions the term itself. In my
> terminology the connection of alienation with the "humanness

of man's species being" can be expressed simply and
coherently in a single sentence. The more a worker comes
close to being an "appendage of a machine" the more he or
she ceases to be a human agent. As Marx puts it, "The
animal becomes human and the human becomes animal". The
interest of this analysis for a philosophical anthropology
of labour, however, should not make us forget that,
precisely because they are not machines, wherever they can
do so human actors devise ways of avoiding being treated as
such." (97)

Coupled to this criticism, Giddens applauds the work of Friedman

(98) for realising that the management strategy is itself the

outcome of situated agency and is not merely directed towards one

solution to the problems of accumulation. Similarly, as Thompson

has stressed:

> " ... the point about human agencies is that they are never
> ciphers and they make choices within structural constraints.
> Indeed the contestation involved in the capital-labour
> relation, and the dynamic and varied nature of capital
> accumulation, create many of the conditions for diversity in
> managerial behaviour." (99)

More than this Thompson argues that the "greatest task" facing

labour process theory is the "construction of a theory of the

missing subject" (100). A task which he acknowledges cannot be

accomplished "within" labour process theory itself.

In this connection one final criticism of much labour

process work concerns the arena within which this "missing

subject" can be sought. Thompson rightly criticises what he

refers to as the tendency of the ultra-left to reduce all

activity to struggle. However all too often studies have been

concerned with the "frontiers of control" situations in which new

technologies are introduced or management strategies produce

activist resistance. Too often access to the workers' experience
of the labour process has been through the trades union movement
or through activist workers. Whilst such "frontiers" are
important and an activists' viewpoint is often a crucial one this
should not be taken as the whole story. Largely because of the
Marxist origins of the labour process debate attention is paid
solely to the "sharp points" of the capital/labour relationship,
a relationship which all too often is actively invoked (as a
structural contradiction) and only imperfectly theorised.

Another attempt at relating the concerns of structure and
agency to the labour process debate is a paper by Neimark and
Tinker [101]. Here the authors outline their theoretical attempt
to deal with agency and structure on the basis of Ollman's
reading of Marx, as the "philosophy of internal relations" [102].
In criticising Giddens they appear to be preparing the ground for
a more thorough going conception of the essential unity of agency
and structure:

> "The concern with the relative importance of agency and
> structure (or individual and society) and the solution
> suggested by Giddens are motivated by analytical premises.
> Although Giddens recognises the dependence and reciprocity
> between the individual and society (or agent and structure)
> the category pairs are conceived as ontologically distinct.
> For the philosophy of internal relations, however, such a
> distinction and the concerns it raises are without meaning;
> so deeply do individual and society inter-penetrate each
> other." (103)

However, their apparent willingness to use interchangably the
notions of agency and structure with those of individual and
society should lead us at once to be wary of their summation of

the work of Giddens, who, as has been argued earlier, sees

fundamental ontological categories as a product of a basic

existential contradiction and not as lying within a cleavage

between the individual and society. On a more substantive level

the paper is disappointing in its attempt to introduce dialectics

into the labour process debate by way of:

> " ... illustrating the use of a dialectical framework that
> is grounded in the philosophy of internal relations by
> examining the origins of the current crisis facing U.S.
> labour with particular emphasis on General Motors and the
> automobile industry." (104)

The account produced amounts to a "traditional" outline of

industrial relations at General Motors since the 1930s to the

present. Primary sources of data are the annual reports of G.M.,

and the specific consciousness of the "workers" is gauged by the

"type" of strike action undertaken or wider references to "the

new social consumption norm" [105]. References to the labour

process at the point of production are sparse and where such

issues are mentioned they are often skipped over in a "shopping

list" fashion. Thus in explaining the issues at stake at a

strike within the Fisher Body plant in December 1936 the authors

suggest that for the union the issue of recognition was

paramount, whereas:

> " ... the workers on the other hand, were more concerned
> with the pressures of line speed-ups, wage cuts, unsafe and
> unsanitary working conditions, the lack of steady work, the
> capricious power of foremen, and the absence of any control
> over workplace conditions." (106)

Whilst this is a fairly comprehensive list, its object is unfocussed and the use of phrases such as the "absence of any control" again renders any potential agency of the workers impotent, the dialectic of control has vanished and the apparently total "real subordination of labour" irons out the complexities of the individual workplace.

It would be unfair however to attack this paper alone for these failings. Indeed as we noted earlier many labour process studies share the same problems and failings, but what makes this paper particularly disappointing is that the problematic of structure and agency is, in a conscious fashion, related to the labour process debate in the theoretical introduction and then largely ignored in the empirical study. This failing is perhaps not only the responsibility of the individual authors, but also includes a problem of using the "labour processes" as the starting point for analysis. The transformation of raw materials into products having use-value consisting of three simple elements:

1 Purposeful activity of man, directed to work.
2 The object on which work is performed, in the form of natural or raw materials.
3 The instruments of that work, most often tools or more complex technology. (107)

can indeed be construed as a social process, but all too often can lead to a reified abstraction of a collection of physical tasks situated in time and space between the monolithic structures of labour and capital. In order to avoid such a

failing it is perhaps useful to redirect our attention towards

the employment relationship. Focussing upon this relationship as

a starting point for analysis is useful as it can be seen to

imply the embodiment of structure and agency within the "moment"

of the production process. Moreover such a focus escapes both

the failing of a labour led theory and an over-emphasis upon the

physical concept of the mode of production whilst not neglecting

an investigation of how industrial capital is organised. The

importance of such issues has been well brought out by Theo

Nichols in another connection:

> " ... it might well be said that both productivity
> researchers and students of the labour process have much in
> common - at least in the sense that neither of them have
> typically made much of an attempt to marry an analysis of
> the ("vertical") capital-labour relation to a serious
> analysis of organisation forms (including "horizontal"
> aspects). ... Just as C_{MP}^{L} ... P cannot be reduced to C^{L} ...
> P, nor L reduced entirely to a question of the intensity of
> labour, so even C_{MP}^{L} ... P is only the beginning of the story
> when international differences are considered. Any adequate
> comparison has to take in not only possible differences in
> organisational capacities on the side of wage labour (in
> particular different trade union structures and strategies)
> but differential organisational capacities and qualities on
> the capital side as well. For this a literally physical
> concept of MP is of no help." [108]

The focus on the employment relationship gives at once an

undeniably social character to the production process without

legislating its actual form on the basis of an unchanging

imminent law. It therefore admits the problem of the dialectic

of control as an empirical question without prejudging the extent

to which the formal subordination of labour can or will be translated into real subordination.   Moreover because its "substance" is the relationship between employee and employer, no matter what the level of analysis it should be obvious that it would be absurd to speak of the working class (or indeed the capitalist class) only in its "objective" aspect.   The relationship must imply both objective and (inter) subjective dimensions understood as a totality and as such this approach is unavoidably outward looking.   Others have suggested a similar approach:

> "The central characteristic of work in industrial societies is that by far the largest proportion of it is carried out by employees.   The employer - employee relationship is a key social relation in such societies and in my view it is on investigating this relation, and all those social relations which surround and arise out of it, that industrial sociology can and should focus as its distinctive field of competence.   An analytical starting point for industrial sociology can be found in the employment relation, and from that point the investigation can and should lead outwards to consider the whole complex of social relations within which it is situated. (109)

The strength of this approach then is that it can accommodate and indeed necessitates the inclusion of the concerns dealt with within the labour process tradition; the details from within the "hidden abode" of the workplace cannot be treated in a cursory fashion.   Neither however can the wider systemic features of (ultimately) the world system be neglected, for it is through this multiplicity of contexts that the employment relationship is created and reproduced anew.   The relationship is the social form

of the activity which not only meets the material needs of the existential (humankind and nature), but within the industrialised nations also goes beyond the provision of mere physical subsistence towards an increasingly indeterminate determination of material need. This implies not only a receding ontology but also holds out the possibility of receding determination by factors other than human agency. To understand the limits of the possibility of such potential we need a sustained effort to sketch the existing dilemmas caught in the vortex of structure and action. This is why the following "empirical" account cannot be understood apart from these theoretical foundations. The interpenetration of agency and structure is the principal axis through which to grasp the unfolding dimensions of the employment relationship in all of its complexity. The theoretical task I have set myself is a hard one; the relevance of this approach however is to be judged with reference to the following sections.

Notes to Chapter 1

1   Abrams, P. "Historical Sociology", Shepton Mallet. Open Books 1982 p227.

2   The idea that any study can be purely empirical is nonsensical. To claim this is only evidence that the author does not recognise his/her theoretical bias.

3   Anthony Giddens has attempted to deal with some of the issues raised by structuration theory for empirical research in Chapter 6 of his book "The Constitution of Society", Cambridge Polity Press, 1984.

4   Abrams, P. (1982) op cit pp108-109.

5   Bauman, Z. "Culture as Praxis", London, RKP 1973 p81.

6   Shutz himself saw his work as a radical break with existing conceptions of social life and saw his task as laying a foundation for an entirely new conception of the study of social life, drawing on the philosophy of Husserl. See Cuff, E.C. and Payne, G.C.F. (Ed) "Perspectives in Sociology" London, George Allen and Unwin 1980, especially Chapter 5.

7   Berger, P.L. and Luckman, T. "The Social Construction of Reality", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1967, p208.

8   Ibid p211.

9   Philip Abrams identified the work of Berger and Luckman along with that of R.K. Merton, Alvin Gouldner and Alan Dawe as representing contemporary attempts to grapple with the "Paradox of Agency". See Abrams, P. 1982, op cit pxiii.

10   Marx, K. "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in Marx, K. and Engels, F. "Selected Works" Vol. 1, Moscow. Foreign Languages Publishing House 1962, p252.

11   Quoted in Giddens, A. 'Studies in Social and Political Theory", London, Hutchinson 1977, p129.

12   Mezaros, I. "Marx's Theory of Alienation", London, Merlin 1970, pp224-225.

13   Althusser, L. "Politics and History:, London, New Left Books 1972, p183.

14   Thompson, E.P. "The Poverty of Theory and other essays", London, Merlin 1978, p290.

15   Althusser, L. and Balibar, E. "Reading Capital", London, New Left Books 1970, p180.

16   Thompson, E.P. 1978 op cit, p300.

17   There is evidence to suggest that Thompson's opposition to the notion of structure is not as total as his polemical attack upon Althusser would make it seem. Indeed within "The Making of the English Working Class" Thompson suggests that:
        "The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born or enter involuntarily".
"The Making of the English Working Class", Harmondsworth, Pelican 1968, p10.
This clearly implies a structural reference point. Indeed as G.A. Cohen has argued it can be seen that in relation to the traditional structural notion of "class":
        " ... at most Thompson could say that it is the wrong word for a good concept."
Cohen, G.A. "Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence", Oxford, Clarendon Press 1978, p75.

18   Anderson, P. "Arguments within English Marxism", London, Verso 1980, p19.

19   Ibid, p19.

20   Ibid, p19.

21   Ibid, p20.

22   Ibid, p21.

23   Ibid, p19.

24   Anderson, P. "Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism", London, Verso 1978, p140.

25   Thus during the period of land enclosure in England or the Highland clearances in Scotland the goal of cultivation of a plot could and somtimes did take on a very public form. In relation to the enclosures one authority has noted that:
        "There was resistance, bitter and often violent - in the case of Otmoor, near Oxford, long and determined."
Gregg, P. "A Social and Economic History of Britain", London, Harrap and Co. 1961, p30.
In the Highlands collective resistance by riot was also in

evidence; some of the more notable of these took place
between 1820 and 1840 and even after this period:
> "The slow attrition of the people went on, small
> removals as the sheep-walks changed hands, grew in
> size, or were broken into lots. Thirty years after
> Knoydart, and sixty since Strathraver, the cause of the
> people was taken into politics by the Land Restoration
> League and by a league for the Nationalisation of Land.
> On Skye and Lewis crofters fought with police, Marines
> and Royal Scots."

Prebble, J. "The Highland Clearances", Harmondsworth,
Penguin 1984, p303.
In these cases then the "cultivation of a plot" became in no
way a purely private goal and the context within which such
orientation took place ensured that it was not the case that
> "These personal projects are inscribed within existing
> social relations and typically reproduce them."

26   Mair, L. "An Introduction to Social Anthropology", Oxford,
      Clarendon 1972, pp86-87.
      It should not be thought that marriage "systems" only exist
      in traditional societies. Evidence exists to suggest that
      within modern Britain the choice of a marriage within
      certain social groups is "structured" to the extent that
      highly connected networks can develop. See Lupton, T. and
      Shirley-Wilson, C. "The Kinship Connections of Top Decision
      Makers" in Worsley, P. (Ed) "Modern Sociology",
      Harmondsworth, Penguin 1975, pp151-164.

27   Such an approach has parallels with that outlined by Rosa
      Luxemburg in "Reform or Revolution" where anything short of
      revolution is seen to be relatively inconsequential, thus:
      > "That is why people who pronounce themselves in favour
      > of the method of legislative reform in place of and in
      > contradistinction to the conquest of political power
      > and social revolution do not really choose a more
      > tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but
      > a different goal. Instead of a stand for the
      > establishment of a new society they take a stand for
      > surface modifications of the old society."

      Luxemburg, R. "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks", New York, Pathfinder
      1970, pp77-78.
      The use of the physical metaphor in terms of the notion of
      "surface modifications" clearly implies the existence of
      more fundamental "deep structures" and thereby imposes a
      hierarchy of the importance of the "Structure" over the
      "surface".

28   Miliband, R. "The State in Capitalist Society", London,
      Quartet 1973, p144.

29   Lane, T. "The Union makes us Strong", London, Arrow Books
      1974, p144.

30   Other writers have also stressed the historically relative
      position of trades unions in relation to their role as
      either "subversive organisation" or as a "restraining
      influence upon the workers". A useful summary of this
      debate is the volume edited by Clarke, T. and Clements, L.
      "Trade Unions Under Capitalism", Glasgow, Fontana 1978.

31   Anderson, P. 1980 op cit, pp20-21.

32   Two articles are of particular interest here: Dawe, A. "The
      Two Sociologies" in Thompson, K. and Turnbull, J.
      "Sociological Perspectives", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1976.
      Dawe, A. "Theories of Social Action" in Bottomore, T. and
      Nisbet, R. (Eds) "A History of Sociological Analysis",
      London, Heinemann 1979.

33   Dawe, A. 1976 op cit, pp550-551.

34   As Dawe puts it:
          " ... sociological thought and analysis constitute one
          response to the ambiguous rise of human agency. Their
          history turns on the bifurcation of the ambiguity into
          two opposed concepts of social action, and thence into
          two opposed moral and analytical traditions, the
          sociologies of social system and social action. Their
          central problems of order and control constitute
          opposed formulations of human agency and its
          consequences, and their doctrinal answers to these
          problems opposed versions of the appropriate communal
          foundation for a genuinely moral individuality. At
          root, therefore, both sociologies are sociologies of
          social action."
      Dawe, A. 1979 op cit, p380.

35   Ibid, p411.

36   Ibid, p413.

37   Ibid, p414.

38   Ibid, p414.

39   Giddens has outlined the theory of structuration in several
      publications:
      "Studies in Social and Political Theory", London, Hutchinson
      1977.

"Central Problems in Social Theory", London, Macmillan 1979.
"A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism", London, Macmillan 1981.

The most comprehensive statement of his theory is to be found in:
"The Constitution of Society", Cambridge, Polity Press 1984.

40   Giddens, A. "Central Problems in Social Theory". London, Macmillan 1979, p69.

41   This point is of immense importance and lies at the heart of the disjuncture between structuration theory and some more established social theory. Thus for example one theorist, in an article which counterposes morphogenesis to structuration, misunderstands the crucial division between social structure and social system and the importance of the existence of a matrix of different contexts (spatial and temporal) and the non-linear occurrence of such contexts. The upshot of this critique then is to restate the division between structure and action within a simplistic duality of temporal sequence, however disjointed for "action" and "structural elaboration". The ontological status of structure is clearly stated:
       "The morphogenetic argument that structure and action operate over different time periods is based on two simple positions:
       - that structure logically predates the action(s) which transform it;
       - that structural elaboration logically postdates those actions."
Archer, M.S. "Morphogenesis versus structuration: on combining structure and action." BJS Vol.33 No.4 December 1982, p468.

42   Dallmayr, F.R. "Agency and Structure", review article in "Philosophy of the Social Sciences" Vol.12 1982, p434.

43   Giddens, A. "The Constitution of Society", Cambridge, Polity Press 1984, pp26-27.

44   This remains so even when an attempt is made to cobble together several contexts, which individually in themselves remain a series of static (in time and space) "heres".

45   Giddens, A. 1984, op cit p181.

46   Dallmayr, F.R. 1982, op cit pp429-430.

47   Such a criticism was the central thrust of the review
      article by Nigel Thrift who saw Giddens' attempt to
      reformulate social theory as unsuccessful"
            "The result is that Giddens ends up with a rather
            traditional conception of social theory."
      and any further work Giddens undertakes:
            " ... would have to show how structuration "theory" can
            act as a basis for challenging existing interpretations
            of historical events. It would therefore show whether
            structuration "theory" was viable. Of course, this may
            sound like a plea for Giddens to do some "empirical
            work". But it seems to me that, more than most other
            social theories, that is the import of structuration
            theory. After all it is not possible to expose the
            importance of context and then ignore it. At some
            point "conceptual salvoes" must hit particular places
            or disappear back into the thin air of high theory."
      Thrift, N. "Bear and Mouse or Bear and Tree? Anthony
      Giddens' Reconstruction of Social Theory." Sociology Vol.19
      No.4, November 1985, pp609-623.
      Similarly John Urry suggested that:
            "Many people will accept the broad outlines of
            structurationism, if not the particular formulation.
            But that is not really the issue. What is really
            important is to develop precise and detailed modes of
            understanding contemporary class societies, modes which
            are helped by but by no means follow from what Giddens
            describes as the mere "approach" developed in this
            book."
      Urry, J.   Review of "The Constitutions of Society" in
      "Sociological Review" Vol.34 (2) 1986, pp434-437.

48   Clarke, S. "Marx Marginalism and Modern Sociology: From
      Adam Smith to Max Weber", London, Macmillan 1982, p239.

49   Abrams, P. "Historical Sociology", Shepton Mallet, Open
      Books 1982, p227.

50   Abrams, P. 1982, op cit pp16-17.

51   Weber, M. "The Methodology of the Social Sciences", New
      York, Free Press 1949, pp63-64.

52   Marx, K. "The German Ideology", London, Lawrence and
      Wishart 1970, p48.

53   Giddens, A. 1979, op cit p39.

54   Giddens, A. 1984, op cit p193.

55   Such a view seems to imply a progression towards "planful
     provision and work and the association of human beings under
     the impetus of the satisfaction of the conditions of human
     existence".   However the attempted satisfaction of such
     needs can lead to the opposite situation implying the
     breakdown of human association. See Turnbull, C. "The
     Mountain People", London, Picador 1973.

56   Engels, F. in a letter to J. Bloch, Sept. 21st 1890 in Marx,
     K. and Engels, F. "Selected Works", London, Lawrence and
     Wishart 1968, pp682-683.

57   For a discussion of materialism and reflection theory as it
     relates to Marxism, see Hillel Ruben, D. "Marxism and
     Materialism", Sussex, Harvester 1977, especially Chapter 5.

58   Trier, J. quoted in Schaff, A. "Language and Cognition",
     New York, McGraw Hill 1973, p15.

59   Weber, M. 1949, op cit p72.

60   For a useful discussion of the problem of closure, see
     Gluckman, M. (Ed) "Closed Systems and Open Minds",
     Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd 1964.

61   Luckman, B. "The Small Life Worlds of Modern Man" in
     Luckman, T. (Ed) "Phenomenology and Sociology",
     Harmondsworth, Penguin 1978.

62   Walerstein, I. "A World System Perspective on the Social
     Sciences"; in BJS Vol 27, pp343-352.

63   Braverman, H. "Labour and Monopoly Capital", New York, MRP
     1974, pIX.

64   Ibid, p4.

65   McGoldrick, J. "Crisis and the division of Labour" in:
     Dickson, T. (Ed) Capital and Class in Scotland, Edinburgh,
     John Donald Ltd, 1982.

66   Marcuse, H. "Reason and Revolution", London, RKP 1955,
     p320.

67   Braverman, H. 1974, op cit p11.

68   Op cit p17.

69   Cutler, T. "The Romance of Labour", Economy and Society,
     Vol 17 No 1 1978.

70   See Wood, S. (Ed) "The Degradation of Work?", London,
      Hutchinson 1982, especially Chapters 5, 6 and 10.

71   Braverman, H. 1974, op cit p14.

72   Op cit p172.

73 . See Littler, C. "The Development of the Labour Process in
      Capitalist Society" 1982 and Stark, D. "Struggles and the
      Transformation of the Labour Process" in "Theory and
      Society" Vol 19 No 1.

74   Stark, D. op cit p92.

75   Jacoby, R. Review article in "Telos" No 29, 1977.

76   Littler, C. and Salaman, G. "Braverman and beyond: Recent
      theories of the Labour Process" in "Sociology", Vol 16 No 2,
      1982.

77   Braverman, H. 1974 op cit p27. For criticisms see:
      Nichols, T. "Sociological Review" Vol 25, No 1.
      Coombs, R. "NLR" 1978.
      Jacoby, R. "Telos" 1977.
      Burawoy, M. "Manufacturing Consent", Chicago, University of
      Chicago Press 1979.

78   Thompson, E.P. 1968, op cit.

79   Braverman, H. 1974, op cit p24.

80   Op cit p25.

81   Op cit p378.

82   Aronovitch, S. et al "The Political Economy of British
      Capitalism", New York, McGraw Hill 1981, Chapter 19 p304.

83   Marx, K. "Grundrisse", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1973, p99.

84   Ibid pp99-100.

85   Gramsci, A. "Selections from Prison Notebooks", London,
      Lawrence and Wishart 1971, pp277-318.

86   Gospel, H.F. and Littler, C. (Eds) "Managerial Strategies
      and Industrial Relations", London, Heinemann 1983.

87   The commodity status of labour is a problematic notion which

often suggests an over-deterministic view of the real
subordination of labour. For a further elaboration of this
point see McInnes, J. "The Labour Process Debate and the
Commodity Status of Labour: Some Problems", Paper at a
conference "Organisation and control of the labour process",
23rd-25th March 1983, UMIST.

88   A similar problem is highlighted by Sohn-Rethel, A. in "The
      Dual Economics of Transition" in "The Labour Process and
      Class Strategies", London, CSE 1978, (6).
      See also Sabel, C. "Work and Politics", Cambridge, CUP
      1982.

89   Nichols, T. Review article in "The Sociological Review",
      Vol 25 No 1, 1977.

90   In a sense the very popularity of the labour process
      approach has led towards its demise, the "language game" has
      been over-played and for a number of industrial relations
      and industrial sociology practitioners labour process theory
      has become atheoretical, referring simply to the physical
      processes of work.

91   Storey, J. "The Means of Management Control" in
      "Sociology", Vol 19 No 2.

92   McGoldrick, J. 1982, op cit p2.

93   For example, Sohn-Rethel, A. 1976, op cit and Palloix, C.
      "The Labour Process: From Fordism to neo Fordism" in "The
      Labour Process and Class Strategies", 1976.

94   Zimbalist, A. (Ed) "Case Studies on the Labour Process",
      New York, M.R.P. 1979.

95   Burawoy, M. 1979, op cit.

96   Giddens, A. "Power, the dialectic of control and class
      structuration" in Giddens, A. and Mackenzie (Eds) "Social
      Class and the Division of Labour", Cambridge, CUP 1982.

97   Ibid pp44-45.

98   Friedman, A.L. "Industry and Labour", London, MacMillan
      1977.

99   Thompson, P. "Crawling from the Wreckage. The Labour Process
      and the Politics of Production", Paper at the Aston/UMIST
      conference "Organisation and Control of the Labour Process",
      April 1986, p9.

100 Op cit p17.

101 Neimark, M. and Tinker, T. "On rediscovering Marx:
     Dissolving Agency - Structure in Dialectical Unity", Paper
     at 4th Aston/UMIST conference "Organisation and Control of
     the Labour Process", April 1986.

102 See Ollman, B. 'Alienation" (Second Edition) Cambridge, CUP
     1976, especially Chapter 3 and Appendix 1 and 2.

103 Neimark, M. and Tinker, T. 1986, op cit p11.

104 Neimark, M. and Tinker, T. 1986, op cit Introductory
     Abstract.

105 In this way the work is far closer to macro accounts of
     industrial relations such as that of Colin Crouch "The
     Politics of Industrial Relations", London, Fontana 1979 than
     to the labour process account of Braverman.

106 Neimark, M. and Tinker, T. 1986, op cit pp28-29.

107 Thompson, P. "The Nature of Work", London, Macmillan 1983,
     p39.

108 Nichols, T. "The British Worker Question", London, RKP
     1986, pp142-143.

109 Brown, R.K. "Sociologists and Industry - In search of a
     distinctive competence" in "Sociological Review", Vol 29 No
     2, 1981, p224.

CHAPTER 2

Wear Shipbuilding in the Inter-War Period

Part I

In all shipbuilding communities the inter-war period and more specifically the 1930s are remembered as times of hardship. Very few standard histories of shipbuilding centres or individual yards would be complete without their chapter upon "The Grim Thirties" [1]. Lack of orders, record levels of unemployment and the accompanying material hardship have tended to dominate such accounts. The intractability of the economic crisis gives a picture of workers bowing to the inevitability of the circumstances bestowed upon them, or as in the case of the Jarrow march [2], appealing to the powerful for help. However, in recent years an alternative account of shipbuilding in the inter-war years has been emerging. Such analyses look at the labour process in shipbuilding and far from confirming the impression of the powerlessness of the workers within the industry in the face of mass unemployment, they suggest that a great deal of power was exercised by the workers in:

" ... resisting at the point of production the expropriation of the control they have exercised over the labour process."
(3)

Indeed, so successful was this resistance seen to be that one author has felt justified to conclude, after a study of the inter-war period, and more specifically the fate of the Ship-building Employers Federation (S.E.F.) welding plan that:

" ... the U.K. Shipbuilding industry represents an example where "deskilling", as Braverman defines it, did not take place." (4)

A common thread running through the work of both Edward Lorenz and Jim McGoldrick is the emphasis placed upon struggle at the point of production over the introduction of new technology (particularly welding) and the retention of control (by the workers) of the craft basis of production. The work of both of these researchers is a valuable contribution in understanding the shipbuilding industry in this period; however both accounts appear to share some common problems. Firstly, whilst both authors make programmatic statements which appear to recognise the heterogeneity existing within the British shipbuilding industry, their empirical focus is largely restricted to ship-building on the Clyde, with the odd mention of the situation on the Tyne. Indeed as McGoldrick states, his study:

" ... takes the Clydeside area as representative of the types of problem the industry faced and the types of solution it used to resolve them." (5)

However, this claim should perhaps be treated warily for several reasons. Firstly, the very heterogeneity of the British ship-building industry ensured that the type of product produced on the Clyde, primarily a "specialised" class of liners and cargo liners, could not be seen as typical for other areas such as the North East coast and particularly the River Wear, which relied almost exclusively upon the production of "tramp" tonnage. The importance of this lies not only in the differing technical

requirements of the different types of product, but also to some

extent the different patterns of demand for each type of ship.

Thus in the 1920s and 1930s the industry in the North Eastern

region was hit harder by the effects of slump than any other

area. Not only were the effects of the slump more deeply felt,

but also any "recovery" was slower in coming. It should be

apparent already that to treat the Clyde as representative of the

industry as a whole is perhaps a risky business. This view is

reinforced when one considers the employment relationship and the

actual form of the constituent groups of "capital" and "labour".

If we are to avoid a structurally over-deterministic account the

importance of the "local factor" within class culture must be

taken into account [6]. Such an approach then needs to formulate

a study of the labour process as situated in its specific

environment and realise that the full implications of a labour

process analysis can be grasped only if such wider contexts are

considered [7].

     If the work of McGoldrick and Lorenz can be faulted for not

paying enough attention to the specificity of the wider context,

there is also to some extent an opposite problem. That is their

level of analysis rarely "descends" to the point of production in

other than aggregate terms. We are told of workers "resisting at

the point of production", but are given little evidence of the

complexity that such an assertion implies. All too often the

"action" is seen to lie at the level of the formal stances taken

by the unions and the employers, and one feels that in the end

little knowledge is gained of the doings and attitudes of the

non-activist worker. This problem is compounded by an over

emphasis upon the issue of welding and in particular the defeat

of the S.E.F. welding plan, so much so that one is given the

impression that "boilermaker" becomes the substitute for "British

shipyard workers". This over emphasis upon the issue of welding

is understandable given the apparently clear-cut division between

capital and labour over the issue; however, and this is more true

of the work of Lorenz than McGoldrick, we are left with a mere

inversion of Braverman. The tendency towards deskilling (as an

orientation of capital) is left intact, if the process is

frustrated it indicates strong labour and weak capital. To this

extent then the neglect of the specificities of the wider context

and the details of "action" at the point of production has led to

a neglect of the social relations of the workplace and the

community. An understanding of these elements is vital if one is

to appreciate the contours of the apparent paradox of British

shipbuilding, the retention of the craft division of labour, and

the absence of widespread "deskilling" even in the face of the

high levels of unemployment within the industry in the inter-war

years. Furthermore, it is important to understand this period in

all its complexity and uniqueness in order successfully to

compare and contrast that time with developments in the present

day.

In order to develop such an analysis, this study restricts
itself to the industry on the River Wear as an example which in
some respects contrasts with the Clyde (and to a lesser extent
with the Tyne).   The aim in this chapter is not to undermine the
conclusions of Lorenz and McGoldrick, but rather to complement
their work with an infusion of issues and problematics arising
from different levels of analysis and a different geographical
(and therefore technical and cultural) location.   Hopefully this
will contribute to an enlargement of our understanding of the
complexity and heterogeneity of the British shipbuilding
industry.

Part II

In attempting to situate our object of study in its global
context the overwhelming feature of the inter-war years needs to
be grasped, that is the existence of economic crisis.   In order
to appreciate the centrality (and perceived inevitability) of
this background to the industry we need to make what may appear
as a slight diversion to consider the nature of developments in
the inter-war economy.

In any consideration of the British economy of the 1920s and
1930s, the notions of depression and slump inevitably play a
large part [8].   Nowhere is this more true than in relation to
the shipbuilding industry.   Thus in Sunderland, a town heavily
dependent upon shipbuilding, unemployment had by 1923 reached a

level of 14,000. By 1926 this figure had grown to 19,000, and
whilst it improved in the late 1920s, by the early 1930s it was
worse than ever [9]. The general pattern to these developments
was as follows. Britain experienced a short boom after the first
world war and then slump particularly in the export field. Thus
in the early 1920s the volume of British exports was only two
thirds of that exported in 1913 [10].

The collapse of demand came at just the point where the
capacity to supply had been enlarged, as A.J. Youngson suggested:

> "In cotton, coal, iron and steel, and shipbuilding capacity
> was increased when money costs were high in order to meet a
> demand which was very largely temporary." (11)

Following the fall in demand between 1920 and 1923, average wages
and prices fell by one third [12]. The Government responded in a
typical fashion, pursuing a policy of deflation following
directly from adherence to the marginal productivity doctrine
which, combined with the return to the gold standard at a pre-war
parity in 1925, ensured that Britain's economy did not recover in
the late 1920s to the same extent as those of some of her
competitors. In this then the Government attempted to reduce the
costs of production without devaluing the currency. This:

> " ... helped to keep unemployment high in British export
> trades in the later 1920s when other countries enjoyed an
> industrial boom. It exposed Britain more nakedly to the
> effects of the crash on Wall Street in 1929." (13)

The return to gold at the pre-war parity seems at first a rather
strange thing to do, as it resulted in an over-valuation of the
pound in the region of 10%, adding further to the problems of a

British export industry already struggling with relatively high costs. This seems especially so given that France could return to gold well below the pre-war level, and whilst avoiding any inflation supposingly following under-valuation, raise its exports from 32,549,000 metric tons in 1926 to 41,128,000 metric tons in 1928 [14]. The reason for this move springs directly from the position Britain occupied in the World system. Furthermore the dominance of the fraction of finance capitalists over industrial capitalists, expressed through the interests of "the city", were more concerned that the balance of payments stayed in reasonable equilibrium rather than the fact that the balance of trade was highly unfavourable. Therefore, as David Thomson noted:

> "It was a decision of the city, not of industry. The Bank of England, to prevent loss of gold, had to keep up high interest rates. This, in turn, kept up the burden of national debt charges, and so of taxation. It hampered enterprise. It ignored the structural changes brought about by the events of the previous decade." (15)

Similarly, Ron Smith suggested that:

> "The return to gold at the pre-war parity was a City policy, based on their international financial interests; on their desire to discipline the working class; and on their political perception of Britain's world role. The cost of the policy was domestic stagnation, great damage to British industry, and high unemployment." (16)

We can see then that dominance of the interests of finance capital over industrial capital led directly to the policy pursued by the Government in the mid 1920s, and in this sense only is the return to gold at the pre-war parity understandable.

But, as E.J. Hobsbawm has argued, the outcome of relying too
heavily upon finance capital was to become apparent.

> " ... by the middle of the 1920s British overseas
> investments earned more than ever before and so, even more
> strikingly, did her other sources of invisible income -
> financial and insurance services and so on. But, the inter-
> war crisis was not merely a British phenomenon, the decline
> of a former industrial world champion, all the more sudden
> and sharp for having been delayed for decades. It was the
> crisis of the entire liberal world of the nineteenth
> century, and therefore British trade and finance could no
> longer regain what British industry lost." (17)

That Britain was enmeshed in the international financial system
cannot be denied. The nature of this involvement was to prove of
critical importance when following the Wall Street crash in the
autumn of 1929, a period of world slump was initiated. In this
respect Britain had two associated problems. Firstly, during the
post war period Britain continued to build up long term
investments overseas. However these were financed largely by
short term borrowing from abroad. Thus a problem of liquidity
was to arise once the demands upon the gold supply rose during
the period of the crisis of confidence in the soundness of paper
money beginning in 1929. A second related problem which grew as
the 1920s progressed was that mentioned by Henry Pelling:

> "Britain ... though a creditor of her allies to the extent
> of some £1,740 million (of which £568 million had been lent
> to Russia, and was now irrecoverable), in her turn could not
> afford to be very generous to her debtors without serious
> danger to her balance of payments." (18)

Similarly:

> "By 1924 new lending had approximately made good the sale of
> overseas assets during the war. But whereas Britain's debts

were owing to sound creditors like the U.S.A., many of the
new loans were made to countries whose willingness and
ability to repay were at best dubious." (19)

We can see then that the basis of Britain's finance capital,

for which so much was sacrificed, was not as solid as it may have

seemed. Moreover the fact that it was necessarily enmeshed

within the world financial system meant that when the U.S.A.

retreated from its aid obligations to the defeated powers in

order to attend to its own problems at home, the system of

international debt and credit collapsed, and all the sooner in

the first instance for currencies being tied to gold; Britain was

bound to be affected.

Looking back over the twenties we can see that the

performance of the British economy was affected both by external

conditions and internal policy. Perhaps of central importance is

the notion that the world system in the post World War I period

had changed. Britain had emerged from the war with a weakened

economy facing a world in which the powers not centrally involved

in the conflict had developed their economies at a startling

rate. For example, from 1914 to 1920 the industrial production

of the U.S.A. and Japan had risen by 20% and 75% respectively and

the U.S.A.'s share of world industrial production was to rise

from 36% in 1913 to 45% in 1928 [20]. The conditions for British

hegemony over the world system had passed, failure to appreciate

this led to the attempt to retain sterling as the predominant

trading currency - an attempt which was ultimately bound to

fail, and result in further injuring British industry,
particularly exports.   Thus Britain was to enter the world slump
of the 1930s with an industry which had already taken a battering
throughout the previous decade [21].

The events surrounding the Wall Street crash of 1929
reverberated through the finance and credit systems of the world.
There was a flight from paper money to gold, and once started it
was inevitable that this movement would gather momentum and put
further pressure on national currencies.   By 1931 that pressure
had become almost intolerable, and in May with the failure of the
Creditanstalt, a large Vienna bank, a new twist to the crisis was
underway.   The failure of the Austrian bank had a profound effect
on the already faltering German economy and increased the sense
of panic in all European financial centres.   The demand for the
only truly international currency, gold, increased.   Thus France,
which had avoided any large financial involvements in central
Europe, but did have large foreign exchange holdings in London,
increased their withdrawals demanding gold.   In order to attempt
to counter this flight from the pound, and in order to recover,
to some extent, gold reserves, Britain and the U.S.A., which was
feeling similar pressure, began a large scale withdrawal of their
short-term claims lodged in central European banks.   This of
course increased the problem to such an extent that by September
21st 1931 legislation was enacted in Parliament suspending the
Bank of England's obligation to sell gold.   The effect on the

pound was that it began to fall against the dollar, falling from

4.8665 dollars to 3.14 by 1932. The upshot of these movements,

which tilted the balance of trade slightly in Britain's favour,

was that by 1933 the U.S.A. devalued the dollar returning the

balance back to what it was before Britain effectively abandoned

gold. A further consequence of these moves firstly by Britain

and then the U.S.A. was to ensure that world demand remained low

because the external depreciation of both currencies discouraged

imports, and as the prices of primary products continued to

decline there was already a diminishing level of effective demand

exercised in this quarter.

The real consequence of the financial crisis of 1929-1931

does not lie in the shifts of gold and currency across frontiers.

Rather what is of importance is that the money form is the

relationship through which the general form of commodity exchange

is universalised [22].

> "Money, by expressing all commodities as values expresses
> the domain of capital - the social relations which make all
> use-values into commodities." [23]

It was not then merely a financial crisis but also a crisis of

the social relations expressed through the commodity form. Thus

the shifts of currency had real effects upon the production and

exchange of use values throughout the world. Whilst these

disruptions were represented as direct consequences of the

problems of financial management, the manipulation of tariff

barriers and non-equilibrium in exchange rates, they had real

effect upon the lives of millions of people.   The exchange

dealers and speculators had by their actions encouraged and

stimulated the cycle of depression and whilst it may have seemed

that:
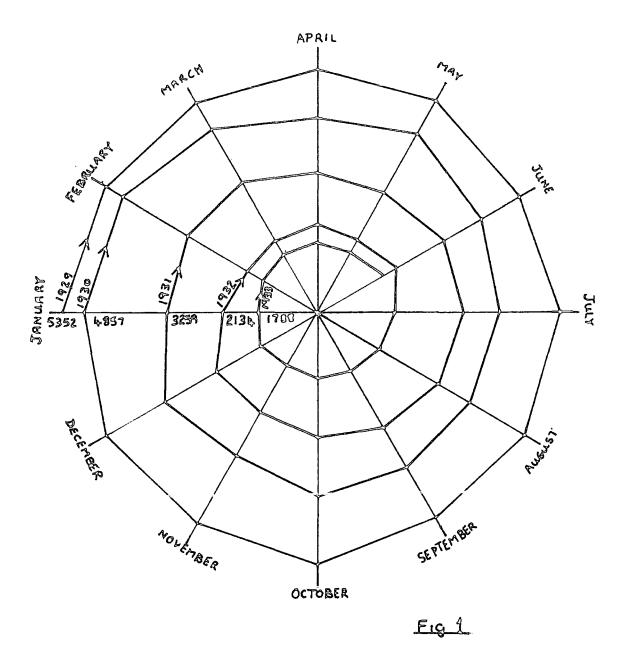
> "The economic depression, like the two great wars, had a
> quality of fatality - an impersonal calamity as if it were
> not of human creation - which bred despair and intensified
> fears." (24)

it was nevertheless a result of social action past and present

which creates and recreates anew the social relationships through

which men and women live.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the withdrawal of

credits and the raising of tariff barriers was the collapse of

world trade.   It declined from a total of 5352 million U.S. gold

dollars in January 1929 to 1788 million in January 1933 (see

Figure 1).   With the decline in world trade came the decline in

production especially within the export industries.   So that

whilst the index of production in Britain using a base line of

1929 as 100, fell to 84 in 1931 and was 93 in 1933, the fall in

the amount produced by the export industries was a far greater

percentage especially given the growth of the "new industries"

which for the most part dealt within national boundaries:

> "While imports were maintained, exports declined making for
> certain "depressed areas" where industry was especially
> dependent on the export trades, even when other industries,
> such as the building trades, stimulated by the housing boom
> were flourishing." (25)

If in the 1920s many of Britain's problems had been self

inflicted, or at least worsened by the maintenance of sterling at

APRIL

MARCH

MAY

FEBRUARY

JUNE

JANUARY

1929 1930 1931 1932 1933

5352 4857 3259 2136 1700

JULY

DECEMBER

AUGUST

NOVEMBER

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

Fig 1

The contracting spiral of world trade, month
by month, January, 1929, through June, 1933, in millions
of United States gold dollars.   (Source: World Economic
Survey, 1932-1933, Geneva, The League of Nations, 1933)

an over-valued level, in the 1930s those same export industries

were hit again by the collapse of trade, and as Pelling noted:

> " ... the only fully effective path to recovery of world
> trade lay through genuinely world wide agreements. It was
> unfortunate, however, that the crisis had encouraged in so
> many countries, including Britain a spirit of economic
> nationalism. This was demonstrated in the spring of 1933 at
> the World Economic conference in London, sponsored by the
> League of Nations but also attended by the U.S.. The new
> American government of Franklin Roosevelt, intent upon its
> own internal problems and experiments, was unwilling to
> support any effective measures to initiate the recovery of
> world trade. Consequently little was done except to
> introduce some international schemes to restrict the
> production of primary commodities. Henceforward relaxations
> of international trading barriers were largely the result of
> bilateral agreements between governments. Long term inter-
> national lending like international migration became a thing
> of the past and multilateral trade seemed to be growing
> obsolete." (26)

Underlying the crisis was the loss of Britain's role of

exercising hegemony over the world economic system and the

refusal of the only power which could then have assumed that role

of dominance, namely the U.S.A., to do so. This effectively

meant, for a short time at least, an attempted retreat from the

expansion of the modern world system, a change in relative

importance of industries producing for export and those catering

for demand internal to national boundaries. The crisis, as well

as expressing a change in the relative importance of particular

countries in relation to world wide economic activity, also

further developed those changes.

The relevance of this outline of the economic background can

be seen in that, firstly it serves as a general context in which

to locate the industry. However of more importance are the
direct effects that the events outlined had upon the industry.
The fact that the shipbuilding industry is an export industry is
obviously important here. Moreover of all the traditional export
industries it is perhaps most sensitive to changes in the general
level of its own commodities (ships) traded in themselves, but
also those commodities are the primary medium through which other
commodities are transported. Also the level of demand for the
products of the industry profoundly affects the balance of power
within the industry. Of importance here is the level of
unemployment created through lack of demand, more generally what
arises is:

> " ... an environment which favours one side or other of
> industry." (27)

Specifically in relation to the British shipbuilding industry,
the overwhelming dominance of the world depression meant that the
problems faced by the industry were seen as lying almost solely
within the disjunction between the capacity for supply and the
level of demand for ships. This being the case, there was less
emphasis paid by both employers and government to the nature of
the division of labour than perhaps would otherwise have been the
case. An example of what is meant is the approach of the
Government (shared in different ways by both the employers and
unions) which stressed aid to shipowners in terms of the "scrap
and build" scheme of 1935 rather than direct aid to shipbuilders
to modernise production in order to compete in the international

market for what orders were available. As will be argued, if the

dominance of the problem of demand had the effect of diverting

the attention of the employers and the Government away from the

production process and the division of labour, it had the

opposite effect upon labour within the industry. The existence

of extremely high levels of unemployment necessitated the

struggle to ensure that what work was available was available to

you! At the level of the production process this meant asserting

your right to a particular type of work. The agency through

which these assertions were made in the shipbuilding industry

were predominantly the craft unions. Thus in confronting the

problems that faced them:

> "Workers in a trade found it easier to combine to strengthen
> their individual labour power than to establish a sense of
> common self-interest with other workers in the same
> industry, let alone workers in general. The primary
> struggle of workers was not for the establishment of
> Socialism but for control of authority in the work-place."
> (28)

Although this was written of workers in the 1800s it

remained true of shipyard workers faced with the problems of the

1930s. Finally the need to understand the specific nature of the

slump of the 1920s and '30s suggests itself at another level.

There is a sense in which history is a totality, in this way

there are real connections between the Wall Street crash, the

failure of the Creditanstalt, and children of unemployed fathers

begging any uneaten "bait" from men leaving Doxford's shipyard on

the River Wear (29). The contexts are different, as are the

primary actors in the different situations and perhaps the extent

of agency each can effectively initiate may be different, and yet

they exist as they do because of their relationships within the

world system at a particular historical point. Hopefully I have

demonstrated some ways in which a consideration of the nature of

the depression of the 1920s and '30s is relevant to a study of

the shipbuilding industry on the Wear. Now we must look at some

of the features of the industry itself to understand why the

economic climate had such a devastating effect in general and on

the River Wear in particular.

Part III

Given that we have already established at a theoretical

level the importance of the inter-relationship of the moments of

production and consumption, we now need to turn our attention

towards some of the general features of the shipbuilding industry

in order to locate these concerns in an empirical context. The

first point to note is the construction nature of the industry in

which:

> " ... nearly two thirds of the final costs of a ship
> represent bought in materials and components." (30)

This clearly has implications for the analysis of the strategies

of capital within the industry in as far as these attempt to

maximise accumulation [31]. One would expect concerns with

external costs to feature largely in the preoccupations of

management. Also as the shipbuilding process lies as it were at

the end of several labour processes, relative inefficiencies in

these industries will have an effect upon the competitive

position of shipbuilding itself. As one author has suggested:

> "The shipbuilder assembles in his yard the finished products
> of many other industries - the steel-rolling mills, the
> foundry, the forge, the coppersmith, the engineering
> industry, the boat builders, the instrument makers, and so
> on." (32)

It is because shipbuilding in its totality is such an amalgam of

other industries that some authors (even up until the late 1960s)

have claimed that the health of the industry is indicative of the

more general health of the economy. As House has noted:

> " ... shipbuilding in Britain is one of the best indicators
> of our general industrial competitiveness." (33)

Whilst this may be an overstatement, it is undeniable that the

British industry has in the past been closely tied to the role of

Britain as a world power. However historically, with the

increasing decline of Imperialism in its specifically political

form, the industry has seen the removal of the "buffer" of Empire

consequent upon the loss of British hegemony within the World

System.

On a more general level however, the industry has always

been very responsive to shifts in world trade.

> "It has long been recognised that the fluctuations of
> industry and trade, known as the trade cycle, have probably
> a more marked effect on the shipbuilding industry than on
> any other of our staple industries." (34)

Indeed as Parkinson has observed, the world output of merchant

ships during the period of 1886-1939 has fluctuated wildly:

> " ... before the First World War output might fluctuate in
> an extreme case from 50% below its trend to 50% above its
> trend in 2 years, while swings of 50% from slump to boom and
> back again were usual. In the inter-war period, output fell
> from the post-war peak of 150% above the average to 80%
> below in 1933, and there were considerable variations in
> other years." (35)

In some senses then, fluctuations in world trade are exaggerated

in the demand for ships, entering the equation in two respects

(relatively between national industries) as a capital good in

itself and (absolutely) as the medium of transport of other

commodities. As one other author has remarked:

> "Shipbuilding is particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in
> world trade. Shipping capacity cannot be rapidly adjusted to
> changes in demand and fluctuations in world trade are immed-
> iately reflected in the level of freight rates. Moreover,
> since the volume of new mercantile tonnage produced each
> year represents only a small percentage of the tonnage in
> existence, ship construction tends to fluctuate far more
> than in proportion to the changes in world trade." (36)

Here then the very scale of the product, and consequently the

time taken in producing an individual unit, serves to ensure a

disjunction between supply and demand:

> "When during a period of booming international trade rates
> rise, shipowners place new contracts for ships; but as soon
> as the peak in rates has been passed and a downward trend
> sets in, the orders fall off very steeply. As the period of
> ship construction is long, however, the response of output
> to these changes in demand cannot be immediate. Both 1921
> and 1930, years in which international trade, freight rates
> and new orders declined, were years of high activity as
> measured by the tonnage launched; for the shipbuilders were
> then engaged in dealing with orders placed during the
> preceding boom. This, a large number of new ships becomes
> available just when the demand for shipping space is ebbing
> fast; and this intensifies the depression in freight rates
> and increases the reluctance of shipowners to place new
> orders." (37)

One point to note however is that fluctuations in demand stemming

from rising and falling freight rates do not hit all shipbuilding

centres with the same severity. This is due to the nature of the

specialisation of centres towards the production of different

types of ship. Firstly one would not expect the demand for

warships to follow the same pattern as that of merchant tonnage.

Secondly, however, there is considerable variation within the

merchant sector with various patterns of demand applying to

passenger liners, cargo liners, tankers and tramps. In the

inter-war years it was the North East's "specialisation" upon the

general cargo vessel, the tramp, which ensured that when

depression hit the British industry it was the region that

suffered most. Thus for example whilst the relative share of the

British market averaged 42% from 1919 to 1929, in 1926 the North

East region held only 28% of the market share [38]. Again the

importance of the heterogenous nature of the British industry is

underlined even in the face of the common problems facing the

industry in the inter-war period. However the point to be

emphasised is the essentially interlinked nature of the

relationship of the industry to wider issues of world trade, and

in the case of Britain the historically specific conditions of

its retreat from world hegemony.

If the defining characteristics of the market demand for

ships in the inter-war period can be seen as generally involving

cyclical fluctuations of the whole world market, then the

organisational and technological characteristics of British

shipbuilding can be seen to be more specific. The key to these

features of the industry is the reliance upon a craft technology

and administration [39]. In this context the importance of craft

skills has been seen as paramount:

> "The two essential features of the technology of ship-
> building are that the product is not standardised and that
> mechanisation and rationalisation have not proceeded to any
> great extent. For the most part each ship is individually
> designed, programmed and constructed. Lack of
> standardisation of product and the fact that shipbuilding is
> a construction industry have limited the extent to which
> there can be standardisation, rationalisation and
> mechanisation of the production processes. Even though a
> great deal of equipment is supplied by outside sub-
> contractors, the building of a ship depends essentially on
> the manipulation of tools and materials by men who have
> acquired craft skills over a period of years." (40)

In outlining these general features of the industry we must

beware of the tendency to reduce a complex process to a

simplistic overly static and technologically determined account.

Whilst it is undeniable that the technology used in shipyards has

a determining effect, within limits, upon the degree of

"standardisation, rationalisation and mechanisation" of the

production process, such technological determinism is not however

a quantitively uniform phenomenon. The specific form of the

level of "standardisation, rationalisation and mechanisation"

cannot be formulated purely as a function of the level of

available technology or the non-standardised nature of the

product. Rather, the nature of the production process in any one

national industry is the result of complex mediations at both

local, national and international levels. In order to address
these complexities we must shift the focus away from the general
characteristics of the industry and towards the empirical
context.   In doing so we must locate our concern with the
division of labour in its wider social context of the employment
relationship which in turn necessitates an investigation which
"leads outwards to consider the whole complex of social relations
within which it (the employment relation) is situated" [41].   In
looking at the shipbuilding industry on the River Wear in the
inter-war period the aim is to produce an "account" which in
apprehending the industry in its context as an historical
individual can nevertheless contribute towards an increased
understanding of the complexities of the wider national industry
and also provide a benchmark with which to assess the
continuities and discontinuities within the industry on the Wear
in the 1980s.

Part IV

In the previous section it has been suggested that there is
a difference between shipbuilding centres, and one important
feature of this difference is the type of product (i.e. ships) in
which particular centres specialise.   However, for our purposes,
of at least as much importance as the type of tonnage produced
are other differences relating to the specific nature of both
capital and labour and the cultural traditions within which both
of these groups interact (and create and recreate anew).   In this

connection it is worth quoting at length one comparison made by

the Reverend C.H.G. Hopkins, of the shipbuilding centres on the

Wear and Mersey:

> "During the seven years before I came to Pallion, I had been
> working at St. Luke's, Tranmere, a shipyard Parish in
> Birkenhead. From the streets of the parish you could see
> growing, day by day, on the stocks, such great ships as the
> "Mauritania", the "Ark Royal" and the "Prince of Wales".
> They were launched in the Mersey in Tranmere Bay, at a point
> where the river was a mile wide. On arriving in Pallion, to
> work in Sunderland, "the largest shipbuilding town in the
> world", I was amazed to see how narrow the River Wear looked
> at Pallion, in comparison with the Mersey at Tranmere. It
> seemed hardly credible that the fine ships for which
> Sunderland is famous, could be launched into such a small
> space ... However, that was by no means the only difference
> one noticed between the Wear and the Mersey. Immediately I
> was struck by the difference in the atmosphere of the place;
> in Sunderland there were eight shipyards of varying size,
> whereas in Birkenhead there was the one enormous shipyard -
> though there are, in addition, several repair yards. In
> Sunderland, nearly all the yards and allied engineering
> industries are family firms, of a size which makes personal
> contact between employers and workmen an everyday factor.
> As a result, the general tone of industrial relationships
> has been harmonious over a long number of years. Men who
> work in the various yards have mostly been in the same yard
> for a great many years; they are proud of it and of its
> achievements and traditions, and they refer to it as "our
> yard"." (42)

This draws our attention to issues which are often overlooked by

sociologists, namely the importance of the physical context of

communities. Certainly in the case of Sunderland several authors

have commented upon the physical location of the town, as lying:

> "eccentric to the axial routeway of the North-East from Tees
> to Tyne." (43)

The importance of this is seen to lie in the contribution that

such "isolation" has made to constituting the clearly demarked

"character" within the town,

> "Unlike the conurbations of Tyneside and Teeside Sunderland
> is a unitary compact city, one of the largest county
> boroughs in Britain ... Although only some 7 miles from
> South Shields and the Tyne ... Sunderland has kept a strong
> town character and individuality ... the dependence of the
> local economy on shipbuilding and repairing has
> traditionally been greater than on Tyne or Tees. In some
> respects overshadowed by Newcastle as a regional service
> centre and capital, Sunderland is more strikingly a Northern
> industrial town, with many of the legacies of industrialism
> writ large in its townscape ..." (44)

Others, whilst being equally guilty of an anthropomorphic

portrayal, have attributed even greater importance to the

sedimentation of the past in the character and attributes of the

town, and more importantly the real sense in which the past is

still "alive" in the attitudes of the present population. As one

author writing in 1969 put it:

> "Sunderland is a town which is living on the dwindling fat
> of its Victorian expansion. The legacy of the Industrial
> Revolution is apparent in its appearance, its industrial
> structure, its population growth and in a host of social and
> economic characteristics. Even attitudes are coloured by
> its past heritage. The Depression years, the final death
> spasm of the nineteenth century in a pre-Keynsian era, are
> still a real memory amongst much of the town's population
> and impinge upon the attitudes of the working population.
> This imprint of the past, rooted in a continuing dependence
> on heavy industry, is found to a much greater degree than in
> the towns of the Midlands or even Lancashire, since the
> spread of light manufacturing has had only marginal effects
> in the North East." (45)

The town of Sunderland as clearly demarked from other urban

centres with a degree of dependence upon shipbuilding uncommon in

other large towns was seen by one author to be largely a "closed

community":

> "Sunderland in 1926 was by no means a one industry town, but
> the fortunes of shipbuilding had for so long been the major

> indicator of economic and social conditions on Wearside ...
> The rope making and pottery industries did not employ a
> great number, and coal mining was not as prevalent in the
> Borough as in the rest of the county.   This separated
> Sunderland from the county town of Durham City, the focal
> point for miners within the Durham coalfield.   Lacking the
> communications, prestige and diversity of Newcastle, only
> twelve miles away, Sunderland was very much a closed
> community, forever in the shadow of these two centres.
> Shipbuilding was at the heart of the industrial and everyday
> life at the mouth of the Wear." (46)

Here then we can see that the "character of the town" cannot be

deduced solely from its physical location but rather location is

one feature in a complex which includes past history and

industrial structure.   In order to unravel some of these

complexities it is perhaps worthwhile to look at the early

history of shipbuilding on the Wear (the coming together of the

specific location and the historically specific forms of capital

and labour) in as much as this legacy bestowed a character upon

the culture of the local population.

For some authors the location of the industry is merely a

function of the proximity of certain natural resources.   Thus L.

Jones has suggested that the shift in the importance of ship-

building centres from the Thames to the North of England was

consequent upon the change from wooden to iron steam ships and

that:

> "New materials also involved a shift in location.   The
> Solent and Thames, near the sources of timber supplies, and
> with excellent launching facilities, were flourishing
> centres of wooden shipbuilding.   The change from wood to
> iron, and sail to steam, in propulsion, had the effect of
> localising the industry principally in the North." (47)

Such a purely technical functional view of the shift in the

location of the industry would seem to be lacking in several

respects. Firstly the move Northwards began before iron and

steam were significant factors in shipbuilding. Indeed as early

as 1835 Lloyds Register recognised that Sunderland was:

> " ... the most important shipbuilding centre in the country
> nearly equalling as regards number and tonnage of ships
> built, all the other ports together." (48)

This was some ten years prior to the launch of the river's first

steam powered ship and seventeen years before its first iron

ship; the dominance of Wear shipbuilding was first established in

the days of "wooden walls" [49]. Secondly, such a view neglects:

> " ... the point that it was not the location of coal and
> iron deposits under the soil that was crucial, but the
> development of local organisations of capital and labour
> capable of extracting and processing these raw materials."
> (50)

This approach, then, redirects our attention back towards the

social processes involved in the development of industry. The

superiority of such an approach is underlined when we turn our

attention towards the growth of the shipbuilding industry in the

North East region, where a purely technical functional approach

can in no way account for the rise in the importance of the Wear

shipbuilding industry relative to that of the Tyne and the Tees.

Rather the explanation must be sought in the specific nature of

capital and labour on that river understood as a complex

historical individual.

The growth of the importance of Sunderland as a shipbuilding

centre was a relatively sudden one, going from an output of some

3,951 tons in 1790-1, with such ports as Hull and Whitby

launching considerably more, up to an output of 14,330 tons in

1814 as the premier shipbuilding port out-producing its nearest

rival, Newcastle, by some 5849 tons [51] (see Appendix 1). The

timing of this expansion owes much to the demand stimulated by

the Napoleonic Wars, but the reason for the pattern of relative

growth owes more to the peculiarities of Sunderland (or its

rivals). One thing is certain however, the growth of Sunderland

as a shipbuilding port was not predicated upon economies of scale

of large yards. For an 1805 Admiralty survey provided a

comprehensive overview of the structure of the industry in 1804

when:

> " ... 24 shipyards on the Wear employed 667 shipwrights, 60%
> of whom were apprentices and 6% over fifty years old. Two
> yards employed 7 and 9 men respectively and the three
> largest yards were those of Laing (53 men), Hall (52) and
> Robson (49). On Tyneside there were many much larger yards
> and these included ... R. Bulmer (181), J. Craster (158), S.
> Temple (121), Nicholson, Horn and Co. (70) and N. Fairles
> with 54 workers ... Thus, clearly the Wear shipyards were
> much smaller units than those on her sister river, which she
> was soon to lead in output." (52)

The importance of the role of the small(er) firm for "nineteenth

century industrialisation" has been noted by Sabel and Zeitlin -

they suggest that a concentration of small firms in an "indust-

rial district" could and did lead to "flexible specialisation -

one of the defining characteristics of which was that:

> "Firms were not enduring units of production but rather
> temporary combinations of machines and skills directed to
> the achievement of particular tasks ... " (53)

Such a characterisation was true of many of the enterprises

building ships on the Wear where according to the "Corder

Manuscripts" there were approximately 68 cases of enterprises

building only a single ship between 1790 and 1849 [54]. That

such enterprises were possible owed much to a lack of effective

institutional barriers to starting such a business, and similarly

little in the way of barriers to mobility within the labour

market. Indeed it would seem that such a position was

characteristic of the Wear rather than other centres. Thus for

example the access to the shipbuilding industry on the Tyne was

restricted in its formative period by the power of the freemen of

Newcastle. Thus Robert Wallis had to fight hard to establish the

first shipyard in South Shields:

> "For in shipbuilding as in everything else connected with
> the River Tyne, Newcastle's freemen claimed and enforced a
> monopoly. The Corporation thus did everything in its power
> to hinder the construction of Wallis's first ship and he had
> to fight two legal actions, as well as ward off physical
> intimidation, before he succeeded in breaking Newcastle's
> power." (55)

The absence of such a restrictive power block on the river Wear

not only meant easier access for individuals to a shipbuilding

enterprise but it also tended to blur, to some extent, the

division between capital and labour. This had implications not

only for the structure of the industry but also for the

development of trade unionism. For whilst:

> "Many ports had well organised shipwrights' unions and,
> while Thomas Brown, a Tyneside businessman, regarded the
> absence of "combination" on the Wear as contributing to the
> port's success, he added, "a large proportion of the

shipbuilders are generally satisfied with mere wages; these
shipbuilders being more of the character of operative
builders for the wood importer." Since many ships were
built "by persons ... barely above the position of artisans
..." he could "certainly" obtain cheaper terms than if the
shipbuilders "had been capitalists". (56)

Similar appraisals of the nature of shipbuilding on the Wear were

forthcoming from other sources. Thus in 1848 one Sunderland

ship-owner commented that:

" ... a great many of our shipbuilders are working men,
perhaps they have very limited education, and ... are
employed as shipbuilders by the Timber merchants ... (they)
are men of small capital." This view was restated by the
Lloyds surveyor, himself a shipbuilder for two years. "The
shipbuilders in the Port of Sunderland are not generally Men
of Capital." (57)

This form of industry would appear to conform to Sabel and

Zeitlin's form of institutional framework described as

"municipality". In this form the boundaries of the employment

relationship are relatively fluid:

"Typically the movement of work in progress was co-ordinated
by a merchant who supplied credit and raw materials." (58)

The importance of this "form" for the characterisation of social

relationships lies in the lack of social distance or permanence

between employer and employee:

"Aside from encouraging innovation the scope given to
competitive ambition in these regions contributed to their
survival by reinforcing in a roundabout way the solidary
sentiments that kept the struggle for advancement within
safe limits. Because those on top had often risen from the
ranks and could fall back into them, they were less likely
to mistreat their subordinates, both out of a knowledgeable
sympathy for their situation and out of a fear that after an
unlucky year they might again share it." (59)

In this view then, there is congruence between the specific form
of social relationships and the regulation of relationships at
work. Indeed it may be further suggested that such relations
between employer and employee whilst not finally or absolutely
sundered represents the source of many of the attitudes which
were to persist regarding the responsibility of the individual
worker for ensuring the quality of his own work.

Here then is the source of the Wear's peculiarity (and
success), the legacy of which was to remain important in the
inter-war period. An open labour market and the lack of any
institutional power bloc or strict regulation of entry into
business ensured that:

> " ... working carpenters, who had been frugal and careful,
> and had saved a few pounds, found little difficulty in
> commencing in shipbuilding." (60)

The lack of social distance coupled with the relative
isolation of the borough from other urban centres interacted and
helped in the development of what one researcher has referred to
as the "politics of local loyalties" rather than the politics of
class [61]. Clearly in a sector such as shipbuilding with an
historically increasing demand upon the minimum level of fixed
capital viable for an individual enterprise, such "free" entry to
business was likely to be characteristic of the early history of
the industry in the era of competitive capitalism [62]. In
relation to the Wear the rise of monopoly capitalism from 1880
onwards came as the last wooden ships were being built. The

force of these two trends, towards monopoly capital and iron,

ensured that the days of the worker employer were largely over.

Many of the remaining shipbuilders by the turn of the century

could claim several generations of their family as Wear builders.

However, even by the inter-war period many of the attitudes of

earlier times and in some aspects even the structure of the

industry itself on the river still bore the imprint of those

earlier days.

In terms of the yards themselves, those on the Wear remained

smaller than those in the Tyne or Tees. Thus the largest yard on

the Wear in 1931 (Wm. Doxford and Sons Ltd.) had a total of six

berths, whilst the biggest individual berth (at Sir John

Priestman's yard) could accommodate vessels up to 600 feet in

length. The corresponding figures for the Tyne were 20 berths

(Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd.) and a berth for vessels

up to 1,100 feet in length at Vickers-Armstrong Ltd.. On the

Tees the largest yard of the Furness Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. had 12

berths in which vessels of up to 750 feet could be built [63].

Whilst Wear yards were relatively small in comparison with

those on the two other principal rivers in the North East of

England, it was nevertheless the case that the absolute and rel-

ative cost of opening a "shipyard" had grown enormously since the

mid nineteenth century and therefore an identifiable "capitalist

class" had coalesced. However it is important to understand the

context and the historical continuities that persisted even with

the emergence of this class, in order to gauge the specifics of the interrelationship between the employers and workers within the yards and the community. Even with a largely working class/lower middle class population of around 160,000 in 1926:

> " ... the political bias of the town up to that time was more a reflection of traditional loyalties than of adherence to a particular party line ... Local loyalties ensured that men such as Tory shipyard owner Sir W.T. Doxford, and Samuel Storey, proprietor of the popular "Sunderland Daily Echo" were elected (to parliament)." (64)

Moreover such local loyalties were to some extent maintained as a consequence of the employers devoting some of their fortunes to doing "good works" within the town. Such local beneficence again had a long history within Sunderland. For example one shipbuilder, John Hutchinson, in the mid nineteenth century was renowned for:

> " ... the number and extent of his public charities. His name figured invariably at or near the head of subscription lists for philanthropic purposes, whether the Sunderland Infirmary, soup kitchens, or other similar objects. He was one of the best friends of such institutions as The Ragged School, to the children attending which he gave a dinner once a year, besides other donations in the shape of clothes etc." (65)

This "tradition" was maintained in the inter-war period, thus for example, Sir John Priestman owned:

> " ... a prosperous well managed and profitable yard out of which a considerable fortune has been made which the owner is now spending over church, hospital and charitable works ... " (66)

The importance of doing "good works" in the locality cannot be understood in terms of direct paternalism, a concern of an employer with "their" employees, but rather must be seen as an

essential contribution to the politics of locality. It should not

be thought that what is being argued is that the Wear employers

were parochial. One of the enduring myths about shipbuilding

employers is that they were men of little education with only

practical knowledge; this may have been true in the early years

of the "artisan builders" but by the inter-war period that had

changed. Most of the employers and directors of yards had some

form of higher education. Thus for example, R.C. Thompson,

Managing Director of J.L. Thompson's, was educated at Marlborough

College and gained an honours degree at Cambridge reading

mechanical sciences [67]. Henry Short, Chairman of Short

Brothers, was educated at Haileybury and Trinity College

Cambridge, gaining a B.A. in Law [68]. Mr. F.W. Dugdale, from

1929 Managing Director of the Wear Dockyard of S.P. Austin and

Son Ltd. was educated at Welling-borough and then read for a

B.Sc. at Durham University. Mr. A.J. Marr, Director of Laings in

the 1930s, obtained a B.Sc. from Durham University and Mr. R.A.

Bartram, Chairman of Bartram and Sons was educated at Armstrong

College Newcastle [69]. In business as well as education the

horizons of Wear shipbuilders extended far beyond the borough.

Many had connection with shipping lines as in the case of the

Chairman of J.L. Thompson's, Sir R. Norman Thompson, who was also

Chairman of Silver Line Ltd. of London [70]. Sir John Priestman

was Chairman of two shipping companies, two coal mining

companies, a Director of Phoenix Assurance Company and had also

built up very considerable investments in South African gold
[71]. The importance of such other business interests, especially
in shipping lines, in the early inter-war period, was seen in its
potential as a source of demand for ships. Thus for the period
after the first World War, up until 1931:

> " ... it has been suggested to us by one authority that the
> Wear has maintained her proportion of North-East tonnage
> because of the existence of family connections between
> owners and builders." (72)

To the extent that this was true it was managed largely, and to a
far greater extent than on the Tyne, within the corporate form of
the private firm rather than the public joint stock company [73].
Such family connections have been described by Sabel and Zeitlin
as constituting a pattern based on the "federated family firm".
The importance of such alliance lies in its flexibility, in that:

> " ... firms often found markets outside the family; but
> their financial and emotional ties to the lineage made them
> dependable partners even in difficult times." (74)

We can see then that in education and business interests the Wear
employers often had connections extending far beyond Sunderland
itself and often in the empirical case spanning the "fractions"
of industrial and financial capital. In the face of these class
attributes and the social distance they imply as between employer
and employee, the question becomes how were the politics of
traditional loyalties maintained, and more intriguing is the
question as to how this paradox represented itself within the
employment relationship in the individual yards?

So far the focus has been upon the continuity of the families representing the "personification of capital" within the industry on the Wear and the stability over generations of the "family firm" [75]. It was not only the families of the employers who had a long history in shipbuilding however, as generations of workers also lived and worked in the area. The pattern of settlement was of particular importance here, with a stable band of working class housing emerging around the shipyards in the nineteenth century. Such districts were not comprised of homogeneous units of housing, however, and artisan housing of the type still visible today at Roker, Fulwell, Pallion and Millfield consisted of small cottages rather than the larger subdivided houses which were the homes of many of the poorer sections of the working class [76]. It was in these districts that the shipyard workers lived, in "stable" communities whose boundaries (visible and invisible) were preserved in opposition to other areas in the town. Indeed patterns of locality and the networks established within them were often important in relation to securing employment at a particular yard.

The quality of the relationships between employers and employees, each with their "own" local traditions and loyalties, is often elusive. For, by the inter-war period, the industry on the Wear had acquired many of the wider characteristics which were notable by their absence in the early years of shipbuilding;

comprehensive trade union representation, and as we have seen

shipbuilders who could be seen unequivocally as capitalist, the

employment relationship had hardened into a structural

relationship [77]. In this situation some observers have put the

retention of a non-radical workforce down to the quality of

personal relationships in the yards, facilitated by the small

size of each unit. Thus, as late as 1954 one author was claiming

that:

> "In Sunderland, nearly all the yards and allied engineering
> industries are family firms, of a size which makes personal
> contact between employers and workmen an everyday factor.
> As a result, the general tone of industrial relationships
> has been harmonious over a long number of years." (78)

Explanations of harmonious industrial relations based on the

small size of firms should be treated warily and as recent

research suggests there would seem to be little reason to think

that size of firm in itself is any guarantee of such a situation;

indeed in some ways the opposite may be the case [79]. The

situation is more complex than Hopkins suggests. The lack of

social distance between employer and employee, characteristic of

the early years of the industry, was retained in some yards as

late as the turn of the century. In these situations the

employer is often remembered as a "character". Thus one plumber

interviewed during the course of this research had written down

some stories told to him by other workers, during his apprentice-

ship in the 1930s. One concerned "Jacky Crown" and his personal

supervision of the "coming of age" ceremonies of his apprentices:

> "On their 21st birthday they were escorted down to the
> slipway at high tide and thrown in, with Jacky Crown lending
> a willing hand ... On his 21st birthday (the original
> storyteller) during the dinner break, he knew his mates were
> preparing to carry him out so he slipped into the store and
> slipped off his clothes, but before he could pull on an old
> pair of overalls Jacky and the mob appeared, and he was
> carried out stark naked and thrown into the slipway ... as
> ill luck had it, he was thrown in above the cradle and found
> himself under the hauling cable, head down and his backside
> up. The water was only about 5 feet deep, but he had
> swallowed half the water in the dock before the onlookers
> realised that he was in trouble, with the heavy cable over
> his neck. His legs and backside were above the surface.
> His version of it was that when he was dragged out half
> drowned old Jacky gave him the customary sum of money from
> his waistcoat pocket, a small tip to denote the end of his
> training, then said "You took your time about getting out."
> To which he replied, "So would you if you were held down by
> your head like I was." Jacky retorted, "My mistake, lad, I
> didn't realise that was your arse sticking up, I thought it
> was your head - you look better that way up" and then walked
> away laughing his head off." (80)

This account of the initiation into journeyman status in the

1890s with the help of the yard owner as "one of the lads" is

replaced by the author's own account of initiation in the late

1930s. This particular "rite" involved immersion in a barrel

filled with filthy water, but in this case the circumstances

surrounding the "event" were very different:

> "All this, of course, was done with one eye out for the
> foreman who was, in his turn, always mindful of the fact
> that a manager might witness the struggle. He knew what
> went on, but had to stop the skylarking and threatened
> suspension or other dire punishment for the sake of
> discipline and appearances." (81)

A general feature of the accounts given by the men interviewed in

connection with this research who worked in Wear yards in the

1920s and 1930s is not the lack of social distance between

employer and employee, but rather the reverse. Moreover a

deferential attitude is observed in some of the accounts given

which stress the importance of acknowledgement across the social

divide. Thus for example one plater began his account of working

in a shipyard stressing the fact that he became known to the

owners personally:

> "I worked at Laings and Thompsons ... I knew Victor Thompson
> ... I've been at meetings ... different discussions I've had
> with him ... he thought the world of me." (82)

A similar account was produced by another boilermaker describing

how he "knew" Cyril Thompson:

> "Now then, that man never walked past me anytime in the
> shipyard, he always stopped to talk to me - always." (83)

From these and other accounts there emerges an overall impression

of the importance of being known by a "significant other", in

most cases this being the owner of the yard. However the view of

the employers produced in such accounts approximates more to the

modern media portrayal of Royalty than to any notion of the

employer as "one of the lads". The essence of these views, which

also betray a moral order, is summed up in the much heard phrase

used to describe shipyard owners - that these men were "gentle-

men". It is this phrase rather than any more precise description

such as paternalism which captures the quality of the

relationship between the workers and the owners of the Wearside

shipyards in the inter-war period. To some extent the social

distance between the workers and the "gentlemen" who owned the

yards excused the latter from being seen as implicated in the day

to day conflicts which arose in the workplace - like Royalty they

were almost "above all that".

Such a view was often true in a literal, geographical as

well as an organisational sense. The day to day issues of the

regulation of employment was the preserve of the foremen and

managers, and this was the level at which most of the potential

conflict would be articulated. Again here, the importance of the

"occupational community" and the small size of the yards could be

considerable. Thus one worker explained how he was able to move

from one yard to another because of the similar movement of

foremen and managers:

> "They all passed (from one yard to another) the managers,
> the foremen they all passed, even the manager went down
> there, the foreman plater went down there - that's how I
> walked in you see." (84)

Even where supervisory staff did not physically move they could

still assert their influence through an active social network:

> "It was essential to try to keep a good personal reputation.
> Foremen did know each other, and passed men around from one
> yard to another. Fall foul of one foreman and a tradesman
> could find himself frozen out." (85)

In such a situation with the foremen as the hirers and firers of

labour one can appreciate how the owners could in some senses be

seen to be above the conflicts on the "shop floor" and remain as

a significant other in the eyes of the worker - a "gentleman" who

"thinks the world" of his workers as individuals. Back at the

level of the production process however, the "harmony" in

industrial relations was perhaps less the product of goodwill

between persons, but rather the pragmatic result of the balance

of forces between workers and foremen articulated through the

networks of the work and community situation. Clearly at this

level "harmony" is often in the eye of the beholder, for as Weber

has noted:

> "Obedience will be taken to mean that the action of the
> person obeying follows in essentials such a course that the
> content of the command may be taken to have become the basis
> of action for its own sake ... Subjectively, the causal
> sequence may vary, especially as between "submission" and
> "sympathetic agreement". (86)

Being "obedient" to a foreman meant more than doing a

satisfactory job at work - it meant also keeping a "good personal

reputation" in a wider sense:

> "You couldn't afford to have an argument with a foreman,
> what! If you upset one of them that was it, you were
> finished." (87)

Here again what is important is the physical concentration of the

yards on the Wear and the relatively "closed" nature of the

community; in a sense the physical density and structure of the

occupational community served to produce a particular "moral"

density. The importance of the "respectable" working craftsman

was highlighted through both the pragmatic considerations of a

very effective social network amongst foremen (in the face of a

loose labour market) and was also encouraged by the moral density

of the occupational culture stressing the politics of local

loyalties (88). The importance of "respectable" (i.e. non

radical) status was pointed to by the "carrot" of identification

with the "gentlemen" owners and the "stick" - the power of and

the effective network between the foremen. This produced a situation in which those in exercise of the economic power of hiring and firing (the foremen) were because of community position very effective bulwarks against the potentially activist worker. However on the other hand, as will be shown later, the importance of the foremen in the recruitment and organisation of labour was dependent upon and refracted through their own backgrounds as craftsmen. This factor was one of several which was to serve as a retarding force in relation to any radical views of reorganising and/or deskilling the production process. It is within the contexts outlined so far - the interaction of physical and social locality and distance, the persistence of cultural continuity and the historically specific forms of the employer/employee relationship that the problems and opportunities of the shipbuilding industry on the Wear in the inter-war period were enacted. We must now look at some of the issues which became important during this time in order more fully to understand the specific content of the employment relationship.

Part V

It was argued in an earlier section that a major characteristic of the British economy in the inter-war period was that of crisis and slump, the effects of which were unevenly distributed across industries, with the traditional export

industries and shipbuilding in particular being the worst hit.

However it has been argued by some that shifts in the level of

world trade do not primarily define the notion of crisis and what

is of more importance is the idea of the falling rate of profit

and the devaluation of capital [89]. This may be so if one is

attempting to understand the large scale structural tendencies

within the capitalist mode of production. What it cannot do is

provide a link between these movements and the active initiatives

undertaken by capital in its (personified) attempts to deal with

the problems that they (individual capitalists) saw as facing

them. In other words to reject the validity of analysing

movements in the levels of world trade as a problem in itself is

to render unintelligible the preoccupations of capitalists, and

by and large those of the workforce also, who saw these very

movements as comprising the central problem with which the

industry had to grapple (i.e. lack of demand for ships). What

this suggests, then, is that in order to deal adequately at the

level of meaning with the actions of agents one must give a

validity to their way of seeing the problems that confront them

regardless of whether we see that approach as residing within the

realms of mere ideology [90]. To do otherwise and force "our"

particular problematic wholly with little concern for the actions

of the agents orientated towards "their" problematic is to risk

distortion in our analysis. Whilst we may see "their" approach

as residing in the realm of ideology we must nevertheless

appreciate, along with Gramsci, the "materiality of ideology"
[91]. So then, the starting point for the investigation of the
inter-war period has to be the contours of demand, the point at
which the general moves in world trade and the historical
specifics of Britain's position interact with respect to the
shipbuilding industry. The details of the amount of tonnage
commenced, launched and under construction are tabulated in
Appendix (2); what is important for present purposes is the view
of the nature of the "crisis" as understood by those in the
industry. It is in that sense that the fluctuations in demand
are to be seen as important.

During the first world war 13 million gross tons of merchant
shipping were lost due to enemy action, of which over 8 million
tons were British [92]. Given this state of affairs and the fact
that many yards had been working solely on naval work during the
war, it was expected that demand for new tonnage would be great
in the post war period, so much so that many new shipbuilding
firms were created. For example on the Wear work started in the
early part of 1918 on two new shipyards, the Egis yard at
Pallion and the Wear Concrete Building Company. As Smith and
Holden noted,

> "By the end of the summer three keels of cargo ships had
> been laid at the Egis yard, and the keels of two ocean-going
> tugs at the concrete yard." (93)

Similarly in shipbuilding centres throughout the country new
berths were being created to produce for a demand which, as soon

became evident, was of a temporary nature. The rate at which new
tonnage was built throughout the world was nothing short of
staggering, so that by 1919 the tonnage in existence was 1.8
million tons greater than in 1914. The high level of demand did
not last however, and freight rates began to decline in February
1920. That year represented the peak of the boom with British
yards launching 2,040,000 gross tons, and even into 1921 tonnage
under construction was 3,800,000 tons compared with a pre-war
maximum of 2,600,000 gross tons. However when we look at the
quarterly returns we can see how drastic the drop in demand was,
as the tonnage commenced in the last quarter of 1920 was 506,000
falling to 393,000 in the first quarter of 1921, and then to a
disastrous 69,000 by the second quarter. In Sunderland the
effects of the fall in demand were felt immediately.

> "Output in 1921 fell to less than half the figure for 1920;
> the position worsened in 1922, and in 1923 the figures
> dropped to 17 ships and 56,5222 gross tons. By July 1923,
> 14,000 men were out of work in Sunderland ... Wage
> reductions caused several strikes in the shipbuilding and
> engineering industry." (94)

The severity of the collapse of demand was such that many
people in the industry saw that it was not due solely to the
operation of the business cycle but was also caused by the
changed circumstances consequent upon the end of the first world
war. Thus William Lorimer, the General Secretary of the Boiler-
makers Society, suggested that the depression in the industry in
1921 was:

" ... mainly due to the conditions laid down in the Peace
Terms with Germany, under which thousands of tons of the
best of her merchant tonnage were handed over to the Allies
and the further condition imposed upon her that they would
each year for a number of years build ships to be also
distributed among the Allies as part of the payments under
the Reparations Agreement." (95)

It is true that the transference of tonnage as reparations
was considerable. Between the years 1919 and 1922 slightly over
2 million tons were transferred, an amount equivalent to one and
a half years of "normal" post war output (between 1919 to 1931)
(96). Of more importance than this however was the increase in
shipbuilding output from countries not centrally involved in the
conflict, most notably the U.S.A., whose output rose from 228,000
tons in 1913 to no less than 3,580,000 tons in 1920, although
this quickly fell back to an average of 95,000 tons between the
years 1922 to 1926 (97).

Whichever factor one takes to be of greater importance, the
result is nevertheless the same - the problem is defined first
and foremost as one of overcapacity. This problematic was to
remain the dominating theme throughout the inter-war period. The
reaction to this situation on behalf of individual British ship-
builders was to enhance competitiveness by cutting costs and a
traditional element in such a strategy was that of wage reduct-
ion. The declining level of demand in the industry was matched by
rounds of wage cuts implemented by the employers. From the point
of view of the workforce the withdrawal of recent awards provoked
more outcry than the rescindment of special bonuses. Thus the

joiners' strike on the Wear, which began on December 1st 1920,

was precipitated by the withdrawal of a 12 shilling a week

advance which had been awarded as late as May 1920. The strike

lasted until August 22nd, 1921, a reduction of 9 shillings a week

to be phased in in two instalments. In other cases however wage

reductions were accepted, however grudgingly by the workforce.

> "By April 1921 the industry's new difficulties were
> beginning to emerge clearly. So too were the employers'
> demands that the workmen should play their part in trying to
> retrieve the position. They asked for a 6 shilling a week
> reduction in time rates and for a 15% reduction in piece
> rates to take effect from the end of April. The unions
> agreed as long as the reductions could take effect in two
> instalments on May 7th and June 4th ... (and) ... in the
> face of an almost total absence of orders employers gave
> notice that they were going to abolish the Ministry of
> Munitions war bonuses of twelve and a half per cent to time
> workers and seven and a half per cent to piece workers in
> three instalments from November 1921 to January 1922. Harsh
> though these measures must have seemed, the men agreed to
> accept them in a ballot." (98)

As well as reducing wages, as the slump continued the

employers sought to gain greater flexibility with respect to

their "variable capital". Thus by 1922:

> " ... the shipbuilding firms on the Wear ended their time
> honoured custom of their working by the day and established
> the new method of working by the hour." (99)

The importance of all these initiatives was that they were aimed

at reducing costs, in these cases wage costs. Efforts were also

made to obtain more favourable terms with suppliers, although by

1922:

> "Costs remained high, despite cut-throat prices quoted by
> builders to obtain orders. Ships plates which cost £7 a ton
> before the war were now costing £24; coal had risen from 10
> shillings to 40 shillings a ton." (100)

The concern with costs and the level of absolute demand dominated the concerns of builders on the Wear (and elsewhere), and the years of 1925 and 1926 saw the demise of two of the yards on the river: those of John Blumer and Co. and Sunderland Shipbuilding Company. Demand remained at a low level throughout the middle years of the 1920s [101]. A rise in freight rates increased demand in 1927, especially for replacement tramp tonnage [102], and on the Wear demand rose up until 1930.

Changes in the production process throughout the 1920s tended to be piecemeal. On the Wear there was an extension in the use of pneumatic riveting, and in some yards the introduction of plate punching machines [103]. The earliest mention of the existence of a welding squad on the Wear, doing primarily non-structural work, was during 1928:

> "The first welder was a bloke called Sollie French, and he started that in Laings." (104)

The issue of welding will be considered in greater detail at a later point. The main thing to grasp here is that during the 1920s it was issues other than those concerned directly with the production process which were uppermost in the minds of the employers. This did not mean however that no questions were asked about British building techniques as part of the wider industry. Indeed during 1926 when a substantial order of five ships, for a British shipping line called Furness Withy, was placed with a German yard there was a public outcry. Suggestions in the Times

were that it had as much to do with the overall organisation of

German industry and the prevalent corporate form as to any

specific phase of the organisation of production.

> "It is probable that one of the factors which makes for the
> ability of the German yards to compete is the complete
> "trustification" of material, from the mine to the fitted
> plate, from the financing bank to the sale of tickets. This
> system is not without its effect on wages, and the cost of
> living. When all these forces are turned into the same
> direction the margin for reduction in costs becomes very
> considerable." (105)

Commenting on the same event Leon Trotsky, writing on the British

economy, drew a similar overall conclusion:

> "There are, it is true, indications that the order for ships
> was placed with the Hamburg yard for the special purpose of
> frightening the trade unions and thus preparing the ground
> for bringing pressure to bear on them with a view to lower-
> ing wages and lengthening hours of labour. Needless to say,
> that manoeuvre is more than likely. But that does not in
> the least weaken the force of our general considerations on
> the irrational organisation of British industry and on the
> overhead expenses arising out of that organisation." (106)

It would indeed seem to have had the effect of "frightening the

trade unions", for they agreed to participate with the employers

in an inquiry into the nature of foreign competition. The inquiry

found that workers in Dutch and German yards worked longer hours

than the British workers and often foreign yards had more

advanced equipment. The conclusions drawn from the inquiry

differed markedly. The unions called for international influence

to be asserted to restrict "unfair competition". The employers

made more detailed recommendations and in as far as these related

to the production process they called for a greater element of

"elasticity" and "interchangeability", but importantly these

recommendations, amounting to some "fifty flexible practices",
were to be achieved

> " .. without infringement of the broad principles of
> craftsmanship." (107)

This indeed would seem to be the hallmark of the approach of
the employers throughout the 1920s, considerations of the
organisation of the division of labour were subordinated to the
concerns of overcapacity and external costs.   These issues were
viewed through a perspective which stressed the normalcy of
fluctuations in trade; to this extent the problem was seen as the
absolute decline in demand rather than the changing pattern of
what demand there was.   In the face of such resignation to the
inevitability of recurring slumps the owners did little to change
production techniques.   The complex of reasons as to why this was
the case can best be outlined in consideration of the 1930s, and
in particular in the case of welding.

The slump of the 1930s bore many similarities with the
1920s, but there were also significant differences.   The severity
of the collapse of world trade was all the more notable because
it was not consequent upon the dislocations of production and
consumption following a war, as in the 1920s. Again the nature of
the product of the industry was such (the medium of transportat-
ion of world trade) that the effects of the decline in world
trade were felt quickly, and on the Wear these effects meant that
by 1932 there were only two ships launched.

> "In these tragic years the depression was really
> unprecedented. Two small colliers in one year made the
> slump of the 'twenties look like a time of comparative
> prosperity." (108)

What is striking about contemporary commentaries of the develop-

ment of the slump in the industry is the rapidity with which

these changes took place, and also the shifting quality of the

accounts from buoyant optimism to despair. It is perhaps useful

to outline these developments as they relate to the industry in

the North East, and particularly the situation upon the Wear.

The year of 1930 began bright enough with the output in the

North East district being the best for nine years (109).

Furthermore it was estimated that:

> "The shipbuilding outlook on the Tyne, Wear and Tees for the
> current year is very bright, by reason of the large number
> of foreign orders secured towards the end of 1929." (110)

Only one week later the same observer introduced a note of

caution into his earlier estimation.

> "The middle of the first month of the year has not disclosed
> much new business locally in the placing of orders for new
> ships." (111)

It was noted that this was particularly true of tramp tonnage

which "could not easily be made to pay". By March the

seriousness of the situation was becoming apparent, and it was

noted that in the North Eastern region as a whole:

> "There have been very few orders placed this year and soon
> there will at least be some empty berths once more. Leading
> yards are better off than the smaller ones, but there are
> instances where firms are getting uncomfortably near the end
> of present contracts." (112)

By May, the feeling of crisis in the industry was largely

confirmed. The work in hand had dwindled to a very low level and

the outlook for the rest of the year was black.

> "In the course of the next few months there will be a marked
> change in the shipbuilding position on local rivers. Some
> yards are very near the end of present contracts and no
> fresh orders are being received. The Wear is worse off than
> the Tyne or the Tees. One Sunderland firm has put its last
> ship into the water." (113)

The position of the Wear continued to deteriorate, and a changed

atmosphere on the river was seen to exist.

> "Just now ship launches on the river have a significance
> rather different from those of normal times. They mark
> stages towards greater unemployment for shipyard men because
> fresh orders are so hard to get. At the present time there
> are less than a dozen vessels on the stocks; four yards are
> without work, and the remainder are getting very near the
> end of their contracts. (114)

It was becoming clear that the problem of orders would continue,

and if the outlook at the beginning of the year had been "very

bright" it was now catastrophic, especially in Sunderland, with

"armies of workless" within the borough (115). Moreover,

> "The winter outlook for shipbuilding on the Wear is worse
> than on the Tyne or Tees. A very few yards on the Tyne have
> sufficient work to carry them well into the coming year, and
> the Tees has some tankers, cargo boats and whalers to build;
> but on the Wear the contracts in hand appear to have
> dwindled to seven steamers and two hoppers. Five yards out
> of about a dozen on the banks of the river are without any
> work, and before the year ends there will be very little
> shipbuilding going on at all. As far as is known, no new
> orders have been booked for a considerable time." (116)

The crisis of the 1930s hit the Wear earlier and harder than

the Tyne or Tees. But in the absence of a single large yard

closing down in one catastrophic event the river gradually, but

over a relatively short time period, ground to a halt. It is not

to be wondered then that it was the closure of Palmers at Jarrow
that produced that most fabled event in inter-war working class
history: the "Jarrow March", for if Jarrow was "the town that was
murdered" [117], Sunderland appeared to have died of natural
causes.

The shipbuilding employers however appeared to have learnt
that the inaction that was characteristic of the previous decade
had not helped the industry, and the free play of market forces
had not resulted in the successful "rationalisation" of the
industry. For as Sir Frederick Pyman, a Director of William
Gray's yard at West Hartlepool, noted in a speech in October
1933:

> "Shipbuilders die hard. They hang on in the hope that
> competitors may go under and that things will get better.
> In the privately owned yards, which must constitute a
> substantial proportion of the capacity of the industry, it
> is common to find the third, fourth, or even fifth
> generation at the helm. Family pride and prestige are at
> stake ... So there are forces at work which are pulling in
> opposite direction to economic forces. For nearly a decade
> the old shibboleth of laissez faire reigned and what
> happened? A mere handful of yards went into liquidation,
> and of these the best were picked up at scrap prices and
> reconditioned." (118)

Again the central problem of the industry was seen as over-
capacity, and therefore as lying outside of the division of
labour [119]. The response of the employers to the developing
slump was the formation of National Shipbuilders' Security LTD
(N.S.S.) in February 1930. The aim of the company was to reduce
shipbuilding capacity through buying up and dismantling redundant

yards. The company was formed of shipbuilders themselves, with

capital of £10,000, and borrowing powers of up to £2.5 million,

plus a 1% levy, paid by members, of the price of new tonnage. On

the board of directors of N.S.S. were two people with direct

interests on the Wear: Sir Alexander Kennedy, Chairman of William

Doxfords, and Mr. R. Norman Thompson, Director of both J.L.

Thompsons and Sir James Laing and Sons Ltd [120]. The official

statement of policy of N.S.S. made it clear that the problem

which the firm was addressing was one related to "financial

stability" rather than rationalisation of production as such.

> "The British shipbuilding industry during the last two years
> has been steadily consolidating its position in world
> shipbuilding, in the face of unprecedented and subsidised
> foreign competition. It is now building over 50% of the
> world's tonnage. To enable shipbuilding to recover and
> maintain financial stability it has become imperative to
> secure a greater concentration of work available, thus
> obtaining considerable savings in the overhead and adminis-
> trative costs and in rates and taxes." (121)

In this view the "rationalisation" would improve cost-

effectiveness and not therefore lead to greater unemployment

amongst "shop floor" workers.

> "We do not think, when the new proposals are carried out,
> that there will be any additional unemployment in the ship-
> building trades. It is hoped that at least the same number
> of ships will be turned out each year, and it is possible
> that there may be even more ... Such reductions as will be
> inevitable are more likely to take place in the higher
> grades of staff and managerial departments." (122)

Similarly Sir Alexander Kennedy reported in a speech at

Fairfields on the Clyde that:

> "He had noticed that the fear had been expressed in certain
> quarters that the activities of the new corporation might

lead to the closing down of yards which formed the principal
nucleus for employment in their respective areas ... He had
no doubt at all that the correlation of producing capacity
to the possible market demand could be accomplished with
little or no disturbance to any particular shipbuilding
area.   Indeed if it was true, as he thought it undoubtedly
was, that considerable saving could be effected by greater
concentration of production than existed at present, then it
should mean more work for shipbuilding and thus more
employment. (123)

However it became apparent in the operation of N.S.S. that

with the deteriorating level of demand such "rationalisation"

would bring higher levels of unemployment for tradesmen. Its

activities began to resemble solely the payment of redundancy

money to employers. As one worker put it:

"I remember N.S.S. came up and we discussed it. "Oh," I
said, "that's very good, and what percentage do the retired
men that have been thrown on the scrapheap get? Is there any
fund to recompense some of them?" Only the employers were
getting the benefit, you see. The workers were getting
nothing." (124)

Furthermore the form that the "rationalisation" took seemed to be

rather arbitrary and based purely upon who was willing to sell

out.   On the Wear for example there seemed to be little

consideration of the technical efficiency of the yards closed.

"The loss of Gray's shipyard was particularly resented. It
was the most modern - in point of time on the river ... "
(125)

At the same time that builders in Britain, with the encouragement

of the Government and the Bank of England, were attempting at all

costs to reduce capacity, the French Government was giving direct

aid to their builders. By May 1930 the French Government had

concluded that supplying maritime credits to shipowners was not

the best way to help their own shipbuilders as orders were placed

abroad, primarily in Britain and Germany.   So whilst they

required the employers to launch a committee to formulate a

program of concentration and rationalisation they also offered

direct aid to builders in order to match foreign prices.   In the

mid '30s, when the British Government decided that the ship-

building industry needed assistance, it was given directly in the

form of the British Shipping (Assistance) Act of 1935.   The scrap

and build scheme enshrined in the act encouraged British shipping

owners to place orders by scrapping old tonnage and subsidising

the building of new.   What the scheme did not do was subsidise

British Shipbuilders directly; clearly the problem was not seen

to lie in inefficiencies within the yards.   The efforts of the

N.S.S. were similarly orientated towards reducing capacity

(building capacity rather than shipping capacity directly) and

the establishment of market equilibrium at a lower level.   The

most pressing problem was clearly seen as lack of demand, or to

put it another way, over-supply.

Given this situation the issues pursued inside the yards

were orientated towards the reduction of costs in order to

survive until market equilibrium returned.   Moves were being made

nationally in this direction by the Shipbuilding Employers

Federation (S.E.F.).   In a letter to the Wear Shipbuilders

Association (W.S.A.) the S.E.F. stated that:

> "At a recent meeting of the federation central board it had
> been agreed that, in view of the depression in the industry,

and the increase in foreign competition, it was essential that everything possible should be done to secure the most economical level of costs." (126)

Each local district was instructed to produce reports, the contents of which:

> " ... should cover local agreements, arbitration awards, district and yard practices, and also the provisions of existing piecework price lists either for district or individual yards." (127)

The list is a comprehensive one; however it became apparent that the most important items on this list were not "district and yard practices" but rather aspects of wage rates. Again the concern is primarily with issues other than those arising directly from the division of labour. Another important feature of this S.E.F. initiative was the tension that arose between the W.S.A. and the national body. This was eventually resolved by the W.S.A. attempting to act unilaterally. It is perhaps useful to indicate the dimensions of these issues as recorded by the W.S.A.

On receipt of the district reports the S.E.F. wrote to the W.S.A. noting their concern about the piece rate prices, specifically the platers' list, on the river. The W.S.A. wanted to start local negotiations to reduce the rates. But the S.E.F. did not want them to pre-empt the forthcoming national negotiations with the Boilermakers. However the W.S.A. disagreed and recorded their view that:

> " ... there was nothing to prevent the Association from instituting negotiations at once." (128)

Negotiations began early in December and the secretary of the

W.S.A. was instructed to write to the federation advising them of

what was being done, and asking them if they approved of the act-

ion.   Mr. Bartram, the W.S.A. delegate to the S.E.F., reported in

March 1931 that the federation had reaffirmed its position that:

> " ... no questions should be raised by local associations
> which would lead to a dispute with the Boilermakers Society
> while national questions were under consideration." (130)

At the same meeting a letter from the Tyne Shipbuilders

Association was presented which supported the S.E.F. position and

asked the W.S.A. to cease negotiations.   Ironically it was

eventually the representatives of the workforce who put a stop to

the local negotiations.   Both "piece" prices and payments for

"walking time" were being discussed, but the position adopted by

the trades in the Federation of Shipbuilding and Engineering

Trades was that:

> "They had stated that they could not proceed with
> negotiations until they knew what was to take place on the
> national wages negotiations." (131)

On the other hand the Boilermakers were not party to the

national discussions and would only deal with wage questions

locally.   The position adopted by the W.S.A. shows the tensions

that existed between the employers born out of the different

circumstances that prevailed upon different rivers.   However

there were also division within the W.S.A. during this period, as

the resignation of W. Pickersgill and Sons from the W.S.A. in

March 1931 demonstrates.   The meeting of the W.S.A. on March 5th

of that year noted that:

"Messrs. Pickersgill's resignation was particularly
unfortunate in view of the present position of the industry
when the need for complete unity among employers was
absolutely imperative. Disunity among employers at the
present time was tantamount to handing over the industry to
the trade unions." (132)

The situation in which employers could not agree a national

approach towards the unions had a long history in the industry

where owners were proud of the individual standing and

achievements of their own yards. The minutes of the W.S.A.

during the early 1930s were predominantly concerned with wages

and other cost issues, notable by its absence was any detailed

debate over production techniques. Even the many entries in the

minutes of 1931 and 1932 under the heading of "Revision of

Onerous Agreements and Practices" refer primarily to altering

rates of payment and removing the payment of extras (extra pay-

ments) for certain kinds of work. They do not refer to changes

in the way the work is to be carried out. The theme of costs and

wages is continued in one of the other issues to loom large

during this period, and that is the concern with wage rates in

other industries, particularly local authority workers.

On this issue the employers on the Wear followed the lead of

those on the Clyde, who had begun to petition local councils in

order to get them to lower their wage rates for manual workers.

The disparity between workers in the "protected sector" and those

in shipbuilding was thought to exercise upward pressure on wage

rates in the industry. The W.S.A., finding that in 1931 a

disparity of 7/6d existed between the wages of unskilled

municipal workers and unskilled shipbuilding workers on Wearside,

initiated a letter to be signed by other firms in the town and

then sent to the Council urging them to cut their rates [133].

The absence of any significant discussions in the W.S.A.

minutes about changes in the production process within yards

suggests that such issues were not seen as dominant, or, at the

very least, were held to be the responsibility of the individual

employer and not a suitable issue for a joint approach. It is

with these factors in mind, the dominance of the issues of cost

and wages and the apparent lack of concern with the direct

production process, that we must now turn to a consideration of

the introduction of the S.E.F. welding plan and the development

of welding as it happened (or didn't happen) on the Wear.

The importance of the S.E.F. welding plan as outlined by

Lorenz was that:

> "The scheme marked the first attempt by employers to
> determine in advance through national negotiations the terms
> upon which new techniques would be introduced to the
> industry ... " (134)

The defeat of the welding scheme was taken as evidence that the

British shipyard workers have indeed "characterised themselves by

resisting at the point of production the expropriation of the

control they have exercised over the labour process". The

importance of the resistence which could be exercised by labour

was also seen to be "the" factor restraining the employers from

advocating a more "radical" scheme.

"After an initial, and misinformed, assessment that welding
on the flat might require as little as two weeks training,
the committee decided that between one and two years were
required to train the average worker as a fully qualified
welder. The S.E.F.'s final proposal however called for a
five year apprenticeship and the training of welders with a
general knowledge of shipyard practice. Any other proposal
would have provoked a crisis in industrial relations, as it
would have challenged the control the unions had been able
to exercise over entry to the skilled trades through
apprenticeship; the employers were evidently unwilling to
confront the unions on this general principle." (135)

Furthermore the failure of the employers to act on the potential

which it was seen that the welding process had, to facilitate a

restructuring of the division of labour has been explained in

terms of a conservatism among the owners themselves.

" ... the industry ignored the significance of the
importance of prefabrication and large scale sub-assembly,
which welding rendered possible in the development of a
basic "factory" system. An explanation for this perhaps can
be found in the basic conservatism of the employers." (136)

The problem with these types of analysis as far as the

introduction of welding on the River Wear was concerned, is that

the whole issue did not appear to be as important on the Wear as

on the Clyde or Tyne. The first mention of "Electric Welding on

New Shipbuilding Work" in the W.S.A. minutes appears on July 18

1933, some three months after the presentation of the S.E.F.

scheme (137). Moreover it becomes clear that there was a good

deal of confusion amongst individual employers as to the

potential for savings that could be extracted from the welding

process itself, its technical efficiency and the desirability of

greater amounts of "fabrication" which the process could make

possible. So far as the Wear is concerned then, it would seem

that Lorenz's assertion that,

> "The scheme marked the first attempt by employers to
> determine in advance through national negotiations the terms
> upon which new techniques would be introduced to the
> industry,an apparent indication of their unity ... " (138)

is somewhat of an exaggeration as the W.S.A. formally agreed to

support the scheme at a meeting on the 12 September 1933, not

only five months after its presentation but also after several

unions had also rejected it! It is not an incidental piece of

information that the S.E.F. welding scheme was fourth on the

agenda at this meeting, being preceded by two separate problems

relating to piecework rates.

Before looking in more detail at the reasons why this

"precedent setting" scheme was neglected on Wearside it is

perhaps useful to address some of the more general elements of

"confusion" surrounding welding at this time. In an earlier

reference it was noted that the skill content involved and

therefore the required training period to undertake welding work

was by no means self evident. In the previous decade however it

had seemed obvious that welding was a skilled business. Thus in

1926 it was thought by one authority that:

> "The reason why welding is not used to any great extent in
> shipbuilding is probably due to the fact that in the minds
> of most people it is generally regarded as being an
> operation carried out by hand and which ... cannot be
> economically employed on repetition work. Moreover, since
> it is performed by hand, to be successfully accomplished it
> requires skilled men and thus the semi-skilled or unskilled
> labourer cannot be employed on welding work ... in other
> words, the labour costs of the job are high." (139)

Even as late as 1930 it was still being suggested that welding

involved a higher degree of skill than riveting.

> "We have frequently drawn attention to the possibilities of
> using welding in place of riveting in the construction of
> ships, but while the advantages of the former system are
> recognised the fact must not be lost sight of that its
> success depends to a greater extent upon the skill of the
> operator than does the latter, and hence particularly for
> strength portions of the the hull, riveting is still
> generally preferred." (140)

The process did have its advocates however, and at this time

Major James Caldwell of the Institution of Structural Engineers

was clear as to the prime inhibiting factor:

> ... it is not so much that naval architects who would not
> adopt welding in ship construction as the classification
> societies who would refuse to authorise such methods until
> they had convinced themselves by long and repeated
> experiments that they could give their consent to such
> without any misgiving." (141)

It was not only the classification societies who were urging

caution (142); it was felt by some shipbuilders and shipowners

to be a more costly process if it was to be done correctly and

quality guaranteed. Thus in reply to a suggestion that Britain

was being left behind in terms of the application of welding to

ship-building, the "Shipbuilding and Shipping Record" of August

20 1931 offered the opinion that:

> " ... This question of cost is of course a factor which has
> decided shipbuilders and shipowners in this country against
> the extensive use of electric welding in spite of the
> obvious saving in weight which can be obtained.
>   The necessity of employing skilled workers has often
> been stressed, but one of the greatest difficulties of
> electric welding, and one which is responsible for a large
> part of the increase in cost, is the necessity of providing
> most careful supervision and inspection during the process
> of welding. This point is covered by the requirements of

> the classification societies, who recognise that it is quite possible to produce a weld which is apparently satisfactory and the unsoundness of which cannot be detected unless the joint is tested to destruction. ... There is no doubt that the application of electric welding to the construction of the entire ship is quite practicable, but the course our British shipbuilders are taking in developing the usefulness of welding slowly, rather than undertaking the organisation required for what would at best be a costly experiment, is wise." (143)

The article went on to quote research undertaken in the aircraft industry which showed that only 25% of welded joints tested proved to be satisfactory. The technical efficiency of welded joints, undertaken in the less than ideal situation of the shipyard, remained problematic throughout the period of the negotiations over the S.E.F. welding plan.

Indeed up to twenty years later ships were still being lost due to the failure of welded joints.

> "Between 1942 and 1952, about 250 welded ships suffered one or more brittle fractures of such severity that they were lost or in a dangerous condition, and 1200 more suffered small brittle cracks dangerous but not disabling." (144)

The point is then that a question mark hung over the welding process both as to its technical efficiency and its cost efficiency. This question mark had by no means been dispelled by the time of the S.E.F.'s struggle with the labour force over the introduction of the process. Indeed it was perhaps the case that in relation to the early use of welding in shipyards the owners were faced with a choice which was similar to the one confronting employers thinking of introducing Taylor's scientific management, where:

" ... it became apparent that in the face of an uncertain
outcome his methods required initial increases in cost."
(145)

So it was with welding, for it necessitated investment in plant,
reorganisation of plating procedures, the development of new
training programmes for returns which were anything but precisely
known. The decision of the S.E.F. not to pay piece rates would
suggest that they were unsure as to how far their estimate of
12ft per hour for "downhand" welds was realistic, and as far as
weight saving on the final product was concerned estimates varied
between the 30% of deadweight displacement made by the
manufacturers to the less substantial 7% estimated by naval
architects. This uncertainty coupled with the heterogeneous
"specialities" of different centres and the concerns of
individual yards would suggest that a situation of less than
absolute unity was likely to prevail, with individual yards being
unwilling to risk disruption for the sake of a formal agreement
over a process which may have remained of marginal interest for a
number of years to come.

It is exactly these kinds of issues that must be borne in
mind when considering the attitudes and behaviour of the Wear
Shipbuilders Association towards the S.E.F. welding plan. The
general impression given by the W.S.A. minutes during the period
covering the introduction of the S.E.F. welding plan is that the
"action" happened elsewhere. Furthermore the statements of unity
in relation to such things as the prices to be paid for plating

work stand out as statements of principle rather than of

practice, and many are qualified by reservations anyway.   It has

already been mentioned that the W.S.A. first showed interest in

the welding plan a considerable time after it was first

presented.   However as the minutes record that Mr. Gebbie, the

delegate to the S.E.F., went into the provisions of the plans in

considerable detail it is possible that not all the employers at

this meeting were aware of the details involved [146].   Further-

more it is interesting that his main concern was with the prices

to be paid for plating work under the scheme,

> " ... for unless a lead was given by the W.S.A. or the
> federation, British yards would find themselves at a serious
> disadvantage compared with foreign builders." (147)

Even in the midst of this "precedent setting" scheme the concern

of the W.S.A. as articulated by Mr. Gebbie would appear to focus

on wage rates.   As we have seen the meeting of 12 September gave

rather belated support to the plan, and also noted anxiety that

piecework was being operated by some warship yards.   Furthermore,

> "It was suggested that as none of the firms in this district
> had had much experience in welding, it would be advisable to
> have some suggestions and advice for the firms drawn up as
> to what they should do in the way of organising yard
> operations for welding, and as to what they should pay for
> the operations that would be altered by welding ... Whether
> it would be possible to make new prices which would suit
> every firm on the river was another matter, (in relation to
> plating) some firms might shear and others might burn.   And
> further some firms might desire to put semi-skilled men on
> certain work, if so it would obviously be better for all the
> firms to employ semi-skilled labour on that work, so as to
> preserve uniformity as far as possible." (148)

Again what is striking is the "tone" of these statements

implying that unity is fragile and can only be sustained "as far

as possible". This meeting agreed to the setting up of the

W.S.A. welding sub-committee to advise on the questions raised.

The sub-committee met for the first time on October 17 1933, and

it reported to a full meeting of the W.S.A. on 29 January 1934.

It had completed half of its task but it is clear that its advice

was not invested with legislative power. The committee

> " ... had drawn up a statement showing the class of workmen
> to be in charge of each operation on the all-welded ship.
> This was intended for the guidance of firms when work of
> that nature had to be done." (149)

In relations to the pricing of work it was recorded that:

> "As far as possible it would be desirable to observe
> uniformity with regard to these matters though it might be
> difficult to do so." (150)

The question was raised as to whether the welding committee

should advise on pricing, but the Chairman

> " ... thought it was perhaps rather early as yet to deal
> with the matter. As the process developed, the committee
> should meet frequently with a view to keeping in touch with
> the work in the yards and seeing that it progressed along
> the right lines." (151)

It is clear from this meeting that the deliberations are about

practice some time in the future, and the exact details of the

conditions for the implementation of the plan had not been

concretised before the next notable meeting of the welding sub-

committee on July 17 1934 where:

> "Reference was made to the federation welding scheme which
> in the opinion of the committee had largely broken down
> owing to the fact that in the yards where the strikes had
> occurred on the introduction of the 60/- rate, the trouble
> had been got over by putting the men on piece. The

committee was however strongly of the opinion that the work
on the Wear should be done as it came along at the time rate
of 60/- with the appropriate rates for trainees, and that
piece prices should not in any case be arranged without
prior consultation with the association." (152)

That this assertive statement was more a statement of

principle than practice did not become obvious until 1935, for

that is when this type of work first "came along" on the Wear.

In a meeting of the sub-committee on April 12 1935 it was noted

that Doxfords and J.L. Thompson's were contemplating the

introduction of piecework on welding as the situation was

developing at Doxfords where workers would not accept the 60/-

rate when men were getting paid more elsewhere [153]. It is

clear that when faced with the possibility of industrial action

individual yards on the Wear capitulated on the issue of piece

rates and indeed it would be difficult to see how they could have

maintained the position outlined in the S.E.F. plan when other

areas had already conceded the applicability of such rates.

On the other issue of denying the Boilermakers Society to

represent welders as a class the W.S.A. were still reiteratively

stating the formal position, even though the piecework issue had

been conceded. Thus in reporting the current views of the S.E.F.

on the proposed introduction of piece rates at a Wear yard in a

W.S.A. meeting on 10 May 1935,

"It was reported that the question of piecework on welding
had recently been considered by the Federation conference
and works board, whose view it was that yards using
different plant and electrodes must necessarily have
different piece prices; each yard would accordingly have to
arrange its own list. The Federation also agreed with the

firm and the Association welding committee that firms should
negotiate only with their own workmen and not with any union
or unions, as no union could, of course be taken to
represent welders as a class.
     After discussion the meeting agreed that in the
introduction of piecework firms would have to proceed
individually and the proposal of the firms concerned to
introduce piecework was applauded." (154)

Again the statement about not recognising any union as

representing welders as a class was largely a statement of

principle, as the welders in both yards concerned, Doxfords and

J.L. Thompson's, were all members of the Boilermakers Society.

Given this situation any attempt to act in accordance with the

statement could prove difficult as became clear at the W.S.A.

meeting on July 22:

"On the question of piecework, one of the members stated he
had arranged prices with their own men but the Boilermakers
Society (of which all their welders were members) had
prevented the men from working on piece. It appeared that
the Society took the view that they should have more time
and experience before going on to piece." (155)

The issue of representation was already settled then, and it was

only a matter of time before the employers had to concede the

point. In this sense the eventual solution of the issue would

seem to vindicate the "strategy" taken by the unions.

The unions undertook to conduct the struggle yard by yard.
Thus a direct national confrontation was avoided. It was
left to individual employers to precipitate any disputes.
Trade union members continued working normally so long as
existing arrangements were maintained." (156)

However this view is, in some senses, a post hoc rationalisation

of the strategy pursued which was the only possible course of

action given the depleted funds of the Society; it is unlikely

that a national confrontation could have been sustained by the

union.   Furthermore with reference to the Wear there were, as we

have seen, instances where Boilermakers did agree piece rates

with employers; even if they obeyed instructions from the Society

not to operate on these rates the point should not be overlooked

that in the absence of instruction individual workers were less

than consistent in their advocacy of the union's position.

In another sense it would seem that the S.E.F. welding plan

was never forcefully applied in practice by the W.S.A..   Indeed

from October 17 1933 until July 1935 the welding sub-committee of

the W.S.A. only met six times.   In terms of the training of

welders the most important problem was not seen to be the

potential union resistance, but rather the external state of

trade.

> " ... there is no lack of potential labour supply, but the
> difficulty arises from the present state of the industry
> which it is considered will right itself in due course as
> the industry revives." (157)

It is the case then that the shipbuilders of the Wear paid

less attention to the welding process than those of the Clyde and

the Tyne.   There are several reasons for this.   Firstly the

"specialised" product of the Wear was tramp tonnage which was not

deemed to benefit from the use of welded joints as much as the

larger liners or warships.   Secondly, McGoldrick's assertion that

> " ... the concern with costs drove shipbuilders towards
> welding" (158)

must be treated warily as the specific structure of Wear firms

and the effect that the slump had upon them must be taken into account. That the introduction of welding meant an initial increase in cost (investment) cannot be denied. Given this situation, interest in practically adopting the process on the Clyde and the Tyne began in 1934 when the industry in these locations was reviving.

On the Wear, as we have seen, the slump began earlier, but also showed signs of improvement later:

> "In 1932 the County Borough of Sunderland topped the unemployment league table for areas of high unemployment with a figure of 36.6%. The Commissioner for special areas lamented the fact that while unemployment figures for the whole of Durham and Tyneside area had shown a steady, if slight improvement since 1932, by 1934 the number of unemployed in Sunderland was 1,773 more than the previous year." (159)

Moreover, the Commissioner for special areas went on to note in 1934 that:

> "Special attention should be paid to the case of Sunderland. The industrial area at the mouth of the Wear is in fact isolated from the rest of the North East coast, and has not shared in such measure of revival as has already come to the Tyne." (160)

In fact the industry revived very slowly on the Wear until 1936 where, with orders placed under the scrap and build scheme, output rose from 31,396 gross tons in 1935 to 138,791 gross tons, representing 8 and 36 ships respectively. Furthermore given the depth and duration of the slump, the scope for new investment was small:

> "Wear firms, still privately owned, found difficulty in raising the capital necessary for ... re-equipment and re-organisation." (161)

Under these conditions it was not a concern with the relative
costs of construction that dominated, but rather, in absence of
orders, it was the absolute cost of overheads that mattered. On
the Wear a concern with costs served to postpone initiatives for
the introduction of welding.

The "struggle" over the introduction as envisaged in the
S.E.F. welding plan was largely fought elsewhere. Nevertheless
on a national scale the unity of the employers was in the main
theoretical - a desire for the best outcome without considering
the realities of the constraints operating in their situations.
They were, as we have noted, divided by product specialisation
which most importantly represented itself as a difference in
timing for the projected introduction of welding. Thus the time
that any individual employers were willing to sustain a strike,
with only the theoretical backing of all the employers, and
whilst remaining in direct competition with the same, was
limited.

In the areas that did experience strike action over the
introduction of the scheme, the diffuse concerns of the employers
must be contrasted to concentration of those of the labour
organisations. The only claim of the (primarily craft) workers
to a share of available work was within the recognised
"structure" of the craft division of labour. It was only the
specific identity of occupation which gave one an improved chance
in the (literal) labour market. In this sense craft status which

includes exclusive union organisation of a recognised trade
underlay both the division of labour and to a large extent the
local communities. However even in the national context it would
be wrong to concentrate solely upon the "conflicts" in the yards.
Rather a notion of the dialectic of conflict and co-operation is
the important point. Up until the 1930s there was little
evidence of consciously formulated managerial plans for the
future development of the division of labour in the industry as a
whole. The notions of traditionalism and self supervision of the
squad system had a long history and were not going to be
immediately exterminated by one technical change, especially
when the details of its introduction were not, and, because of
its inevitably uneven effect, could not be unanimously agreed in
its practical application. That the employers had not before
this time raised issues concerning the overall development does
not mean that, in an inversion of Braverman, labour was
omnipotent. For the existence of the labour intensive craft
division of labour gave the employers considerable benefits as
well as implying certain costs. "Inflexibilities" in the
structures and practices within the division of labour were for a
long period more than compensated for by flexibility of local
labour markets, in the absence of alternative employment, and
given fluctuating wage levels. In these circumstances the
employers as well as the workers were, to some extent, willing to
work within an ideology of craft [162].

To return to the Wear, then, it is clear that there were
considerable pressures existing which militated against employers
taking the S.E.F. plan too seriously as an immediately practical
issue.   Other issues were more important to them, primarily
securing orders, reducing external costs, and ensuring that wages
remained as low as possible.   In this sense Tomlinson's concern
(163) that much of the work done within the labour process
tradition sees managers and owners as "monomaniacs" can be seen
to be valid, and McGoldrick's assertion made in his study of
interwar shipbuilding that:

> "The central argument ... is that the solutions which
> capitalism will seek to the problem of crisis are to be
> found in production." (164)

can be seen to be overly simplistic.   Moreover such an analysis
of the "struggle" of capital and labour produces an over
structural account and cannot accommodate the complexities
arising where there is a disjunction between membership of
"class" organisations and more particular concerns, such an
approach produces a stereotype rather than an "ideal type" of
worker and capitalist which if not handled carefully can flatten
the complexities of an historical individual.   This can lead to
assumptions about the behaviour that will be followed by workers
and capitalists because of their "essential nature", the wider
questions of specific context can then be overlooked and the
behaviour of individuals and groups is reduced to the posturing
of "their class organisations".   Unfortunately (or fortunately)

history is never this clear cut.

An example of the importance of the context of issues, and

incidentally of not developing the tunnel vision of monomania, is

available in considering several issues which arose around the

status of the apprenticeship in inter-war shipbuilding.   One of

the reasons stated by McGoldrick for the degree of union

opposition to the S.E.F. welding plan was that:

> "The shipyard unions generally defined the welding scheme of
> the S.E.F. as an attempt at dilution, with its conditions
> allowing labourers to become tradesmen after only two years
> training ... " (165)

This was indeed true; however in another context there was almost

an inversion of the positions adopted by the employers and the

unions in this case.   Ironically the period under consideration

is the same as that for the introduction of welding, as the issue

was a direct consequence of the practical problems encountered in

the face of the depression.   It concerned the status of workers

returning to work after their apprenticeship had been interrupted

for several years by unemployment.   In these cases the problem

arose when the returning worker was over the age of 21 years.   If

they were over 21 the unions considered that they should be

treated as a time served craftsman, the employers on the other

hand were of the opinion that they should continue to serve the

period of their apprenticeship albeit on a slightly higher rate

of pay than that of an ordinary apprentice. Furthermore,

> "It was agreed that this scale, when approved by the
> Association should be circulated and put into operation by
> all the firms when they reopened, and that there should not

be any consultation with the unions, in view of the attitude
which had always been observed by employers that the unions
were not entitled to interfere in any way with apprentices."
(166)

This would seem a curious position - the unions arguing that

these men should be seen as journey-men in spite of, in some

cases, only completing two or three years of apprenticed

training, and the employers insisting on the necessity of serving

the five year apprenticeship.   At first sight if one only

considers the control dimensions of these positions they seem

nonsensical, for the two year training period, for men with ship-

yard experience, was precisely what the unions objected to in the

welding plan.   However we can understand the position of the

employers when once again we emphasise the notion of costs.   For

the employers the insistence on completion of the training period

had more to do with a wish to save on the wages bill by not

paying the full journeyman's rate than any great belief in the

efficacy of the five year apprenticeship.   The implications of

the stance of the unions on this matter was more complicated.

Their case was that once a man was engaged as an apprentice he

would, by the age of 21, become a journey-man.   This view was

tied to a wider perspective based in the community.   It was

widely held that 21 years was the time of "coming of age" - the

point where the boy finally became a man and would then be

legitimately entitled to take on marriage and family respon-

sibilities.   Plus, within the yards the pressures of the

skilled/unskilled division made themselves felt, as the unskilled

workers automatically came on to the "man's rate" at the age of

21.   Furthermore the revival in trade led to a special campaign

by the Boilermakers in 1935 to recruit apprentices, for:

> "During the slump very few apprentices entered the
> boilermaking trades in shipbuilding and the organisation of
> apprentices inside the society declined." (167)

The Society's potential to attract apprentice members would have

been damaged by dogmatically pronouncing the sanctity of the five

year training period.   Moreover to accept such workers as

journeymen after only two years of apprenticeship did not

compromise the status of the craftsman, as the two year training

provision in the S.E.F. welding plan did, for these workers would

have become craftsmen if unemployment had not stopped their

training.   This clearly points to the importance of the social

status of the craftsman and the non-technical content of

apprentice training.

As with many other issues in shipbuilding there was no clear

resolution to the problem, and the unions continued to take up

individual cases of apprentices returning to work.   In some cases

the employers agreed to shorten the length of training period to

be worked before journeyman status could be claimed.   The

advocacy of the position adopted by the unions was potentially

problematic. However, they made clear that these cases developed

in exceptional circumstances due to the severity of the

depression and therefore could not be interpreted as any

weakening in their defence of the craft apprenticeship.

The attention given by labour process theorists to the

importance of craft and the problematic of the skilled worker,

and the socialised identities of the latter as expressed through

craft trade unionism, should not lead us to subsume the

importance of individual workers under the focused concerns of

the union.   Again the issue of the movement from apprenticed to

journeyman status can illustrate this point.   At the empirical

level the processes affecting the conferring of the status of

craftsmen were negotiated and not always automatically assumed.

For one worker in the Laings yard the boilermakers lockout of

1923 led to his accelerated recognition as a journeyman:

> "We built two small ships (during the lockout) the "Don" and
> the "Dee" I think they were called. I had to do expansions
> and everything for frame bending ... Then they started back
> again and they still sent me working in the squad. Then I
> was about 20 years old. I was working in this man's place,
> he was taken bad you see. ... There was one man complained
> about an apprentice boy doing a man's job - I didn't take no
> notice of it, I wasn't interested. Anyway there was another
> man, MacAlpine was his name, he said, "How old are you
> Davey?". I said, "nearly 21", and he said, "are you in the
> boilermakers?". I said "oh aye, I've been in since I were
> sixteen years old." He says, "Right, ha-way with me." .. So
> he took me to the delegate of the Union, he was a plater.
> He says, "Geordie if I let this boy go on to the Journeymans
> job and he gets paid in the first class membership of the
> next months meeting will it be OK?" He says "By all means -
> get him in", that's how I became a Journeyman." (168)

The informality of the approach by MacAlpine, the foreman, to the

boilermakers delegate and the reply received show the non-

bureaucratic nature of relations at the point of production.   The

importance of the membership of foreman in the relevant union is

shown in this case by the lack of scrutiny given to the request

by the union delegate.

The informality was facilitated on a wider scale by the lack of any strict and comprehensive rules governing terms of apprenticeship. An enquiry by the Ministry of Labour in 1926 into apprenticeship and training in the shipbuilding industry found that out of a national sample of 217 firms the average ratio of journeymen to apprentices was 6.7/1 and whilst 50.5% were apprenticed under indentures or other written agreements, 48.6% were apprenticed under verbal agreements, with 1.9% being classified as learners [169]. Furthermore it was the case that:

> "There were no collective agreements in the shipbuilding industry which included any regulations governing apprentices, the employers' associations regarded the conditions of apprenticeship as being a matter of individual arrangement between the employers and the apprentice and his guardian." (170)

The 1926 report found that the usual age of commencement of apprenticeship was 16 years old, but a significant number started between 14 and 16 years. The length of the apprenticeship was five years, although an appreciable number of driller apprentices served for a period of four years. Whilst there was no specific period of probation for apprentices admitted under a verbal agreement those who signed indentures were usually required to serve a six month probation; such arrangements were particularly prevalent amongst platers, riveters, shipwrights, joiners, electricians, fitters, plumbers, sheet metal workers and draughtsmen. As for training,

"Apprentices generally received their training by working
with, or under, the supervision of a journeyman for about
two years, subsequent to which they worked independently
under the supervision of a foreman. Of the firms supplying
information to the enquiry, only four employed a person
exclusively charged with the duty of training apprentices."
(171)

Again, this points to the non-bureaucratic nature of
apprentice training during this period. Such a method of
training puts at a premium the social relationships both at work
and in the wider community. That apprenticeship cannot merely be
equated with technical instruction is clear, and even in later
studies of shipbuilding researchers have found that:

"Apprentices not only acquire skills during their training
... they also internalise certain standards of work and come
to accept and cope with the far from easy working conditions
of a shipyard." (172)

More recent work undertaken at Lancaster University similarly
points to the importance of normative content of the socialisat-
ion into skilled identities, emphasising the close interaction
between the older craftsmen and the younger apprenticed learner.

"This socialisation takes a strongly normative form and is
cemented by the close interpersonal relations of craftsmen
and apprentices. However, ... socialisation occurs prior to
entry into the apprenticeship system at around the age of
sixteen. This is because skilled craft work is highly prized
within the manual working class...Apprenticeships are often
filled by word of mouth and routinely involve sponsorship of
a fifteen-year-old boy by an existing skilled worker. These
informal structures lead to the selection into appren-
ticeships of a certain kind of boy - one who has a close
relative in skilled work...This familial process of recruit-
ment means that the apprentice will already know a consid-
erable amount about the normative aspects of craft work. He
will have heard discussions of fellow workers, various types
of other workers and, of course, the nature of industrial
management at home and in the wider community." (173)

The view of the importance of the wider community is especially

applicable to the shipbuilding industry on the Wear in the inter-

war period.   As a Plater recalled, finding a job very much

depended upon family.

> "I went to McCalls and Pollacks, the boilershop and my Uncle
> was the boilersmith there, making the boilertops.   After a
> few months he told my father to get me out, because they
> were going to close down, and sure enough they closed down,
> but I got out before they closed down.   That was when I was
> about sixteen ... My brother was a plater in Laings, and he
> got me the job in Laings." (174)

These family connections at the intersection of community and

industry were seen as particularly important by Marshall in his

accounts of English industrial districts:

> " ... the mysteries of the trade become no mysteries; but
> are as it were in the air, and children learn many of them
> unconsciously." (175)

In Sunderland in the inter-war period such socialisation

into the skilled identity was often overlaid with specific

loyalties to local yards, or aversion to other yards.   The basis

of this was not only a wish to work amongst friends but also to

work with foremen who would not demean the individual craftsman

by allocating jobs beneath the "skill", and therefore dignity, of

the individual worker.   As a worker speaking of the late 1930s

put it,

> "I was forced to go to Shorts.   I never wanted to go but I
> was forced to go by the Labour Exchange ... So I went to the
> foreman's cabin to see the head foreman - he was standing
> there - important with a plan under his arm - everybody
> thought you were the cat's whiskers if you had a plan under
> your arm - and he said what did I want?   I said that I'd
> been sent from the Labour Exchange, - and then I find out
> he's only the foreman and he says have you got your green

card, so I gives him me green card and asks what he's gonna
do and he says "I'm gonna give you a job "jobbing" - that'd
be little bits of jobs y'know, tidying and straightening
little bits up, - and I told him I didn't want that. He
says "what do you want?". "Have you got a job marking the
shell off or marking the deck off or something like that?",
that was the top job. He said "Whaat! Do you think I'm
gonna take one of my men off to give you a job?" and I said
"No I don't but that doesn't mean I can't do it." He told
me to see the Head Foreman and I said "I'm seeing no Head
Foreman." So I went back to the Labour Exchange and they
said "you haven't had your green form signed", and I said
"I'm not straight with the Boilermakers - I owe the Boiler-
makers that much money they won't let me start till I get
squared up." (176)

This statement illustrates several important issues: the

importance of specific yard locality has already been mentioned;

here we see however that in the absence of the direct knowledge

of the individual worker the foreman attempted to assign the

individual to the "skilled job" requiring the least skill. This

draws our attention to the idea of the division of labour within

an individual craft, typically this division arises spontaneously

on the "shop floor" and is the product of a status hierarchy

which is negotiated between the individuals within the craft and

the immediate work group. The notion of the skilled worker then

does not imply a totally homogeneous grouping (177). To some

extent the possession of "skill" has been seen as inevitably

involving a moral connection.

"A lifetime spent plying a particular trade will very much
influence a man's personality and his approach to life, and
it will be reflected in the cast of his countenance. If you
talked to some of the middle-aged men who work in the ship-
yards of Pallion, you would see at once that an intelligence
and alertness, along with a sense of judgement and
discernment, is reflected in their faces ... It would not do
simply to butter people up, and I know that there are many

> people to be found in shipyards - as there are anywhere -
> who are not particularly useful or ornamental; yet the fact
> remains that in Pallion, in the yards, you will find many a
> plater and shipwright and plumber, to mention only three of
> many shipyard trades, who are highly skilled men. They know
> they are skilled, and feel that the public is inclined to
> look down on these as mere shipyard workers." (178)

Whilst cast in rather "romantic" terms this account nevertheless

alerts us to an important feature of the workplace that is often

overlooked in much labour process writing: the fact that work is

not merely the accomplishment of the aggregate categories of

capital and labour, but also everywhere and at every time is the

production of actual human beings with their own particular

abilities and concerns. We need to realise that the aggregate

category of "skilled worker" is only ever an "ideal type" and in

"reality" it is (in this case predominantly skilled) workers

acting at the point of production that determine (within limits)

and express the concerns that are important in the labour

process, conceived not only in its "objective moments" but also

in its particular communal intersubjective form. We should ask

what were some of these characteristics which defined the

industry in the inter-war period on the Wear?

Firstly it is worth making the point overtly that accounts

given by workers of their experiences in the shipyards do not

distinguish between the technical and social aspects of

production. Such a point may seem obvious, and yet is often

overlooked in studies of the introduction of technologies, so

that we are presented with a structural account of the positions

of capital and labour. So then, use of labour, machines and raw

materials is never independent of the specific quality of social

relationships (structure and action) at the point of production.

This is what gives the production process not only a technical

structure but also, for the individuals directly concerned, a

moral significance. These factors, in oral accounts, must not be

dismissed solely as "surface disturbance", but rather must be

understood as part of a cohesive (if not always coherent) view of

the experience of work. For example, when asking about the

introduction of welding, usually the first piece of information

imparted is which individual in the yard was associated with the

process. This should not be interpreted as a lack of knowledge

of the technical aspects of the process by the interviewee, but

rather it speaks something about the priorities of this

individual in relation to the experience of work. Thus,

> "The first welder was a bloke called Sollie French (turns to
> wife: "You know who I'm talking about?" - "Yes") Sollie
> French and he started that in Laings." (179)

The point is then that the experience of the labour process at

the point of production needs to be understood in all its

complexity, including the personal relations of actors insofar as

this qualitative feature has a bearing on the social relations

surrounding the employment relationship. This is an important

feature in relation to a differential potential for "management"

control as exerted through the agency of particular foremen. One

worker outlined the situation in the 1930s:

"The market (was) outside any shipyard gate, where there was
work of any kind. All the tradesmen gathered there until a
foreman came out and pointed at the men he wanted, then they
followed him in for a day or two of work. I've heard it
said that when some foremen were laid off for lengthy
periods (they) ... tried to get their own dole queue so as
not to rub shoulders with their former employees. ... (The)
old shipyard foremen were all powerful and almost like kings
in their power over the men who worked under them. An
apprentice today can never imagine what it was like to work
in a society with no rights at all. Most of the foremen on
the river had been at the same yards for years. All of
them, basically , were hard men, and ruthless, although some
were just and fair, and if their men worked hard and well,
left the running of the job to their chargemen and in
general kept things ticking over quietly ... Other foremen,
perhaps without the flair or organisational ability, relied
on driving their men." (180)

The difference between the approach which allowed things to "tick

over quietly" and "driving" the men cannot be understood fully in

terms of the difference between direct control and responsible

autonomy, for if the rate of work was controlled the exact way

the work was to be executed was not. The squad system ensured

that it was the tradesmen who decided how exactly to go about the

work. A plater described the squad he joined when he started in

the 1920s:

" ... when I served me time everything was priced, every-
thing was priced. You couldn't serve your time till you
were sixteen but I was what you call a "marker boy" at
fourteen. You worked with a Plater - wherever he went you
had to be beside him to mark the walls and you had to tie
the plates down ... you were learning your trade you see and
you marked all yours and the plater - the platers in them
days had to work three in a squad. You used to have a
"marker" and a "puncher" - a man who punched holes in the
plates, another man marked them and what you call a "hanger-
up", he used to take the stuff down to the ship and hang it
up you see, and put it on straight - it wasn't all
prefabricated like it is now, it was every item was
individually ... it wasn't put together - it was put up
individually - even each frame of the ship ... the ribs ...

and everyone of them was put up single - shipwrights used to
put the frames up, the platers used to build them ... there
was no welders in them days, no welders" (181)

Within this division of labour the hierarchy existing between

workers was of as much importance, and in some ways more, as the

divide between "management" and workers. A plumber explained:

"A foreman would expect a full days' work from man and boy.
If he saw lads larking about he would come down hard on the
tradesmen for not keeping the boys employed. Today it's
unheard of for a tradesman to abuse an apprentice. In the
old days a boy was literally at the whim of every adult in
the department with a thump or a kick from his mate if he
was not up to his work. In between boy and tradesman was
the labourer. Usually a hard working family man, and to a
tradesman in the old days a good labourer who knew his job
was irreplaceable. The difference between getting a job
done quickly and correctly and taking longer over it and
thus earning the displeasure of the chargeman." (182)

The "moral" nature of the hierarchy is apparent in the

estimation of the "worth" of a "good labourer" to the tradesman.

Similarly the worth of a good tradesman to a labourer could mean,

within the metal trades, the difference between receiving the

standard unskilled rate or a supplement of "blood-money" from the

tradesman if a decent piece rate had been achieved. Our plater

explained how the rate was worked out:

"When you were in the yards in them days you didn't wait
until the buzzer started because if you didn't go to work
... you had to put a bill in for everything that you worked,
everything that you done you wrote down. See you got a bill
on Monday and you wrote every job down ... You had a "piece
clerk" ... and he used to get these bills. Now everything
in a shipyard, when it comes in, everything's weighed ...
all the materials, I mean shell plates, thick see, 30 foot
by 6 foot wide ... and you were paid by the weight of the
material you were working with and that was so much a
hundredweight that you got ... " (183)

The management of the squad was left largely to the individual

craftsman, who not only had to ensure that the job would pay but

also that the work was performed safely; sometimes these two

requirements came into conflict.

> "I always remember when I first started to hang the deck up,
> you as the plater used to go down and stand in the market
> long before the plans were drawn up ... then as time got on
> the plater went down and he used to pick his own squad
> because he was paying them part of his wages out of his
> piece work you see ... Anyhow I was hanging up these plates
> on the deck - it was hard work with a block and tackle so I
> said I was going to try and make it easier for them all -
> the derricks had a big iron ball on the top and a winch that
> takes the wire and everything - and I got a lot of plates
> that I wanted up to the top of the ship, and I swung the
> iron ball back and fastened the wire - I told them to heave,
> and they aren't moving and I looks down ... and when I
> looked he had the bloody ball off the other derrick (the
> wrong one) so I thought I'll have to go up and get the other
> bloody wire. And the next day they were heaving and I
> shouted "stop" I thought they had stopped, and then the ball
> passed my ear by about 2 inches, they were still heaving you
> see, - like a catapult and I thought that's it I'm not
> taking any more chances, we'll pull it up with the block and
> tackle." (184)

The point is then that the individual craftsman was at liberty to

attempt a "change of practice" in relation to his own way of

working as long as the work was done. This area of discretion

over the physical process of work was in part the resource which

both evidenced and reproduced the "skilled" status of the crafts-

man, and as seen in the last example which changes could not only

lead to a drop in take home pay for other members of the squad

but could even place people in life threatening situations.

That this discretion existed during the period, coupled with

only very basic capital machinery (derricks rather than cranes,

furnaces and hammers rather than cold bending machinery) ensured
to a great extent that innovations in the production in
particular yards were more likely to flow from adaptations made
by individual craftsmen or foremen to the particular problems
that faced them, rather than by individual innovations developed
more formally. In this sense the labour process did develop from
"below" as suggested by Lorenz; however this was not just
"through the resolution of conflicts in the yards" [185]. To
some extent such a view underestimates the scope of individual
craftsmen to initiate change and the willingness of management to
let them do that. In other words change did not only result from
(or initiate) conflict in the labour process but rather given the
extent to which the process developed from "below" such
initiatives often had the implicit blessing of management as well
as serving to remind the skilled workers of their
responsibilities based on their "stewardship" of the industry.
The extent of this latter attitude held, as we shall see at a
later point, unfortunate implications for the maintenance of a
united position of workers in the yards and the community in the
face of the decline of the industry in the post war period. To
return to the point in hand however, the extent to which workers
in the industry held (largely unproblematically) "control" over
the labour process should alert us to the dangers of reducing
"all activity to struggle" [187].

The point is that in the face of widely fluctuating demand a division of labour which was highly labour-intensive suited the employers, who in times of slump did not have to bear high capital overheads. Underlying such a division of labour was the notion of the skilled workforce with the knowledge for self-organisation and discipline being in many ways an integral part of the "collective worker". Given that the employers in the industry were far from parochial, and were aware of such things as "scientific management" [188] it would seem that their lack of practical initiative to change the existing division of labour amounted to more than an implicit acceptance of it and in some cases bordered on enthusiastic advocacy. As Professor Hallsworth noted in 1932,

> "There is ... a general impression among shipbuilders in this country, based on visits abroad, that foreign yards are, if anything, over equipped - in roofs, floors, tools and machinery, the upkeep costs of which will tend to be excessive...
> Their method of working also differs from our own. An extensive use of what is called "Fabrication" or "Expansion" work allows much work to be done by semi-skilled or unskilled labour which in this country would be done by skilled craftsmen. Fabrication work in this country is increasing to a certain extent but the method in some cases involves slightly more expense ... It is probably true, too, that the administrative staff in British yards is smaller, and better organised, than in most continental yards; and that in the practical applications of science, in the facility of preparing new and better designs, in the more rapid construction of ships, and in the craftsmanship of the workers, this country is still ahead even of the best of her competitors." (189)

Again the belief that British yards could out-perform all competitors on the criteria of both technical and cost efficiency leads one to doubt that a sense of urgency existed in the period

as regards any radical re-organisation of the production process.

The existent division of labour was seen to be both flexible and

efficient, and "the" prime asset was seen to be the skilled

workforce which included:

> " ... the aptitude of the British Workman for doing his job
> with the smallest number of tools and the least equipment."
> (190)

Here then the perspective of British shipbuilders meshed to

some extent with the belief of the workforce in the value of

their own skills, and this is where the ingenuity displayed by

individual workers, outlined below, fits in with some of the more

structural concerns of retaining a "flexible" low capital

division of labour in the face of widely fluctuating demand.

In one sense then the immediate problems facing the

workforce in the inter-war period parallelled those of the

employers, the lack of demand for ships which closed down so many

yards on the Wear resulted in unprecedented unemployment both in

total numbers and in the duration that such unemployment lasted.

The problem of unemployment struck deep into the occupational

community and its effects, as we shall see later, ensured that

the political culture, as represented in the "politics of local

loyalties", would not continue unchanged.

The slump brought home to workers in a dramatic way that

local loyalties could not always sustain the community, and any

pretentions of paternalism were flattened in the face of

"objective" economic circumstances (191). The most important

feature of this was the outflow of population from Sunderland.

> " ... for the first time on record Sunderland's population
> began to fall, dropping from an estimated 188,200 in 1932 to
> 182,500 in 1939." (192)

These figures probably underestimate the total figure of temporary migrations from the town during this period. Shipyard workers who left sometimes attempted to work within the boundaries of their trade, although sometimes this could mean taking labouring work. Such a status was not naturally assumed by most craftsmen. As one worker explained in relation to the job he secured in Scotland, erecting structural steel work:

> "I was off about three or four years (from the yards). I
> went away to work ... I was supposed to be doing labouring
> and I nearly got the sack the second day. Well, they were
> building a section over a section, it was a pit plant, the
> section was going to go up a height, and the steeplejack was
> going to go up - putting his tools in the bag - and I says
> to him, "If you're going up there to bolt that up you're
> wasting your time" and I didn't know the boss was standing
> behind me. He says "What do you mean by that?", I says
> "Just what I've said Mr. Holland, if you're trying to put
> that section up there you're wasting your time, the section
> you want is down there" - and the plan was laid out and I
> said "There, there's the section you want. That section
> belongs over there", and somebody gave him a dig ... Well
> the next morning when I went in he says "Come here I want
> you, you're too good where you're going to" he says,
> "there's a plan for you - go and do that job", and from then
> on I was practically leading hand on the job. ... I went
> from there to Nottingham and then back to Scotland ... all
> structural steel work." (193)

Other craftsmen took any job they could find:

> "I went away, I went to Skegness, I worked as an ordinary
> cellarman in a public house." (194)

For the workers that stayed "at home" the situation was often serious:

" ... things were very very bad. We were absolutely poverty
stricken, destitute. I was on the dole. It was very little
then. It may have been fifteen bob, maybe not." (195)

Unemployment had always been a feature of the shipbuilding

industry but the depth and duration of the slump in the '30s

emphasised the different social impact of the depression:

"The shipbuilding managers could live off their reserves or
family fortunes accumulated in better times. The
unemployed riveters and platers, joiners and plumbers were
not so well placed." (196)

That this was the case on the Wear seems to be substantiated by

the attitude of one owner:

"Sir John was fond of recalling with a chuckle how, in
periods of depression which caused him to close down
temporarily ... he and his manager used to play tennis in
the empty shipyard much to the amusement of officials in a
yard on the other side of the river who watched the games
through opera glasses." (197)

For workers the reality was different:

"You got dole money for up to thirteen weeks after you lost
a job, then you had to go on the parish. For a start you
got less on the parish, and sometimes all or part of what
you got was in vouchers which you could only use in certain
shops. To get anything at all you had to go before The
Committee on Monday nights and tell them everything about
your family and what you had or didn't have. They'd come
round and stick their noses in everywhere, sometimes
literally, they'd smell your jugs to see if you'd had a
drink in them." (198)

Such contrasts, and physical dislocation of the settled

community, did serve to raise questions about traditional

loyalties and, as will be seen in the next chapter, the apparent

necessity of war to guarantee full employment shook these

loyalties even further. However the point about the lack of

demand for ships and the consequent unemployment is that it

served to direct the attention of capital and labour in different directions. For labour the unity of occupational identity (as an individual master status) with community interests represented itself through the traditional channels of craft exclusiveness and demarkation boundaries. In other words unemployment was seen to be best resisted by adhering to particular parts of the work process so that when work was available your particular trade was guaranteed a share in the activity. There was nothing new in this and what must be emphasised is that in this sense the position remained as it had done through other slumps in the late nineteenth century; thus to over-emphasise the assertion of craft control is to underestimate the degree to which this control represented an accepted status quo within the industry.

This is especially so given that the slump directed the attention of Capital to the crisis of profitability, producing a concern with all aspects of costs. This over-riding concern with costs became the filter through which all other questions were viewed.

Summary and Conclusion

In order to answer the first part of the central question,
as to why during the inter-war period there was no radical re-
organisation of the division of labour despite the apparent
presence of the technical means to do so, in the form of the
welding process and the potential that that implied for the
extension of "fabrication", many things have been taken into
account. The context that the industry had to work in included
the severity of the slumps of the 20s and 30s. Whilst the first
of these can be explained in part by the dislocation of
production consequent upon the effect of the first world war,
ultimately of greater importance were the more long-term changes
in the capitalist world system. Of particular note here was the
decline of Britain as the nation exercising hegemony over the
world system and the resistance of the U.S.A. to assume that
role. These tensions were considerably exaggerated by the
reluctance of Britain to relinquish its former role and the rise
of economic nationalism in most first world countries.

The exacerbation of the downturns of the trade cycle during
the period must not be understood merely as "background" - its
effects were present at all levels, as much in the qualitative
aspects of the "micro politics" of production as in the more
structured opposition of capital and labour. It is in this
context that the particularities of the developments on the River
Wear must be situated. Understanding this historical individual

necessitated the development of an approach which simultaneously

situated the industry in its specific occupational community.

In this setting it was argued that the early onset of the

slump in the 1930s and its severity did not lead to a

radicalisation of the working class at the point of production or

elsewhere.   Rather the issues were refracted through the

"politics of local loyalties".   Sunderland was not the "town that

was murdered", it appeared to be dying of natural causes.   This

view prompted a spirit of resignation which saw the effects of

depression as the result of an impersonal force, largely to be

endured until a revival came along.

At the level of production such resignation was largely

shared by both capital and labour alike.   The necessity of

adaptation to these circumstances meant that for Capital issues

other than changes in the divisions of labour were paramount,

primarily reducing overheads to a minimum and seeking reductions

in external costs.   The concern with costs did not lead to the

early adoption of welding, as others had suggested, for several

reasons. Firstly the severity of the slump as experienced on

Wearside, and the relatively late recovery ensured the attention

of management was focused on other issues.   This is particularly

so given that the speciality of the river was "tramp" tonnage,

which did not benefit from the application of welding to the same

extent as larger vessels.   Also given that such changes in

technique, welding and prefabrication, had not been experimented

with to any great degree on the river it was indeed the case that
any move in these directions would involve an initial increase in
cost for uncertain returns. Furthermore the reliability of the
welded joint could not always be guaranteed as the number of
ships which suffered from brittle fracture demonstrated, and as
we have seen some authorities were still urging caution in
relation to the wisdom of adopting welding quickly. Finally,
given that the maximum benefit from welding was to be realised
ultimately through the wider use of fabrication techniques, what
was being questioned in the final analysis was the "British way"
of building ships. Many owners were of the belief that the
British system was superior in terms of both technical and cost
efficiency. Added to this was the "sedimentation of the past"
not only in the physical work process but also in the
organisational and managerial spheres; there was not an obvious
alternative managerial structure to the craft administration of
the division of labour.

All of these factors come together on the Wear in a
particularly extreme form, so whilst the Wear Shipbuilders
Association "supported" the S.E.F. welding scheme in theory, in
practice they were almost indifferent to it. This is why on the
Wear the "defeat" of the scheme is not to be equated with the
workers "resisting at the point of production the expropriation
of the control they have exercised over the labour process". The
employers themselves did not take the scheme seriously as a

practical issue of imminent importance, and in fact drew some benefit themselves from letting the craft workers exercise control over the labour process, the "flexibility" of variable capital in the face of fluctuating demand, associated with lower overheads incurred through using less fixed capital. In such a situation employers were less than likely to make a practical stand on the issue of acceptance of the formal scheme, for practice sometime in the future, especially in the face of existing corporate structure and the need for individual firms to capitalise on any competitive advantage. The issue of the S.E.F. welding plan cannot be seen to involve above all else a clash between capital and labour. Rather as this study shows there were also technical and organisational questions which had not been answered, and above all the issue of costs served to ensure that on the Wear at least the issue remained of marginal importance during the period.

The wider implications of these factors have several dimensions. Firstly, the structural tendencies in labour process theory deduced from the sphere of production do not operate irrespective of the "moment" of consumption (i.e. demand). The invariant determinacy of the "marxist" model in relation to the increasing organic composition of capital is unacceptable. For not only is it the case that one cannot deduce the empirical orientation of the personification of capital and labour from such structural tendencies, but also one must beware of seeing

the relationship of capital and labour as identical with their

aggregate class organisations. The rhetoric of unity and the

"fact" of aggregation must not be seen as the total "reality".

The analysis developed in this chapter points to the

importance of "taking apart" the solidity of the categories of

"capital" and "labour". Thus the importance of the category of

"capital" in this study is expressed at a number of simul-

taneously existing levels: the geo-political location in the

world system, the "fraction" of industrial capital, the corporate

form and the federated family firm, the changing status of the

employer seen through the refraction of the "politics of local

loyalties", the "delegation" of the control function to foremen

and the "moral" hierarchy of the occupational community. For

"labour" similarly the specific national and regional location,

the industry subculture, the social and physical location both at

work and in the community, the formal and informal hierarchy both

with respect to inter- and intra-trade differences and

accessibility of social networks are important.

Such concerns are complex not only in their range but also

because of the non-uniform temporality which underlies them, and

such temporal dislocations tend to transmute "action" into

"structure" as the sedimentation of distance in both time and

space. For these reasons the "labour process" in shipbuilding or

elsewhere cannot be characterised through the study of one

"typical" centre, nor can "it" be grasped by looking solely or

even partially at the leading edges of technology, or the "sharp
points" of the class struggle.

For these reasons this chapter has been concerned to, in
some ways, "go behind" the formal stances of the Unions and
employers' organisations and attempt to begin an examination of
the "micro-politics" of production as well as the wider setting.
In doing so issues of routine take on as much importance as
change, for both are dynamic properties. In order to develop
these concerns further, as well as test some of the conclusions
already formed in relation to the inter-war period, the next
chapter will examine the situation as it developed during the
period of the second world war and in its immediate aftermath.
The importance of this period lies in the relatively abrupt
changes brought about through the exigencies of war including the
acceleration of technical developments and application, and
problems consequent on the dislocation of the workforce. Also
however the period of the second world war represented a
watershed in relation to the development of the world system, and
the importance of Keynesian economic management techniques
ensured that the situation which confronted the industry on the
Wear (and elsewhere) in the aftermath of the second world war
proved to be profoundly different from that which developed in
the 1920s and 1930s.

Notes to Chapter 2

1   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. "Where Ships are Born: Sunder-
     land 1346-1946", Sunderland, Thomas Reed and Co., 1947 pp61-
     70.

2   Ennis, F. "The Jarrow March of 1936 and the Symbolic
     Expression of Protest", M.A. Thesis, Dept. of Sociology,
     University of Durham 1982.

3   Lorenz, E.H. "The Labour Process and Industrial Relations
     in British and French Shipbuilding: the inter-war years."
     Paper at SSRC Shipbuilding Seminar "Scottish and
     Scandinavian Shipbuilding: Development problems in Historical
     Perspective", 21-23 September 1980, pp1-2.

4   McGoldrick, J. "Crisis and the Division of Labour: Clyde-
     side Shipbuilding in the inter-war Period" in Dickson, T.
     (Ed) "Capital and Class in Scotland", Edinburgh, John Donald
     Ltd 1982.

5   McGoldrick, J. op cit p1.

6   The importance of the contrasts as well as the continuities
     in the constitution of class culture is clearly grasped by
     John Foster in his thought-provoking study of three
     industrial towns.
     Foster, J. "Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution",
     London, Methuen and Co. 1974.

7   Such a shift from a perspective stressing the importance of
     internal factors within the firm to a wider conception of
     the importance of "economic-technical, political and ideo-
     logical" factors for a labour process analysis can be seen
     in the work of Burawoy. See:
     Burawoy, M. "Manufacturing Consent", Chicago, University of
     Chicago Press 1979.
     Burawoy, M. "Towards a Marxist theory of the labour
     process: Braverman and Beyond" in "Politics and Society"
     Vol. 8, 1978.

8   This point stands even in the face of the evidence
     supporting the tendency in the 1930s for rising living
     standards. For as has been suggested the 1930s were a
     period of paradox. See:
     Finn, R. "Social Conditions in the County Borough of
     Sunderland during the 1930s", unpublished B.A. dissertation,
     University of Durham, Department of Sociology 1985.
     Yet for our purposes the dominant feature of the industry
     and region is one of depression. See also:

Stevenson, J. and Cook, C. "The Slump", London, Jonathan Cape Ltd 1977.

9   Corfe, T. "Sunderland: A Short History", Newcastle upon Tyne, Frank Graham 1973.

10   Stewart, M. "Keynes and After", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1967, pp54-55.

11   Youngson, A.J. "Great Britain 1920-1970" in "The Fontana Economic History of Europe. Contemporary Economies 1", Glasgow, Collins 1976, p136.

12   Stewart, M. op cit, 1967.

13   Thomson, D. "England in the Twentieth Century", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1965, p99.

14   Patterson, E.M. "An Introduction to World Economics", London, Macmillan 1948, p493.

15   Thomson, D. op cit, pp99-100.

16   Smith, R. "The Historical Decline of the UK" in Aronovitch, S. et al "The Political Economy of British Capitalism", London, McGraw Hill 1981, p75.

17   Hobsbawm, E.J. "Industry and Empire", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1968, p210.

18   Pelling, H. "Modern Britain", London, Cardinal 1974, p97.

19   Youngson, A.J. op cit, p138.

20   Ashworth, W. "An Economic History of England", London, Methuen and Co. 1972.

21   As Andrew Gamble has noted it is ironic that Britain went to war with Germany in order to protect her position as the foremost world power and in the process lost that very position to the USA.
"Hence forward the British Empire, the pound sterling, and the very survival of Britain depended on American sufferance. The tariff reformers had enjoyed a belated triumph in the 1930s when the world economy fragmented into currency and trading blocs following the Great Depression. But the opportunity was already gone of turning the Empire from a strategic and economic burden into a source of British strength. The British state now began to acquire very different relationship to the world economy it had once

dominated and done so much to develop." - Gamble, A.
"Britain in Decline", London, Macmillan 1981 p62.
Furthermore it was not only the USA and Japan whose industry
grew whilst that of Britain stagnated during the conflict of
World War I and then grew rather slowly in its aftermath.
For:
"In Europe there were several countries which had only a
small share in the world's manufacturing output but which
were becoming industrialised to such an extent as made a
significant difference to international trade. Between the
two World Wars Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands
all increased their manufacturing output much more than the
general average and in proportion to their population
attained a level of industrial output comparable to that of
Britain at the time of the First World War." - Ashworth, W.
"An Economic History of England", p309.

22   McLellan, D. "Marx's Grundrisse", London, Paladin 1973,
      pp70-75.

23   Cleaver, H. "Reading Capital Politically", Brighton,
      Harvester 1979, p163.

24   Thomson, D. op cit, p130.

25   Thomson, D. op cit, p144.

26   Pelling, H. op cit, p122.

27   Hill, S. "Competition and Control at Work", London,
      Heinemann 1981, p238.

28   Taylor, R. "Workers and the New Depression", London,
      Macmillan 1982, pp199-200.

29   This scene was remarked upon by my father, who at the time
      was in the care of Sunderland orphanage and therefore
      received regular meals.

30   Brown, R.K. and Brannen, P. "Social Relations and Social
      Perspectives Amongst Shipbuilding Workers - A Preliminary
      Statement" in "Sociology" Vol. 4 1970, p197.
      Others have put the "external" costs of the industry at a
      higher level:
      " ... the growing need for specialised components made ship-
      building increasingly an assembly industry, with perhaps
      only 20 per cent of the cost of the ship generated within
      the yard." - House, J.W. "Industrial Britain: The North
      East", London, David and Charles 1969, p168.

31   On this point Tomlinson has suggested that much labour
      process work sees managers as "monomaniacs" for whom:
      "all enterprise strategies are subordinated to the strategy
      aimed "against" labour", and:
      "Problems which govern the activities of most managers -
      marketing, cash flow, supply of components, quality control
      etc. - are striking by their absence because they are not
      readily assimilable to the assumed over-arching question of
      the management of labour." - Tomlinson, J. "The Unequal
      Struggle? British Socialism and the Capitalist Enterprise",
      Methuen 1982, pp23-25.

32   Hallsworth, H.M. "The Shipbuilding and Ship-repairing
      Industry" in "An Industrial Survey of the North East Coast
      Area", H.M.S.O. Board of Trade 1932, p256.
      This point would seem to suggest that any attempt to analyse
      in the "moment of production" the relative (cost) efficiency
      of a national shipbuilding industry would of necessity,
      especially if the approach was linked to the labour theory
      of value, need to look at the labour processes within those
      supply industries.

33   House, J.W. (1969) op cit, p177.

34   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p254.

35   Parkinson, J.R. "The Economics of Shipbuilding in the United
      Kingdom", Cambridge, C.U.P. 1960, p74.

36   Jones, L. "Shipbuilding in Britain: mainly between the two
      World Wars", Cardiff, University of Wales Press 1957, p32.

37   Allen, G.C. "British Industries and their Organisation",
      Longmans 1959, p163.

38   McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, p26.

39   The final report on the research undertaken by R.K. Brown et
      al - "Orientations to work and industrial behaviour of
      shipbuilding workers on Tyneside" notes that:
      "The management structure of the shipyard appears, there-
      fore, to reflect many of the characteristics which Woodward
      has suggested will be typical of unit production firms: a
      reliance on line managers, who are themselves technically
      qualified or experienced, rather than on specialist staff;
      no clear distinction between "formal" and "informal"
      relations and procedures; close contacts between development
      and production; little written communication; and so on. In
      addition it reflects something too of the situation which
      Stinchcombe has typified as "craft administration"

specification by an external authority of the goals of
production (i.e. what sort of ship is to be produced) but
not of the precise way in which these goals are to be
achieved; the control of pace, manual skill and effective
operative decision are, to a large extent at least, left to
professionally maintained occupational standards among
members of the work crew." (p26)

40   Brown, R.K. and Brannen, P. (1970) op cit, p197.

41   Brown, R.K. "Sociologists and Industry - in search of a
     distinctive competence" in Sociological Review, 1981 Vol. 29
     No. 2, p224.

42   Hopkins, C.H.G. "Pallion 1874 to 1954: Church and People in
     a Shipyard Parish", Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd.
     1954, p107.

43   House, J.W. (1969) op cit, p215.

44   House, J.W. (1969) op cit pp214-215.

45   Robson, B.T. "Urban Analysis: A Study of City Structure",
     Cambridge, CUP 1969, p75.

46   Brown, J.A. "The General Strike, 1926: Sunderland", undated
     and unpublished B.A. Dissertation.

47   Jones, L. (1957) op cit, p25.

48   Quoted in: Dougan, D. "The History of North East Ship-
     building", George Allen and Unwin ltd. 1968, p27.

49   The first steam powered ship launched on the river was the
     "Experiment" built by Thomas Rowntree and launched in 1845.
     The first iron ship built on the river was the "Loftus", a
     77 ton rigged schooner, built by George Clark and launched
     in 1852.
     Smith and Holden (1947) op cit, pp35-36.

50   Reid, A. "The Division of Labour in the Shipbuilding
     Industry", unpublished paper, date unknown, p26.

51   Clarke, J.F. "Shipbuilding on the River Wear 1780-1870" in:
     Sturgess (Ed) "The Great Age of Industry in the North East,
     1770-1920", Durham, Durham County Local History Society
     1981, p81.

52   Ibid, p82.

53   Sabel, C. and Zeitlin, J. "Historical Alternatives to Mass
      Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth
      Century Industrialisation" in "Past and Present" 1985 No.
      108, p149.

54   The Corder Manuscripts: Volumes written in longhand by
      William Corder with un-numbered pages, which are held in
      Sunderland Central Library.

55   Dougan, D. (1968) op cit, p24.

56   Clarke, J.F. (1981) op cit, p85.

57   Clarke, J.F. (1981) op ct, p85.
      It is interesting that in a book published by William
      Brockie in 1894 entitled "Sunderland Notables" the author
      lists none of the "notables" as shipbuilders. Insofar as he
      does mention shipbuilding employers it is in their capacity
      as "shipowners" even though their primary business interest
      had been in shipbuilding, as in the case of Thomas Burn and
      John Hutchinson. This would seem to imply that being a
      shipbuilder carried less status than being a shipowner.
      Brockie, W. "Sunderland Notables", Sunderland, Hills and
      Co. 1894.

58   Sabel, C. and Zeitlin, J. (1985) op cit, p148.

59   Sabel, C. and Zeitlin, J. (1981) op cit, p155.

60   Potts, T. "Sunderland, a History of Town, Port, Trade and
      Commerce", B. Williams 1892.

61   Brown, J.A. (Undated) op cit, p2.
      Not only did union formation appear later in Sunderland than
      in most other ports, but its form tended to be anything but
      radical. One of the two Shipwrights Union Societies
      existing on the Wear in the mid nineteenth century still
      included rules which:
           " ... imposed a fine of 5/- in the event of any member,
      at a meeting, uttering unlawful or disaffected expressions
      against the King or Government."
      Mitchell, W.C. "History of Sunderland", Hills 1919, p132.

62   On the notions of competitive and monopoly capitalism see:
      Mandel, E. "Marxist Economic Theory", London, Merlin 1972.

63   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, pp239-240.

64   Brown, J.A. (undated) op cit, p2.

65   Brockie, W. (1894) op cit, p344.

66   Corder, W. "The Corder Manuscripts".

67   Sunderland Echo 10-03-67, p1.

68   Sunderland Echo 27-03-61, p8.

69   Sunderland Echo 07-11-73, p9.

70   Sunderland Echo 02-10-51.

71   Sunderland Echo 06-08-41.

72   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p232.

73   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p232.

74   Sabel, C. and Zeitlin, J. (1985) op cit, p152.

75   Laings commenced shipbuilding in 1793.
     Crowns: 1807.
     Bartams: 1838.
     Thompsons:1819.
     Doxfords: 1840.
     Pickersgills: 1838.
     Short Bros.: 1850.
     S.P. Austin and Son: 1826.

76   Brian Robson, in his study of Sunderland, has suggested that
     one has to distinguish between two types of subdivided
     housing:
          " ... first the classic rooming-house area to which
     typically the single or young married, transient and mobile
     population is attracted and in which great social hetero-
     geneity is found; and secondly, the more residentially
     stable type of area which contains families of manual
     workers and is of lower and homogeneous social status."

     In Sunderland at the turn of the century Robson identifies
     four principal areas of subdivided housing:
          "To the south of the river, there is an area in
     Bishopwearmouth close to the centre of the town, and
     secondly there is an area to the east of it, in Hendon,
     which is of low class subdivided housing. To the north of
     the river, there is a small rooming area near Roker Park
     close to the sea, and secondly, a more extensive area of low
     class subdivided housing stretching to the west adjacent to
     the industry along the banks of the river."
     Robson, B.T. "Urban Analysis", Cambridge, CUP 1971, pp122-

123.
These stable areas of lower class subdivided housing tended
to gravitate towards the river and surrounded the shipyards.

77   Understood as a structural quality of the "system" in
      Giddens' sense.

78   Hopkins, C.H.G. (1954) op cit, p107.

79   See: Rainnie, A. and Scott, M. "Industrial Relations in the
      Small Firm" in Curren, J., Stanworth, J. and Watkin, D.
      "The Survival of the Small Firm", Aldershot, Gower, 1986.
      Also: Roberts, I.P. "Industrial Relations in Small Firms: In
      Search of a Framework", Paper at the Ninth National Small
      Firms Policy and Research Conference, Gleneagles 20-22 Nov.
      1986.

80   Alan Bell served his apprenticeship as a plumber in the
      1930s and in his working life has spent some time in every
      yard on the River Wear. He has recorded details from his
      working career and that of other workers he encountered in
      his unpublished "Shipyard Tales".

81   Bell, Alan "Shipyard Tales".

82   Albert Baxter, Plater.

83   David Richardson, Frame Turner.

84   D. Richardson.

85   Bell, A. "Shipyard Tales".

86   Weber, M. "The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation",
      London, Macmillan 1964, p327.

87   J. Roberts, Plumber.

88   Such local loyalties and the involvement of "gentlemen" in
      the Volunteer Service Committee to oppose the general strike
      on Wearside were seen by one scholar as part of the reason
      for the mild effect that the strike had upon the Town. The
      importance of footballing connections is a significant one
      in this respect.
           "It (the committee) included as Chairman Mr. W. Miburn
      MBE, a respected architect in the town, the Town Clerk Mr.
      H. Craven as Food Officer, and Borough Engineer J.P.
      Collinge as Road Officer - clearly a set of men designed to
      impress strikers and non-strikers alike. Perhaps the most
      important member of the USC hierarchy was its Chairman of

the Haulage Committee, Major Joe Prior - a popular Director
and later Chairman of Sunderland Football Club, the single
most important interest for a large number of Wearside's
working population.   Major Prior's connections with the
football club and influence as owner of a large haulage
business were instrumental in the excellent response to the
appeal for motor cars and haulage wagons, and undoubtedly
played some part in the decision of the organisational
Secretary of the Transport Workers to allow volunteers to
handle food supplies and building materials, which was taken
after discussions with the Major."
Hills, R.I. (undated) op cit, pp10-11.

89   McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit.
     See also: Mandel, E. "Late Capitalism", London, NLB 1975.

90   On this point I am reminded of the "Poulantzas, Miliband"
     debate upon the "Problem of the Capitalist State".   In
     taking seriously the notion of fluctuation of levels of
     trade in relation to movements in the business cycle I am,
     in Poulantzas' terms placing myself on the "terrain of the
     bourgeois ideologists" and "contaminating the appropriate
     (Marxist) "problematic" with opposed "problematics"".
     However as Miliband as suggested we need to analyse
     empirically both the motivation and action of actors in
     their own terms as well as an institutional analysis which
     on its own can lead towards a "structural super
     determinism".
     See: Poulantzas, N. "The Problem of the Capitalist State"
     pp238-253, and Miliband, R. "Reply to Nicos Poulantzas"
     pp253-262 in:
     Blackburn, R. (Ed) "Ideology in Social Science", Glasgow,
     Fontana 1972.

91   " ... which therefore is one's real conception of the world
     - that which is logically affirmed as an intellectual
     choice, or that which emerges from the real activity of each
     person and which is implicit in his or her mode of action?"
     p326.
     In this way Gramsci suggests that ideology (historically
     necessary ideology, not ideology that is arbitrary,
     rationalistic or willed) has: "a validity which is
     "psychological"; they "organise" human masses and create the
     terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their
     position, struggle etc."
     in Gramsci, A. "Selections From The Prison Notebooks",
     Lawrence and Wishart 1971, p.337

92   See: Jones, L. (1957) op cit, esp. Ch.II;
          Allen, G.C. (1959) op cit, Ch.VI.

93   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p56.

94   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p59.

95   Tuckett, A. "The Blacksmiths History", Lawrence and Wishart
      1974, p205.

96   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p224.

97   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p225.

98   Dougan, D. "The History of North East Shipbuilding", George
      Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1932, pp155-156.

99   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p59.

100   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p59.

101   There was one notable exception to the dearth of new orders
      coming to the Wear. In November 1925 Silver Line placed an
      order of over £1,000,000 for six motor cargo vessels; three
      to be built at Laings and three at J.L. Thompsons - all six
      to be engined at Doxfords. The electrical and auxiliary
      equipment was to be supplied by Sunderland Forge and
      Engineering Company. As Smith and Holden suggested:
          "The order was largely due to the efforts and influence
      of Sir James Marr, who was head of the three companies,
      Laings, Thompsons and Forge, and also Chairman of the Silver
      Line for whom the ships were built." - Smith and Holden
      (1947) op cit, p60.

102   "Freights rose substantially during the coal crisis, and it
      was realised that the tonnage of tramp shipping available
      was not so large as it had been thought to be. On 1 October
      1926, when every available ship was pressed into commission
      to transport coal from America, there were 350,000 gross
      tons of British shipping idle, proof that much of the laid
      up tonnage, which it was thought constituted a menace to
      freights whenever they were inclined to rise, was obsolete
      and ineffective. Recognition of this fact stimulated
      replacement demand and 92% of shipping launched in 1926 and
      82% in 1927 was built for replacement of old vessels."
      Jones, L. (1957) op cit, pp100-101.

103   Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p269.

104   D. Richardson, Frame Turner.

105   The Times, March 10th 1926.

106   Trotsky, L. "Where is Britain Going?", London, New Park
      Publications Ltd. 1970, p6.

107   Joint enquiry into Foreign Competition and Conditions in the
      Shipyard Industry, June 1926.
      Quoted in:
      Pagnamenta, P. and Overy, R. "All Our Working Lives",
      B.B.C. 1984, p132.

108   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p61.

109   "Shipbuilding and Shipping Record" (hereafter S.S.R.),
      January 2nd 1930 (North Eastern Correspondant).

110   S.S.R., January 9 1930.

111   S.S.R., January 16 1930.

112   S.S.R., March 6 1930.

113   S.S.R., May 8 1930.

114   S.S.R., September 4 1930.

115   S.S.R., September 11 1930.

116   S.S.R., October 9 1930.

117   Wilkinson, E. "The Town the was Murdered - The Life Story
      of Jarrow", London, Left Book Club 1939.
      Palmers at Jarrow was sold to National Shipbuilders Security
      Ltd. in the summer of 1934, and as David Dougan put it not
      only was there an institutional villain but according to
      Wilkinson also a personal devil in the shape of Sir James
      Lithgow. Here then the sense of injustice was perhaps
      intensified because the closure of the yard was obviously an
      act of human agency.

118   Quoted in: Jones, L. (1957) op cit, pp130-131.

119   Observers of the industry were by this time even claiming
      that within the production process wage costs were low and
      that the cost of external supplies was a more significant
      problem. Thus the S.S.R. reported that two independent
      investigations of comparative costs between the UK and USA
      found that it cost 60% more to build a ship in the US than
      in the UK. Moreover,
          "The curious feature about the comparison made is that
      while the wages of American shipyard workers are about
      double those of men in home yards, the average cost of

material is only about 20% greater than in this country.
This finding is illuminating. Shipbuilders have been
cutting down their charges and profits, and the wages paid
are as low as they can become, but it is doubtful whether
similar sacrifices have been made by those who supply the
materials which the builders assemble ... Those who supply
this material have the same tale, namely that they are
selling at keen prices. Nevertheless, they are able to
maintain a standard of cost which the shipbuilder would be
happy to enjoy. If ships had a definite market value it
would be more equitable if all those who contribute to the
building and equipping of ships should bear alike their part
of the depression."
S.S.R.,   May 1 1930.

120   As well as being a director of Doxford and Sons Ltd. Sir
      Alexander Kennedy was also Chairman and Managing Director of
      Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. and Managing
      Director of Northumberland Shipbuilding Co. at Howden on
      Tyne.

121   "Official Statement of Policy of N.S.S. Ltd", reprinted in
      S.S.R., March 6 1930.
      The year following this statement Britain's share of world
      output fell from 51.2% to 31.1%.

122   S.S.R., March 6 1930.

123   S.S.R., May 8 1930.

124   Quoted in: Pagnamenta, P. and Overy, R. (1984) op cit,
      p136.

125   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. (1947) op cit, p64.

126   Minutes of Wear Shipbuilders Association, 9th August 1930.
      The records of the W.S.A. are held at the Tyne and Wear
      Archive, Blanford Street, Newcastle.

127   W.S.A. minutes, 9 August 1930.

128   W.S.A. minutes, 28 October 1930.

129   W.S.A. minutes, 10 December 1930.

130   W.S.A. minutes, 5 March 1931.

131   W.S.A. minutes, July 1931.

132   W.S.A. minutes, 5 March 1931.

133 In March 1931 unskilled council workers were paid 48/6d,
     compared to 41/- for similar workers in the yard.
     W.S.A. minutes, 5 March 1931.

134 Lorenz, E.H. (1980) op cit, p6.

     The essentials of the S.E.F. Welding Plan were that:
         "The scheme called for the creation of a new class of
     skilled worker, shipwelders, to be organised outside the
     existing union structure and to be recruited initially from
     the supply of shipyard workers and apprentices, but not
     necessarily from those displaced by the process. The
     allocation of welding between shipwelders and other trades
     was to be at the discretion of each firm. Remuneration was
     to be at the national uniform rate for skilled labour, 60/-
     per week in 1929. Trainees with prior shipyard experience,
     whether skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled, were to undergo
     a two year training period and to start at the rate of 41/-
     per week and advance to 60/- by equal half yearly
     instalments, though in the case of semi- and unskilled men
     progression to the 60/- rate was to be dependent upon the
     employers' assessment of progress."

135 Lorenz, E.H. (1980) op cit, pp6-7.

136 McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, p50.

137 W.S.A. minutes, 18 July 1933.

138 Lorenz, E.H. (1980) op cit, p6.

139 S.S.R., May 20 1926: Article entitled "Welding in
     Shipyards".

140 S.S.R., 13 March 1930.

141 S.S.R., 13 March 1930.

142 The process was deemed acceptable by Lloyds in 1932,
     although they retained reservations about standards of work-
     manship.

143 S.S.R., 20 August 1931.

144 Fox, F.A. "The Brittle Fracture of Structural Steel",
     Science News 36. Quoted in:
     Parkinson, J.R. 'The Economics of Shipbuilding in the UK",
     Cambridge, CUP 1960, p114.

145 Bendix, R. "Work and Authority in Industry", University of California Press 1974, p281.

146 This is indeed possible as the information on which the S.E.F. relied for its understanding of the actual use of welding prior to developing the plan came from 14 firms, who were the only ones within the S.E.F. who were using welding and interested enough to reply to the enquiry. See: McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, pp46-47.

147 W.S.A. minutes, 18 July 1933.

148 W.S.A. minutes, 12 September 1933.

149 W.S.A. minutes, 29 January 1934.

150 W.S.A. minutes, 29 January 1934.

151 W.S.A. minutes, 29 January 1934.

152 W.S.A. Welding Sub-committee minutes, 17 July 1934.

153 W.S.A. Welding Sub-committee minutes, 12 April 1935.

154 W.S.A. minutes, 10 May 1935.

155 W.S.A. minutes, 22 July 1935.

156 Mortimer, J.E. "History of the Boilermakers Society", George Allen and Unwin 1982, Vol.2 p231.

157 W.S.A. minutes, 10 July 1934.

158 McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, p45.

159 The Sunderland Echo 2 June 1981: article on Sunderland in the Thirties.

160 Quoted in: Finn, R. "Social Conditions in the County Borough of Sunderland during the 1930s", unpublished B.A. Dissertation, University of Durham, Department of Sociology 1985.

161 Corfe, T. "Sunderland: A Short History", Newcastle, Frank Graham 1973, p105.

162 For an elaboration of this point see:
     Roberts, I.P. "The Labour Process in the Shipbuilding Industry", unpublished B.A. Dissertation, University of Durham, Department of Sociology 1982.

163 Tomlinson, J. "The Unequal Struggle? British Socialism and
     the Capitalist Enterprise", London, Methuen 1982, p23.

164 McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, p42.

165 McGoldrick, J. (1981) op cit, pp65-66.

166 W.S.A. minutes, 29 May 1933.

167 Mortimer, J.E. (1982) op cit, p263.

168 D. Richardson.

169 "Report of an Enquiry into Apprenticeship: 1925-26",
     Ministry of Labour 1926, p54.

170 Owen, A.N. "The History of the Education and Training of
     Apprentices in the Shipbuilding Industry in Sunderland", un-
     published M.A. Thesis 1969, p35.

171 Owen, A.N. (1969) op cit, p34.

172 Brown, R.K. et al ( ) "Orientations to Work and Industrial
     Behaviour of Shipbuilding Workers on Tyneside", Final Report
     to the Social Science Research Council, p14.

173 Penn, R.D. "Socialization into Skilled Identities: An
     Analysis of a Neglected Phenomenon", Paper at Aston
     University "Organisation and Control of the Labour Process"
     conference 1986, pp13-14.

174 D. Richardson.

175 Marshall, A. "Principles of Economics", London 1922, p271 -
     quoted in: Sabel and Zeitlin (1985) op cit, p152.

176 Albert Baxter.

177 Braverman has attacked the notion of "average skill" in
     aggregate terms relating to a given society as a whole. In
     a sense he did not take this critique far enough: to the
     micro level of production process, where the constitution of
     skilled work empirically can be seen to be partly an
     emergent property of the ongoing creation of the workers
     themselves. This is essential if the particularity of the
     construction of skill is to be understood in the empirical
     context.
     See: Braverman, H. "Labour and Monopoly Capital", New York,
     M.R.P. 1974, especially Ch.20.

178 Hopkins, C.H.G. op cit, p110.

179 D. Richardson.

180 Alan Bell, "Shipyard Tales".

181 Joe Robinson, Plater.

182 Alan Bell, "Shipyard Tales".

183 Joe Robinson.

184 Joe Robinson.

185 Lorenz, E.H. (1980) op cit, p2.

186 This in the context of increased piece work earnings and
     increased output, drawing attention to the importance of the
     interplay of both antagonism and co-operation in the social
     relationships at work, under capitalism. On this point see:
     Cressey, P. and MacInnes, J. "Industrial Democracy and the
     Control of Labour", Capital and Class 1980 No. 11.

187 Thompson, P. "Crawling From The Wreckage: The Labour
     Process and the Politics of Production", Paper at
     Aston/UMIST "Conference on Organisation and Control of the
     Labour Process", 1986.

188 Reports of lectures on scientific management attended by
     shipbuilders were periodically given in the shipbuilding
     press. Thus for example the Shipbuilding and Shipping
     Record reported a luncheon given by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree on
     29 May 1930 where shipbuilers and industrialists listened to
     Mr. Wallace Clark, "expert on scientific management":
          "There was a measure of encouragement in Mr. Clark's
     dictum that in production as in war, those who take and hold
     the offensive are the most successful. As long as the
     industrialist fights a defensive battle, defeat is
     inevitable. His only chance of existence is to take the
     offensive for a change."
     S.S.R. 1930, p675.

189 Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, pp249-250.

190 Hallsworth, H.M. (1932) op cit, p250.

191 Having said this however the point should not be overstated
     as in one interview: Miss Lavinia Foster remembered working
     in her aunt's shop outside the main gate of Pickersgills

shipyard at Southwick, noting:
    "He (Mr. Pickersgill) was good to his men, the men used
to wait for him coming down the bank to see if there was any
work and sometimes when he came in the shop he would say to
Aunt Bell "Give the lads a fill of baccy" and leave the
money, yes he was good to the men."

192 Corfe, T. (1973) op cit, p105.

193 D. Richardson.

194 Albert Baxter.

195 Joe Robinson.

196 Pagnamenta, P. and Overy, R. (1984) op cit, p134.

197 The Sunderland Echo, 6 June 1941, Obituary article on Sir
     John Priestman.

198 "Them were the days - or were they?: Life in Sunderland's
     East End in the 1930s", East End History Project/Community
     Arts Project, Sunderland 1985, p16.

CHAPTER 3

The War and After

Part I

Harmony and Conflict

The revival in demand for merchant tonnage which began in
the mid 1930s showed signs of faltering by 1938. Whilst output
in this year exceeded a million tons, tonnage commenced only
amounted to 500,000 tons.

> "Consequently, 1939 opened with the possibility of being one
> of the worst years in the experience of the industry." (1)

On the Wear,

> "At the beginning of 1939 there were only nine contracts in
> hand and only four of the yards - Doxfords, Laings,
> Thompsons and Crowns - were open. The position became
> desperate again." (2)

However, given the tension increasingly developing in Europe the
Government was unwilling to allow a decline in the British mer-
chant fleet and a substantial package of aid was announced: some
£2.75m a year for five years to subsidise tramp shipping and £10m
for loans to shipowners to encourage them to build new ships in
British yards. The response to this aid was immediate. Within six
weeks, nationally, orders were received for 144 ships with a
total gross tonnage of over 700,000 tons. The Wear got its share
of this demand.

> "The shadow of Hitler was over Europe: the safety and
> existence of the nation was felt to be in danger, and there
> was an immediate response to the Government's announcement.
> Orders began to flow in to the shipyards. Six were placed
> with Wear builders in the first week; 28 in a fortnight; and
> 40 in less than three weeks. The orders continued to come.

There was a great trek back to work in the shipyards and
engine shops." (3)

Whilst the above statement underlines the importance of patriot-

ism in the face of the "shadow of Hitler" it was only after the

material incentive from the Government that orders began to flow.

Similarly, amongst those that began the trek back to the

yards any enthusiasm for a patriotic cause was blunted by the

recognition of other realities. As one contemporary observer

noted, the view of the workers was coloured by past experience.

"Aye", they said, "we're back - you're only wanted when
there's a war on - after this lot we'll be back on the scrap
heap again." (4)

In the initial phases of the war the belief that nothing really

ever changes was reinforced by traditional recruiting methods,

and the power of locality remained. One worker explained how his

father's return to employment was facilitated:

"Me father was a Priestmans' man, Priestmans closed down
altogether around the 1930s. With them closing down it
didn't leave him an opening anywhere else. The result was
he was off right until 1939, Pickersgill's got an order, as
it happens the chap that got the Foreman's job - he knew
him, he was the same age as him, he went to school with him,
and of course that was the magic connection. So when he
went down he got a start and after doing one ship he was now
a Pickersgills man." (5)

Another feature which served to re-emphasise the traditional

vulnerability of shipyard employment was the persistence, until

the end of 1940, of pockets of unemployment within the industry.

Two factors contributed to this. Firstly, despite the growing

level of demand for ships the effect of the technical

requirements of the shipbuilding cycle still made itself felt in

fluctuating demand for particular trades at different times.

Secondly there was a substantial number of unemployed ship-

building workers who, because of age and/or physical condition,

could no longer be usefully employed in the industry.

Nevertheless the existence of unemployed shipbuilding workers

served, as we shall see at a later point, to introduce a

retarding effect upon the willingness of the trades unions to

accept widespread dilution. However,

> "By November 1940 ... only 4,000 skilled and unskilled ship-
> building workers were unemployed and many of these proved
> unsuitable for re-employment in the industry. The reserve
> was now very nearly exhausted." (6)

The importance of issues of both continuity and change is vital

in an understanding of the effect of the war upon the ship-

building industry. Thus the national emergency did not instantly

put an end to unemployment nor could it escape the limitations

of both the physical and organisational status-quo which had been

the legacy of the inter-war depressions. The relevance of this

sedimentation of the past is particularly important if we are to

avoid an analysis which errs to the extreme of either an account

which is overly self-congratulatory, manufacturing a view of

total harmony within the relationships at the point of

production, or an account which over-emphasises the degree of

inefficiency and conflict. Both of these simplifications project

the concerns of the "present" onto the past, ironing out the

complexities of the empirical situation.

An example of the first approach is available in the

standard history of shipbuilding on the River Wear in which we

are informed of "a remarkably fine performance which it is hardly

possible to overpraise", and furthermore,

> "During the whole of the period of the Second World War
> no major stoppage of any kind took place in any of the yards
> on the river. The amount of time lost by any trade dispute
> was quite negligible.
>   In this respect the shipbuilding industry at Sunderland
> maintained a proud record which was perhaps not excelled, or
> even equalled, by any other industry or district engaged in
> war work during those six years of unremitting effort on the
> industrial front as well as on the battlefronts." (7)

Such a view has been worked up into a kind of folklore in Sunder-

land, where memories of the wartime working are often subjective.

Accounts are produced of how men and women used to practically

live in the yards for days at a time, working "all the hours that

God sent". These stories and the claims of extraordinary levels

of production which usually accompany them have achieved almost

the status of legend. Moreover, whilst these claims are usually

framed in a local context, in that one yard produced more than

another or the Wear produced more than the Tyne [8], they never-

theless usually include a general assessment of the state of the

nation. A spirit of "togetherness" is often stressed, as is the

pride in being able to rise to the "test" that was imposed during

the war [9]. These features of wartime experience often tend to

overdominate accounts of the period leading to such statements as

"there weren't any strikes during the war" [10].

Such statements seem irreconcilable with the general picture

of wartime industrial relations which can be taken from other

sources.   As Allen Hutt notes in his book on British Trade

Unionism:

> "In the first three months of war there were forty local and
> factory strikes; and in 1940, the number of days lost in
> industrial action disputes was a low record, the total
> number of disputes was the third highest for ten years -
> strikes were small and short, in fact, but there were a lot
> of them." (11)

That strikes did take place cannot be denied, even though

after July 1940 they were declared illegal under order 1305. In

relation specifically to shipbuilding Henry Pelling has noted

that demarcation disputes continued throughout the period.

> "The worst trouble was as usual in the shipbuilding industry
> and at times during the war it seriously interfered with the
> efficiency of the shipyards." (12)

Strikes and disputes were unofficial in nature, the trade

union officialdom having given their assent to such things as the

"suspension of trade practices act" of 1942 as well as generally

exhorting the workers to give maximum output in order to execute

a successful "people's war".   However as the war drew on and

victory became more probable the incidence of disputes rose, so

that by 1944 working days lost through disputes was in excess of

any year since 1932 (13).

These observations go some way towards countering the more

extreme versions of accounts of wartime production dwelling upon

a perfect internal harmony.   Divisions still existed at the point

of production.   Thus for example, February 1945 saw 500 boiler

makers at Vickers Armstrong Ltd. strike over the use of semi-

skilled labour to operate a new gas cutting machine, and in

another dispute on the same issue at the Walker Naval Yard in

December 1945, 125 boiler makers were fined for taking part in an

illegal strike. In the latter case the dispute dragged on for

some time in which there were several sympathy strikes of small

duration; the issue was finally solved only when the management

withdrew the new machinery [14].

Such evidence has led one recent writer to conclude that the

wartime shipbuilding industry represented "the Fossilisation of

Inefficiency" [15], in which the "real culprits" could be

identified.

> " ... for all the weaknesses of dim, old-fashioned and often
> elderly managers, it was the unions and their members who
> continued to be the real culprits in losing potential
> production." (16)

This then is the opposite account to the one stressing harmony.

It still takes harmony in the face of war as the norm, however it

concentrates on the "inefficiencies" in production and condemns

the agency of working people for not achieving that "norm". What

has happened in this account is that the very valid data drawn

upon to suggest that the situation was more complicated than the

harmony myth suggests is taken to characterise a polar opposite

position. Again to concentrate upon only the sharp points of the

class conflict is to risk distortion. For example the widespread

use of the same strikes of boilermakers, mentioned above, by

several authors to demonstrate the general problems of the

industry must be treated warily. Thus the trouble with the flame

planing machine on the Tyne is used by Pelling to support his

conclusion that "the worst trouble as usual (was) in the

shipbuilding industry" [17], by Pagnamenta and Overy [18] and by

Barnett [19] himself. The use of this same example over and over

again suggests that perhaps such disputes were not as widespread

as these authors would have us believe, and given that this

dispute took place in late 1944 to early 1945, when victory

seemed to be only a matter of time and more generally when:

> "Fear of the many consequences of the transition (from war
> to peace) is the predominant feature of industrial life from
> the autumn of 1944 until well into 1946, but it is hardly
> mentioned in the official history as an industrial relations
> problem." (20)

it seems unfair to characterise the abovementioned event as

typical of the behaviour of workers in industry throughout the

war.

Barnett's condemnation of the Unions, and to a lesser extent

the management, in the industry does not focus solely upon strike

activities but also upon "inefficiencies" in the craft division

of labour. The tone of this criticism is evident in his

evaluation of the Restoration of Pre-War Trade Practices Act.

> "This act of Parliament, by which the state formally under-
> took to restore all that overmanning and those absurd inter-
> union demarcations throughout all industries which had
> already done so much to hasten British industrial decline,
> was the price extracted from the wartime national government
> in 1940 by the unions for their kind consent, often enough
> dishonoured in the event, to the removal of these brakes on
> productivity while the nation was actually fighting for
> survival." (21)

This, then, is the alternative view to that stressing harmony and achievement in the industry during the period. Its reference is selective and irons out the complex of interests on either side of the employment relationship, casting the issues in a monolithic concern with the "national interest" as projected from the era of "post-Thatcherian populism". In neglecting the historical legacy of shipbuilding this author seeks to render the behaviour of those connected with the industry as irrational, if not downright treacherous:

> "The record of the Second World War thus demonstrates Britain's great traditional industries to have indeed suffered from the same kind of weaknesses that brought about the collapse of the French Army in 1940, from outdated technology and doctrine to poor leadership and to morale so low as sometimes to verge on the mutinous." (22)

Somewhere between these two partial views lies an account which is not merely a "middle way" but is one that can deal with the data drawn on by both sets of authors. Such an account does not iron out the contradictory tendencies existing in the industry during the period but recognises both short and longer term continuities and changes and as such can serve to unify concerns of both structure and action. It is to the development of such an account that we must now turn.

Part II

Continuity and Change

As mentioned above, the workers who returned to the shipyards to meet the initial demands stimulated by the onset of war were often confronted with an organisation which had changed little since the depressions of the inter-war period. Recruiting strategies were the same, the position and indeed the personnage of the foremen were very often the same, and, as we have seen, the uneven demands on labour of the shipbuilding cycle remained the same. The physical structure and conditions of the yards had in some cases remained largely unchanged from the nineteenth century. As an electrician beginning his apprenticeship in 1939 graphically described:

> "When I started in 1939 the yard had been closed, and Pickersgills ... was very basic, and it depended purely on physical effort and manpower to get anything done. The cranes were all in fixed positions. There was no roads whatsoever in the yard, it was simply all dirt and in the winter the mud was over the top of your boots. The bogies that they used in them days, with iron wheels just churned everything up ... The steel was all brought into the yard on horses and carts." (23)

Moreover the neglect and decay of some of the yards in the inter-war years meant that the return to production could only proceed slowly.

> "I started in the April, and yet my father didn't start until around about the June. It had just opened out and of course it had to gradually build up, I mean we didn't launch our first ship until well into 1939, you know, in spite of the war." (24)

Not only does this speak of the objective limitations involved -

the "gearing up" of production, but also, despite much naval

activity during the period of the "phoney war", a lack of

urgency. The point to understand is that the declaration of war

did not completely obscure the material interests of individuals,

the yards were still privately owned and in the business of

seeking profit, the "free" labour market was still in existence

and therefore, not unnaturally, workers driven away from the

industry during the depression years had little desire to return,

especially when higher wages could be had elsewhere:

> " ... in the early years of the war wage rates were
> relatively unattractive and people were not anxious to
> return to or to enter an industry where present conditions
> were unattractive and future prospects poor ... Even the
> recruitment of Ministry of Labour and Admiralty staff with
> the knowledge of the industry was limited by the shortage of
> technical and managerial staff." (25)

Initially however it was not an absolute lack of labour

supply that was the problem, especially on the North East coast,

but rather how many of those registered as unemployed

shipbuilding workers could be usefully reabsorbed into the

industry, and indeed as late as July 1939 some 20% of the 176,000

insured workers in the industry were unemployed. These then were

some of the contradictory pressures exerting themselves upon the

industry at the beginning of the war. Technical barriers to the

production of maximum output as a direct legacy of the inter-war

years combined with persisting unemployment, even in the face of

projected labour shortages, and owners who were largely unwilling

to expand capacity without firm guarantees of profitability. This was the context in which the Admiralty and the Ministry of Labour had to set about the task of encouraging the development of maximum output from the industry.

This task was tackled in several ways, with changes being sought not only in the supply of labour but also in the organisation and operation of the division of labour. The first point to emphasise is that the yards were not organised for the mass production of tonnage. The division of labour and physical plant were organised to meet the needs of a bespoke product in what was normally a widely fluctuating market. In such a situation a premium was put upon the craft skills of the workforce and the cost effectiveness and flexibility of variable capital. The experience of the normal market conditions led owners as well as workers to doubt the "efficiency", both in its technical and cost dimensions, of a highly capitalised division of labour and lesser skilled workforce, even if orientated towards mass production. It will perhaps be useful to indicate some of these issues with reference to the industry on the Wear.

Firstly the technical changes sought by the Admiralty were designed to increase output with a labour force characterised by less skill than would be normal in peace time. To this end they sought to increase the extent of welding and prefabrication, a move further encouraged by a severe shortage of riveters on the Clyde, but not on the North East Coast [26]. The rate of

adoption of the technique of welding proceeded very differently
in different districts and individual yards. The crucial factor
here was the supply of riveters. Where that supply was plentiful
the adoption of the newer technique was slow, suggesting that the
impetus to the change was the "push" factor of too few riveters
rather than any "pull" effect of the inherent attractiveness of
welding and prefabrication in themselves.

On the Wear, where there was a relatively plentiful supply
of riveters, welding generally, and hull welding in particular,
had not proceeded to any great extent. Returns gathered by the
Ministry of Labour compiled in June 1942 (Table 1) show that in
yards on the Wear a greater percentage of the skilled workforce
were involved directly in hull construction. Thus when we look
at the percentage of platers expressed as a proportion of the
total skilled workforce we find that the average for the main
yards on the Tyne and Tees was 10.9% (1533 Platers out of a total
skilled workforce of 13,988) and 13.32% (423 Platers out of a
total skilled workforce of 3174) respectively, whereas on the
Wear the average was some 19.05% (968 Platers out of a total
skilled workforce of 5090). To some extent the nature of the
products produced on the different rivers can explain some of
this difference. Thus the intense specialisation upon tramp
tonnage on the Wear ensured that a greater demand existed for
labour producing the ship's shell rather than a heavy demand for
outfitting labour as was the case where more internally complex

ships were built, such as the warships and passenger liners which

formed part of the traditional output of the Tyne.

However when attention is directed towards the numbers and

types of riveters on the three rivers it becomes obvious that the

Wear and the Tees were using more traditional techniques than the

Tyne.   Thus whilst hand riveters only accounted for 2.95% of the

total skilled workforce (410 hand riveters out of 13,988 skilled

workers) on the Tyne, the figure was greater on the Wear at 6.81%

(347 hand riveters out of 5090 skilled workers), on the Tees the

percentage was higher still at 7.62% (242 hand riveters out of

3174 skilled workers).   However these averages conceal wide

variations between yards on the rivers, and when such variations

are taken into account individual variations between rivers can

be greater.   Thus on the Tyne Hawthorn Leslie and Co. Ltd.

employed the greatest proportion of hand riveters, 5.6% of the

total skilled workforce, amounting to 3.4% of the total

workforce.   On the Tees the Furness Shipbuilding Co. Ltd.

employed hand riveters to the extent of 9.7% of the skilled

workforce, 5.4% of the total workforce.   On the Wear at Bartrams

Yard 18.6% of the skilled workforce were hand riveters, amounting

to 10.7% of the total workforce.

Given this concentration of hand riveters it is little

wonder that workers on the Wear at the time can remember

graphically the scene where:

> "Right through the war you went to a shipyard, you could
> hear the noise miles away - and you looked along the deck

> and all you could see was men - not pneumatic, but the hand
> hammers kneeling, squads of men kneeling, hundreds of them
> along the deck, bang, bang, bang, bang all the time." (27)

The corollary of such dependence upon less technically advanced

processes was a disinclination to invest in and adopt newer tech-

nology. Thus in the case of welding, the percentage of welders

as a proportion of the skilled workforce amounted to 5.22% (730

Welders out of a total of 13,988 skilled workers) and 5.79% (184

Welders out of a total of 3174 skilled workers) on the Tyne and

Tees respectively, whilst on the Wear it was only 3.55% (181

Welders out of a total of 5090 skilled workers). Again the

difference between individual yards on the three rivers with the

highest proportion of Welders is considerable. On the Tyne and

Tees Welders made up 8.5% and 9.3% of the skilled workforce at

Swan Hunters Neptune yard and the yard of the Stockton

Construction Co.. On the Wear at J.L. Thompsons Yard 5.4% of the

skilled workforce were Welders.

With the inherent possibilities of the technique of welding

clearly being insufficient an incentive for its widespread

adoption, certainly on the Wear at least, the Admiralty attempted

to push employers into increasing their welding capability. Thus

a letter from the Admiralty of 13 November 1942 to J. Ramsey

Gebbie, managing Director of Doxfords Yard, raised the issue of

welding:

> "I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
> to direct your attention to the instruction of the Director
> of Merchant Shipbuilding that by the end of March 1943, "all
> butts throughout the ship and all seams of tank top plating"

must as a minimum be all welded as normal practice thereafter, it is thus intended by concentration of your riveting labour force on other parts of the ship to speed up the output of merchant ships." (28)

In June 1942 Doxfords had the third highest concentration of welders, in their yard, on the River Wear. Nevertheless Gebbie's reply to the Secretary of the Admiralty of 16 November 1942 made it clear that these rather modest minimum requirements were unlikely to be met:

"Sir,
     We are in receipt of your letter of the 13th ... with regard to Electric Welding and the training of Welding labour.
     We are afraid we shall not be able to carry out the minimum recommendations of the Director of Merchant Ship-building by the date given, as we do not see any prospect of increasing our welding facilities sufficiently by that time. We are however preparing a scheme to increase our welding facilities, and we expect to have no difficulty in training all additional Welders necessary in our own yard." (29)

An important point to note about the Admiralty's approach is that it is orientated towards using welding as a method of freeing riveters to concentrate their efforts and thereby raise output. Welding is thus seen to be useful in as much as it is a partial solution to the perceived labour supply problem rather than for the technical efficacy of the process itself. In the empirical situation then the cost and technical efficiency of any new process is always to be related to labour supply and the conditions of the wider market demand. The importance of labour supply in relation to welding was pointed to by a worker from Pickersgills who remembered that in 1939:

" ... there was three small welding machines, that was the
total number that they had in the yard.   Then the Admiralty
allocated, about 1943, a certain amount of money and we
jumped up to twelve six operators, 72 plants.   They realised
they had to get the welders (welding machines) in because
you only had three, and you had more men trained for
(them)." (30)

However overall the relatively good supply of riveters on

the Wear ensured that the increased use of welding proceeded

rather slowly.   This cannot be reduced solely to conservative

management and the "retarding effect" of the trades unions, as

Barnett would have it.   But rather it owes much to the

constraints and continuing resource endowment of the industry in

its empirical setting which, unlike some of the American yards,

predated the onset of war.   This point was well grasped by Smith

and Holden when speaking of the Wear in wartime:

"Welding had been making steady progress as a new method of
construction, but it was in nothing like general use.
Riveting remained the principal method of putting a ship
together, and it would have been worse than useless to have
given up riveting and wasted the services of many thousands
of skilled riveters while at the same time having to train
them, or other men, as welders." (31)

If the exhortation to introduce elements of the welding

process owed much to labour supply issues as a feature of both

the continuity and change as between the pre-war and wartime

situations, so too were the larger capital developments initiated

during this time.   In explaining the course of developments here,

explanations based on employer conservatism explain little.

Rather, what is important is the grounds for such conservatism

involving both absolute objective limitations and perceptions of

the limitations of such developments in both the short and long

terms, and particularly insofar as these relate to the expected

disjunction between wartime and peacetime demand in terms of both

type and quantity of product required.

An example of the issues involved can be seen with reference

to the modernisation, including the provision of a new berth, at

Bartrams Yard. Negotiations began between the yard's owners and

the Admiralty during the summer of 1942 with various

possibilities being suggested and costed, but Admiralty approval

not being secured until 10 October 1943. One problem was the

amount of money that the employers were prepared to invest, with

several letters to the Admiralty in the course of the year

reaffirming their original estimation that they could afford to

spend no more than £17,000 on modernisation. Even to raise this

amount they had to secure a loan of £15,000 from Lloyds Bank.

The grounds on which Lt.Col. R.A. Bartram attempted to "sell" the

idea of the loan to the Manager of Lloyds Bank are interesting:

> " ... You will no doubt realise that the reason for our
> preference for this scheme is that it is first of all
> essential for us to keep abreast of modern shipbuilding
> improvements in practice, and quite apart from a wartime
> angle, which of course is the Admiralty's concern. From the
> point of view of meeting post-war competition, and possible
> difficulties in connection with the future supply of
> riveters, it is essential that we should be in a position to
> tackle (a) large scale welding and (b) the erection of pre-
> fabricated material, and this involves larger lifting
> facilities. The opportunity given to us now, of putting
> this work in hand with the advantage of a 60% grant from the
> Admiralty, as against having to meet 100% of the cost after
> the war, is of course obvious." (32)

Not only is the overt reference to a possible shortage of riveters worthy of note, but also the advantage of keeping abreast of modern shipbuilding improvements in practice did not apparently encourage the owners to attempt to raise more than £17,000. The reason for this lies firstly in the poor financial condition of the yard, the overdraft on working capital of £25,000 was fully extended. Therefore the Bank Manager required written evidence of future Admiralty orders to the yard, whereupon he agreed to advance the sum of £15,000 on the condition that a new account was created in order to deal with the money earmarked for the modernisation program. Secondly at that time it was by no means as clear as the letter to the Bank Manager suggested that pre-fabricated construction would be the cost efficient way to build ships after the war. As late as 1947 Mr. R.C. Thompson, a leading member of the Wear Shipbuilders Association and Managing Director of Thompsons Yard, proclaimed pre-fabricated construction an expensive method of building ships. Similarly a worker remembered the attitude of Mr. Pickersgill to the method of pre-fabrication by which the American "liberty ships" were built:

> "He said about what was happening in America, he said, "It will never come here." He says "They'll never pre-fabricate here." That's what he thought at the time." (33)

Clearly the owners of other yards on the Wear had great doubts about the commercial viability of pre-fabricated construction in peacetime; we will return to this issue at a

later point.   As Bartrams were only prepared to contribute

£17,000 towards modernisation, considerable negotiation went on

with the Admiralty before they sent a letter to the yard on 20

October 1943 approving a modernisation scheme costed at £163,151

(34). The arrangement was that the Admiralty agreed to pay 100%

of the cost for certain items, most notably a new berth and shed,

which were then to be leased to Bartrams.   The final settlement

of account was to be decided by assessment after the war. One

other condition was that the Admiralty should hold legal

entitlement to the ground upon which these developments were

built.   The lease of the land from Sunderland Corporation was

duly transformed from Bartams to the Admiralty.   The negotiations

involved in this modernisation went on for over a year, not due

to the conservatism of the employer or the retarding effect of

the unions, but rather because the firm and the Admiralty were at

pains to agree the right financial package; private ownership and

the criteria of profit were not to be subordinated to the demands

of war.

Again it must be emphasised that the leading edge of

technology is not necessarily the best focus in order to under-

stand the general nature of any particular division of labour.

In the case of hull welding and pre-fabrication it was by no

means obvious at the time of the Second World War that, when

considered from the point of view of both technical and cost

efficiency, such methods were superior to more traditional

processes. Not only were there doubts about the techniques as

construction processes, but there was also concern about the

product they produced.

Thus an all welded hull was thought not to be as strong as a

riveted one. Experience of the American built "liberty" ships

did little to change this view as an ex-Plater, who had done

repair work on several of these ships, noted:

> " ... They made it across the Atlantic but that was about
> all. Because of brittle fractures we had to burn sections
> down the hull and put riveted plates in to allow some
> flexing to take place." (35)

In a similar connection, F.A. Fox noted that:

> "Between 1942 and 1952, about 250 welded ships suffered one
> or more brittle fractures of such severity that they were
> lost or in a dangerous condition, and 1,200 more suffered
> small brittle cracks dangerous but not disabling." (36)

That the all welded hull was to prove viable in the future owed

much to improvements in welding equipment, and the British

development of the coated electrode should mentioned in this

connection. But whatever the potentialities of such new develop-

ments, at the point of production things rarely conveyed the

impression of unproblematic progress:

> "There was problems with it. I remember a problem with
> Admiralty work with the armour plating they were trying to
> weld. They didn't have the right rods. The parts that they
> were welding over were just literally dropping off." (37)

That technical progress was made during the war cannot be

denied. Not only were production techniques developed but also

the product, the ships themselves were subject to more

concentrated development, and there was a substantial increase in

top speeds of vessels. However whilst there were other technical

develop-ments during this period, as a general conclusion upon

the rate and nature of technical change the Shipbuilder and

Marine Engineer in 1945 pronounced these cautious words:

> "Such has been the emphasis on wartime progress in plant,
> and methods of construction that there is, perhaps, too
> great an expectation of "things to come" by many outside the
> industry itself. What is perhaps overlooked is that such
> developments have, in some instances, been undertaken with
> less regard for cost than performance, and with a number of
> labour customs modified or suspended as a wartime measure."
> (38)

The impetus to technical change initiated by the Admiralty

was then only one strand in a wider attempt to raise the absolute

output of the industry, in the context of labour shortage. As

far as changes in labour practices themselves were concerned the

two most important attempts at change were in relation to

dilution and interchangeability between crafts. In the case of

the former there was a direct relationship to some of the

technical changes occurring: the substitution of welding for

riveting, with consequently shorter training periods, has already

been mentioned in this connection.

However, given the experiences of the inter-war period, the

Unions were anxious to ensure that such changes were initiated

only where genuine labour shortages existed. The maintenance of

demarcation boundaries was suggested by Barnett to be one of the

mechanisms by which workers practised the

> " ... skilled and dedicated avoidance of tiring activity."
> (39)

Such a glib characterisation is hardly worthy of serious

research; however it is true that considerable effort had to be

expended in order to secure agreements upon interchangeability

between the unions and the S.E.F.. Moreover such agreements were

often limited in scope and could be rather bureaucratic in their.

(theoretical) operation. A memorandum by the Ministry of Labour

in October 1943 dealing with interchangeability suggested that it

was:

> " ... only permissible in existing circumstances in so far
> as it is expressly provided for in agreements which have
> been reached between the shipbuilding Employers' Federation
> and certain of the principal shipbuilding unions ... This
> method, however, is cumbersome and it is arguable that if
> the skilled labour force in each shipyard is to be kept
> continuously employed to the best advantage, a much more
> flexible method should be adopted whereby craftsmen could,
> where necessary, be transferred to skilled work in another
> craft where they are more urgently required even though it
> be only for a short period of a few hours at a time." (40)

Although it is possible to sustain a view which shows the unions

as the main force retarding more flexible interchangeability

between trades with reference to detailed National agreements, at

the local level things were often more complex. Thus on the Wear

in October 1939:

> "(an) agreement was signed between the Wear Shipbuilders'
> Association and the Boilermakers', Shipwrights' and Joiners'
> Societies, by which it was agreed that for the period of the
> war there would be no stoppage of work through demarcation
> difficulties. The unions also agreed that where necessary
> labour should be interchangeable in different trades so as
> to avoid delays in production through acute shortage of
> labour in any particular trade." (41)

This agreement also formed the basis for the setting up of a

joint committee of employers and union representatives, known as

the Labour Supply Committee.   It was at a meeting of this

committee on 9 July 1940 that the issue of interchangeability was

again raised by Mr. W.L. Barker, the Wear district secretary of

the C.S.E.U., and as the W.S.A. minutes recorded:

> "It was also suggested from the men's side of the committee
> that greater use could be made by firms in some cases, of
> the local agreement made in October last year providing for
> interchangeability between members of the Boilermakers,
> Shipwrights and Joiners Societies, and it was agreed that
> firms should be reminded of the facilities provided by the
> Agreement and encouraged to make use of them where
> necessary." (42)

Here, then, it is the unions who raised the issue and actually

advocated the greater use of interchangeability.

However of more importance than interchangeability as the

war progressed and labour shortages became acute was the issue of

dilution.   Here again the experience of the past ensured that

both sides of the employment relationship moved with initial

caution in this direction.   For the Ministry of Labour this could

be frustrating, as one official put it:

> "Whenever dilution is raised we seem to be brought up short
> against a ghostly army of unemployed boilermakers." (43)

Again it must be stressed that it was not solely the unions that

frustrated early attempts to dilute the workforce, for:

> "Nor was there much support from the shipbuilding firms,
> each of which was more interested in preserving its own
> skilled labour force at maximum strength than in providing
> surplus labour to be transferred to its rivals, and all of
> which (like the Admiralty itself) preferred to put up with
> existing practices rather than risk trouble with the
> unions." (44)

The reticence of the employers and the Admiralty was not based

solely on fear of the unions, but was also predicated upon their

belief in the efficiency of the skilled worker and the craft

division of labour. This can be evidenced with reference to a

correspondence which took place in 1942, on the interpretation of

productivity figures, between the Managing Director of Doxfords

Yard and the Admiralty. The publication of productivity figures

appeared to show that output per man was lower at Doxfords Yard

than other yards on the Wear. Stung into action by this, J.

Ramsey Gebbie attempted to put forward a reason why this should

be so. Without knowing the ratios of skilled to unskilled

workers in other yards he suggested that the explanation of the

low output per man perhaps was to be found in this ratio, and

therefore asked the Admiralty if they could confirm this? Their

reply of 8 May 1942 seemed indeed to support Gebbie's hypothesis:

> " ... it is true that your total of semi-skilled and
> unskilled labour represents a larger proportion of the
> tradesmen than is the average condition throughout the
> yards. This may have the effect of reducing your average
> output per man somewhat, but it is because of this type of
> feature that we are anxious to stress that the tests taken
> out here are a first diagnosis. Whilst you may suffer to
> some extent from this comparative condition of a high
> proportion in the semi-skilled and unskilled classes, I
> think this is a matter upon which you are entitled to
> receive congratulations at the present time.
>   The logical ultimate result of a drive to increase
> output by taking on more men - recognising that the only men
> likely to become available will be unskilled, would be a
> falling off in output per man, but what we are after in the
> long run is tonnage, and it is that that is important." (45)

That this "logical ultimate result" of falling output per

man should be accepted perhaps bears witness to the unsuitability

(and given other wartime constraints the near impossibility) of
substituting on any large scale capital for labour. An added
dimension to the debate over dilution was the move taken at first
hesitantly to introduce women into the industry. This develop-
ment is worth studying in detail, not only for the questions it
raised in terms of the operation of the division of labour, but
also because of the light it can shed upon issues of social
relations at work as well as producing valuable insights into the
nature of the occupational community.

Part III

The Case of Women Workers [46]

In his book published in 1894 entitled "Sunderland Notables"
William Brokie noted that s shipowner named John White was:

> " ... a wonderful man for looking after others, for their
> benefit as well as his own ... Having a number of workmen in
> his employment in various capacities, he took a pleasure and
> made it a practice to visit them all at their homes at least
> once a year, to see if their wives kept everything clean and
> nice." [47]

The perception of women as wives and homemakers was a view that

lived on in traditional shipbuilding centres. So much so that at

the beginning of the Second World War there seemed to be a "con-

spiracy" between the owners and the working men to bar the entry

of women from the shipyards. Thus:

> " ... in September 1939, the shipbuilders put on record the
> view, which was said to represent the consensus of opinion
> at the end of the First World War, that women could only be
> employed usefully in the yards in so far as they could be
> segregated within four walls and provided with a separate
> entrance. It would serve no useful purpose to employ them
> in open shops or in ships for, apart from their
> unsuitability for the work, any increased output obtained
> would be more than offset by loss of output from the men
> already employed." [48]

Similarly the unions were opposed to the widespread employment of

women in the yards. This position was maintained as late as

April 1940 when, in a meeting of the Admiralty on the 30th of

that month,

> " ... various suggestions were put forward including
> proposals to speed up the design and construction methods of
> shipbuilding. But while they were ready to consider and
> implement many suggestions, the unions were opposed to the
> greater use of women. They felt it was "a drastic departure
> from custom and practice"." [49]

However as the demands on labour power grew these positions were
considerably modified; in the case of the unions only a month
after their initial opposition was voiced to the Admiralty they
accepted, in conference, the extension of women's employment in
the yards, "subject to adequate safeguards being inserted".

This demonstrates an important disjunction between
management and unions underlying their initial opposition to the
extension of the employment of women. The management position as
outlined in "The Shipbuilding and Shipping Record" focuses upon
the supposed physical limitations of women.

> "In the ordinary way there seems to be little scope for
> women labour in the shipyard ... It is true that the
> introduction of new tools and revised methods have reduced
> the amount of heavy manual labour, but nevertheless,
> shipbuilding is a heavy industry. It has been suggested
> that rather than employing women in the shipyards men
> engaged in lighter industries might be transferred to
> shipbuilding and their places taken by women." (50)

Here then the objection is primarily based upon a stereotypical
view of women as the "weaker sex".

In the case of the unions, whilst they may have shared some
of the reservations of management such gender based consider-
ations were not the prime reasons for opposition to extending
women's employment in the yards. Rather the issue of women
workers was seen as one particular form of dilution and therefore
was seen as a threat to the existing workforce. As an
unpublished study of labour in the wartime shipbuilding industry,
written for the Cabinet Office Historical Section, put it:

" ... the expansion of the labour force was primarily at the
discretion of the employers, some of whom were reluctant,
partly because of the opposition of the unions, to dilute
their labour force ... it is true to say that the yards were
never quite as full as they would have been if all employers
had been prepared to make the best use of what labour was
available, including women, and the unions to agree fully to
dilution." (51)

The importance of the differing concerns underlying the

hesitance of management and unions to the employment of women is

further demonstrated once such employment was accepted. The

position for the unions was particularly difficult, for there

were two contradictory concerns uppermost. Firstly, as we have

seen, the unions were wary in case the employment of dilutee

labour was used to attempt to undermine the position of the

"skilled" worker. In order to avoid this situation the tendency

was for the unions at local level to agree with management to a

number of exceptions which women could not perform. However on

the other hand insofar as women did perform skilled work the

unions had to try and ensure that they were not employed as cheap

labour, and were in principle paid the going rate for the job.

The latter position prevailed in national negotiations between

the unions and employers, with the unions putting forward the

principle of "equal pay for equal work". The question was how

should this principle be evaluated?

"On the face of it this sounds fair enough, and we hear that
in principle no great objection may be made to it, so long
as it is clearly understood that the work done by a woman is
the same, both in quantity and quality, and is performed
under the same conditions as that done by men. Indeed, the
unions claim seems to be that it should apply to work which
women can do equally well with men - whether it be skilled,

semi-skilled or unskilled - and that they should undertake the whole duty without additional assistance. The employers have pointed out, however, that as a rule, women would be unable to carry out the whole duty of the men, and a suggestion has been made that at first, at any rate, there should be a probationary period for new-comers at a lower wage, and that the full wage should only commence when the woman is able to undertake the full duties." (52)

The eventual agreement between the S.E.F. and the C.S.E.U. on 17 July 1941 enshrined the principle of equal pay for equal work but also specified a probationary period of 32 weeks before a woman over 21 years could be paid the "skilled" rate. The agreement between the S.E.F. and the C.S.E.U. was followed by agreements, all very similar in content, between individual unions and the S.E.F.. Thus for example the agreement between the S.E.F. and the National Painters Society reaffirmed the position in the earlier agreement:

"Women employed on work normally done by skilled painters shall be paid rates of wages in accordance with the agreement between the Shipbuilding Employers Federation and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions of 17 July 1941." (53)

However the statement of principle on wages at a national level cannot be seen as a guide to what happened at the local level, for the preceding point in the above agreement stated that:

"Arrangements for changes of practice shall be made between firms and their workpeople in consultation with the local Association of the Employers and local Officials of the Society." (54)

When one focuses on the local level it becomes apparent that the agreements between management and unions involved more complex

concerns than were enshrined in the reasonable demand of equal

pay for equal work. On the Wear the final agreement between the

W.S.A. and the Painters Society of February 1943 stated the

position that women shall do all work that skilled painters do

with the exception of:

> " ... jobs of a dangerous nature such as masts and jobs on
> high staging ... In crews and officers quarters women do
> only the undercoats. Where there is two undercoats and one
> enamel, women do the first undercoat only; where there are
> three undercoats and one enamel, women do the first two
> undercoats only." (55)

The concern to include exceptions from the normal range of a

given skilled occupation was accepted by the workforce as an

extra guarantee that dilutee labour could not be used as a

comprehensive substitute for skilled labour. The need for all

available guarantees was clearly perceived by Ernest Bevin in a

letter to the Minister of Production on 15 August 1942:

> "I think ... it is quite visionary to think that any
> prejudice against dilution will be removed by further
> discussions between both sides of the industry. Prejudice
> against dilution exists, in my opinion, because the men
> remember what happened to them after the last war and do not
> trust the employers or the Government to prevent the same
> thing occurring after this one." (56)

The point to grasp however is that once the unions were

prepared to accept, and indeed require, limitations and

exceptions on the range of the processes that women could

undertake within a given occupation, the objective basis upon

which equal pay for equal work could be claimed no longer

existed. An example of this situation was recorded in the

minutes of the Tyne Shipbuilders Association on 13 February 1945.

In this case a claim made by the Boilermakers Society was put forward demanding that the adult male welders time rate plus bonus should be paid to all female welders over 21 years of age who had served the 32 weeks probationary period. The employers replied that such women welders were not skilled as they were restricted primarily to "tack welding". The union argued that this restriction represented the formally agreed situation between the T.S.A. and themselves, that was, that women should do the tacking in order to free men for other work. Whereupon the employers offered to pay the time rate for individual women judged "efficient" by a foreman. The unions did not accept this. arguing that women should be paid the full time rate unless judged "not capable", the employers rejected this and a conclusion of "failure to agree" was recorded [57].

The importance of this "background" is to be seen in relation to the prominence given to the wages issue in other accounts of women workers in the Second World War, and the suggestion that such wage differentials were in themselves the main butress of gender division in industry [58]. What is being argued here is that from the point of view of the unions the main problematic was that of ensuring that in the longer term dilutee labour could not be substituted for skilled workers. This predominant concern became enshrined in local agreements on work procedures which effectively undermined the potential for the realisation of the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Inevitably such a situation helped to ensure the maintenance of inequalities in levels of earning. Thus figures produced by the Ministry of Labour in July 1943 showed average earnings per hour in shipbuilding were 30.5 pence for men, 11.4 pence for boys, and 18.1 pence for women [59].

For the employers the local agreements provided loopholes through which wages lower than the full skilled rate could be paid. For the unions this presented problems, but not of such great magnitude that they were willing to risk the sanctity of the technical and social status of the craftsmen. Where unions represented unskilled women workers their advocacy of equal pay for equal work was often stronger, as in the case of unskilled women workers at Barrow Naval construction Works, who were successfully represented by the A.E.U. at a national arbitration tribunal in 1944 [60].

The point is then that the appearance of conspiracy between management and workforce against women in order to "preserve patriarchal authority" was nevertheless shaped by the enduring conflict between capital and labour in the industry which predated the expansion in the numbers of women employed. It is the dimensions of this conflict which operated in an ironic way to give the appearance that both capital and labour were united in attempting to exclude women from the industry.

It was against this background then that women were to enter the shipyards in the north east. Their introduction was a slower

affair in this region than in others with more acute labour

shortages, and similarly between the rivers in the region they

were introduced later and in lower numbers on the Wear than on

the Tyne. Moreover in individual yards employers often had to be

constantly badgered by the Admiralty to initiate the recruitment

of women. Thus in the case of Doxfords several letters passed

between Amos Ayre for the Admiralty and J. Ramsey Gebbie

regarding the employment of women before Gebbie acted, and in a

letter to Ayre on 22 July 1942 somewhat vehemently stated:

> "I have provided accommodation for about 7% employment of
> women and ... we are starting to employ them next Monday."
> (61)

The reservations of the employers were slowly abandoned,

being based largely upon unreal expectations as regards the

disruptive effect and sexist dogma which led them to believe they

would not get a good return for their outlay in wages. The

condescending tone remained however:

> " ... The modest figures of a year ago have doubtless grown
> appreciably, for the adaptability of women in industries
> previously thought to be beyond their physical capacity, and
> indeed, unsuited to their mental powers, has been among the
> striking discoveries of the war period." (62)

For the unions the worry over dilutee labour remained, but

they realised that the best way to deal with the "threat" was to

"represent" the women concerned and thereby ensure that they

could not be used by the employers as a wedge of dilutee labour

to be driven between the existing craft division of labour. If

these represent the formal positions of capital and labour, the

empirical situation in any locality was often less clearly
structured. The relationships between men and women workers
inside the yards were often less subject to reservations based on
sexist dogma or suspicion over potential functionality for
management schemes. Rather these relationships were at once both
personal and structural, the meeting of persons but in the
context of both the workplace and the community, involving
structured power inequalities stemming from both the employment
relationship, gender division, and more "localised" social
statuses. In order to grasp the subtlety of these experiences we
need to turn to the accounts produced by the women workers and
listen to them speaking for themselves.

Perhaps one of the most important differences between the
employment of men and women in the war-time munitions industry
and the shipyards was that in the latter industry the vast
majority of women workers were recruited from the local
community. The effects that living in a close knit occupational
community had on social relationships within the workplace are
hard to overemphasise, and to a large extent the moral order of
the community spilled over into the workplace. This could be
important not only for the regulation of gender boundaries within
the yards, but also could be crucial in explaining why work was
"sought" within the shipyard in the first place. For some women
it was the case that relatives objected to the possibility of
their going away, as a sign-writer at Greenwells Dock explained:

"My father wouldn't let us join up, he says "you're too
little to join up", and he says "I'll get you a job where
you'll not be called up", and this was how I came to get
in." (63)

For others the decision to go into the shipyards was made on

different grounds:

"Me father's mate, Charlie Ruskin, I used to say to him, "Ye
I would love to be working in Doxfords - I would love it." -
"No no, it is no place for you, tis no place for you." I
thought God, there is a there place for me, and that's why I
went ... and I thought I only want to work down Doxfords ...
it was great, aye I loved it." (64)

For some women, especially where a husband was in the forces, the

incentive was definitely the wage:

" ... for more money ... well I mean at that time when you
only had your army pay, I was sort of glad of the wages to
help with the bairns, 'cos - I mean, army pay you only got
£2 odd a week you know." (65)

Whatever the initial reason for seeking such employment

there were several channels through which women joined the

shipyard. The importance of family ties has already been

evidenced in the above quotations: fathers, brothers, uncles and

in the later years of the war even mothers could "speak" for

women wishing to enter the yards:

"You had to, more or less, have somebody to speak for you to
get in, you know, which I thought was quite good, because of
course my Dad ... was there for years and years." (66)

As time went on and the demands on labour became greater the

more formal channels of local labour exchanges were used for

recruitment.

"I went from the labour exchange because at the time you had
to work - you had no family, so you had to work. So that is
how I came to be in the shipyards ... I was sent as a

trainee electrician, a dilutee - a dilutee that's what they
were called." (67)

The Ministry of Labour envisaged that employers would have

to initiate changes in the way that some jobs were performed in

order to realise the full benefit that the employment of women

could bring. As a pamphlet published in 1942 suggested under the

heading of "Jobs Needing Modification":

> "Changes may be necessary in the case of heavy jobs where
> the physical effort required may be reduced by providing
> lighter equipment or lifting tackle etc.. In some cases two
> women may be substituted for one man, or more usually three
> women for two men. Certain jobs can be broken down so that
> the heavy skilled work is done by men and the finishing by
> women. In other cases men need give only temporary
> assistance or exercise general supervision. Subject to
> proper safeguards women have tackled really heavy work,
> especially in loading vehicles, trucks and machines." (68)

As we have seen the concerns which historically had

dominated the division of labour in the industry made it unlikely

that jobs would be "broken down" to facilitate the "efficient"

employment of women. Indeed, as noted earlier, where such

breakdowns were evident they were far more likely to be aimed at

limiting the scope of dilutee labour rather than attempting to

ease the application of female labour. What then were the jobs

that women were allocated and how did they go about them?

It is perhaps useful to make a distinction between the women

who attended a period of training in order to undertake "skilled

work" as a dilutee and the far larger group who were to undertake

unskilled work. It is important to note that such a division,

whilst following naturally from the existing division of labour,

is often overlooked as an aspect of women's work in the yards.

For women who were to undertake skilled work there were two

avenues through which training could be undertaken, government

training centres and centres inside the yards.

In relation to the Government training centres the general

issue of women was confronted in the early years of the war. The

official position was that there was to be no difference between

the training of men and women. However as a letter from the

Secretary of the Ministry of Labour to Divisonal Controllers in

December 1940 made clear, such an official position was not

necessarily representative of the actual position:

> "As the Deputy Secretary said, we are making no difference
> between the courses for men and women, which means that in
> all cases, it will be long term training ... I am not
> anxious to interpret this too strictly ... if a useful job
> can be done by training women in aero detail fitting, say,
> for 8 or 10 weeks at a minimum, I think we should be
> prepared to do it." (Letter dated 18 December 1940 held in
> P.R.O. ref: LAB 18/66) (69)

It is clear then that the official view prepared to be flexible

in the case of women trainees. Thus a later letter from the same

source indicated the willingness of the training centre to meet

the demands of employers with respect to women trainees:

> "There will be no general distinction between the training
> given to women and that given to men. The considerations
> ... dealt with (under) our general training policy will,
> however, apply here as elsewhere. Thus if in any area there
> is a demand for the training of women to be modified in
> certain respects in view of the work which they will be put
> to when placed, which does not apply to men, we should of
> course be prepared to introduce such modifications in the
> case of women." (16 January 1941: P.R.O. LAB 18.66) (70)

From the evidence gained in the oral histories it would seem

that there was not such a close relationship between individual

firms and the general training centres, indeed some women were

directed to the training centres and trained in a skill unaware

of where that skill would be practised. In this situation women

often did receive a "comprehensive training".

> "I went over to Wallsend ... that morning there must have
> been about 300 young girls and men, and a number of elderly
> people in a line and they counted "1, 2, 3 - you're a
> joiner; 1, 2, 3 - you're a fitter; 1, 2, 3 -" and I was a
> welder. It was as simple as that ... We learnt how to braze
> and how to weld zinc, ordinary welding, copper brazing,
> aluminium, you know - the whole range of everything that
> covered the whole lot." (71)

As with most forms of training there was a difference between

theory and practice:

> " ... I was rather amused about some of the early days; they
> would tell you: "now you have to be able to weld to a
> thousandth of an inch", which meant, good heavens, that you
> just got on with it, and did the best you could. I wasn't
> willing to try to work that out." (72)

On passing a series of practical tests the dilutee was then

allocated to a particular firm. In some cases women who sought

employment at a particular firm were then sent to the training

centre at Wallsend. For women from the Wear the journey to and

from Wallsend was often remembered as more difficult than the

training itself, especially as shift work was operated:

> "It was just getting there and coming back - that was the
> worst bit ... I forget what time you started - about 10
> o'clock and you finished at 6 o'clock in the morning." (73)

As far as the course of training itself was concerned, much

could depend upon the availability of instructors, as a welder

from Swan Hunters remembered:

"So we went to Wallsend training centre - we had a hilarious
time there - it was great ... it was laughable actually
because we started off with bench fitting you see. Well I
got on like a house on fire. But they said the instructor
was leaving so would we go into the welding thing. So I
said "oh well I don't know that ... we'll try it."" (74)

Once the employment of women became a more routine

occurrence individual yards started to do their own training. In

these cases there was less standardisation than at the government

training centres. Some women were given a formal training

period:

"I was sent as a trainee electrician, a dilutee that's what
they were called. And six weeks training in the shop first,
and then down onto the ship." (75)

Similarly,

"I was the first caulker burner for the shipyard you see.
So they started me off as an apprentice - they showed me how
to light my cutter, and put the gauges right, you know, for
the oxygen and that. And he showed me for about six weeks
and I was on burning scrap. And then after six weeks he
says, "Oh, you've got to go on a ship at the gut"." (76)

In other instances a less formal training was deemed

sufficient, as in a case at Palmers where a cleaner who had

worked in the Plumbers shop since 1939 was deemed to have learned

enough to do "skilled work":

"Mr. Wright, me Foreman, asked us if I would like to ... he
says "they're bringing a ship in, mind you it's badly
damaged - the "Kelly"." He says, would you like to go on
it, you've learned a lot of plumbing. I says "who's on it?"
He says "Lord Louis Mountbatten". I says "who is he?" and
he says "well he's something to do with the royalty." ... I
was a plumber!" (77)

On other occasions also women picked up skills without a formal

training period. A rigger at Doxfords was taught splicing at

home by her mother who worked at the yard, prior to her own entry

into the workforce.

> "Only me mother showed us. So I just went down there, and
> just walked in, you know, and started. I did the splicing
> with me mother." (78)

Having been "trained" for skilled work or just launched into

unskilled work the women started working in what for many was a

new working environment. For those practising "skills" many

were, due to local agreements, restricted to only partial

operations such as tack welding. However there were exceptions

to this which could be the source of some conflict between

individual skilled men and women.

> "Well there was this one particular fellow ... I don't want
> to sound big headed, but I was rather proficient at my job,
> and I remember this fellow coming out, and I was going
> towards my work, and it was a rudder stem ... And this
> fellow came over and he says, "that isn't your job, that's
> mine". I said "oh no, I've been told to do it." "I tell
> you that is mine - there's no woman ever allowed to do that
> sort of thing." So I just looked, and I thought oh well
> honey you're 6'2", or whatever, and I'm not going to argue,
> so I merely walked over to our foreman and I said "Would you
> tell me what I have to do." And he said "Yes, that's your
> job." So I said, "Well you tell this gentleman that it is
> my job - that I'm capable of doing it, and just let him know
> this" you see. And he was furious - he was furious ... he
> was the only one that really ever quibbled." (79)

The role of the foreman was clearly of great importance in

interpreting the actual operation of local agreements. Moreover

for the women the foreman could be as important an authority as

for the men. To fall foul of a foreman and incur his wrath could

have serious results. As one fitter from North Eastern Marine

recalled:

> "One day I actually fell out with the gaffer. So he said
> "right - you get no help, you set the job up yourself", took
> me half a day. The gaffer wasn't very nice to me you see.
> He used some nasty terms. I reported him to the Lady
> Supervisor in the "ladies shop". And of course she went up
> to the offices. And, of course, he stopped the men helping
> me to set a job up. And I mean the machine ... was a
> massive thing. And I had to stand on it with my two feet,
> and hold the top, and jump like that ... to shift it." (80)

In most other cases however the women could call upon their

male colleagues for help or advice. Thus a lathe operator from

Greenwells dock noted that:

> "You sometimes found it a bit beyond you at times, you know
> doing the difficult jobs and that, on the lathes, but
> however I managed. And somebody would help, yes they would
> always help you." (81)

Most importantly such help from the male workforce could provide

a guide to the actual standard of work that was required, rather

than the theoretical standards given in training. Thus a burner

was questioned as to whether she had to be very precise about her

work:

> "No ... well I did at first. I thought all the work had to
> be perfect until one of the caulkers came along - he says
> "oh don't be fussy - we do that" he says, "don't be fussy".
> Of course I thought everything had to be perfect with being
> on a ship." (82)

Learning acceptable standards of work and "short cuts" which can

be taken to finish a job are, of course, part of the mysteries of

craft that apprentices learn in their time spent with journey-

men. For the dilutees such elements of the job had to be learnt

quickly, and in most cases relied upon the goodwill of the

skilled men in the yard. As one electrician remembered:

> "I was given a partner to work with. He was a qualified
> electrician, we worked on the "Diadem" - wiring junction
> boxes ... He showed me what to do - he kept me right all the
> time." (83)

If the "tricks of the trade" had to be learnt quickly, so

too did the other "rules" governing the social division of labour

in the yards. In this respect the women faced similar issues as

did men who were new to the yards. As one woman commented in

relation to working at North Eastern Marine,

> " ... when I first went in they asked me what religion I
> was. And, of course, I said "Church of England". He said,
> "well don't open your mouth in here 'cos they are all
> Catholics". And that was the way I was taken in." (84)

Some women interviewed appeared to have accepted

unreservedly the perception of the skill hierarchy between trades

from the point of view of "their" trade. Most importantly this

represents itself as an enthusiastic advocacy of the skill

content of their trade coupled with a denigration of others. In

this situation gender identity was often seen as secondary. For

example in the estimation of one sheetmetal worker from Swan

Hunters,

> "Yes, there was no skill with women welders." (85)

Similarly a splicer from Doxfords was of the opinion that her

work was very highly skilled whereas other women working in the

yard:

> " ... couldn't do it, so they did the little jobs, like
> stick a bit of paint on or something. Aye, I wouldn't have
> bothered painting or owt. To me that would have been nowt."
> (86)

If loyalty to a particular trade was one aspect of the

socialisation of women into shipyard life, another was learning

the use of the "jungle telegraph" as an alert of approaching

management.

> " ... if she (the women's supervisor) came on the deck ...
> she used to come on the deck now and again and the lads
> would pat their heads and say "hi-up, she's here" - well
> there was me standing gossiping like." (87)

The lack of direct managerial control and relative freedom

of movement was one aspect of the work which several women

mentioned as being particularly surprising:

> " ... of course we had a freedom, you know, you weren't sort
> of tied down, it was a freedom of getting on with your work.
> And funnily enough with welders, if you couldn't get on with
> that, or you felt you needed a break, then you were at
> liberty to move off the job and pull yourself together or
> whatever, you know." (88)

Another welcome feature of the labour process in the yards

was seen to be the control that individual workers could exercise

over the rate of work and application of machinery. This was

particularly so where women had experienced other types of war

work:

> "I worked in Dunlop's factory in Birmingham ... but we were
> only in lodgings you see so I came back and started at the
> shipyard ... It was a bit dangerous in Birmingham ... I got
> me fingers jammed one day ... You see the difference between
> the sawmill (at Doxfords) and the factory - well in the
> sawmill when you are sawing you can ease off, when you are
> in the factory where they are cutting the rubber, well you
> can't ... you're not in control of the machine. A few
> narrow escapes there." (89)

As well as an appreciation of the specific nature of the control

features of the division of labour the women also shared with the

men a degree of pride in their work:

> "Oh, and the first time they said there was a launch ... I
> went down, I was so excited ... I was standing beside the
> platers, and all the men clapped ... "Oh," I said, "Tommy,
> look at all our work" - it had grown up they were going mad
> ... I thought "my God, look at that work and it's going into
> the sea," and it was away. Oh, if I live to be a hundred I
> shall never forget or feel anything like it." (90)

So far the importance of the continuities between the work
done by the women and the men in the wartime shipyards has been
stressed in order to point out how little the division of labour
was altered in order to accommodate this new source of labour.
The importance of skill, loyalty to a particular trade and the
lack of tight controls over the rate of work and the physical
movement of workers are elements which dominate most accounts.
As far as more social elements of the employment of women in the
yards were concerned there is considerable evidence of the way in
which the moral order of the local community spilled unproblem-
atically over into the workplace. This is one of the reasons why
the "disruption" effect of employing female labour, expected by
management, did not materialise. Unlike many of the munitions
factories in the Midlands and elsewhere, the women workers
recruited into the yards were local and given the importance of
ties of kinship mentioned below, this helped to ensure that
appropriate behaviour in the presence of the opposite sex was
maintained. The unprompted mention by a majority of the women
interviewed of the moderation of language used by the men is
perhaps one example of this.

"The men ... you never heard them using any bad talk when
the women was around." (91)

The unproblematic meshing of the values of the local

occupational community and the workplace was one reason why the

demobilisation of women working in the yards took place

relatively smoothly, a majority of women interviewed leaving

before they were required to by the restoration of pre-war

practices. Most emphasis ed the resumption of domestic

responsibilities as husbands returned or as marriage was

undertaken; in some cases choice of spouse was a direct result of

working in the yard.

"I left in July 1945, to get married ... and of the five
girls that worked in the boiler shop they all married men
out of the boiler shop. One got married in 1944 and I think
there was two married before me, and we were married in the
July; the other two got married shortly after that." (92)

The exigencies of war required that untapped sources of

labour were called upon to work in the yards, and it was to meet

this "emergency" situation that dilutee labour both male and

female was called upon. Patriotism alone was never enough to

ensure that the particular interests of capital or labour were

totally subordinated to the task of maximum output. Moreover

during the period both capital and labour shared the view that

the abandonment of the strengths of the craft division of labour

would not be the best way to raise production, and given that

view and the legacy of recent past, dilution and inter-

changeability were almost bound to be problematic. During the

war then, the labour supply problems were solved largely through

calling once again on the local communities, "industrial

districts" in which the realities of shipbuilding were readily

known by both men and, as this account makes clear, women as

well:

> " ... it was part and parcel of my life, and living on the
> riverside - well ships, shipyards and rivers - well that was
> all part of my upbringing. But to get into a shipyard
> seemed the most natural thing in the world in war time. It
> wasn't like a girl from London going into a shipyard. Well
> I knew all about shipyard work all my life. You see I knew
> all about rivets and heaters and platers, and all the
> different trades." (93)

With the restoration of pre-war practices after the

conclusion of hostilities, dilutees, both men and women, left the

yards. Although there were exceptions among the male dilutees,

as one worker remembered:

> "I can remember about three that shouldn't have been kept in
> (the boilermakers). They had relatives who were secretaries
> of the union ... Oh it was flexible enough for that to be
> done. I even knew a lad that came out of the army and he
> got in the boilermakers, yet according to their rules you're
> supposed to start as an apprentice you know." (94)

Other than for those with the right personal connections the

return to pre-war practice was accomplished soon after the war.

The question that remained however was whether the wider economic

conditions that were characteristic of the inter-war period would

return? For, as we have seen, it was in relation to the pattern

of demand characteristic of this and other periods, that of

widely fluctuating booms and slumps, that the labour intensive

craft division of labour was seen to hold advantage over that of

a more capital intensive nature. That the answer to this

question was not obvious at the time is apparent when one looks

at the immediate post-war period.

Whilst there had been no "quantum leap" in the principles

underlying the division of labour in the shipbuilding industry

during the war, it had, nevertheless, proved possible to build a

large number of ships using a workforce who had less experience

of shipyard work than would have been the case in peace time.

Also some of the smaller yards and several of those left derelict

after the inter-war depression had been used to assemble

prefabricated units and therefore this technique was no longer

only of theoretical interest to British builders. However the

possibility of technological and organisational innovation was,

in the minds of most builders, ultimately tied up with the

question of demand, both in its quantitative and qualitative

aspects. Would the fluctuations in demand characteristic of the

inter-war period return and would shipowners continue to demand

bespoke products rather than standard vessels? In some ways

these questions were linked in that if high demand was maintained

there was more possibility of a growing importance of the

standard vessel in the situation of a rapidly expanding merchant

fleet, whereas if demand did not remain strong, owners would be

more specific and demanding over the specifications of ships that

they did, on occasion, order. In this sense then the prospects

for change within the division of labour were limited by the

market and the perception of its future course. It is important

therefore to understand that in the immediate post-war position the effects on the industry of the war are not to be seen in the objective changes initiated during this period, but rather in the questions that these changes could pose if the wider post-war environment proved to be fundamentally different from that of the inter-war period. Thus in looking at the post-war position we need to look at various dimensions of the wider context in both its political and economic aspects.

Part IV

The Post-War Position

Alistair Reid in a paper on "The Division of Labour and Politics in Britain 1850-1920" has argued that the nature of the division of labour must not be studied in isolation from the state, and that:

> " ... more attention (should) be paid to the internal dynamics of the state, and of politics in general." (95)

If this conclusion can be drawn from the period 1850-1920 then it should contain as much, or even more, validity for periods after 1945 with the extension of direct state intervention in industry. The State influences industry in several ways, however not all of them direct (96). As Stephen Hill suggests, the creation of a particular "environment" is of some importance:

> " ... the state may have an effect on the structure of social relations and the balance of power within individual firms themselves. The totality of government's economic and social policies creates an environment which favours one side or other of industry, while policy in the specific area of industrial relations has a more direct influence on the manner in which conflicting interests are resolved." (97)

The importance of the creation of a particular environment is indeed great in the immediate post-war years. The Labour "landslide" victory at the polls, according to Peter Calvocoressi, represented the belief of the electorate:

> " ... that the Labour Party would make great strides towards the elimination of absolute poverty and excessive inequality." (98)

The election of the Labour government is then usually seen as a change in the "mood of the country", as David Thomson put it:

> "What was undoubtedly new ... was the change of national
> outlook and of popular resolve: and the spirit of the Labour
> party government, rocketed to power in the summer of 1945,
> chimed with this new mood ... men looked forward, damning
> the recent past perhaps too completely, and shunning so
> vehemently the errors of the past that they were apt to
> commit an entirely new set of errors of their own.
> Uppermost in their minds was the desire for fuller social
> justice, a lessening of class differences and greater
> security and peace." (99)

The theme is a common one in discussions of social history at the

end of World War Two, people running at all speed from the past

impatiently striving to embrace the future. However, more recent

evidence suggests that this view is perhaps an overstatement. As

Bill Williamson states in his book "Class Culture and Community":

> "The dominant mood was one of relief ... However, there was
> no sense of a new world to be built. "Not in this village"
> said Bill when I asked him about the high expectations that
> some historians described. And Mary ... was more emphatic:
> "there was nothing to be optimistic about; we were making do
> and mend, making coats out of blankets. My mother says that
> she expected a major economic depression after the war."
> The result of the First World War had been depression; they
> did not think this one would be any different." (100)

Whilst this account is produced from a mining community there is

no indication that such expectations were atypical, indeed a mood

of pessimism, certainly in medium and long term economic affairs,

was more prevalent in shipbuilding communities, predicated on

earlier experience, than was a mood of optimism. As one worker

recalled, the view in the yards was not one of optimism:

> "They were worried definitely, and by 1947 quite a lot of
> the yards were very short of orders so things were looking
> pretty black by then." (101)

After the war, then, certainly amongst ordinary working people,

there was little evidence of:

> " ... heightened popular expectations that the state can
> provide political solutions to economically generated
> problems; for example, that the state can abolish
> inequalities of wealth and income or restore the control
> that people lack at work." (102)

If there was continuity of expectations in relation to the
economic sphere then there was discontinuity in the make up and
political programme of the state. It is within this juncture of
continuity and change of expectations and political forces
respectively that the study of the change and the division of
labour is to be situated. Of particular importance here is the
changing role of Trades Unions and perception of that role held
within the official trade union structure. For, with a labour
government and the legacy of wartime consultation by government
the trade unions had to some extent "come in from the cold". As
one commentator has put it:

> " ... for the two decades following the last war, the
> national leadership of almost every union remained committed
> to the same aims of "moderation" and "responsibility" and
> was, in general, successful in preventing any serious
> challenge to stable capitalist development." (103)

Walter Citrine placed a different emphasis on the changes
when he spoke at the 1946 T.U.C. Conference. He suggested that
the trade union movement had:

> " ... passed from the era of propaganda to one of
> responsibility." (104)

This emphasis on responsibility manifested itself in some, at
first sight, surprising ways. As Henry Pilling noted speaking of
the trade union movement during the period 1939-51:

It became deeply committed to many of the processes of
management, at the end of the period its representatives,
who under Marshall Plan auspices had the opportunity of
examining the best American practice, came back advocating
union cooperation in the introduction of "scientific
management"." (105)

So far I have attempted to outline "the climate" within the
country after the Second World War as far as the trade union
officialdom and the expectations of ordinary working people were
concerned. An essential part in understanding the significance of
this climate is comprehending how it interlocked with the changed
"nature" of the state. Whilst these relationships are only part
of the myriad of connections implied in the notion of the modern
state they are of central importance for this study of the
division of labour. This condition and these expectations should
be seen not only as a background within which to situate the
(social) action, but are essentially present within the action
surrounding the labour process appearing variously as both
subjective reasons for certain lines of action and as objective
limits to others.

If expectations of labour were pessimistic as regards the
future of the industry, those of management were hardly any more
optimistic. The expectation of a return to the pre-war conditions
of boom and slump coloured their outlook, and whilst attempting
to "stabilise their labour force" in the immediate post-war
period [106] they also warned of the problem of over-capacity
which would follow from the expansion of capacity during the war,
and they clearly expected the level of post-war demand to turn

down sharply after losses had been made good.

The above argument about the persistence of pessimism should not be overstated, but should rather be perceived as an essential part of the consciousness of those people in the post-war ship-building community, predicated upon past experience of the inevitability of boom and slump in terms of demand for their labour or product [107]. Whilst a "boom" period was in progress the workers would make demands for higher wages using to the full extent the existence of a tight labour market to press home their claims. And as McGoldrick has argued [108], the employers would quite often grant substantial rises, confident that once the demand for ships turned down the workers would, without too much trouble, accept wage cuts. Such a period of a short boom had followed the First World War and expectations were that the same situation pertained in 1945.

On the face of it, the position in which British ship-building found itself at the end of WW2 was an enviable one. The defeat of Germany and Japan had effectively removed them from the stage of international competition. The level of demand for ships was extremely buoyant following the mass destruction of wartime [109], the above average age of world tonnage [110] and the drop in carrying efficiency due mainly to longer turn around times in port [111]. In this situation British shipbuilding was able to expand its share of the world market from the pre-war level in 1930-39 of 35% to an average of 50% for the period 1946-49 [112].

At the point of production however this period was anything

but an easy one. The first problem to be faced was the

changeover from wartime to peacetime production. This was a

process which started before the end of the hostilities - its

effects on the workforce in North Eastern yards was noted by "The

Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer":

> "Declining overtime work and occasional, if temporary,
> unemployment have combined to make shipyard and engineering
> workers in the North East acutely aware of the uncertainties
> which peace time conditions may bring. They have not
> forgotten their experiences during the depression of ten
> years ago." (113)

Such was the feeling of insecurity that the Tyne and Blyth

confederation of the shipbuilding and engineering trade unions

held a conference in Newcastle in April 1945 to discuss "post war

employment and the provision of new work". It was agreed that

maximum pressure should be brought to bear to ensure that any

eventual decline in the shipbuilding industry would be offset by

alternative opportunities for employment (114). The employers on

the other hand were concerned that too much would be done to

encourage new industry at the expense of shipbuilding. Thus,

early in 1945 the Wear Shipbuilding Association made its feelings

known to Sunderland corporation on the occasion of its

development of post war plans for industrial development (115).

The problems of reverting to peacetime production were

further exacerbated by several other factors. Firstly, as Mark

Hodgson (116) noted, the surrender of Japan in August 1945, far

sooner than anyone had imagined possible, meant that the

admiralty cancelled several orders already placed with ship-

builders. Secondly, some shipowners were not coming forward with

new orders. There were several reasons for this. Initially

shipowners were anxious to know, before placing new orders,

whether the American reserve fleet would be put up for sale upon

the world market at "knock down prices". Another reason was

suggested in the Shipbuilding and Marine Engineer:

> "Shipbuilders in the North East coast region have received a
> number of enquiries, but in a district where the majority of
> vessels operated are in the tramp class, owners for the most
> part are "marking time" until Government policy in regard to
> the replacement of tonnage lost during the war has been
> disclosed." (117)

In the same journal other reasons for holding back on ordering

are apparent - in a report by the North East Correspondent:

> "One Newcastle shipowner is not placing orders for new
> "tramps" due to high cost and because be could not forget
> the events which followed the last war; and, whatever might
> be said to the effect that there must be no repetition of
> such conditions, the possibility of a similar occurrence
> could not, in his view, be entirely ignored by shipowners."
> (118)

Memories of the past can be seen here to act as a real force upon

the decisions of the present. The issue of price was perhaps

predominant however, with the price of new tonnage in May 1945

being double and, for more specialised tonnage, more than double

what they were in May 1938 (119). Whilst there was hesitancy

amongst some owners to place new orders, this tended to be in

specialised lines such as tramp tonnage. In general the main

problem was not one of lack of orders, as most yards in the North

East were by June 1945 considering their programme for 1947 or
beyond; the real problem was increasingly that of labour.

Apart from the general observations that the labour market
was tight and therefore there were shortages in most industries,
two main points should be made in relation to the shipbuilding
industry. Firstly there was an acute shortage of labour in the
outfitting trades, as by 1947 on the N.E. coast 1,500 men had
been transferred or returned by the ministry of labour from
shipbuilding to house building and repair. This situation was
protested against by the Tyne Shipbuilders Association who, in a
letter to the district Shipyard Controller in the Admiralty
offices, Newcastle (6:2:1946) produced the following table
showing the projected shortage in the "fitting out" trades:

TRADE	NO. AT PRESENT EMPLOYED	NO. DUE FOR RELEASE TO BUILDING TRADE	NO. REQUIRED AS AT AUG. '46 IN ADDITION TO PRESENT NO. EMPLOYED
Joiners	635	81	1400
Plumbers	263	27	250
Painters	229	67	180
Electricians	496	89	190

(120)

The situation on the Wear was very similar as, for example,
the Wear Shipbuilders Association protested in December 1945 that
35% of joiners in Wear yards were "building workers" - in some
yards the figure was substantially higher [121]. The serious
imbalance in the workforce that these shortages caused would

result in delays in delivery times, it was argued. Further to
this, the priority given to the building industry meant that
there was also a shortage in such things as sanitary fittings,
baths, washbasins and taps, upholstery material and certain
electrical fittings.

The second point which should be made in relation to the
labour force concerns the "metal trades". There was some
unemployment within certain groups, specifically riveters,
drillers and caulkers [122], whilst at the same time there was
also a shortage of labour in other branches of the shipbuilding
trades. This shortage is worth remarking upon as to a large
extent throughout the period 1945-50 it can be accounted for by a
reticence of boys to enter those trades whose only application
was within the shipbuilding industry. The following figures from
Boilermakers Annual Reports show the extent to which the decline
of boys apprenticed to metal trades took place:

YEAR	NO. OF APPRENTICES	DECLINE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
1945	8643	- 903
1946	7537	-1106
1947	6928	- 609
1948	6004	- 924
1949	5917	- 87

(123)

The implications of these drops in membership were not lost on

Sir Mark Hodgson, who suggested that:

> "Unless we direct our immediate attention to the task of
> organising the young folk at our trade our future stability
> will be affected." (124)

The problem of recruiting boys to the metal trades was also

remarked upon by the employers. Here, however, the emphasis was

not only upon the lack of numbers of boys entering the trades but

also the relevance of the traditional apprenticeships to changing

construction techniques. Thus at a meeting of the W.S.A. on 23rd

March 1947 the issue of the recruitment of apprentices to the

metal trades was raised by the delegate from the Bartrams yard.

The situation was unclear, he suggested, due to the investigation

of new training methods being undertaken by the S.E.F.

nationally. This investigation, he adds, was being undertaken:

> " ... in view of the possibility in the near future of a
> complete reorganisation of the steel work by the
> introduction of semi-skilled labour on various machines and
> the rearrangement of plating work etc." (125)

It is possible to argue that "the complete reorganisation of the

steel work" envisaged by the employers was not as "complete" as

the above statement may suggest. For, at a meeting of the W.S.A.

only four months earlier, the issue of the future of shipbuilding

at the corporation yard in Sunderland had been discussed. The

issue had been raised initially after trade union pressure to

keep the yard open. This yard had been opened during the war to

help cope with demand; its specific importance lay however in its

use of prefabricated parts for assembly. In addressing the

future of the yard Mr. R.C. Thompson for the W.S.A. suggested

that it was unrealistic to expect the yard to remain open, as:

> "(The) yard was from the first intended only as a wartime
> establishment for the assembling of pre-fabricated parts -

which was in fact an expensive method of building ships."
(126)

The view that the use of prefabrication in the construction of
ships was an expensive method was largely drawn from studies of
the American industry which had pioneered many of these
techniques. This conclusion was drawn from the experience of
particular market conditions, those of boom and slump, in which
greater fixed capital overheads and relatively high labour costs
militated against profitable production. However in a perceptive
article the N.E. correspondent of the "Shipbuilder and Marine
Engineer" suggested that the prefabricated construction of ships
could be undertaken profitably in different circumstances:

> "One view is that should post war labour costs in the U.S.A.
> prove excessive in comparison with those elsewhere, American
> shipbuilding concerns might well feel disposed to establish
> new yards in the Far East when Japan has been defeated.
> Many of the prefabrication methods evolved or adopted during
> the war have come to stay. They are particularly well
> adapted to the semi-skilled labour which it is anticipated
> will be both plentiful and comparatively cheap in the Far
> East after the war." (127)

In Britain however the wholesale prefabricated construction
of ships was generally considered to be an inefficient method in
terms of cost, and in terms of the rearrangement of yards that
such a development would call for. For, as R.B. Shepherd
suggested in an article, "Developments in British Merchant Ship-
building":

> "The American constructional methods involving shipyards
> having ample area and crane capacity with a large available
> labour force, could not generally be applied to the U.K.."
> (128)

The greatest change in constructional methods in the British
industry undertaken during the war and immediately afterwards was
the increased use of welding, which ultimately led to the demise
of riveting [129]. The perceived implications of the widespread
use of welding varied. One suggested implication was expressed
in an article in the "Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer" of July
1947:

> "In the new era, the art of shipbuilding would tend more and
> more to organised accuracy and away from individual skill,
> and though individual skill and artistry would still be
> needed, it would be exercised at a higher level." [130]

This statement encapsulates several of the features of the
deskilling position advocated by Braverman, notably the move away
from skill being held by the individual craftsman towards its
exercise at higher levels. Was the greater use of welding at this
time perceived by the unions and workers as the greatest threat
to their "skilled" position? It is possible to argue that this
was not in fact the case, the reasons for which we will now
address.

As we saw in Chapter 2, welding became established as a
skilled trade, and more importantly integrated into existing
constructional processes rather than being seen as a technique
around which to restructure the whole division of labour.
Welding as a technique was not feared in itself as the beginning
of a vast deskilling programme. However what was new after the
Second World War was its increased use on hull work and in an
atmosphere in which prefabrication had been used successfully in

order to meet wartime demand. It was the prospect of

prefabrication rather than the extended use of welding as such

which was thought to present a threat to the skilled trades.

This position was suggested in a letter sent by Dan McGarvey to

the Boilermakers Monthly report supporting his nomination as

Clyde (North Side) district delegate in which he notes:

> "I have watched very closely the modernisation of our
> shipyards etc. and also the upward trend of the welded ships
> and increasing prefabrication in particular, and I fully
> realise that the employer is at this very moment making an
> all out attack on our members rates and conditions. The
> position of our members in relation to prefabrication needs
> the constant attention of our society ... " (131)

Other members of the Boilermakers Society saw the main problem

similarly, that is an attack upon rates and conditions of skilled

men, ultimately an attack upon the notion of craftsmanship in

general. However the facilitating factor in this attack was not

always seen to lie in changes in technique. Thus a letter to the

monthly report from Bro. Joseph Boyd, who was worried by the

Government's decision to sell 140 liberty ships to private

enterprise, suggested that this move:

> " ... does not augur well for the shipbuilding industry in
> this country, and talk like a slump in two or three years is
> common." (132)

This, it was seen, would lead to the emigration of skilled men

and a further decline in the number of apprentices:

> " ... and will ultimately lead to the dream of the "boss":
> the break up of organised unions, shop stewards and the
> introduction of unskilled workers to our various crafts."
> (133)

How far was the "dream of the boss" a real threat? If the
example of the introduction of welding in the interwar period is
looked at this dream may be seen to be exaggerated, for as has
been argued elsewhere the employers were at this time to a large
extent working within an "ideology of craft" [134].

However the issue of the legitimacy of the organisation of
the division of labour along craft lines was raised in the
aftermath of the war. The context was that in which pre-war
practices had been restored, and the Labour government and trades
union leaders were keen to demonstrate that they were "fit" to
govern. Whilst the substance of the debate took place at a level
above the shop floor, its importance lies in attempting to set
the parameters of the debate within the industry insofar as these
concerns were later to be accepted as part of the post war
consensus [135]. Most notable in these connections is the
conscious defense and advocacy given to "the craftsman" by trades
union leaders.

The "attack" upon the notion of craft came from several
areas; however, perhaps a unifying thread in these attacks was
the claim that the existent organisation of production was
inefficient. Thus the "Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer" claimed
that:

> "Today the demarcations of labour in shipyards and ship-
> repairing establishments stands, in many respects, much as
> it has done for decades past, and, in relation to modern
> methods of production, it cannot but be regarded as
> restrictive in its effects on the efficiency of production.
> In the light of modern developments, many such customs and

practices are outmoded; and it could be readily proved that
they have the effect of retarding and restricting efficiency
in the construction and repairing of ships." (136)

Such attacks on demarcation of labour are common throughout the

shipbuilding press and usually are not paid much heed by the

unions. However in the immediate post war period the relation-

ship between the unions and the state had changed with the

election of a Labour government. Co-operation rather than

conflict was stressed and there was a genuine commitment by the

trade union leaders at least to get the country "back on its

feet". In this task efficient production was conceived as the

most important tool. Under these circumstances then, "efficient

production" became, perhaps for the first time, a fundamental

problem for the union leadership as well as management. As Mark

Hodgson suggested in October 1945:

> "Intensified effort is essential, I admit, and I am
> satisfied that the workers of this country will gladly bear
> the brunt and further tighten their already narrowly
> stretched belts. The restoration of our homeland and our
> contribution to the European salvation are problems which
> call for immediate attention." (137)

It was this concern with macro economics which made it impossible

any longer for the unions to ignore the charges that it was the

trade unions themselves which were responsible for restriction of

output leading to inefficient utilisation of productive capacity.

It became almost mandatory for trade unionists to reconcile their

own demands for changes in working practices with the aim of

increased output. Thus the agitation for a forty hour week took

the form of claims that the reduction in hours would actually

increase productive output due to the greater intensity of work

of which more "refreshed" workers would be capable.   This

position was exemplified in Mark Hodgson's speech at the TUC

conference in 1945, in which he extolled the virtues of a forty

hour week:

> "If we as a nation are to undertake the task (of post war
> reconstruction) efficiently then the whole productive
> capacity of the people, tools and machinery of the nation
> must be intelligently applied ...
> We maintain that with all the mechanical improvements
> introduced before and especially during the war, and with
> the intelligent use of all available labour and the
> scrapping of outworn ideas, greater efficiency and improved
> production can be obtained by the introduction of some
> degree of leisure calculated to fit the overstrained worker
> for a further substantial effort.
> Our claim is that given a five day working week, a
> refreshed worker will produce at least as much in a 40 hour
> week as a tired worker will in 47 or 48 hours.
> It is maximum output we want, and the fitter the
> worker, the better our chance of getting it." (138)

Similarly, by the same writer in the Boilermaker's Annual Report

of 1945:

> "The great need today is increased output of all necessary
> useful and beautiful things for the use and happiness of all
> ... Harder tasks and longer hours are not necessary but a
> more scientific application of machine power, giving the
> workers their rightful share of the advantages which science
> and machinery produce." (139)

The above comments are clearly situated within a discourse rich

in ideas of consensus, and displaying a zeal for increasing

production which hitherto was more characteristic of the

employers than the unions. Such a concern with increasing output

is perhaps more easily reconciled with the interests of Boiler-

makers, who for the most part were paid by the piece, than

outfitting workers mostly paid plain time rates. Nevertheless

the emphasis upon the "scrapping of outworn ideas" and the

"scientific application of machine power" seem to suggest that

the outlook of the leadership of this union was perhaps more

"progressive" in terms of changes in working practice than in the

past. Continued support in the post war period for the National

Production Advisory Council set up during the war is perhaps

further evidence of the progressive spirit. And, whilst there

was some degree of hostility and suspicion directed towards the

Council from the shop-floor, the trade union leaders involved in

the council took a less critical view:

> "As a member of the National Production Advisory Council on
> Industry I can assure members that it is not the desire of
> this council to exhort workers to work harder, but instead
> to conserve energy by increased industrial efficiency. It
> has been proven in many industries that by bringing in
> consultants on motion study, production has increased and
> the energy of the operator has been conserved, thereby
> enabling him to earn higher wages without working any
> harder. There is scope for improvements in the industries
> we are connected with. Some shipyards and engineering shops
> have already been modernised, but there are many that have
> changed but very little over the past 50 years." (140)

At first sight these statements seem to embody many of the

features of scientific management and appear to give support to

the position suggested by Henry Pelling earlier in this article

that the trade union movement "became deeply committed to many of

the processes of management" and that they were advocating "union

cooperation in the introduction of scientific management".

However appearances can often be misleading, and certainly it is

possible to argue that in relation to the shipbuilding industry

the "scientific application of machine power" or the use of

"motion study" should not be understood in terms generally

accepted by scientific management theorists. Indeed this is

spelt out clearly at the end of the article quoted above:

> "Let it be clearly understood that motion study mentioned
> herein has no relation to time study by stopwatch etc. as
> the Society would, at all times, resist any attempt to re-
> introduce Bedeauxism." (141)

As argued earlier the changes proposed have more to do with

increasing piece work payments by raising output than with funda-

mental restructuring of the labour process. The use of the

scientific application of machine power was conceived as a

process to take place within the craft division of labour rather

than as a basis for its extinction. Similarly the "motion" study

was to be undertaken without an accompanying "time" study. In

this way the knowledge produced by the consultants was seen to be

a resource which could be used to maximise the piece earnings of

the individual craftsman rather than as a technique management

could use to increase output disproportionately to the reward

given to the individual worker as in Bedeauxism.

    That this view of the incorporation of science into the

labour process was widely held by those concerned with the nature

of craft in the shipbuilding industry can be further evidenced

with reference to two general articles on the nature and future

of craftsmanship. The first of these was a paper by J.W.

Stephenson, Chairman of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and

Engineering Trades Shipbuilding Group Council, entitled "Science

and Craftsmanship in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industries"

(142). In this paper an historical account of the nature of

craftsmanship is given. It is asserted that in primitive society

the roles of craftsman and scientist were united, "The crafts-man

was in fact the original scientist." A separation of the two

roles was seen to occur with the rise of urban civilisation. The

craftsman who had been a "free agent in primitive society became

a serf" with low social status which "confined him to his

existing practices". On the other hand, "Scientific speculation

was largely confined to the administrative sciences and was

carried on by a limited class of people who had the leisure for

it". The author goes on to suggest that the industrial revolution

was the potential (as yet unrecognised) beginning of a return

towards the increasing identity of these two roles, "The

outstanding feature of the industrial revolution was the renewed

application of experimental thought to the industrial crafts".

And that, "although the social distinction between the scientist

and the craftsman as professional worker and operative

respectively has been inherited from the past, the technical

distinction ... is largely a matter of degree and there are

elements of each speciality in both".

However, Stephenson continues his analysis by asserting that

hitherto the role of craftsmen in the shipbuilding industry has

merely been to learn a large number of repetitive jobs,

> "The historical development needs to set out because it is
> commonly considered that the mechanism and rationalisation
> which the application of science to industry entailed has
> led to the gradual elimination of the craftsman and to
> increasing monotony of work for those engaged in actual
> production. In fact the "mystery" of the old craftsmen
> largely consisted in the fact that he had to learn a large
> number of repetitive jobs by rote. Mechanisation has broken
> these crafts up into their separate units, each of which
> frequently requires only a very low degree of skill." (143)

However, it is suggested that the other consequence of

mechanisation has been the creation of a number of new skills:

> " ... concerned with the control of processes the design and
> fabrication of prototypes, etc. which are required to master
> the production of a growing range of increasingly complex
> goods. The characteristic of the new craftsman is increas-
> ingly that of versatility in the control of a scientific
> technique." (144)

So then the new craftsman is more skilled than the old one in

this view, because he must not only learn a number of repetitive

jobs by "rote", but must also display a versatility in the

control of scientific technique. Thus the new craftsman embodies

the old but also regains part of his lost simultaneous role as

scientist. Moreover it is suggested that there are two further

factors which impel a closer degree of identity between the

scientist and the craftsman. The first of these is the

increasing speed of technical developments which demands a

greater amount of "feedback" between the research worker and the

worker who applies the technique. Secondly and more important

for our purposes is:

> " ... the development of a new technique, "scientific
> management" so called, which in essence is concerned with
> the study of the act of work itself and the intent of which

> is to make human labour more effective. This embraces a
> number of special techniques such as cost accounting and
> motion study which though they may be applied by specialists
> are not exclusive in character and can IN ESSENTIALS BE
> APPLIED BY THE WORKER HIMSELF." (145)

The importance of stating that the worker should apply scientific

management to himself must not be underestimated as it suggests a

conception of scientific management and indeed of workers which

would be foreign to the followers of Taylor or Bedeaux. One

should note that this account also mentions motion study as an

element of scientific management, but neglects to mention time

study as another integral part.

In his conclusion the author sees the relevance of the role

of craftsmanship in these terms:

> "Therefore science and craftsmanship are complementary and
> they are foolish who think that because some new material is
> used, some new method is devised, or a machine replaces a
> hand process, the day of craftsmanship is over. Rather does
> progress demand a clearer appreciation of the essential part
> that craftsmanship plays in production, and an increased
> recognition that the scientist and the craftsman are co
> servants of humanity both essential for the development of
> social well-being and human good." (146)

In a less sophisticated analysis Sir Mark Hodgson pursued a

similar theme of the necessity of craftsmanship "for the develop-

ment of social well being and human good". Here he insisted that

the only way that Britain could regain her leading position in

terms of foreign trade was to produce goods of high quality, and

these could only be produced by good craftsmen. The main emphasis

of his paper was not orientated towards economic arguments

however; rather he suggested that craftsmanship developed:

> " ... the character of the people; and history, both ancient
> and modern, sets a considerable value on the quality of the
> citizens in any community." (147)

Moreover he pointed to the importance of ensuring a greater

supply of "good craftsmen for the future":

> In the industries which I am most closely connected with ...
> the war taught us a lesson. We had too few craftsmen and
> had to introduce dilutees - man and women with little or no
> experience, and since agreements provided that they should
> be paid craftsmen's rates, what this cost the nation cannot
> be easily estimated - but the cost was very great." (148)

Thus a need for more craftsmen was justified in terms of their

use in terms of national emergency.   Also Hodgson saw the

craftsman as a progressive rather than a reactionary force in

relation to the introduction of new working practices:

> "Craftsmen who possess sound knowledge and skill are not
> easily daunted by new work and new problems, and men of this
> type will be a powerful influence in the expansion of
> British trade." (149)

The importance of the above two articles is that they seek to

express legitimate grounds for the continued relevance of

craftsmen to the modern shipbuilding industry. They emphasise

above all the flexibility of skilled labour to deal with changing

circumstances and thereby seek to present craftsmen as a

progressive force within the industry. Hodgson goes so far as to

suggest that more skilled labour is needed to operate machinery

designed for semi-skilled operators. He argues that if the

operation of such machines was a "skilled" task then skilled men

would only undertake these operations temporarily and therefore

would not become the mere appendage of the machine.   Both

articles stress the importance of the notion of craft in giving a
certain character and quality to the labour force.

The tension that existed between the advocacy of rigid craft
boundaries and constantly extolling the virtues of expanded
production was exploited by those seeking a more radical change
in the production process and the organisation of labour. Whilst
in general this ideological war was fought by the trade unions
expressing their own commitment to improvements in output and
stressing unity of purpose and consensus in this aim, there were
statements which appear to adopt a different approach and seem to
point to the conflict inherent in the capital labour
relationship:

> "The members will have noticed the references to restrictive
> practices in debates in the house of commons, and the Tories
> when debating the matter invariably use the exception to
> vilify such restrictions. We may have to look at some of
> the practices referred to, especially where they concern
> trades union membership; on the other hand, there are many
> restrictive practices in the industries we are engaged in
> that must remain until we are working and living under a
> socialist system of society." (150)

If the nature of craftsmanship was under question from within the
industry and the press, the unions position was seen to be
validated from other sources. Thus in the Boilermakers monthly
report of May 1949 the words of the Superintendent of the City
and Guilds of London Institute in relation to a newly proposed
training scheme are quoted with approval:

> "In drawing up this scheme, the advisory committee has had
> in mind not only that sound craftsmanship is an essential
> basis of the constructional steelwork industries, but also
> that the traditional pre-eminence of the nation in this

sphere will only be enhanced, or even retained, if efforts
are firmly directed towards the encouragement of
craftsmanship of a superior type, in which the intelligence
and skill in the industrial arts, so characteristic of our
population, may be given full opportunity for development."
(151)

On the whole, the period between 1945 and 1950 did not see a

victory for those people advocating the ending of "craft"

production in shipbuilding. On the shopfloor changes in yard

layout during this time owe more to attempts to improve

facilities for transport and cranage, which hitherto were

positively primitive, than any attempt radically to re-alter the

division of labour. Whilst welding was expanded, it was done so

as a distinctively skilled process rather than as a technique of

fragmenting skilled jobs. Where new machinery, such as profile

burners, were introduced they were, generally speaking, manned

partially by skilled labour or in some instances "blacked" by a

workforce, so much so that in some instances they had to be

withdrawn. It would seem that during this time continuity of the

organisation of production is more characteristic than sweeping

change. This continuity, or inertia, as some would see it, was

not simply a result of the strength of the unions and a corres-

ponding weakness of the employers, the situation was more

complicated than that. Some employers genuinely believed that

the highly labour intensive system of production based on a large

number of craftsmen was more efficient than a highly capital

intensive one. Some union leaders (and members) believed that

the situation demanded greater production and more industrial

discipline, and made appeals in this respect:

> "It is well that we should understand that under Socialism
> or Communism we will have to work and work to regulated
> hours, and I see no reason why we should not start right now
> to put our house in order in this respect." (152)

Conclusion

In many respects there is a great deal of continuity between the concerns underlying the division of labour in the inter-war period and that in the immediate post-war years. As we have seen the conditions existing during the period of hostilities were seen to be extraordinary in terms of a consistent demand for maximum output, a continuation was not expected or looked for after peace was concluded. Similarly the changes at the point of production were seen to be short term changes forced upon the industry, both capital and labour, by the requirements of war. However things were to change within the context of a sustained post-war boom. Although a realisation of the magnitude of these changes was to be only slowly realised, their scope was to encompass the whole world. These changes affected not only production techniques but were also the cumulative cause and outcome of other changes at the level of the occupational community. In relation to Wearside, as elsewhere, the period of the long term boom was to see changes in the social relations both within and between capital and labour.

And yet the British Shipbuilding industry during the period 1945-59 displayed many features characteristic of the industry at other times, its conservatism based on past practice affected unions and management alike. One dominating feature of the time was the belief in the inevitability of an imminent slump, predictions such as that of Mr. Marr of the W.S.A. made on 4 March

1949 were widespread:

> " ... by 1952 Wear shipyards might only need 50% of present
> workforce, thus, some 5000 men will be unemployed." (153)

Such predictions were wrong, however, for the situation that

British shipbuilding found itself in was substantially different

to that after the First World War. As several authors have

argued, the sale of British investments overseas and debt

incurred to the USA in the course of the war forced Britain to

orientate itself towards an "outward looking economy" and export

led growth as opposed to home led growth after the first World

War [154]. In this situation of a "seller's" market and with

government encouragement the target for exports to reach a level

of 175% of the prewar level was reached by 1950. However during

this same period 1946-50 output in the industry rose by only 16%

[155]. The failure to expand capacity substantially was a result

of objective limitations such as the shortage of men, materials

and power, the difficulty of financing large scale developments

[156] and an estimation of the inevitability of the return of

cyclical fluctuations in the demand for ships. Moreover the

existence of a state committed to full employment strengthened

the bargaining position of labour and the success encountered in

sustaining full employment further reduced the relative

flexibility of variable capital. In this sense the period between

1945-50 was not a good time for the employers to attempt

radically to restructure the division of labour and indeed

evidence that they wished to do so is not conclusive. Capital

accumulation was not a problem for the employers during this period, with substantial profits being made despite substantially higher costs.

The nature of the future of craft was explicitly raised during this time however. The context was that of the dispensing of Marshall aid and growth in influence of the "economic imperialism" of the USA. The potential threat to the "craft" division of labour in shipbuilding was diffused by pointing firstly at the historically cost ineffective nature of ship-building in the USA and secondly by the apparent enthusiastic advocacy of several "management practices" by the trade union leaders. However as has been argued earlier the type of "scientific management" advocated by trade union leaders in the industry had the aim of increasing output and earnings proportionately within the established boundaries of craft rather than establishing a fundamentally different system of the organisation of labour.

The nature of "skill" suggested by the example of the ship-building industry during this period is not one predicated solely upon a notion of physical manipulation combined with a degree of mental dexterity but must also include the dimension of skill as a social status. For, as we have seen, the idea that semi-skilled operations were being performed (captured) by skilled men was advocated by the former leader of the Boilermakers. The essence of skill and craftsmanship presented by such men is that

of flexibility, the potential to be able to respond to changed

circumstance or practice. This would seem to point to the

importance of the distinction made by Burawoy between deskilled

work and a deskilled worker [157]. For indeed any one task

performed in a shipyard, or any other industry, is unlikely to

demand all of the skills associated with any particular craft,

and as specialisation by an individual worker within a craft is

not unusual his claim to be a skilled worker is predicated upon

the potential skill needed by the craft as a whole. Therefore

the skilled status of individual workers is, within an

organisation as large as a shipyard, often based on a cumulative

skill content of the "collective craft worker". Thus within the

yards the technical change which occurred during this period was

largely absorbed within the framework of craft production. The

effects of the deskilling of individual tasks were largely

neutralised by their incorporation into the totality of craft

tasks. For the individual worker then the social status of being

a skilled worker may be as important as the actual tasks he

performs. Of importance for the craft as a whole however will be

the claim to legitimately encompass a wide enough range of tasks

to justify the craft status. In this way whilst changes in

technology during this period may have simplified certain jobs

they did not seriously question the craft status of "skilled"

workers and there was no great move by management to restrict job

autonomy or discretion in the carrying our of the tasks included

in particular crafts.

    In the next chapter an attempt will be made to outline some of the more important changes consequent upon the conditions of the long boom. Hopefully such an account will render a possible comparative dimension between the inter-war and wartime periods and those of the 1980s.

Notes to Chapter 3

1   Jones, L. "Shipbuilding in Britain", Cardiff, University of
    Wales Press 1957, p117.

2   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S.   "Where Ships are Born",
    Sunderland, Thomas Reed and Co. Ltd. 1947, p68.

3   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. op cit, p62.

4   Hopkins, C.H.G. "The Moving Staircase: Sunderland 1939-
    1972", Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd. 1972, p27.

5   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

6   Inman, P. "Labour in the Munitions Industries", London,
    H.M.S.O. 1957, pp94-95.

7   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. op cit, p79.

8   The output figures of new merchant construction on the Wear
    in the five years: September 1939 to September 1944 were as
    follows:

Firms	Ships	Gross Tonnage
Wm Doxford and Sons	71	481,601
Jus. L.T. Thompson and Sons	40	277,697
Sir James Laing and Sons	30.5	230,523
Short Bros.	27	179,002
Bartram and Sons	19	127,756
W. Pickersgill and Sons	20	116,814
S.P. Austin and Son	26	56,916
Shipbuilding Corporation	4	28,342
John Crown and Sons	8	3,688
Totals:	245.5	1,502,239

    From September 1939 to the end of 1944 the total was 249
    ships of 1,534,980 gross tons out of a total for Great
    Britain of 1,240 ships of 5,722,532 gross tons. The Tyne's
    contribution to this total was 130 ships of 709,317 gross
    tons; the Tees produced 49 ships of 269,330 gross tons and
    the Hartlepool's 78 ships of 369,387 gross tons.
    Source: Smith and Holden, op cit pp70-71.

9   Arthur Mawick has suggested the effects on society of a
    twentieth century total war can be expressed in terms of
    four dimensions of war:
    1. Destruction/Disruption: Including direct damage,

dislocation and disruption of peace time patterns of behaviour, but also as some "disaster" studies have suggested, involving a desire to rebuild better than before.

2. The Test Dimension which arises from the challenge war presents to society.

3. Participation in the national cause by hitherto under-privileged groups who thereby make social gains.

4. The Psychological Dimension: total war is a great emotional experience, and tends to reinforce "in group" feelings and, in general, to render change acceptable.

Mawick, A. "Class: Image and Reality", Fontana 1981, p214.

10   My mother often states this point. The same popular (mis)conception is challenged in Richard Croucher's book "Engineers at War: 1939-1945", London, Merlin 1982.

11   Hutt, A. "British Trade Unionism", London, Lawrence and Wishart 1975, p147.

12   Pelling, H. "A History of British Trade Unionism", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1979, p219.

13   Pelling, H. op cit, p219.

14   The Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer", February and May issues 1945.

15   Barnett, C. "The Audit of War", London, Macmillan 1986, Chapter 6.

16   Barnett, C. op cit, p121.

17   Pelling, H. 1979 op cit, p219.

18   Pragnementa, P. and Overy, R. "All our Working Lives", London, BBC 1984, pp137-138.

19   Barnett, C. op cit, p122.

20   Croucher, R. op cit, p325.

21   Barnett, C. op cit, p115.

22   Barnett, C. op cit, pp123-124.

23   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

24   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

25   Inman, P. op cit, p85.

26   The shortage of riveters on the Clyde was so severe that the Ministry of Labour proceeded with the opening of a training school for riveters in April 1942, financed jointly by themselves and the employers, without the agreement of the Boilermakers. The Jordanvale Training Scheme was beset with problems and up until March 1944 had a wastage rate of nearly 50%. See:
     Inman, P. op cit, pp122-125.

27   Alan Bell, Plumber.

28   Letter to J. Ramsey Gebbie, 13th November 1942, held in Tyne and Wear Archive (Doxfords Correspondence).

29   Letter to Secretary of the Admiralty, 16th November 1942, held in Tyne and Wear Archive (Doxfords Correspondence).

30   John Morris, Caulker, Pickersgills.

31   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. op cit, p71.

32   Letter to Manager, Lloyds Bank Sunderland, 18th November 1942, held in Tyne and Wear Archive (Bartrams Correspondence).

33   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

34   Letter to R.A. Bartram, 20th October 1943, held in Tyne and Wear Archive (Bartrams Correspondence).

35   Mr. B. Marley, who made these remarks, is now head of the shipbuilding and fabrication department at Wearside College in Sunderland.

36   Fox, F.A. "The Brittle Fracture of Structural Steel", quoted in: Parkinson, J.R. "The Economics of Shipbuilding in the U.K.", Cambridge, CUP 1960, p114.

37   John Morris, Plater.

38   "The Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer", February 1945.

39   Barnett, C. op cit, p121.

40   Quoted in: Barnett, C. op cit, p121.

41   Smith, J.W. and Holden, T.S. op cit, pp79-80.

42   W.S.A. minutes, 9th July 1940.

43   Quoted in: Cole, M. "The Life of G.D.H. Cole", London, Macmillan 1971, p230.

44   Bullock, A. "The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin" Vol.2, London. Heinemann 1967, pp61-62.

45   Letter from Amos Ayre (Admiralty) to J. Ramsie Gebbie (Doxfords), 8th May 1942, held in Tyne and Wear Archive (Doxfords Correspondence).

46   The oral history material in this section was gathered as part of the project "Women Workers in North East Shipyards during the Second World War - an Oral History". The project was funded by the Nuffield Foundation and carried out between the summers of 1983-84. I carried out all the interviews of women who had worked on the Wear and it is primarily that material that will be drawn on here. Where reference is made to the Tyne, if the interview was not carried out by myself, the interviewer, primarily Frank Ennis, will of course be acknowledged. The other member of the team, without whom the project would not have gone ahead, was Professor R.K. Brown.

47   Brokie, W. "Sunderland Notables", Sunderland, Hills and Co. 1894, p?.

48   Inman, P. op cit, p127.

49   Dougan, D. "The Shipwrights", Newcastle, Frank Graham 1975, p274.

50   Shipbuilding and Shipping Record, 8th May 1941.

51   Quoted in: Barnett, C. op cit, pp120-121.

52   Shipbuilding and Shipping Record, 10th July 1941.

53   Agreement between S.E.F. and the National Painters Society, 29th January 1943. Held in the Public Record Office, Ref: Lab 8/629.

54   Ibid

55   W.S.A. minutes, 26th February 1943.

56   Quoted in: Barnett, C. op cit, pp115-116.

57   T.S.A. minutes, 13th February 1945.

58   See: Croucher, R. "Engineers at War", London, Merlin 1982,
         Chapter 5;
         Anderson, K. "Wartime Women", 1981;
         Douie, V. "Daughters of Britain", Oxford, George
         Ronald 1950.

59   Shipbuilding and Shipping Record, 30th March 1944.

60   S.S.R., 16th November 1944.

61   Letter to Amos Ayre (Admiralty), 22nd July 1942, held in
      Tyne and Wear Archive (Doxfords Correspondence).

62   S.S.R., 2nd July 1942.

63   Painter/Sign Writer, Greenwells Dock, interviewed 10th
      October 1983.

64   Plater's helper, Doxfords, interviewed 27th September 1983.

65   Labourer, Readheads, interviewed by Frank Ennis, 1st
      December 1983.

66   Labourer, Swan Hunters, interviewed by Frank Ennis, 2nd
      February 1984.

67   Electrician, Hawthorn Leslie, interviewed 7th October 1983.

68   Ministry of Labour and National Service: "Wartime Employment
      of Women in Shipbuilding and Allied Industries", 1942, held
      in the Imperial War Museum.

69   Letter dated 18th December 1940, held in P.R.O., ref: Lab
      18/66.

70   Letter dated 16th January 1941, held in P.R.O., ref: Lab
      18/66.

71   Welder, Readheads, interviewed 9th March 1984.

72   Ibid

73   Lathe operator, Greenwells Dock, interviewed 5th October
      1983.

74   Welder, Swan Hunters, interviewed by Frank Ennis, 30th

November 1983.

75   Electrician, Hawthorne Leslie, interviewed 7th October 1983.

76   Caulker, Readheads, interviewed by F. Ennis, 26th June 1984.

77   Plumber, Readheads, interviewed by F, Ennis, 2nd December
      1983.

78   Splicer, Doxfords, interviewed 29th September 1983.

79   Welder, Readheads, interviewed 9th March 1984.

80   Fitter, North Eastern Marine, interviewed by F. Ennis, 22nd
      March 1984.

81   Lathe operator, Greenwells Dock, interviewed 5th October
      1983.

82   Caulker, Readheads, interviewed by F. Ennis, 26th June 1984.

83   Electrician, Hawthorne Leslie, interviewed 7th October 1983.

84   Fitter, N.E. Marine, interviewed by F. Ennis, 22nd March
      1984.

85   Sheet Metal Worker, Swan Hunters, interviewed by F. Ennis,
      10th February 1984.

86   Splicer, Doxfords, interviewed 29th September 1983.

87   Labourer, Doxfords, interviewed 17th October 1983.

88   Welder, Readheads, interviewed 9th March 1983.

89   Sawmill labourer, Doxfords, interviewed 4th October 1983.

90   Plater's helper, Doxfords, interviewed 27th September 1983.

91   Sawmill labourer, Doxfords, interviewed 4th October 1983.

92   Driller, Wallsend Slipway, interviewed 5th January 1984.

93   Electrician, Hawthorne Leslie, interviewed by F. Ennis, 13th
      December 1983.

94   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

95   Reid, A.   "The Division of Labour and Politics in Britain
      1850-1920", Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge 1981,

unpublished paper, pp23-24.

96   "Industry" here should be understood as a complex term,
      including in any empirical example both capital and labour -
      and the nature of the relationship between the two.

97   Hill, S. "Competition and Control at Work", London,
      Heinemann 1981, p238.

98   Calvocoressi, P. "The British Experience 1945-75", quoted
      in: Marwick, A. "British Society Since 1945", Harmonds-
      worth, Penguin 1982, p14.

99   Thompson, D. "England in the Twentieth Century", Harmonds-
      worth, Penguin 1982, p218.

100   Williamson, W. "Class, Culture and Community", London,
      R.K.P. 1982, pp219-220.

101   Leslie Tait, Electrician.

102   Hill, S. op cit, p249.

103   Hyman, R. "Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction",
      London, Macmillan 1979, p135.
      Similarly, Colin Crouch has argued that:
          "The involvement of union leaders in government bodies
      was an ambiguous development ... àité enabled the unions to
      exercise influence within many areas from which they had
      previously been excluded; it gave them access to information
      about how the political and economic system worked; and it
      brought a new stature and acceptance to their position in
      society.
          On the other hand, this involvement fell short of any
      bodies which exercised real control over the economy, or was
      limited to the token representation of trade unionists on
      organisations whose fundamental mode of operation remained
      entirely unaffected."
      Crouch, C. "The Politics of Industrial Relations", Glasgow,
      Fontana 1979, p21.

104   Quoted in: Pelling, H. "A History of British Trade
      Unionism", Harmondsworth, Penguin 1979, pp230-231.

105   Pelling, H. op cit, p231.

106   McGoldrick, J. "Industrial Relations and the Division of
      Labour in the Shipbuilding Industry since the war", B.J.I.R.
      Vol.21 No.2, July 1983.

107 As we have seen, the existence of this consciousness goes
     some way to explain the "conservative nature" of British
     shipbuilders in terms of their willingness to hold to the
     established labour process. For the question of Capital
     accumulation was not experienced as a problem directly
     stemming from the organisation of the labour process, as it
     was in some other industries less prone to cyclical
     fluctuations (see: Edwards, R. "Contested Terrain", London,
     Heinemann 1979).

108 McGoldrick, J. "Crisis and the Division of labour:
     Clydeside Shipbuilding in the inter-war period", in:
     Dickson, A. (Ed) "Capital and Class in Scotland",
     Edinburgh, John Donald Ltd 1982.

109 During the course of the war 18 million tons of shipping had
     been lost, of which only about two thirds had been made up
     by new building. Pelling, H. "Modern Britain 1885-1955",
     London, Cardinal 1974, p170.

110 "If the American reserve fleet is excluded, the proportion
     of world tonnage over twenty five years old came to nearly
     25% in the years around 1950 compared with just over 17% in
     1935."
     Cairncross, A.K. and Parkinson, J.R. "The Shipbuilding
     Industry", Chapter in: Burn, D. (Ed) "The Structure of
     British Industry" Vol.2, Cambridge, CUP 1958, p97.

111 Estimated to be as large as 20% less efficient, than the
     pre-war average, between 1945-50. Monthly Bulletin of
     Statistics, United Nations Vol8 No.9, September 1954.

112 McGoldrick, J. (1982) op cit, p1.

113 The Shipbuilder and Marine Engineer (S.M.E.), April 1945.

114 S.M.E., April 1945.

115 W.S.A. minutes, 23rd January 1945.

116 Boilermakers Monthly Report, General Secretary's Remarks,
     September 1945.

117 S.M.E., March 1945.

118 S.M.E., July 1945.

119 S.M.E., May 1945.

120 Letter from T.S.A. to District Shipyard Controller, 6th June

1946, held in Tyne and Wear Archive.

121 W.S.A. minutes, 31st December 1945.

122 By October 1947 this unemployment in the northern region
     amounted to 2,000 men and youths normally employed in the
     industry. S.M.E., October 1947.

123 Boilermakers Annual Report 1945 to 1949, membership returns.

124 Boilermakers Annual Report 1945, General Secretary's
     Remarks.

125 W.S.A. minutes, 23rd May 1947.

126 W.S.A. minutes, 6th January 1947. Further to this it was
     explained that because of its temporary nature a number of
     facilities had been omitted from the yard, including:
          Frame turning equipment
          Plumbers shop
          Blacksmiths shop
          Drawing office, etc.

127 S.M.E., August 1945.

128 Shepherd, R.B. "Developments in British Merchant Ship-
     building" in "Shipbuilding and Shipping Record", 29th August
     1946.

129 "With the co-operation of the Admiralty merchant shipyard
     manual welding plant ... was increased threefold between
     1942-1944." Shepherd, R.B. op cit.

130 S.M.E., July 1947: "The Future of Welding in Ship
     Construction".

131 B.M.R. June 1949: Letter from Bro. D. McGarvey, dated 27th
     May 1949.

132 B.M.R. June 1947: Letter from Bro. J. Boyd Clydebank No.2.

133 B.M.R. June 1947.

134 See: Roberts, I.P. "The Labour Process in the Shipbuilding
     Industry", unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of
     Durham Department of Sociology 1982.

135 Colin Crouch has argued that:
          "The pattern of industrial relations bequeathed by the
     extraordinary arrangements of war-time mobilization ...

contained a typical British patchwork of measures combining
to form a new compromise between the classes. Labour's
strength within polity and economy was considerably
strengthened by full employment and, more ambiguously, by
union participation in official machinery. The potentially
disruptive implications of the former were held in check by
the generation of a new national consensus (based on war
priorities, the construction of the welfare state, the
incorporation of the unions, the ending of party political
conflict over industrial relations) which included union
leaders who were, in turn, powerful enough to impose order
on their members."
Colin Crouch (1979) op cit, pp27-28.

136 S.M.E., August 1947.

137 Boilermakers Monthly Report, General Secretary's Remarks,
     October 1945.

138 Mark Hodgson's speech at TUC 1945 on the 40 hour issue.

139 B.A.R. 1945, General Secretary's Remarks.

140 B.A.R. 1949, General Secretary's Remarks.

141 B.A.R. 1949, General Secretary's Remarks. It is significant
     that Bedeauxism rather than Taylorism is mentioned
     specifically, this reference has a double significance.
     Firstly as Craig Littler has argued, during the inter-war
     period "Bedeauxism became the most commonly used system of
     managerial control in British Industry". Secondly the
     reference to Bedeauxism embodies a polemical point in that
     the system was largely discredited during the war by
     Bedeaux's close links with the Nazis.
     See: Littler, C.R. "The Developments of the Labour Process
     in Capitalist Societies", London, Heinemann 1982, esp.
     Chapter 8.

142 Paper read before the North East Coast Institution of
     Engineers and Shipbuilders, 11th January 1946, reprinted in
     S.S.R., 24th January 1946.

143 Ibid

144 Ibid

145 Ibid My emphasis. The reference to scientific management as
     a new technique is interesting and perhaps reflects its new
     found importance in the post war world as a technique
     advocated by the dispensers of Marshall aid.

146 Ibid

147 Hodgson, M. "The Outlook of the Craftsman", Broadcast on
     BBC radio Sunday 26th October 1947. Reprinted in B.M.R.,
     November 1947.

148 Ibid

149 Ibid

150 B.M.R., May 1948, General Secretary's Remarks. From 3rd May
     1948 E.J. Hill took over as General Secretary from Sir Mark
     Hodgson.

151 B.M.R., May 1949.

152 B.M.R., June 1948, General Secretary's Remarks.

153 W.S.A. minutes, 4th March 1949.

154 In this connection, see: Cipolla, C.M.C. (Ed) "The Fontana
     Economic History of Europe: Contemporary Economies - 1",
     Glasgow, Fontana 1976, and Eatwell, J. "Whatever Happened
     to Britain", London, BBC 1982.

155 Flinn, M.W. "An Economic and Social History of Britain
     Since 1700", London, Macmillan 1970, p399.

156 The difficulty in obtaining long term investment is situated
     by Aaronovitch et al within the fraction between finance and
     industrial capital as a specific feature of British
     Capitalism. Aaronovitch, S. et al. "The Political Economy
     of British Capitalism", London, McGraw-Hill 1981, esp.
     Chapters 6 and 7.

157 Burawoy, M. "Towards a Marxist Theory of the Labour
     Process: Braverman and Beyond" in Politics and Society,
     Vol.8, 1978.

Table

Percentage of workers, specified trades, in the major yards in the North Eastern Region: 1942.

RIVER Yard	Holders On		Riveters (hand)		Riveters (pneumatic)	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
WEAR						
S.P. Austin	6.45	3.5	14.4	7.8	0.5	0.3
Bartram	9.2	5.3	18.6	10.7	2.5	1.4
J. Crown & Sons	5.1	3.6	8.6	6.1	0.8	0.6
W. Doxford	8.2	4.3	1.1	0.9	12.4	6.6
J. Laing	10.1	5.9	4.1	2.4	5.7	3.3
W. Pickersgill	9.8	4.9	12.6	6.3	6.5	3.2
Short Bros	12.0	6.7	7.9	4.4	6.8	3.8
J.L. Thompson	6.7	4.0	4.4	2.7	5.2	3.1
TYNE						
W.G. Armstrong Whitworth	6.2	3.0	1.1	0.5	11.0	5.3
Hawthorne Leslie	7.4	4.45	5.6	3.4	5.5	3.4
Palmers	1.9	1.0	3.0	1.6	0.9	0.5
Readhead	7.95	3.8	3.7	1.8	9.3	4.4
Swan Hunter (Wallsend)	1.6	1.0	4.4	2.9	9.7	5.5
Swan Hunter (Neptune)	4.0	2.3	0.7	0.4	n/a	n/a
Vickers Armstrong	2.2	1.5	0.5	0.4	4.2	2.9
TEES						
Furness	6.4	3.6	9.7	5.4	3.2	1.8
Wm Gray & Co	7.6	3.9	8.8	4.4	7.4	3.8
Stockton Con Co	4.9	3.6	4.1	3.0	n/a	n/a
Teesside Bridge & Engineer Wks	11.1	5.7	6.5	3.3	8.7	4.4

Key:
    A = % of skilled workforce
    B = % of total   workforce

Table   (continued)

Percentage of workers, specified trades, in the major yards in
the North Eastern Region: 1942.

RIVER Yard	Platers		Welders	
	A	B	A	B
WEAR				
S.P. Austin	15.5	8.4	0.8	0.4
Bartram	22.0	12.0	2.1	1.2
J. Crown & Sons	11.3	8.1	3.5	2.5
W. Doxford	20.7	11.0	4.2	2.2
J. Laing	21.7	12.7	3.2	1.9
W. Pickersgill	14.4	7.2	1.9	0.9
Short Bros	17.8	9.9	4.5	2.5
J.L. Thompson	18.7	11.2	5.4	3.2
TYNE				
W.G. Armstrong Whitworth	16.7	8.0	2.0	0.9
Hawthorne Leslie	13.95	8.4	4.1	2.5
Palmers	6.0	3.3	2.4	1.3
Readhead	17.9	8.5	5.1	2.4
Swan Hunter (Wallsend)	11.4	7.5	7.1	4.6
Swan Hunter (Neptune)	11.6	6.6	8.5	4.6
Vickers Armstrong	9.0	6.15	5.2	3.5
TEES				
Furness	14.4	7.9	4.2	2.3
Wm Gray & Co	15.5	7.9	1.8	0.9
Stockton Con Co	12.2	8.9	9.3	6.8
Teesside Bridge & Engineer Wks	10.7	5.4	7.4	3.8

Key:
    A = % of skilled workforce
    B = % of total   workforce

CHAPTER FOUR

Towards the Eighties

Part I

Approaching the Long Boom

In the last chapter it was noted that for those connected

with the shipbuilding industry the expectation was that after the

war a slump in demand would follow a brief "boom" to make good

wartime destruction, as was the case after World War I. This view

was also shared by those taking a somewhat wider view of economic

prospects.   Thus the economist Samuelson predicted in 1943 the

probability that for the U.S. economy, which was in a far

stronger position than the UK, the post-war period would bring a

> "... nightmarish combination of the worst features of
> inflation and deflation ... there would be ushered in the
> greatest period of unemployment and industrial dislocation
> which any economy has ever faced." (1)

A similar preoccupation with the developments that occurred after

World War I led Joseph Schumpeter to suggest in 1945 that:

> "The all but general opinion seems to be that capitalist
> methods will be unequal to the task of reconstruction. (It
> is) not open to doubt that the decay of capitalist society
> is very far advanced." (2)

However, with the benefit of hindsight it is easy to see

that these views were mistaken, not because they were unrealistic

at the time, but rather because longer term processes within the

world system combined with specific forms of political action to

ensure that history would not simply repeat itself.   A key

argument in an earlier chapter was that the ferocity of the

inter-war depressions was fuelled in part by the decline in

British hegemony and the disinclination of the only other power

who could have assumed that hegemony, the USA, to do so [3]. In

this situation there was almost a temporary retreat from the

expansion of the modern World System as states "defended" them-

selves by measures of "economic nationalism" [4]. In the

aftermath of the Second World War the relative impoverishment of

Europe and the indebtedness of Britain to the USA ensured that if

the American economy was to avoid serious depression its only

option was to become the "sponsor" of the growth of the world

capitalist system.

This was not, as we have seen, self-evident by the end of

the war, when as Armstrong et al have argued there were two

possible options facing the USA:

> "At one extreme was the option of exploiting to the hilt the
> position of economic dominance achieved by the United
> States. This would be reflected in insistence on absolute
> freedom of penetration of U.S. goods, with no attempt to
> help the reconstruction of production inside these
> countries. At the other extreme the United States could
> concentrate on the fastest possible recovery in these
> economies on the grounds that this would be the best
> guarantee of an expanding market for U.S. trade and
> investment in the long term." (5)

In the short term the former option was adopted with aid to

Europe and Japan limited to emergency relief. The ending of the

Lend-Lease scheme to Britain necessitated the negotiation of the

"dollar loan" from the USA, and to a smaller extent Canada. But

such was the relative strength of the USA both industrially and

fiscally that the loan was to little avail, disappearing as

currency speculation rather than forming any basis for capital

investment.   Moreover the terms of the loan further exacerbated

the problem of American (over)dominance:

> "The terms were onerous, one currency could only be
> exchanged for another under strict control. The loan
> required almost immediate convertability of sterling, into
> other currencies without government restrictions, as a
> condition for its acceptance. The loan arrived in 1946, at
> the same time as Germany and other European countries were
> presenting the United States and the United Kingdom
> governments enormous problems with financing their imports.
> Once the pound was declared convertible, the entire dollar
> loan disappeared in exchange speculations." (6)

Britain could ill afford to "pay her way" in the

reconstruction of Europe, having sold assets and incurred

enormous debt during the war:

> "War damage at home and to shipping amounted to some £3
> billion. Overseas assets worth more than another £1 billion
> had been sold or lost and the income from foreign
> investments halved. The external debt had been increased by
> £3.3 billion. The export trade had been halved and exports
> were paying for less that a fifth of imports." (7)

By 1947 it was becoming clear not only that Britain could do

little to regenerate the European economy but also that aid

needed to be sought in order to reconstruct her own economy.

Indeed the continuing problems of all European economies led to a

realisation that:

> "rehabilitation of the economic structure of Europe quite
> evidently will require a much longer time and greater effort
> than has been foreseen ...
>   ... The truth of the matter is that Europe's require-
> ments for the next three or four years of ... essential
> products - principally from America - are so much greater
> than her present ability to pay that she must have
> substantial additional help." (8)

The launching of the Marshall plan indicated the official

recognition by American statesmen of their "de facto" role as the

hegemonic world power, and whilst much has been made of the

Marshall plan as a "Truman Doctrine in action" it was the

economic self-interest of the USA rather than issues of

ideological principle which forced the change of approach.

However it should be noted that such economic self-interest was

framed around and consciously addressed to a world within which a

substantial non-capitalist bloc existed.   As a senior US

diplomatic officer stated at the time in commenting upon the

prospects for Europe:

> "If these areas are allowed to spiral downwards into
> economic anarchy, than at best they will drop out of the
> United States' orbit and try an independent nationalistic
> policy; at worst they will swing into the Russian orbit. We
> will then face the world alone. What will be the cost in
> dollars and cents of our armaments and our economic
> isolation? I do not see how we could possibly avoid a
> depression far greater than that of 1929-32 and crushing
> taxes to pay for the direct commitments we should be forced
> to make around the world." (9)

The USA had at long last begun to orientate itself towards the

world not only as a state amongst others but as the global

representative of capitalism. For as a contemporary US official

put it,

> "If the American program for world trade were to fail, its
> failure would hasten the spread of nationalization among the
> other countries of the world ... We cannot insulate
> ourselves against the movements that sweep around the globe.
> If every other major nation were to go Socialist, it would
> be extremely difficult, if not impossible to preserve real
> private enterprise in the United States." (10)

The solution to the problems of the US economy and those of the
other capitalist countries was seen to lie, unlike during the
inter-war period, in the rapid growth of international production
and trade.

> "The general interest of US business and finance in the
> post-war period, perceived as such from 1947 onwards at
> least, was that the capitalist world should expand rapidly,
> with as open access as possible for US commodities and
> capital." (11)

The rise of the USA as the state exercising hegemony over the
capitalist world should not just be seen in terms of a
quantitative rise in its importance and a fall in the importance
of Britain. Rather the form of the basis of that hegemony had
changed from a state enmeshed in the responsibilities of
colonial administration to one whose domination was built upon
economic imperialism without the attendant complexities of direct
colonial government. This meant a change in the basis of
"control" exercised through that hegemony; no longer was the
detail inter- and intra-state cultural tinkering of the "divide
and rule" tactic necessary, rather the monoculture of capital and
commodity control would suffice.

The preconditions and implications of this state of affairs
were profound. Not only could the "economics of imperialism" [12]
be extended more easily than colonial occupation, but the rate of
such expansion could become cumulative. In this way and
effectively for the first time the "equality" before the market
of all people of the non-eastern bloc world was a real potential.

That these changes were reinforced by and articulated through

technical change cannot be denied. Such changes affected not

only aggregate figures of economic growth but were experienced as

rapid changes in lifestyle of millions of people. So great have

the changes in the post-war world been that Margaret Mead has

spoken of the supersession of the concept of migration in space

with that of "migration in time". In this context she suggests

that a profound change in the relationship between the

generations has occurred; the changes she outlines are worth

noting.

> "Within two decades, 1940-60, events occurred that have
> irrevocably altered human beings' relationships to other
> human beings and to the natural world. The invention of the
> computer, the successful application of atomic fission and
> fusion in both military and civil fields, the discovery of
> the biochemistry of the living cell, exploration of the
> planet's surface, the extreme acceleration of population
> growth ... the breakdown in the organisation of cities, the
> beginning of man's destruction of his own natural
> environment, the linking up of all parts of the world by
> means of jet propelled flight and television, the building
> of the first satellites and man's first ventures into space,
> the newly realised possibilities of unlimited atomic energy
> and synthetic raw materials, and, in the more advanced
> countries, the transformation of the age-old problems of
> production into problems of distribution and consumption -
> all these have brought about a drastic, irreversible
> division between the generations." (13)

We shall return to the issue of the relationship between the

generations at a later point, but the important factor to note

about the last quotation is the magnitude of the changes outlined

and the extent of the geographical penetration of such changes.

It is clear that the effects of these changes go beyond advanced

capitalist countries.

"In the 1930s, when one arrived in a New Guinea village, the
first requests were for medicine, as someone came forward
with a festering wound or bad laceration, and for trade
goods - razor blades, fishhooks, salt, adze blades, cloth.
The European was expected to bring material objects from the
outside world and, if he stayed, to make it easier for the
village people to obtain these goods. But in 1967 the first
conversation went:
        "Have you a tape recorder?"
        "Yes, why?"
        "We have heard other people's singing on the radio and
        we want other people to hear ours."
A major shift. Through the spread of a world culture of
transistor radios and democratic theories about the value of
each small culture, the people of Tambunam had heard New
Guinea music, which it was now Australian-United Nations
government policy to broadcast, and they had come to feel
that they could participate, on an equal footing in this new
world of broadcasting." (14)

The world system in the post-war world was to become much

more than a system of the exchange of goods. However, we are

getting ahead of ourselves. In returning to a consideration of

the circumstances at the beginning of the post-war period we must

now look at another of the preconditions of the long boom in the

advanced capitalist countries, namely the labour force. In the

reconstruction of Europe, American control of the "purse strings"

ensured that in most countries the autonomous part played by the

organisations of labour would be small.

"The Marshall Plan furnished the initial impetus for
rebuilding the European economy, but it was only accepted at
the cost of abstaining from socialist policies.
        Such was the background to the reconstruction and the
policies of the trade union and political organisations of
the working class in the European countries after the war.
They had more or less to fit into it, being too weak to play
a determining role." (15)

The factors contributing to this weakness were various, and on

the whole ensured a degree of compliance with the policies of

reconstruction which was largely absent in the wake of the First

World War.

> "The existence of the large potential reserve army of labour
> in itself reduced the bargaining strength of the working
> class, but this was combined with a variety of political
> factors. Fascism in Germany and Italy, and occupation by
> the Nazis in other European countries, had weakened labour
> movements, as had the high unemployment of the inter-war
> years. The Cold War ideology, Stalinism, and the consequent
> split between the communists and other sections of the
> labour movement also weakened the working class ... The
> terms on which the working class cooperated with capitalism
> varied from country to country ... but the pattern of
> compliance and the dominance of social democratic strategies
> among the working class was general." (16)

Where such compliance was not forthcoming coercion could be

and was applied. Where industrial and/or political action was

threatened by the working class, the economic climate was created

in which capitalist control could be reasserted. In Germany

strikes swept through the Ruhr in 1947; initially the issues

concerned housing and food but over time the issue of

nationalisation also came to the fore. At its height the strike

wave involved 350,000 workers and as well as mass demonstrations

Miners operated an effective "go-slow" when at work. During the

strike wave the US Governor Newman said in a broadcast:

> "In the US Congress there is a distinct inclination to
> oppose further shipment of food to Germany. This can be
> traced back to rumours of strikes, threats of strikes and a
> certain resistance in behaviour to the authorities. Strikes
> which endanger the policies of the occupying powers, or
> interfere with their plans will not be tolerated ... I have
> the power to cut the rations of anyone involved in work
> unrest ... this would be drastic and extend for an
> indefinite period of time." (17)

In Italy a deflationary policy period from 1948 onwards
effectively quelled industrial unrest. In France, the autumn of
1947 saw a general strike to which the government responded by
introducing legislation carrying penalties for "interfering with
the right to work". They also called up 80,000 army reservists
and Police broke up picket lines and occupied Paris' power
stations. At its peak the strike involved three million people,
but by December this had fallen by a third and on the 9th of that
month the strike was called off. In Japan a nine point
stabilisation programme was launched under the supervision of
American banker Joseph Dodge. As a direct result of the
retrenchment measures 700,000 workers were sacked. Dodge noted
at the time that:

> " ... the standard of living has probably been permitted to
> go too high ... (higher unemployment) ... will in turn lead
> to increased efficiency of labour and increased production."
> (18)

In the USA itself there was a strike wave in early 1946 and wages
rose by 15%. However by May 1946 Truman initiated legislation
which gave the government powers to induct strikers and union
officials into the Army. This was supplemented in June 1947 by
the much more comprehensive Taft-Hartley Act. In all these
countries, then, there was clear evidence of an offensive against
labour, in some cases by both government and employers. In those
countries occupied by allied forces there was often direct
evidence of Marshall aid being tied to concessions which were to
be extracted from labour. The one country which appeared to

provide an exception to these developments was Britain.   As

Armstrong et al have argued,

> "Despite the anticommunist witch-hunt, and the control
> exerted by the right-wing leadership, employers in Britain
> never launched a frontal assault on the labour movement
> comparable to those in France, Italy, Japan or even the USA.
> This may actually have weakened the employers in the long
> run.   Complacent, with their markets carved up at home and
> in the Empire, they failed to launch the kind of "rational-
> ization" drive against the labour movement that was a
> precondition for the investment booms of the fifties in
> continental Europe and Japan." (19)

The reasons why no such "assault" on labour was forthcoming

are more complex than complacency alone.   Firstly the labour

surpluses evident in most countries which had experienced

occupation of one sort or another were absent in Britain.   As one

historian has suggested, the slow rate of demobilisation had a

double consequence:

> "While defense expenditure remained a substantial proportion
> of gross national product and of the government's budget,
> the economy was acutely short of labour." (20)

A tight labour market is clearly not the best time for employers

to initiate an attack on the conditions of labour.   Added to this

"objective" factor is also the psychological dimension of

"victory" and the changed nature of the state.   In continental

Europe all of the belligerent powers had at some point been

occupied by the enemy, a sense of defeat in both the capitalist

and labouring classes made submission to the will of those

promoting reconstruction under the Marshall plan more likely.   Of

more importance than this however was the changed nature of the

state.   Nowhere was Marwick's third dimension of war,

"participation in the national cause by hitherto underpriviledged

groups who thereby make social gains" [21], truer than in

relation to Britain. The condition of this participation were

the incorporation of the representatives of labour and those

sympathetic to the "cause" of labour into the state apparatus.

Two of the most important features of this incorporation were the

co-option of Labour politicians into the coalition government and

secondly the increase in importance of those sympathetic to

labour in the civil service. In the latter case within the

treasury the rise from opposition to orthodoxy of the personage

and ideas of J.M. Keynes readily springs to mind. But there were

others of more "radical" temperaments who were also to be

inducted into the civil service. G.D.H. Cole "found himself,

somewhat to his surprise, a temporary civil servant in the

Ministry of Labour" [22] organising the "Manpower Survey" of

1940.

It would be wrong to overstate the influence of such

"participation" as purely a wartime contingency. However the

election of a Labour government in 1945 ensured the continued

relevance of a more radical outlook within the state than had

been the case in the inter-war period. Certainly in the case of

Keynes, his influence remained paramount for most of the period

of the "long boom". Underlying his approach to practical

economic issues was a philosophy which condemned the "love of

money" as the "moral problem of our age", and thus:

> "Keynes's efforts at making capitalism work more effectively
> had as an ultimate aim, paradoxically, the supersession of
> capitalist values by higher and more satisfying ones. As he
> saw it, the real benefit of the almost inevitable advance of
> abundance was that it would dethrone wealth and material
> possession as dominating ends of life." (23)

Given all these factors it was unlikely that a successful

assault upon the labour movement and conditions and practices at

work could have been put together; the "environment" created by

the state and the problems of a tight labour market coupled with

the dependence of many employers upon government contracts and

the "cost plus" system militated against an employer's offensive.

However it would be wrong to conclude in the absence of such an

offensive that the unbridled aspirations of labour dominated the

period of reconstruction. The particular nature of the State and

balance of class forces created a self-imposed discipline in the

sphere of consumption during the period of austerity. Economic

"health" was restored to the nation by sacrifice in the realm of

consumption, particularly imported goods, rather than

"rationalisation" of production itself. A favourable export

market existed enabling the government's initial target of 175%

of pre-war levels to be achieved by 1950 [24]. There were

however limits to the duration to which working people were

prepared to give their voluntary consent to austerity, and

pressures from this quarter, combined with those bemoaning the

burden of taxes as a stifling of incentive to enterprise, reduced

the Labour Party's majority at the general election of February

1950 and was a large element in its defeat in the election of

1951.

With the change of government was to come an eventual change

of emphasis. The controls on individual consumption were to be

lifted, the consumer boom based on, and giving form to, the long

upswing of the post-war world economy was about to begin.   In

this movement Europe was to follow in the footsteps of America.

> "One of the most notable features of the present upswing in
> Western Europe is the great increase in purchases of
> consumer durable goods. The expansion of the West European
> motor car industry was largely destined for European
> markets, and concurrently there has been a growing sale of
> furniture, electrical appliances and other durable household
> goods which, when added to the increase in purchases of
> motor-cars constitutes a veritable wave of consumer buying."
> (25)

The long boom was to enable the continuation of consensus policy

in both the political [26] and industrial relations [27] spheres.

It would appear then that the "historical compromise" of the

English class system had once again become the defining quality

in this period of change [28].   We shall return to the market

conditions for shipbuilding during the period of the long boom in

the next chapter.   Now however we must address ourselves to the

changing nature of the working class, specifically upon Wearside

but with inevitable reference to wider contexts.

Part II

One Side of the Employment Relationship

There is a difficulty for anyone attempting to outline

qualitative, as well as quantitative, changes in the lifestyle of

the working class. It is an irony that this difficulty is often

consciously acknowledged by writers as problematic and then, it

would seem, almost ignored in their substantive material.

Perhaps one of the best examples of this whole problem is

available in the classic work of Richard Hoggart, "The Uses of

Literacy". The author states on the first page of the first

chapter that:

> " ... difficulties of definition are less troublesome than
> are those of avoiding the romanticisms which tempt anyone
> who discusses "the workers" or "the common people", and
> these romanticisms deserve to be mentioned first. For they
> increase the danger of over-stressing the admirable
> qualities of earlier working class culture and its debased
> condition today. The two over-emphases tend to reinforce
> each other, and so the contrast is often exaggerated." (29)

Having noted this pitfall the author goes on to outline the "core

of working-class attitudes":

> "The more we look at working class life, the more we try to
> reach the core of working-class attitudes, the more surely
> does it appear that the core is a sense of the personal, the
> concrete, the local: it is embodied in the idea of, first,
> the family and, second, the neighbourhood ... Where almost
> everything else is ruled from the outside, is chancy and
> likely to knock you down when you least expect it, the home
> is yours and real: the warmest welcome is still "Mek y'self
> at 'ome"." (30)

These traditional virtues are at a later point contrasted to the

processes that are increasingly "ensuring that working-people are

culturally robbed":

> "Inhibited now from ensuring the "degradation" of the masses
> economically, the logical processes of competitive commerce,
> favoured from without by the whole climate of the time and
> from within assisted by the lack of direction, the doubts
> and uncertainty before their freedom of working-people them-
> selves, are ensuring that working people are culturally
> robbed. Since these processes can never rest, the holding
> down, the constant pressure not to look outwards and
> upwards, becomes a positive thing, becomes a new and
> stronger form of subjection; this subjection promises to be
> stronger than the old because the chains of cultural
> subordination are both easier to wear and harder to strike
> away than those of economic subordination. "We are betrayed
> by what is false within", by our common weaknesses ..." (31)

The theme of loss of something valuable in the face of

increasing material prosperity is one that is repeated in many

accounts of the working class in the post-war period. From

sophisticated versions which viewed the working class from a

distance to more "folksy" portrayals in the classic mould of

Hoggart there seemed to be emerging the potential for a consensus

that the working class had become and was increasingly becoming

not like it once was. The causes of these changes were not

agreed upon. For Marcuse changes in technology and the labour

process were the material basis upon which a change in

consciousness was affected:

> " ... Changes in the character of work and the instruments
> of production change the attitude and the consciousness of
> the labourer, which become manifest in the widely discussed
> "social and cultural integration" of the labouring class
> with capitalist society. Is this a change in consciousness
> only? The affirmative answer frequently given by Marxists
> seems strangely inconsistent. Is such a fundamental change
> in consciousness understandable without assuming a
> corresponding change in the "societal existence"? Granted
> even a high degree of ideological independence, the links
> which tie this change to the transformation of the
> productive process militate against such an interpretation.

> Assimilation in needs and aspirations, in the standard of
> living, in leisure activities, in politics derives from an
> integration in the plant itself, in the material process of
> production. It is certainly questionable whether one can
> speak of "voluntary integration" (Serge Mallet) in any other
> than an ironical sense." (32)

Blackwell and Seabrook argue that the "damage" done to the

working class cannot be seen to stem directly from the material

gains made by the class in the post-war period. Rather,

> "The question is not whether certain life-enhancing or
> labour-saving objects and artefacts lighten people's lives
> (they most surely do) but what other function, other than
> their ostensible useful purpose, they serve? That is, what
> else is sold alongside, within and under these products?
> What concealed pains and forfeits are involved in their
> production right from the moment when the raw materials are
> extracted and processed until they appear in all their
> shining innocence in the world of goods." (33)

The effects of such changes lead the authors to conclude that

"what can be said with some certainty is that a moment which

offered certain possibilities has definitively passed" (34).

Whilst others have situated these changes differently, for

example Martin sees changes in the post-war culture of the

working class as representing the ritualised realisation of a

move from "control" to "liminality" (35), the implicit question

in all these analyses is "What Went Wrong?" (36).

This question is central and forms the negative basis upon

which many analyses of the post-war working class have been

developed. It can be found not only within the sophisticated

ruminations of sociologists and other social theorists but also

within more localised studies.

"The question was asked, "What went wrong?". If in 1939 and

earlier, before the break up in the pattern of working class
life, the heroic women ruled the roost, how do you account
for the transition to the notorious bingo women who neglect
their children and who have allowed family life to go to pot
on the large new housing estates in Sunderland and
elsewhere?" (37)

Is the question fair, given that its basis is a negative one?

Are we as the apologists of Socialism or the gatekeeper of moral

values adopting a role similar to that ascribed by Gouldner to

Howard Becker as the "zoo-keeper of deviance", in which Becker's

school of deviance

> " ... expresses the romanticism of the zoo curator who
> preeningly displays his rare specimens. And like the zoo-
> keeper, he wishes to protect his collection; he does not
> want spectators to throw rocks at the animals behind the
> bars. But neither is he eager to tear down the bars and let
> the animals go. The attitude of these zoo-keepers of
> deviance is to create a comfortable and humane Indian
> Reservation, a protected social space, within which these
> colourful specimens may be exhibited, unmolested and
> unchanged." (38)

In the place of the deviant is the pre-war working class made

exotic by its "migration in time". Nevertheless the zoo-keeper

tag would seem relevant given the negative appraisal apparent in

the terms of the question. The species appears to have escaped

from (or is it entered?) its "iron cage" and, in pursuance of its

libidinal urges, has lost its purity and produced mongrel

offspring. Metaphor can be taken too far however! In order to

appraise the changes that have come about in the post-war working

class, and especially in so far as these changes relate to the

division of labour, we must return to the particular situation of

Wearside and chart those changes historically.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the occupational community
of shipbuilding workers in the inter-war period on Wearside was
"reproduced" in relatively stable physical boundaries, which were
structured hierarchically and through which networks existed
which ensured local loyalties with respect to individual yards in
times of loose labour markets. In its operation the physical
density of the shipbuilding community served to ensure a
particular "moral" density amongst the workforce and their
families. It will be useful to retain these characteristics of
the inter-war community in mind whilst we outline some of the
changes in the post-war community.

Physical Location and Housing

Whilst the local authority had pioneered some attempt at
slum clearance in the late 1930s, it was in the post-war period
that a massive house building programme was initiated. In 1945
the council made immediate plans to put up nearly 1,000 temporary
homes and within two years to build some 3,000 permanent ones.
By 1947 a vast programme was under way:

> "More than 20,000 houses in spreading estates were built in
> the twenty years after the War, acre upon acre of red brick
> stretching over the green fields and farms that had once
> surrounded the town. Sunderland almost doubled its built up
> area, and the change was recognized in the extension of the
> borough boundaries that took place in 1951 and again in
> 1967." (39)

Whilst initially many of these houses were to replace the
12,800 (40) homes destroyed or damaged by German bombing, in

later years their availability meant a decrease in population

density in central areas and areas adjoining the river:

> "In the 1951-61 period, therefore, even though the
> population of the whole town showed a small increase, eleven
> of the eighteen wards showed a decrease in population and
> all eleven were centrally located. By comparison the
> peripheral areas clearly show two rings of expansion: with
> greater rates further out and lesser rates closer to the
> centre." (41)

These changes can be seen graphically in tables (i) and (ii). Of

particular importance is the outflow of population from the wards

bordering the river, Monkwearmouth, Deptford, Bishopwearmouth,

Roker and Pallion in which were particular concentrations of

shipyard workers. Added to this is the rise of structurally

separate dwellings in all these areas. In other words there was

an absolute outflow of population from these "shipbuilding" wards

accompanied by a relative dilution in the physical concentration

of the population remaining in these areas.

The significance of these changes goes far beyond a simple

change in the location of dwellings. Rather, changes were

wrought in the ecological structure of the community itself. One

of the most important of these emerges from Brian Robson's study.

He mentions in passing what for him is merely a methodological

problem but which for our purposes indicates a development of far

greater significance. This is the effect that council housing

has upon the relationship between social class (as measured by

the Registrar General's categories) and rateable value.

> " ... the inclusion of the council sector robs ... rating
> valuations of much of their diagnostic value." (42)

Robson goes on to show that the reason for this is the lack of
correlation between social class and rateable value in the
council house sector.   He does this by dividing the census
enumeration districts into three groups: those which include 90%
or more of private houses (Private); those which include 90% or
more council housing (Council) and those which include less than
90% of either type (Mixed).   A high correlation between rating
values and social class can be observed in the Private sector but
this breaks down in the Council sector:

Correlation between rating values and Social Class

a) Private sector   r=0.870
b) Mixed sector   r=0.767   d)   Whole town r=0.606
c) Council sector   r=0.210

As Robson suggests,

> "The coefficients for the private and mixed sectors are
> significant at the 1% confidence level whereas that for the
> council sector is not significant even at the 5% level.
> Thus, while social class may vary quite markedly from one
> council estate to another, rating values show little if any
> change and what variation does occur is not necessarily
> associated with the social composition of the estate." (43)

The author might have added that this decoupling of social class
and rateable value occurred not only between estates but also
within estates.   In other words the skilled shipbuilding worker
(Registrar General's category III) moving from privately rented
accommodation in Pallion to a council house in Hylton Castle
could find himself living next door to an unskilled worker
(category V) with a larger family and therefore larger house
(44).   In such a situation then not only was the shipbuilding

worker confronted with a community in which there was a far

smaller density of other shipbuilding workers but also the

geographical structuring of socio-economic groups was no longer

directly established, via the market, in residential patterns.

Both these locational and residential changes made the

maintenance of occupational identity as the master status, and

the specific moral density of the locale, problematic. Given

this development Hopkins is in one sense mistaken when he

suggests that:

> "While provision of housing for those who needed it was an
> urgent priority, very little building was allowed for owner-
> occupiers. This was understandable, but it had two results;
> the very large council estates were socially monochrome in
> colour; there was very little social mix and very little
> provision for the kind of houses that managerial types would
> want when new industries were attracted to the town." (45)

The estates were composed primarily of manual workers, but in

terms of the very important   divisions between such

workers the social mix was perhaps greater, in residential

patterns, than in the more hierarchical patterns of the older

occupational community. It is exactly this social mix, indicating

a potentially heterogeneous moral order, which people were

concerned about in Dennis's study of opposition to slum clearance

in 1965:

> "It all depends when we go an where they put waa. When they
> pull it down you got to go where they say. There is that
> many people mixed up! Half of them are making slums of them
> already. You can't pick and choose. They dinnit seem to
> bother. They seem to mix the good 'uns with the bad 'uns."
>   "We hope we'll get amongst nice clean people - but we
> won't! We'll be put among dirty people to give them an

example!"
        "We know the new houses are nice, but its who you get
beside." (46)

The moral overtones of "clean" and "dirty" people, good 'uns and

bad 'uns, of "many people all mixed up" are obvious and point to

one of the features which is less popular amongst the champions

of the pre-war working class, namely its basis in hierarchy. The

hierarchy of occupation, of residential location and the moral

division between "respectable" and "rough" were all symmetrically

located in the occupational community which dissolved the

boundaries of home and work. The dilution of the density of the

shipbuilding occupational culture, particularly amongst those

moving out to the new estates, put a question mark against the

occupational identity of a worker as the master status for

himself and his family. The moral order of the community was no

longer symmetrically located within the tight geographical limits

of the physical "occupational" community.

    The pattern of residential location was further complicated

as the "stability" of the long boom became evident to workers

themselves, who in increasing numbers sought to buy their own

homes. This development was noted by Hopkins in commenting upon

the vast extension of public authority housing in the immediate

post-war period:

        "Then, it was not expected that a time would come round
        about the early 'sixties when quite large numbers of newly
        married people who stemmed from well established Sunderland
        artisan families would no longer want council houses. In
        many cases it could almost be said that the bride-to-be
        could insist to the draughtsman, young technician or skilled

worker that they must go into an owner-occupied house immediately after the honeymoon. At this time there were very few houses available for buyers within the County Borough; houses between Durham and Sunderland could be had for nearly a whole thousand pounds less, and so it was that, in the sixties, a very large number of the most promising young men and their wives went to live at Shiney Row, Belmont, Carrville, Houghton-le-Spring and Penshaw. The men, and in most cases their wives too, continued to work in Sunderland, but of course, their rather well turned out children would be educated by the County, and Sunderland was left without any social mix on its housing estates." (47)

The move out of the immediate locality of the workplace was also facilitated by the availability of transport. In the initial phases of council development the provision of adequate bus services became one important issue for those opposing the slum clearance programme. A survey by Sunderland Corporation Transport Department found that amongst families transferred from the Dock Street clearance area to Town End Farm estate total weekly journeys increased by 231% (48). The later move towards private housing ownership was accompanied by a massive increase in car ownership.

"The expansion in car ownership began in the fifties, but accelerated rapidly in the early sixties: 2,307,000 cars and vans in 1950; 3,609,000 in 1955; 5,650,000 in 1960; 9,131,000 in 1965; 11,802,000 in 1970." (49)

It is no coincidence that the period in which private car ownership "took off" was also that in which Hopkins noted the increasing tendency towards owner occupation of private housing. The continuation of the long boom had lasted through a period from which the initial financial benefits had gradually become associated with changes in attitudes; the rise of consumerism

took place in a context in which boom conditions began to be seen, especially by the post 1945 generations, as normal. However we are getting ahead of ourselves. The importance of changed attitudes will be dealt with later. The main point to stress is the fragmentation of residential locality as a central element in the occupational community. Furthermore in the case of Sunderland such geographical dispersion had two distinct moments (phases and aspects), the first being the expansion of council housing and slum clearance projects, the second being the increasing inclination towards home ownership amongst the skilled working class. If the allocation of council property in some senses jumbled up the social "structure" of location, the move towards private housing re-emphasised divisions between manual workers by putting far greater distance between skilled and unskilled than had hitherto been the case. Moreover private home ownership opened up divisions other than those based solely upon locality.

> "The increase in home ownership sets up new divisions within the wage-earning population: between those who thus acquire a small stake in the rising value of land and those who, as council or private tenants, are the victims of this inflation." (51)

Neither of these two changes were conducive to the retention of work-based identity as a master status and therefore to the continuance of a specific occupational community. The shifts that occurred in residential location ensured that there was no longer any guarantee of the unproblematic integration of the work

and non-work spheres of life. Increasingly the distance between
the "small life worlds" of work and the ecological community
presented the possibility of larger "gear shifts" within this
multi-world existence [52].

Attitudes and Social Change

There is a series of problems associated with talking about the attitudes or consciousness of the working class. Firstly,is a class a suitable "subject" or "object" in which to locate a specific consciousness? This problem is associated with a further conundrum - that in speaking about changes in the consciousness and attitudes of a given class, one might ask "what is the benchmark from which the "change" has occurred?". Finally one should consider what might be construed as evidence of specific consciousness and attitudes. These questions are all pertinent given the continuing debate about the nature of the post-war working class, a debate fuelled by changing economic and political circumstances, the long boom and its collapse, consensus politics and the creation of Thatcherism.

On consideration our first problem turns out to be a false one. For it is not a question of whether class is a suitable subject in which to locate a specific consciousness; class, as we saw in the critique of Braverman in Chapter One, is never just comprised of an objective moment. In reality class always implies a consciousness, as:

> " ... a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of
> disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw
> material of experience and in consciousness." (53)

Again in reality the consciousness of the working (or any other) class will be far less unitary than any ideal typical formation of "true" class consciousness. The notion of false consciousness

is too often used as a bucket with which to bail out a "leaking theoretical vessel". The complexities of class and consciousness point to the fact that not all attitudes and action are dictated solely by class position [54]. This implies that any attempt to portray a "generic" outline of working class consciousness will necessarily assume the status of an ideal type, a one-sided accentuation of "the essential characteristics and tendencies of the phenomenon in question" [55]. This is not to say that such views do not contain certain elements of reality, but rather that in the empirical situation the totality of individual and collective agencies involve elements which will often be self-contradictory.

The second problem of speaking of change in the working class is eased once we realise that any generic conceptions are likely to be ideal typical. Given this, our benchmark can be outlined with reference to evidence internal to our individual study, as in our consideration of the inter-war position and the importance of the "objective" position of the physical occupational community, and/or externally, with reference to the wider literature. However it is perhaps easier when, as in this case, the ideal type is referred to an empirical example. Focusing on shipbuilding workers on the Wear gives us the potential to use critically the wider accounts of the changes in the post-war working class.

This empirical reference point is particularly important in relation to our third problem, of what is to count as evidence for class attitudes and consciousness.   The problem is often one of the meaning of social action. For example, is strike activity always an indicator of "true" working class consciousness? As will be argued below, the meaning of such social action can vary widely with context.   Therefore any purely objective indices of class consciousness are likely to obscure as much as they reveal. In order to understand the meaning and significance of action as an indicator of consciousness, one must get closer to the subject and attempt to "re-cover" the inter-subjective significance of action and perception.   Such a move, when compared with more general accounts of the consciousness of the working class, can provide a dialogue out of which hopefully something of significance can be constructed.   In attempting this task I will actively use my own biographical experiences, in as much as these are suggestive of problematics and avenues of inquiry [56].

Firstly, however, it is perhaps useful to look at some of the terms of the debate which have shaped the discussion as to the (changing) nature of the working class in the post-war world [57]. Eldridge has suggested that the search for the "new working class":

"... is growing to be as long and tortuous as the quest for the Holy Grail." (58)

That such a search has been a constant preoccupation of sociologists in the post-war period should not obscure the

changes in the terms of the debate from the "first wave" surrounding the embourgoisement thesis and the more recent formulations of Gorz and Seabrook [59]. The background of rising affluence has given way to the collapse of the long boom, and to some extent the focus of the debate has changed from centering upon the working class at work to the working class in the political sphere and "what went wrong?" to the extent that Thatcherism has achieved three terms in office.

Of course the view of the working class will differ if the focus is shifted from work to the non-work situation, and more importantly the actual changes in the priorities between these spheres within the class itself, will produce different outlooks. The importance of a growing dissonance between these two spheres, as far as the shipbuilding workers of Wearside are concerned, will be outlined below. However to return to the "first wave" of debate over the post-war working class it is perhaps useful to suggest that this debate was less conclusive than it might have been because of the time at which it developed.

There are two elements to this view. Firstly the apparent stability of the post-war boom as viewed from the early 1960s led some theorists to link too closely and in a mechanistic way the notion of the qualitative change within the working class with the continuing rise of affluence, so that one of the key axes of the debate became the integration of the class on the basis of rising consumption.

" ... the prospects of containment of change, offered by the
politics of technological rationality, depend on the
prospects of the Welfare State. Such a state seems capable
of raising the standard of administered living, a capability
inherent in all advanced industrial societies where the
streamlined technical apparatus - set up as a separate power
over and above the individuals - depends for its functioning
on the intensified development and expansion of
productivity. Under such conditions, decline of freedom and
opposition is not a matter of moral or intellectual
deterioration or corruption. It is rather an objective
societal process insofar as the production of goods and
services make compliance a rational technological
attitude." (60)

That such views failed to appreciate the historicity of

their own epoch is now, with hindsight, obvious. A second

element which served to complicate the "first wave" of the debate

about the post-war working class is that quite often the focus

on "the worker" disguised the fact that he or she was only post-

war in the sense of occupying the "present". Many workers in the

1960s grew up through the experiences of the inter-war period and

had presumably carried much of their "world view" (61) forward

from that period.

These considerations were particularly important in

communities which traditionally had been dominated by a single

industry such as shipbuilding. The necessity is pointed to of

understanding that qualitative changes arose not only from

individual consumerism, but also from the changed context of the

community, and that the timescale of changes is longer and more

uneven than in many accounts. In considering what changes have

occurred one must beware of confusing the ideal typical

construction of the "traditional proletarian worker" for a
description of an actually existing past reality. For if this
confusion occurs almost any changes will appear as involving some
degree of embourgoisement. As we have already established in
Chapter Two, the working class shipbuilding workers on Wearside
in the inter-war period were characterised by the politics of
local loyalties as much as any wider proletarian consciousness.
The complexity of this base line must be kept in mind whilst we
attempt to outline some of the general developments in the post-
war period.

Firstly, as we have already noted, the physical occupational
community was to become increasingly dispersed, and such movement
opened up the potential for an increasing "gap" between the world
of work and the worlds of the community. Such developments did
not however lead to the privatisation of the shipbuilding worker
and his family, rather the basis for sociality became less work-
based, although the importance of locality remained. Thus for
example those workers moving out to the council estates were more
likely over time to give their allegiance to the local working
men's club than to continue to travel to the area of the former
physical occupational community. Similarly for the wives of such
workers the locality became (or remained) the dominant feature in
sociality; the importance of good neighbours, the local shops as
a meeting place, and increasingly the experience of work in their
own right served further to exacerbate the distance between the

shipyard worker's family and the specifically occupational
community.

If privatisation was not characteristic of those undergoing
relocation on Wearside in the post-war period, what about some of
the other elements of the embourgoisement thesis, that both
"political" and "industrial" integration would result from the
harnessing of technological advances to mass consumer production.
It is possible to argue that such a position is fundamentally
mistaken and in order to do so we must look more closely at the
political and industrial relations "consensus" as it appears in
our empirical reference point.

Firstly, it is indeed the case that many of the preoccupat-
ions of the inter-war period carried on into the post-war years.
We have already noted the expectation that a slump would follow a
brief replacement boom. This uncertainty combined with higher
than average unemployment in some shipbuilding centres to ensure
that defensive action to attempt to preserve jobs was more
characteristic than action orientated towards purely economic
aspirations. In this sense Wearside appears to represent an
extreme example of these concerns. The immediate post-war years
brought problems with supplies of materials leading to both lay-
offs and disputes.

Thus in the winter of 1947 Mr. R. Cyril Thompson complained
of the shortage of steel, and warned that:

> "The situation will inevitably lead to wholesale
> unemployment unless it is quickly remedied." (62)

The situation was not to improve quickly however, with the
shortages being experienced throughout the 1950s. These
shortages and the layoffs they caused were a constant source of
friction, and served to remind the workforce of the precarious
nature of employment in shipbuilding. Disputes arising out of a
shortage of materials were relatively frequent. Thus on 19th
August 1952 the Ministry of Labour in the region recorded a
strike at Bartrams involving twenty riveters and seventeen
holders up. The cause of the strike was recorded as:

"Shortage of steel: some squads could not be absorbed." (63)

However the report went on to comment:

"Failure to absorb all squads occurring for some time:
Strike coincided with visit of Mr. A.W. Digby, Civil Head of
Admiralty on a fact finding tour of N.E. yards, Bartrams
first item on itinerary.
    "It may be the walk out was merely a gesture of protest
about the steel shortage." (64)

This may have been the case, as the strikers returned the
following day even though "some squads still remained
unabsorbed"; however "discussions with management" were taking
place. It is unlikely that management could offer anything of
substance to the riveters as the problem was clearly one of
scarcity of supply which had been "occurring for some time". It
was not only steel which was in short supply and causing
problems. On 26th March 1947 fourteen rivet heaters went on
strike causing 28 riveters to be laid off. The cause was
reported:

> "The coke being used by the Heaters was becoming exhausted
> and was, for the most part, small and dusty. The heaters
> complained of this and the firm promised to have this
> riddled (i.e. the dust shaken off) if they use it until
> sufficient supplies were received, delivery was expected
> during the next two days. The heaters complained that this
> was not satisfactory to them and decided to cease work ...
> Mr. J.J. O'Donnell, Wearside Delegate of the Boilermakers
> Society, is aware of the dispute, and states that he is
> endeavouring to get a resumption as quickly as
> possible." (65)

Again problems relating to coke supply were not solved quickly,

so that by May 1952 there was an almost identical account of a

strike, in which fifteen Rivet heaters ceased work, laying off a

further fifteen riveters, fifteen holders up and four

apprentices.

> "Poor quality coke - stock of coke nearly exhausted: heaters
> complained too much dust in it. Coke riddled and heaters
> came in 20th only to complain coke too large." (66)

It is important to understand that the quality of coke was the

decisive factor in being able to attain and keep the correct heat

in the rivet fire. Failure to do this caused frustration and

delay not only for the heater but also for the rest of the squad,

and thereby led to a fall in piece earnings. Therefore the

frustrations felt were real enough, and certainly in the above

case could not be put down to over-zealous shop stewards, for as

the strike report noted the heaters were "unorganised".

> "Only 2 heaters in N.U.G.M.W. - union official (as far as
> can be ascertained) is not doing much about it." (67)

The continuance of "lay offs", whether induced through

shortages or the traditional cyclical fluctuations in the demand

for labour, emphasised that action to preserve employment was

still a relevant consideration, and was particularly so where

local labour market conditions were loose. This is one factor

outlined by G.C. Cameron to account for the fact that between

1946 and 1961, whilst on the Tyne demarcation strikes accounted

for only 3% of all strikes, a total of two disputes, on the Wear

demarcation strikes accounted for some 43% of the total [68].

Linking demarcation to labour market conditions seems a

potentially useful strategy, although in relation to Wearside

Cameron's suggestion that vertical demarcation occurs when "local

unemployment is very low" and that horizontal demarcation occurs

"when the level of local unemployment was high" [69] cannot be

substantiated. This is so for two reasons. Firstly due to the

uneven concentration of demarcation disputes between Wear yards,

"two firms employing approximately 25% of the total area labour

force accounted for 55% of all Wearside demarcation strikes"(70),

therefore the conditions of the local labour market do not

operate as a force irrespective of the situations existing within

individual yards. Secondly and more importantly however is the

fact that the empirical data do not show a distinct pattern or

phasing of the two types of demarcation dispute. Thus for

example at Bartrams yards horizontal disputes occurred during

1950, 1954, 1958 and vertical disputes at the same yard during

1954 and 1956. At other yards on the Wear vertical disputes took

place in 1953, '54 and '56, interspersed with horizontal disputes

during 1954, '56 (3), '57 and '58 (2).

Indeed it is hard to sustain the view that vertical disputes
were part of any managerial strategy aimed at dilution, or that
they represented a response to intractible problems of labour
supply. This is particularly so given that 75% of such disputes
were settled in under four days and the remaining 25% within
seven days [71]. Moreover the context of such disputes was often
that of meeting a short term contingency. Thus for example a
dispute involving 55 welders occurred at Austin and Pickersgills,
Southwick yard, on 7th March 1956, where the cause was recorded
as:

> "Management's refusal to employ a skilled welder on welding
> operations which were being performed by an apprentice who
> usually assisted a skilled worker who was absent owing to
> sickness." (72)

A full return to work was forthcoming the following day,
whereupon:

> "Assistant District Delegate of the Boilermakers Society
> (achieved) amicable understanding with employers over
> dispute." (73)

The context of the dispute was then one in which a skilled worker
had "gone off" sick and the dispute was solved quickly.
Similarly at Greenwells Dock twenty platers walked out without
consulting Management or Delegate on 25th May 1954 following a
revelation that during the previous weekend's overtime a general
labourer had removed some material from a ship. However as the
report stated,

> "A demarcation issue. It was ascertained by the platers
> that a labourer, during the weekend, had performed
> operations proper to their craft without consulting the

management or Trade Union Officials." (74)

Again the idea of the vertical demarcation dispute as the response of management to labour shortage is not substantiated.

However the point to grasp is, as Geoffrey Roberts has suggested, that rather than seeing demarcation as being directly linked to levels of unemployment it is rather employment insecurity, of which the unemployment level is only one factor, which is of more importance [75]. Certainly this would seem to be so with respect to the general level of industrial disputes. Thus when a contraction of orders affected the smaller yards in the North East (i.e. those on the Wear) [76] during the late 1950s the level of man-hours lost as a result of strikes and stoppages of work on the Wear rose dramatically above those in the Tyne district, so that during 1958 and 1959 the number of man-hours lost on the Wear was 91,000 and 24,000 respectively, whereas in the Tyne district the comparable figures were 43,000 and 21,000 [77].

The continuation of employment insecurity, unemployment and the preoccupation with occupational protection on behalf of the workforce ensured that in the shipbuilding industry generally, and perhaps on the Wear in particular, the objective conditions for worker affluence were by 1960 still largely absent. Therefore any discussion of the effect of affluence on the attitudes of these workers would have to take account of the relatively late percolation of the objective conditions of affluence, with

as much emphasis to be put upon continuity of employment and
therefore income, as upon a weekly wage.

In pointing to the continuities with the inter-war period in
terms of employment insecurity, one should be careful not to give
the impression that nothing had changed at all. The fact was
that such employment instability persisted in the face of, until
the late 1950s, growing demand. Thus by the end of 1956,

> " ... the Wear had 140 ships on order or under construction
> worth about £120 million and guaranteeing work for four to
> five years ahead. "It was a period of almost unexampled
> prosperity"." (78)

Indeed the following year the high level of demand continued in
spite of the fifteen day National strike in March, thus:

> "The Wear received the greatest number of orders in its
> history in a single week period with orders for 11 ships
> worth £12,000,000 ... " (79)

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the industry had this contra-
dictory character about it. Prophecies of impending doom inter-
spersed with buoyant optimism, the major "problem" facing the
industry being seen variously as a declining order book or a
shortage of labour with which to meet launch deadlines and there-
by cope with the timetabling of a full order book. Both of these
views expressed partial truths. The pattern of demand for ships
followed not only from the fluctuations of the replacement cycle,
but from the less isolationist policies of the major powers and
the opposition of the two power blocs of East and West. This
coupled with the accelerating expansion of the capitalist world
system ensured that rapid relative decline of the British

industry was not immediately translated into absolute decline.

These meta-contexts had a direct effect at the point of production, ensuring that at several important junctures action at the level of nation states militated against any drastic downturn in demand for shipping.   In this connection the importance of the Korean war beginning in 1949 can be seen in as far as it turned what was developing into a slump in demand into a boom.   Another example of perhaps more importance was the Suez Crisis of 1956, which revived the freight markets in a dramatic way, a development which as we have seen was translated directly into orders for ships [80].

The effect of such indirect "aid" to the industry, coupled with more direct measures such as the Government's £65 million credit aid scheme of 1964, ensured that the terrible slumps of the inter-war period did not re-occur.   Moreover in the 1960s the wider economy was also enjoying boom conditions.   The balance of power between capital and labour began to swing to the latter's advantage. However if moves towards employment stability and affluence for shipbuilding workers were more hesitant and uneven over time, this very fact seemed to speak of the meanness of the employers who constantly "cried wolf" of the imminent slump of orders, which because of other contingencies did not occur in a general way for another two decades.

How then did these developments represent themselves at the point of production?   The first point to stress again is the

uneven and at times contradictory nature of developments. Employment security did not emerge overnight, and the complexity of the moves towards this situation left their mark upon the workforce. However it is possible to indicate some of the changes which began to develop during the 1950s and continued into the next decade.

Whilst the late 1950s saw the continuation of the demarcation dispute as a form of "realistic conflict" [81], the period nevertheless saw the emergence of other types of action concerning some issues which would have been unthinkable in the inter-war period. The first of these indicates the changed position of the foreman and thereby suggests a different balance of forces at the point of production. Thus, for example, a dispute began at Bartram and Sons on 23rd March 1952 which directly involved 72 platers and laid idle another eighty helpers. The cause of the stoppage was recorded as "Attitude of Foreman" [82]. It is perhaps worthwhile to quote in full the developments in this dispute until its resolution on 29th March:

> "Friday, 21/3/52
> Marshland (Wear Shipbuilders Association) unaware of dispute but since has been in contact with manager of the yard who was away yesterday.
>
> Cause of stoppage - - attitude of a foreman, but yard manager not notified of complaint. Platers attended yard this morning but after a meeting amongst themselves decided not to resume work, and the shop stewards were unable to influence them.
> Cook (District Union Official) in touch with management.
> Further meeting of men 4.30 today at which Cook will be present to try to effect a resumption.

24/3/52
Complete resumption following meeting of men with Cook and
shop stewards.
Yard conference afternoon of 24/3/52, and indications that
management will take disciplinary action against foreman.

26/3/52
Men give management ultimatum that unless foreman removed
they would leave the Firm on Friday night.
At a yard meeting, 24/3/52 (Cook, shop steward, management)
management (Marshland) at first inclined to take
disciplinary action against foreman but after full inquiry
decided that this was not warranted and no solution was
forthcoming.
Shop stewards and men held meeting 25/3/52 afternoon and
decided by 52 votes to 9 that unless foreman removed
withdrawal of labour on Friday.
Cook - men are adamant - but if men strike it will be
unofficial.
If during discussion Mr. Mellenby, Manager of Yard, had
suggested some way out of the impasse such as removing the
foreman to another department temporarily until the present
discontent blew over, he (Cook) felt he would be able to
avert a stoppage. No such suggestion was forthcoming,
however, and he did not want it to come from him. I asked
him whether a limit would be given to Mr. Marshland and he
welcomed the suggestion: I thereupon informed Marshland of
what Cook had said.
Marshland hopeful of a meeting before Friday - Cook says he
is available.
Other shop stewards in yard asked for a meeting with
Mellenby tomorrow.
Understood that other workers in yard "not entirely in
sympathy with the boilermakers' action".

29/3/52
Cook - several meetings with Management, shop steward and
Cook, as a result of which strike threat lifted.
Management agreed to restrict authority of foreman and have
warned him that any further complaints against him will be
regarded seriously." (83)

This dispute is interesting for it is one of the earliest

examples of recorded action being taken over the "attitude" of a

foreman. Also worth noting is the effort put in by the district

official to avert a further stoppage even though he did not wish

it to be known to the men that the compromise solution was originally suggested by him. Finally the outcome of the dispute is worthy of note, for given the approach of other shop stewards in the yard suggesting they were not in sympathy with the boiler- makers, this actually served to increase the pressure upon management to reach a prompt solution. Whereupon the management restricted the authority of the foreman and gave him a further warning in relation to his future conduct, despite their earlier position that disciplinary action against the foreman was "not warranted".

Such action against the attitudes and actions of chargehands and foremen played an increasing part in the negotiation of order at the point of production. Sometimes the outcome of such disputes was less clear than in the above example. Thus when 67 riveters and holders up went on strike, laying off a further 25 rivet heaters and 19 rivet-catchers, at Greenwells on 25th November 1957, the cause was recorded as "objection to the attitude adopted by a charge-hand". The stoppage lasted only for one day, and again the district delegate of the boilermakers was instrumental in its solution, arguing that such a grievance did not warrant strike action.

> "Comments
> The return to work was reported as unconditional. No further trouble was anticipated. The District Delegate of the Boilermakers, Mr. Cook, advised them to return to work, told them that their complaint should be notified to the management and that it was not one which justified strike action." (84)

However the willingness of the workforce actively to challenge the decisions and demeanour of immediate supervisors and foremen was a notable development of the post-war period. It speaks both of the growth of the objective resource of a tighter labour market and a change in the moral hierarchy existing both at work and in the wider community. Such action could be directed at individual decisions of foremen as well as at the wider focus of their attitudes and increasingly such action was successful from the workers' point of view. For example another dispute at Bartrams of 12 rivet heaters, laying off 22 riveters and holders up, on 18th September 1957, was solved in a day when management reinstated a rivet heater dismissed by a foreman (presumably for a disciplinary offence)[85].

The incidence of such objections to foremen and charge hands is higher than strike reports alone might suggest. One Plumber recalled an occasion at Doxfords in 1960 when a disagreement arose between the Plumbers and a foreman over the calculation of bonus payments.

> "It was always the same, as you were working on a ship Harry Hunter had a graph of how the bonus was going. Early on it would be really high and towards the end he would play with the figures and the line would plummet. Anyway this one time we decided we'd had enough so we were walking out, up the bank. Halfway up we saw Benny Tewit the yard manager coming down - "Where you going, lads?" he said ... Well, we were all together, you know - brave like ... so we said "we're going home." "What are you going home for?" he says. So one lad, I'll always remember, said "I don't know but we're not coming back till we get it!" Anyway we goes back into the shop and he got Harry Hunter. He could have took him into the office but instead he was ranting and raving at

him in front of us. He was saying "it's 1900 and so and so
not 1800 and so and so". He gave him a right talking to.
It wasn't right really, 'cos Harry Hunter was canny really,
even a bit soft. But aye, right in front of us." (86)

The tone of this account is interesting for there is no

"celebration" in the "victory" over the foreman. In fact quite

the opposite, the humiliation dealt out to the foreman was seen

as a regrettable thing. An important point to be made about

conflict at this level is that it necessarily involves a moral

dimension and is inextricably bound up with individual identit-

ies. Conflict at work is rarely only experienced as a structural

conflict between employer(s) and workers. Again these changes

must be seen in relation to the decline of employment insecurity.

Nevertheless such a change did not have an even effect upon the

perceptions of all workers, as the account of another Plumber

pointed out:

" ... in the post-war years of full employment, a change
came over the yards. Most of the older foremen retired, and
once some of the younger men felt secure and the
uncertainties of unemployment were removed, they lost their
fear of the foreman. The older men never did. They
continued to live and work by the old standards." (87)

An important feature of the loss of authority by foremen

during this period is that there was little evidence of the

emergence, on the management side, of any other features of micro

control in the spheres both of the performance of work and

discipline. It would seem then that on this issue the balance of

forces at the point of production began to move in favour of the

workers.

Similarly when one looks at the incidence of redundancy and unemployment during this period, the evidence suggests that the labour market was beginning to tighten as redundancy itself became a harder issue for management to handle. As was argued in Chapter 2, in the inter-war period cyclical unemployment was accepted by the workers as a "fact of life" within the industry. In the post-war period this gradually began to change. Not only did disputes arise about the basis of decisions as to whom should be made redundant, especially when suspicion of the victimisation of shop stewards was involved, but also disputes began to occur over redundancy pure and simple.

There are several examples of the first type of dispute occurring in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Some were of a relatively short duration such as the strike at Greenwells on 18 June 1958 when 24 riveters and holders up came out after the laying off of ten men including a shop steward. Work was resumed on the 23 June when the steward was re-engaged [88]. Others were of longer duration: at Austin and Pickersgill action was readily taken over redundancy with alleged victimisation. On 19 March 1958 thirty welders and six apprentices went on strike after eight welders including one steward were made redundant. There was a full resumption on 1 April with the district delegate Cook negotiating for the re-engagement of the shop steward [89]. At the same firm on 15 January 1960 329 platers walked out over the laying off of five platers, one of whom was a steward. Although

they returned the following day there was a series of token one
day stoppages over the following month, with eighty platers
striking on 22 February (seventy workers laid idle), 81 platers
on 29 February (66 laid idle) and 150 platers and welders
striking on 7 March [90]. The outcome of these token strikes was
reported by the Ministry of Labour as "no result known" [91],
with the workers ending the action on 14 March.

One feature of these disputes worthy of note is the
relatively long period for which they were sustained, and the
relative frequency of disputes over dismissal and redundancy on
the Wear (10% of all disputes between 1946 and 1961) compared
with that on the Tyne (4%) and the Tees (2%) for the same
period [92]. This again draws attention to the vulnerability of
the labour market on Wearside and the uneven and problematic
"drift" towards "full employment". But the message was beginning
to become clearer to both management and workers that the vast
fluctuations in employment levels in the inter-war period should
no longer be seen as inevitable. For the workers especially it
became evident that action could be successful in preventing
redundancy. Thus for example when thirteen boilermakers withdrew
their labour at Greenwells on 8 May 1961 over the redundancy of
eight men, the redundancy was cancelled by the following day,
"Due to other work becoming available" [93].

Redundancy was becoming much harder to handle. Thus even as
Ken Douglas, the Managing Director of Austin and Pickersgill, was

quoted as saying of the Wear district,

> "There are no grounds for criticising our labour relations
> because we have the edge on many other districts.   In
> Sunderland we have the ability to settle our problems and
> maintain a spirit of co-operation" (94),

the maintenance fitters at J.L. Thompson's had begun what was to

be the longest strike on the Wear for twenty years.   The strike

was to last for 118 days, and:

> "The cause of the dispute was the dismissal of the fitters'
> shop steward under a redundancy scheme.   The men alleged
> that there had been unfair discrimination, a charge which
> was strongly denied by the management." (95)

Gradually then, there began to develop a tendency towards

the stabilisation of work forces, and despite Dougan's

characterisation of the period between 1961 and 1965 as

representing "The Struggle to Survive" (96), this continued

throughout the period.   In this connection it is perhaps useful

to trace some of the comments about the industry on the Wear in

order further to illustrate this process and the precarious basis

upon which the greater "affluence" of the workforce was built.

There are several aspects to these developments. Firstly, the

vulnerability seen by some as underlying the full order books in

the short term did not become apparent at the point of production

during this period, and a feeling that employers were "crying

wolf" was shared by workers and to some extent unions too.

Secondly, such problems as did underlie the changing pattern of

demand were seen to lie with unfair competition from abroad,

subsidies and credit terms, and as far as the workforce were seen

to be a problem by management, wage demands and reduction in

working time were initially seen to be perhaps more serious than

inefficiencies in the labour process.   Thirdly there was little

evidence of forward planning by management as to how the demand

for specific types of tonnage would develop.   Most serious in

this direction was a failure to appreciate how big tankers and

some dry cargo ships would become.   This fault necessitated a

continuous "ad hoc" form of modernisation of berths,   and with

continuous outlay of capital to achieve this the workforce could

scarcely believe that the situation was as serious as some

employers sometimes suggested.   The irony that during the period

of one of the fastest relative declines in the importance of a

national industry the workers had "never had it so good" should

not be lost on us.

The annual outlook for Wear shipbuilding compiled by Colonel

R.A. Bartram in January 1962 listed two main problems facing the

industry: firstly the lack of long-term credit available and

secondly "the continued rise in wages". Of the latter he went on

to say:

> "Last January shipbuilding trades got 3.5% in wages.   Trade
> Union leaders might point to orders booked since and say it
> made no difference.   In fact it possibly was largely the
> cause of Britain's percentage of world orders dropping so
> severely during the past year." (97)

The drop in the percentage of orders was seen by some to imply an

imminent decline in the fortunes of the industry.   Thus in

September of the same year Roland Vidal, Sunderland Corporation's

industrial development officer, was predicting that 1,000 ship-

yard and marine engineering workers could be out of jobs over the

next year [98]. This mood of pessimism was carried into 1963

when Sunderland Junior Chamber of Commerce stated in a report

published in November that the Wear workforce could be expected

to drop from 12,000 to 8,000 over the following ten years [99].

However only one month later a "Brighter outlook for the Wear"

was pronounced as it was revealed that the river had booked more

than 40% of the £75 million worth of orders placed with British

shipyards under the Government's credit aid scheme [100]. Also it

was noted that whilst completions were low, nevertheless for the

third successive year.

> "The Wear is second to the Clyde in production among British
> shipbuilding centres." (101)

Furthermore Mr. Cyril Thompson announced his intention to have a

bigger berth built:

> "We have the space to build another large berth and the
> space for new pre-fabricating shops to double our output and
> the number of employees." (102)

These indicators and the fact that most yards on the river had

orders to last until the end of 1965 indicated that immediate

pessimism was misplaced. However some have argued that the

"signs of decline" were apparent on the river at this time. Thus

John Spence has suggested that:

> "In January 1964 Shorts total workforce of 300 went on the
> dole when the yard ran out of orders." (103)

We must be careful not to confuse the demise of an individual

firm with the fortunes of a wider section of the industry. The

failure of Shorts did not necessarily indicate an absolute lack

of orders but also reflected on the management of the yard over a

number of years. For as Hopkins noted,

> "The yard had not been modernised during the war. This had
> to be undertaken in the late fifties and early sixties and
> financed out of current profits; eventually it seemed that a
> family firm could no longer survive under modern conditions
> without large capital resources." (104)

Indeed Mr. John Short, Managing Director of the company, in an

article entitled "Why Shorts Yard is Closing", acknowledged the

limitations of his individual yard in which the biggest berth

could only cope with vessels of up to 22,000 d.w. tons.

> "We simply have to face the fact that our berths are just
> not big enough to accommodate the bigger class of general
> cargo vessel now in demand." (105)

Again this technical limit was felt despite modernisation "in

recent years" which:

> " ... involved the construction of a new fitting out quay,
> the extension of one of the berths and the provision of new
> shops well equipped to undertake prefabrication and pre-
> assembly. These schemes, it is estimated, cost about
> £750,000." (106)

> Moreover another important feature of the closure of Shorts

was that the 300 workers went to other yards on the river rather

than "on the dole". As the Shipbuilding and Shipping Record

commented in January 1964,

> "Six months ago, when it became evident that a rundown of
> labour was inevitable, arrangements were made for other
> shipyards to absorb redundant craftsmen. This arrangement
> has worked smoothly." (107)

whilst one observer noted that during the last two months of the

yard,

> "John Short spent endless hours on the telephone getting
> jobs for the men he knew so well." (108)

It would nevertheless seem that the absorption of workers did go

smoothly, for by February it was being stated that:

> "The closure ... will not lead to more unemployment on the
> river, for other yards are absorbing the 300 manual workers
> and technical and administrative staff." (109)

Even after the absorption of the workers from Shorts the demand

for labour was maintained, with Laings attempting to increase its

workforce to 500 in April 1964 to cope with the influx of work

gained with the assistance of the Government's credit scheme. It

was further planned to increase the workforce to 900 within "the

next few months" (110).

However a note of caution was struck later in the year by

A.J. Marr, Managing Director of Laings and President of the

Shipbuilding Conference. He drew attention to the increasing

threat of Japanese competition in export markets.

> "The threat in this connection is, of course, the continuing
> expansion of the Japanese shipbuilding industry, whose share
> of world orders is now approaching the 50% level. Their
> price advantage is such that no amount of modernisation or
> further increases in shipyard efficiency can close the gap.
> This is a problem shared by shipbuilders throughout the
> western European countries." (111)

Marr saw this problem as stemming from the credit terms and

interest rates available in Japan and not from inefficiencies in

the division of labour. Anyway how could warnings of decline be

treated seriously by the workforce when in the following month

Laings began another extension programme, this time to their

number 3 berth to enable them to build ships up to 50,000 d.w.

tons (112).

As the prophecies of impending doom continued the terms of

the problem were seen to change and throughout 1965 it was labour

shortage which was mentioned as the most pressing problem. Thus

in January, Clem Stephenson, chairman of the Wear Shipbuilders

Association, warned of the possible return of recession and

perils of wage rises and reduced hours, and then went on:

> " ... the gradual rundown by the shipbuilding industry had
> resulted in the departure of traditional shipyard craftsmen
> to other industries and even if maximum shipbuilding orders
> were forthcoming there were not enough skilled shipyard
> workers to meet this demand." (113)

This view would seem to have some substance for in July Mr. Cyril

Thompson, Chairman of J.L. Thompson and Son, explained the three

month delay in the launch of the 34,500 d.w. ton tanker

"Kirriemoor" in terms of labour shortage. He suggested that:

> " ... urgent attention must be given to the labour shortage
> if the future of Sunderland as a shipbuilding centre was not
> to be seriously and perhaps permanently jeopardised." (114)

Furthermore the berth on which this ship was built, "a modern

berth completed only a few years ago", would no longer be used

for shipbuilding. In future he said that only their new big

berth would be used. However,

> "Even on this basis we are short of every class of skilled,
> semi-skilled and unskilled labour." (115)

So the tendency towards the stabilisation of workforces was

completed under the pressure of labour shortage.   A shortage

exaggerated not only by the boilermakers' ban on apprentices, but

also due to the increasing labour market opportunities elsewhere,

for example the structural steel and pipe work involved in the

expansion of the chemical industry on Teesside was mentioned by

several workers in this respect.   Also the expansion of

contracting firms such as Steels and William Riddie's was seen to

exacerbate labour shortage and to put upward pressure on ship-

yard wages [116].

For workers at this time the maintenance of steady employ-

ment and the amount of building going on seemed to indicate that

all was well in the industry.

> "Things ran very smoothly, at Doxfords they used to have up
> to 3 ships moored side by side in the river and I would do
> the tank testing, bump, bump, bump from one to the other.
> Things were very predictable, you knew what you would be
> doing not weeks ahead but years ahead, it almost used to get
> boring sometimes." [117]

However work in hand did not always indicate the financial health

of an individual yard.

> "Wages were rising and managements, in some cases, took on
> work at a loss rather than have empty berths with heavy
> overheads to maintain.   In these days, a yard without work
> or credit would close for ever.   In the slump between the
> wars a yard would close, employ a watchman and a skeleton
> staff, and then open up again when an order came
> along." [118]

Problems of profitability and the declining share of world

tonnage built in British yards led not only to the Shipbuilding

Inquiry Committee, chaired by Geddes, but also, in its aftermath,

to a concern by both Employers and Unions to improve the situation. Indeed less than three months after the publication of the Geddes report in February 1966 Dan McGarvy, President of the Boilermakers Society, was quoted as saying:

> "We have given a firm declaration today that there will be no more stoppages of work over the demarcation disputes." (119)

This declaration is not as startling as it may seem, for demarcation disputes had already dwindled to a low level given the arrival of "full employment" and the amalgamations of the Blacksmiths and the Shipwrights with the Boilermakers in the early sixties. Although the removal of employment insecurity must be seen as the major factor here, for as McGoldrick has pointed out, at earlier points disputes between different sections of the Boilermakers were relatively common [120]. McGarvey's statement was made at a meeting of employers and Unions at York in the context of the "new realism" in the industry in the aftermath of Geddes and the Labour Government's increasing involvement with the industry; as such it was an attempt at reassurance on a public platform that the unions were "reasonable people".

Of more importance however were the subsequent moves towards the relaxation of working practices. In understanding the limitations involved in these developments it is necessary to re-emphasise the context in which they took place. The disappearance of immediate employment insecurity and a tight labour market ensured that in spite of the Government's advocacy of

changes similar to those involved in the Fairfield experiment,

the prime concern of the employers, on the Wear at least, was not

with these changes as an element in reorganising the division of

labour as such, but rather insofar as they would help overcome

immediate labour shortages.   This was the intention of the

individual agreements arranged very quickly after Geddes in the

yards at Bartram's, Laing's and Thompson's, where it was reported

that:

> "Platers, Welders and Shipwrights are to relax demarcation.
> The platers will allow shipwrights to work in their
> department provided they are under the direction of a
> foreman plater, and welders will permit the upgrading of a
> number of tack welders. Also Laing and Bartram platers and
> shipwrights will be able to do some of the Platers' work in
> the fitting of brackets, for example." (121)

The same factors were important in determining the attitudes

of the trades unions towards these "changes" in working

practices.   Thus a speech on 16 February 1967 by Don McGarvey was

reported in the Shipbuilding and Shipping Record where the issue

of labour shortage was linked to the possibility of changes in

working practices [122]. Furthermore at a conference in Newcastle

in June, McGarvey suggested that restrictive practices were to be

seen as equivalent to "property rights" to be sold by workers and

bought by employers.   Moreover,

> "Mr. McGarvey stressed that appropriate compensation must be
> given to workers when they surrendered practices based on
> long training and experience and designed to safeguard their
> security against economic hazards." (123)

In the face of greater employment stability the unions then

agreed to bargain over working practices.   However in some senses

this does not demonstrate the importance of issues springing from

the division of labour but rather the opposite. In the context

of the tight labour market the unions' decision to let the

employers "buy the book" [124] had the beneficial effect of

showing them as "responsible people" and yet also allowing them

to pursue what was becoming the almost exclusive bargaining

issue, higher wages. In the event, in the short and medium

terms, such agreements did not radically alter working practices.

For as McGoldrick has suggested,

> " ... agreement on paper did not necessarily mean agreement
> in practice. The Boilermakers, for their part, exacted a
> high price for this lease on their birthright, and this in
> turn proved costly in terms of the outrage to other groups
> of workers who saw the Boilermakers' R.O.W.P. as the
> extension of existing differentials. But more importantly
> the agreement was a poor one, in which the prescription of
> specific items of flexible working meant that more general
> flexibility was lost. The disputed interpretation of the key
> phrase "progressing own work" meant that "more flexibility
> was paid for than was achieved in practice." (125)

The prominence of the short term concerns variously felt by

employers and unions as labour shortage and the search for higher

wages served to obscure the longer term aim, as promoted by the

Labour Government. And yet this position of change in theory but

not in practice meant that when the Commission on Industrial

Relations reported on the shipbuilding and shiprepairing industry

in 1971 a sense of "deja vu" was forthcoming. The power of the

workgroup and the extent of craft sectionalisation was contrasted

with the small impact of the changes forthcoming as a result of

the R.O.W.P. negotiations.

> "The extent of independent control probably appears less
> from inside the industry than from without. Management
> would assert that it is managing the work of the yard and
> the workforce in it.   Yet ... many decisions about
> recruitment, demarcation, manning, the hours actually
> worked, overtime and so on are actually made independently
> by the union or the work groups. Management has not agreed,
> in any formal sense, that this should be so, but it allows
> it to happen; it preserves a pretence about the real
> situation." (126)

However the agreement of the Unions to endorse, on paper,

elements of flexible working and the small returns that such

agreements gave to the employers ensured that:

> " ... the question of job control, which had been at the
> centre of industrial relations since the mid nineteenth
> century, became secondary to a formalised system of
> collective bargaining." (127)

This was true at the level of formalised bargaining, where

wage issues increasingly played a very large role. The promotion

of the importance of the wages issue would seem to accord with

Taylor's account of the potential that full employment afforded:

> "Full employment was a necessary prerequisite for the
> maximisation of labour power and in the post-war period we
> can see a loosening of former rigidities and austerities.
> Workers began to think and act like capitalists and the
> values of acquisitiveness became almost universal." (128)

We must beware of overstating the case however, and whilst

workers may indeed have shown great enthusiasm with regard to

wage rises this does not necessarily indicate a change in

priorities from issues of job control to those of wages as

McGoldrick implies. For as we have seen in relation to the Wear

in the inter-war and wartime periods, the evidence for workers

"resisting at the point of production" expropriation of control

over the labour process is not too convincing. Indeed the

evidence of any serious attempt to expropriate such control was

not forthcoming. The preference of employers for flexibility in

the face of fluctuating demand was of course a vital element in

their acceptance and in some cases advocacy of the existent

division of labour. However in the post-war period these

fluctuations were not forthcoming as demand was maintained, and,

as we have seen, the consequences of this and the wider boom in

the economy led to the solidification of variable capital and the

disappearance of the option of closing yards as a method of not

incurring heavy overheads. The objective value of a labour

intensive division of labour and the craft organisation of

production would seem to have passed, and yet the employers

achieved little practically in terms of changes in working

practices. This is even more surprising apparently, given the

ideal prerequisites of the pre-fabricated assembly of ships.

> "The rise of large-scale and capital intensive shipbuilding
> diminished the importance of flexible access to a highly
> skilled, mobile workforce. The larger volume of production
> of individual yards and the greater standardisation of
> output provided a firmer basis for continuously employing
> workers with specialised skills, while greater mechanisation
> increased the amount of semi-skilled machine-tending work.
> The shift to prefabrication led to a division of labour more
> industrial in character, based on location in the flow of
> production as opposed to type of activity or craft, which
> increased the possibilities of imparting skills through
> simple systems of on-the-job training associated with
> upgrading or internal promotion." (129)

Even if some of the more objective rationalisations of the

craft division of labour had disappeared by the mid 1960s the

"skilled" definition of the work lived on together with the craft

administration of the production process [130].

These features of the labour process were no longer located

symmetrically across a moral order which, while complex in the

details of its hierarchy, spanned both the contexts of work and

non-work. Rather the changes in the locations and structuring of

the manual working class had served initially to confuse a moral

order based upon the symmetry of hierarchy in work and non-work

spheres focused upon occupational identity as a master status.

Subsequently the non-work patterning of residential locations was

re-established via the growing market of private housing,

creating in a more stark form a kind of residential apartheid.

Both these developments served to deepen certain divisions within

the working class and were to spell the end of the occupational

community both in its physical form and as a morally cohesive (or

viewed differently, coercive) force. The basis of craft control

at work was increasingly less supported unproblematically within

the non-work sphere. Yet in spite of these far-reaching changes

in the community, technical changes in the industry and formal

agreements over changes in working practices, there appeared to

be some dimensions of control over the work process which seemed

invulnerable to change. The next chapter will outline some of

the dimensions of this entrenched control and seek to explain

why, two decades later, that control apparently evaporated with

minimal resistance from the workforce. An understanding of this

problematic will illuminate not only the nature of shipbuilding and the employment relationship, but will also allow us to address the question of the changed nature of the working class in an empirical context.

Notes to Chapter 4

1   Samuelson, P. "Full Employment after the War" in Harris, S.
    Post-War Economic Problems, New York, McGraw Hill 1943, p51.

2   Quoted in Armstrong, P., Glyn, A., Harrison, J. Capitalism
    Since World War II, London, Fontana 1984, p23.

3   In this sense Wallerstein's assertion that "The
    mechanisation by which the capitalist system ultimately
    resolves its recurrent cyclical down-turns is expansion:
    outward spatially, and internally in terms of the "freeing"
    of the market ... " cannot be seen to operate other than
    through the collective "structural social action" of states.
    "It" on an ontological level "resolves" nothing and does not
    "act". The world system cannot be separated from the
    actions of individual states. The "system" nevertheless has
    a "reality" as the historical outcome and precondition of
    the located action of such states.
    Wallerstein, I. "A World System Perspective on the Social
    Sciences", B.J.S. Vol. 27.

4   Trotsky for one expected the U.S.A. to assert quickly its
    dominance over Britain resulting in armed conflict between
    the two. The pace of the economic eclipse of the latter by
    the former was not as rapid or as determined in form as
    Trotsky foresaw:
        "In retrospect both the realism of this analysis and
    the errors of perspective stand out clearly. Trotsky did
    not imagine that the British could escape an armed conflict
    with the United States, although he himself had shown
    convincingly that such a conflict would have been suicidal
    folly for bourgeois Britain ... he could not envisage that
    the British would "peacefully" and "to the end" surrender
    their supremacy to the United States. And he saw the
    decline of British power as a cataclysmic collapse, not as
    the chronic and long-drawn-out process it was to become."
    Deutscher, I. The Prophet Unarmed. Trotsky: 1921-29.
    Oxford, O.U.P. 1970, p218.

5   Armstrong, P. et al, Op.cit. p50.

6   Vaizey, J. The Squandered Peace, London, Hodder and
    Stoughton 1983, p52.

7   Calvocoressi, P. The British Experience: 1945-75, London,
    Bodley Head 1978, p10.

8   General George C. Marshall, 5th June 1947, quoted in:
    Gregg, P. The Welfare State, London, George G. Harrap and

Co. Ltd. 1968, p77.

9   Jones, J.M. quoted in:
     Armstrong, P. et al (Op.cit.) p108.

10   Armstrong, P. et al Op.cit. pp111-112.

11   Armstrong, P. et al Op.cit. p227.

12   See: Barratt-Brown, M. The Economics of Imperialism,
     Harmondsworth, Penguin 1974.

13   Mead, M. Culture and Commitment, New York, Anchor Books
     1978, p63.

14   Mead, M. Op.cit. pp5-6.

15   Abendroth, W. A Short History of the European Working
     Class, London, New Left Books 1972, pp127-128.

16   Smith, Ron "Patterns of Growth in World Capitalism",
     Chapter 12 in:
     Aaronovitch, S. et al The Political Economy of British
     Capitalism, London, McGraw Hill 1981, p162.

17   Quoted in Armstrong, P. et al Op.cit. pp84-85.

18   Quoted in: Kolko, G. and Kolko, J. The Limits of Power:
     the World and U.S. Foreign Policy, New York, Harper and Row
     1972, pp522-4.

19   Armstrong, P. et al Op.cit. p153.

20   Vaizey, J. Op.cit. p84.

21   Marwick, A. Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France
     and the U.S.A. since 1930, Glasgow, Fontana 1981, p214.

22   Cole, M. The Life of G.D.H. Cole, London, Macmillan 1971,
     p230.

23   Wiener, M.J. English Culture and the Decline of the Indust-
     rial Spirit 1850-1980, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1982, p91.
         "Emerging from the "tunnel of economic necessity, we
     shall be able to afford to dare to assess the money-motive
     at its true value. The love of money as a possession ...
     will be recognised for what it is, a somewhat disgusting
     morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological
     propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the
     specialists in mental disease."

Quoted in Wiener   Op.cit. pp91-92.

24   Although clearly the offensive against labour in other
     countries did pose a problem of legitimacy for trade union
     leaders, as we saw in Chapter 3, in the shipbuilding
     industry the legitimacy of the status of the craft worker
     was raised by union leaders themselves.
     Pelling, H.   Modern Britain 1885-1955, London, Sphere Books
     1975, p172.

25   United Nations Economic Commission for Europe quoted in:
     Armstrong, P. et al Op.cit. p164.

26   David Thompson has argued that the Labour Government between
     1945 and 1951 achieved what Churchill had achieved in war "a
     national solidarity and sense of community".
          "It made impossible any sense of alienation from the
     community on the part of the workers.   The British State was
     now "theirs" as much as anybody else's - dedicated to the
     interests and welfare of every citizen, however humble."
     Furthermore the post-war consensus was built upon shared
     ideals:
          "The real revolution was a psychological one, marking
     reaction against the inter-war class strife."
     Thompson, D. England in the Twentieth Century, Harmonds-
     worth, Penguin 1965, p229.

27   Colin Crouch sees five elements as dominating the creation
     of the post-war consensus upon industrial relations:
     i)   The existence of full employment;
     ii)   the involvement of trade unions in government policy-
           making bodies over wide areas of the economy;
     iii) acceptance by all major political parties of a policy
           of trying to keep industrial relations out of political
           controversy;
     iv)   a similar acceptance of a commitment to construct a
           welfare state.
     Dating from slightly earlier was:
     v)   the emergence of a centralised trade union leadership
           which was prepared to reach understandings with
           governments and which then had the power to enforce
           acceptance of the results on its membership.

     Crouch, C. The Politics of Industrial Relations, Glasgow,
     Fontana 1979, p19.

28   The importance of the mediation of the English class
     struggle by aspects of religion and nationality have been
     pointed to by Tom Nairn; the historical roots of the
     creation of a working class which is "for itself in itself"

lie in the circumstances in which:
"Capital did not have to resort to self-wounding excesses to establish its reign in England; it could hide behind the Bible, and make of practically everything "national" an instrument direct or indirect of domination."

Wairn, T. "The English Working Class" in Blackburn, R. (Ed) Ideology in Social Science, Glasgow, Fontana 1978, p194.

29 Hoggart, R. The Uses of Literacy, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1958, pp13-14.

30 Hoggart, R. Op.cit. pp33-34.

31 Hoggart, R. Op.cit. pp243-244.

32 Marcuse, H. One Dimensional Man, London, Sphere Books 1972, p37.

33 Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J. A World Still to Win: The Reconstruction of the Post War Working Class, London, Faber and Faber 1985, p52.

34 Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J. Op.cit. p51.

35 As the author states,
    " ... the expressive imperative has undoubtedly gained ground in quite fundamental ways ... As a cultural style it contains elements which are increasingly appropriate to a complex, mobile and privatised system in which ego rather than any natural "tribal" group forms the basic unit. ... the crucial mechanism by which the old culture of control was broken open to the possibilities of change was the counter-culture of the late 1960s, with its vision of permanent liminality, a boundary- and rule-free Utopia."
    Martin, B. A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1981, p236.

36 Seabrook, J. What Went Wrong?, London, Victor Gollancz 1978.

37 Hopkins, C.H.G. The Moving Staircase: Sunderland 1939-1972, Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd. 1972, p9.

38 Gouldner, A.W. For Sociology: Removal and Critique in Sociology Today, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1975, pp37-38.

39 Corfe, T. Sunderland: A Short History, Newcastle, Frank Graham 1973, p122.

40 Corfe, T. Op.cit. p121.

41 Robson, B.T. Urban Analysis, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1971, p97.

42 Robson, B.T. Op.cit. p133.

43 Robson, B.T. Op.cit. p134.

44 In early 1960 my own family made such a move from a first floor privately rented flat in Pallion to a two bedroomed house with a garden, in Cheltenham Road, Hylton Castle.

45 Hopkins, C.H.G. (1972) Op.cit. p9.

46 Dennis, N. Op.cit. pp261-262.

47 Hopkins, C.H.G. Op.cit. pp9-10.
        This account of the decline in social mix on the council estates is more convincing than Hopkins' earlier assertion that there was little social mix on these estates from the beginning. Moreover it would appear that such migration of skilled labour from council estates in Sunderland has persisted up until the present. In my own experience both of my family and others such a move from the council estate to private housing was initiated by the post 1945 generation and then copied by their parents, perhaps suggesting an example of what Mead has called the prefigurative culture in which the older generations learn appropriate forms of behaviour in unfamiliar circumstances from the younger generations. A similar view is outlined by Blackwell and Seabrook, speaking of the working class in the 1960s:
        "Those intimate and familiar landscapes which had offered some shelter, however inadequate, became places to get out of as soon as you could scrape up the deposit for a house. As the working class no longer appeared even to itself in public discourse as a class, its members were increasingly obliged to make their own arrangements with Capitalism. They moved out in order to be nearer "a good comprehensive", where their children would have a better chance than they had. With what understandable eagerness people explored their mortgaged houses, where they would no longer have to get permission from the Council to paint their front door the colour of their choice. They felt like refugees from streets scarred by neglect, potholed roads, vandalised street lights, tinned up front parlours and grass growing through the cracks in the broken paving slabs. Those who left became more and more sharply differentiated from those who had to remain: the elderly, the poor, the migrant, the single parents, the unemployed."

Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J. <u>A World Still to Win: The</u>
<u>Reconstruction of the Post-War Working Class</u>, London, Faber
and Faber 1985, p120.

48   Sunderland Corporation Transport Department <u>People and</u>
<u>Transport</u>, Sunderland 1964, pp29-30.

49   Marwick, A. <u>British Society Since 1945</u>, Harmondsworth,
Penguin 1982, p121.

50   This is especially so over two or more generations of
private home ownership.

51   Westergaard, J. and Resler, H. <u>Class in a Capitalist</u>
<u>Society</u>, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1976, p113.

52   Benita Luckman has spoken of the worlds of work and the
ecological community as constituting two of the three basic
omphalic small worlds, the other being that of the family.
Luckman, B. "The Small Life-Worlds of Modern Man" in:
Luckman, T, (Ed) <u>Phenomenology and Sociology</u>, Harmonds-
worth, Penguin 1978, pp275-290.

53   Thompson, E.P. <u>The Making of the English Working Class</u>,
Harmondsworth, Penguin 1968, p9.

54   This is an important point underlined by studies which point
to the variability of class relationships in different
cultures and even regions in the same country. For a useful
study in the variations between national labour movements
see:
Kendal, W. <u>The Labour Movement in Europe</u>, London, Allen
Lane 1975.
For variations in the form of class relationships within
Britain, see:
Foster, J. <u>Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution</u>,
London, Methuen and Co. Ltd. 1974.
Finally for a more micro study of the variations of working
class attitudes to education in Sunderland see:
Robson, B.T. <u>Urban Analysis</u>, Cambridge, C.U.P. 197?.

55   Zeitlin, I.M. <u>Ideology and the Development of Sociological</u>
<u>Theory</u>, London, Prentice-Hall 1968, p120.

56   In this sense the re-analysis of my own upbringing in a
"shipbuilding family" can be seen as an element of
participant observation. However it is important to realise
that a degree of "distance" lies between myself and my past.
Insofar as this distance can be maintained I can beware of
shaping the account purely as a participant.

57   A useful summary of some of the arguments is available in:
      Eldridge, J. Recent British Sociology, London, Macmillan
      1980, especially Chapter 13.

58   Eldridge, J. Op.cit. p182.

59   Gorz, A. Farewell to the Working Class, London, Pluto 1982.
      Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J. A World Still to Win,
      London, Faber and Faber 1985.

60   Marcuse, H. One Dimensional Man, London, Abacus 1972, pp51-
      52.

61   Howard Davis has denied that the working class display any
      aggregate of attitudes which approximates to an "image of
      society" as a whole. However one should not confuse lack of
      coherence with a lack of any "totalising" approach at all,
      especially insofar as such issues impinge upon practical as
      well as discursive consciousness. See:
      Davis, H. Beyond Class Images, London, Croom Helm 1979.

62   Quoted in Dougan, D. (1968) Op.cit. p194.

63   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Bartrams 19/8/52.

64   Ibid

65   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Bartrams 26/3/47.

66   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Bartrams 20/5/52.

67   Ibid

68   See: Cameron, G.C. "Post-war Strikes in the North East
      Shipbuilding and Ship-Repairing Industry", British Journal
      of Industrial Relations, Vol. II No.1, 1954, p5.
      Also:
      Eldridge, J.E.T. Industrial Disputes, London, Routledge and
      Kegan Paul 1968, pp100-103.

69   Eldridge, J.E.T. (1968) Op.cit. pp102-103.

70   Cameron, G.C. Op.cit. p5.

71   Eldridge, J.E.T. (1968) Op.cit. p102.

72   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Austin and
      Pickersgill 7/3/56.

73   Ibid

74   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, T.W. Greenwells
      and Co. Ltd. 25/5/54.

75   Roberts, G. "Demarcation Rules in Shipbuilding and Ship-
      repairing", Cambridge, C.U.P. 1967, pp12-13.

76   As Dougan has argued, during 1958, " ... for the smaller
      yards at least orders were getting perilously low."
      Dougan, D. (1968) Op.cit. p199.

77   S.E.F. Ref: 3164: "Man-hours lost as a Result of Strikes
      and Stoppages of Work: 1957-61".

78   Dougan, D. (1968) Op.cit. p198.

79   Spence, J. "Industrial Relations in Wearside Shipbuilding
      1945-1981" in:
      Potts, A. (Ed) Shipbuilders and Engineers, North East
      Labour History Society Newcastle 1987, p83.

80   The Suez Crisis illustrates well the importance of the two
      bloc model of international relations and the effective
      dominance of the U.S.A. over the U.K.. Britain's withdrawal
      from Palestine in 1948 has been seen, by Thompson, as
      leaving a void between the two blocs, and thereby
      occasioning the development of a Soviet diplomatic offensive
      to gain influence throughout the Middle East reaching its
      zenith in 1955. This, coupled with the agreement between
      Egypt and Czechoslovakia (arms in exchange for cotton and
      rice) was enough evidence of the growing importance of
      economic imperialism (aid for ideological allegiance).
      Further to this the withdrawal of the American offer of
      assistance to Egypt in order to build the Aswan high dam
      ensured, in the light of Nasser's nationalisation of the
      Suez Canal Company, that Britain's options were limited.
      This was especially so given Eden's obsession with the image
      of Nasser as a second Hitler. Again what is ironic is the
      position that Britain's (and France's) military
      intervention, whilst it unintentionally ensured healthy
      demand for (British and foreign) tonnage, further weakened
      the international position of the British economy, with gold
      and dollar reserves falling by 84 million dollars in October
      1956 and a further 279 million in November. See:
      Thompson, D. England in the Twentieth Century, Harmonds-
      worth, Penguin 1982, esp. pp251-257.

81   See: Eldridge, J.E.T. (1968) Op.cit. pp124-125.

82   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Bartrams 20/3/52.

83   Ibid

84   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Greenwells
     25/11/57

85   Ministry of Labour: regional strike data, Bartrams 18/9/57.

86   J. Roberts (Snr), Plumber.

87   Bell, A. "Shipyard Tales", unpublished and undated, pp1-2.

88   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Greenwells
     18/6/58.

89   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Austin and
     Pickersgill 19/3/58.

90   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Austin and
     Pickersgill 16/3/60, 23/2/60, 1/3/60, 9/3/60.

91   Ibid 9/3/60.

92   Cameron, G.C. (Op.cit. p5.

93   Ministry of Labour: Regional Strike data, Greenwells 8/5/61.

94   S.S.R. Vol. 99, 1962 (Jan-June) p290.

95   S.S.R. Vol. 99, 7th June 1962, p767.

96   Dougan, D. (1968 Op.cit. p199.

97   S.S.R. Vol. 99, 11th Jan 1962, p60.

98   S.S.R. Vol. 100, Sept, p386.

99   S.S.R. Vol. 102, Nov. 1963, p666.

100 S.S.R. Vol. 102, Dec.

101 Ibid

102 Ibid

103 Spence, John "Industrial Relations in Wearside Shipbuilding
     1945-1981" in:
     Potts, A. (Ed) Shipbuilders and Engineers, Newcastle, North
     East Labour History Society 1987, p83.

104 Hopkins, C.H.G. (1972) Op.cit. p33.

105 S.S.R. Vol. 103, Feb. 1964, p284.

106 Ibid
     These points would tend to confirm Lorenz's view that,
         " ... with few exceptions, British firms failed to
     invest adequately just after the war in the new vintage
     technology based on welding and prefabrication that was
     being adopted abroad. Rather than adopt this new technical
     base in a wholesale manner, most British yards invested in
     welding and burning plant, longer capacity cranes, larger
     berths etc. in a piecemeal fashion adapting them to the
     existing layout of their yards."
     Lorenz, E.H. "The Labour Process and Industrial Relations
     in the British and French Shipbuilding Industries from 1880
     to 1970: Two Patterns of Development", unpublished PhD
     thesis, University of Cambridge 1983.

107 S.S.R. Vol. 103, Jan. 1964, p106.

108 Hopkins, C.H.G. (1972) Op.cit. p33.

109 S.S.R. Vol. 103, Feb., p236.

110 S.S.R. Vol. 103, April, p507.

111 S.S.R. Vol. 104, 5th Nov., p596.

112 S.S.R. Vol. 104, Dec., p728.

113 S.S.R. Vol. 105, 7th Jan., p5.
     He went on to say that the situation on the Wear was
     aggravated by the five year ban on apprentices by the
     Boilermakers. The ban was eventually lifted later in the
     year. It was estimated that due to its operation 600 boys
     had been denied apprenticeships. The ban, begun in February
     1959, was the response of the Boilermakers to unemployment
     amongst welders in that year. See:
     Spence, J. Op.cit. p83.

114 S.S.R. Vol. 106, 15th July, p99.

115 Ibid

116 The growing importance of the relatively large contracting
     firms is a subject that deserves greater attention as the
     higher wages and need for geographical mobility of workers
     suggest the possibility that such firms may have tended to

attract the more young "affluent" worker ideal type from within the traditional shipbuilding workforce.

117 J. Roberts, Plumber.

118 Hopkins, C.H.G. (1972) Op.cit. p34.
     This view encapsulates the problem alluded to by Sohn Rethel in his Dual economics of transition, where he suggests that:
        "The modern plant economy has made production inadaptable to the postulates of market economy" (p31). However the inflexibility of the shipbuilding industry at this time was compounded, for the demand for tonnage was still there, it was the price of new tonnage that presented the problem in these circumstances. To shut production down would have been suicidal. The inflexibility was a product of the shifting contours of international market demand as much as any rigidities arising from a more capital intensive division of labour.

119 Quoted in: S.S.R. Vol. 107, May 1966, p651.

120 McGoldrick, J. "Job Control, Industrial Relations and the State; Changes in British Shipbuilding since Nationalisation", Paper at King's College Research Centre Colloquium "Job Control and the State", 27th-29th September 1982, p12.

121 S.S.R. Vol. 108, July 1966, p4.

122 S.S.R. Vol. 109, Feb. 1967, p210.

123 S.S.R. Vol. 109, June 1967, p893.

124 Eldridge, J.E.T. (1968) Op.cit. p124.

125 McGoldrick, J. (1982) Op.cit. p9.

126 Commission on Industrial Relations Report No.22 Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing, London, H.M.S.O. Cmnd 4756 1971, pp105-106.

127 McGoldrick, J. (1982) Op.cit. pi.

128 Taylor, R. Workers and the New Depression, London, Macmillan 1982, pp48-49.

129 Lorenz, E. and Wilkinson, F. "The Shipbuilding Industry 1880-1965" in:
     Elmbaum, B. and Lazonick (Ed) The Decline of the British Economy, Oxford, O.U.P. 1968, p118.

130   See: Brown, R.K. et al: final report to S.S.R.C. of the
      Project "Orientation to Work and Industrial Behaviour of
      Shipbuilding Workers on Tyneside", pp18-30.

Table i

Population Change: Sunderland CB Wards 1951-61 (1961 Boundaries)

Ward	Population 1951	Change 1951-61	Percentage Change
Central	13,133	-7,086	-54
Bridge	10,247	-3,874	-38
Hendon	10,808	-2,920	-27
Monkwearmouth	15,501	-3,996	-26
Deptford	11,779	-2,900	-25
Bishopwearmouth	9,429	-1,529	-16
Park	12,610	-1,697	-13
Roker	9,952	-1,226	-12
Colliery	11,038	-1,249	-11
Pallion	11,579	-1,055	-9
Humbledon	11,113	-732	-7
Thornhill	8,682	-59	-1
Fulwell	8,495	1,339	16
Southwick	7,545	1,727	23
St. Michael	8,972	2,112	24
Pennywell	12,828	3,802	30
Thorney Close	7,807	12,892	165
Hylton Castle	47	14,616	31,097

Source: Census 1961: Reprinted in Dennis, W. People And Planning, London, Faber & Faber, 1970, p170.

Table ii

Structurally Separate Dwellings Occupied: Sunderland CB Wards 1951-61 (1961 Boundaries)

Ward	Dwellings 1951	Change 1951-61	Percentage Change
Central	2,449	-744	-30
Bridge	2,650	-482	-18
Hendon	2,908	-342	-12
Southwick	2,651	19	1
Roker	2,819	138	5
Pallion	2,979	204	7
Colliery	2,741	290	11
Thornhill	2,592	408	16
Humbledon	2,612	465	18
Park	2,275	460	20
Fulwell	2,700	684	25
Bishopwearmouth	1,815	583	32
St. Michael	2,415	1,074	44
Pennywell	2,539	1,193	47
Monkwearmouth	1,553	1,821	117
Deptford			
Thorney Close	1,775	3,552	200
Hylton Castle	n/a	3,826	-

Source: Census 1961: Reprinted in Dennis, W. People And Planning, London, Faber & Faber, 1970, p171.

CHAPTER FIVE

Craft Workers, Crisis and the Collapse of Control;
or a demoralised lament? - "We knew it couldn't last".

Part I

In the last Chapter it was suggested that in spite of the
technical changes implied in the move towards pre-fabrication and
the formal agreements over the relaxation of working practices,
there was again little movement towards any radical restructuring
of the division of labour which would herald the forthcoming
demise of the craft apprenticed "skilled" worker. As others have
noted some employers were still supportive of the craft system of
production, even if the meaning of craftsmanship was seen to have
changed:

> " ... from implying a mastery of technical mysteries to
> being a promise of competence in a variety of exacting
> conditions and circumstances." (1)

The importance of such an analysis, which stresses a multi-
faceted view of skill, must be understood if we are to avoid the
pitfalls of suggesting that skill is totally socially created.
Thus for example in an otherwise useful treatment of the concept
of skill Charles More singles out the shipbuilding industry as an
example of where apprenticeship was used to delimit skill in an
"artificial way" (2). Whilst we may accept that the whole period
of a five year apprenticeship may not be taken up with the
imparting of the mastery of technical processes, and a similar

point could be made for most courses of "professional" training,

the period was seen as one in which the "rules of conduct" of the

yard could be learnt together with the more informal "tricks of

the trade" [3]. Further to this the employer's "support" of the

craft division of labour lay in exactly those features of

apprenticeship identified by More himself:

> "It seems reasonable to suggest that apprenticeship has
> retained an economic rationale as a period during which
> adolescents can spend time not on productive work but on the
> training necessary to make them productive in the future,
> "paying" for this training by foregoing the higher earnings
> they might obtain elsewhere." (4)

Perhaps of greater importance however than More's estimation

of riveters as being "not in reality highly skilled" is the

realisation that hierarchy of and fluctuations in the skill level

of individual trades are, in the context of shipbuilding, a

natural aspect of a complex and changing division of labour and

do not by themselves indicate the purely social creation, or

maintenance, of the craft division of labour. Thus the important

point is that even into the 1970s authors could claim that:

> "Despite very considerable changes which have taken place
> over the years a shipyard can still fairly be described as
> having a craft technology." (5)

The craft technology and the associated craft administration had

rendered any abrupt reorganisation of the labour process

unlikely. This is not to say that some of the managers within

the industry were not considering the possibility of radical

change. As one Wearside Manager wrote in 1969:

> " ... the inevitable course of industrial advance common to
> all industries should also be adopted in the shipbuilding
> industry. One has seen that advancement of modern industry
> is based not only on technical development but also on a
> more intelligent division of labour." (6)

And again at a later point:

> " ... the author feels that from this study one conclusion
> stands out above all other findings, viz. that shipbuilding
> is not as unsuitable as generally accepted when it comes to
> the possibility of introducing scientific management, the
> reasons why it has not been applied to a larger extent being
> put down to measures of conservatism and traditions." (7)

The unsatisfactory nature of concluding that what exists in "the
present situation" can be put down to "conservatism" and
"traditions" should, by now, be obvious. Moreover the author's
emphasis that scientific management is "generally accepted" to be
"unsuitable" in the context of shipbuilding indicates that his is
a voice crying in the wilderness. It would seem then that even
into the 1970s, and notwithstanding changes in technology and
attempts to change working practices, the legitimacy of the craft
division of labour was accepted either pragmatically or in
principal by a majority in the industry.

Given the lack of any general attempts radically to
restructure the craft division of labour it followed that
attempts to raise labour productivity would necessarily have to
take account of the realities of craft technology and
administration as well as the context of international
competition in which, as we saw in the last Chapter, there was a
belief that no amount of modernisation or further increases in
shipyard efficiency could close the price gap with the Japanese.

In this sense changes in working practices were to be seen as only one element, and not necessarily the most important one, in an attempt to close the gap. In such a context the potential divergence between the outcome of the two levels of the negotiation of control outlined by Brown [8] is great.

In this account the two levels are seen thus:

> "In the first place negotiation can obviously be observed to take place through "official" channels, between employers or their representatives and the Trade Unions, and through slightly less "official" channels between managers and workers, or their representatives, the shop stewards ... Secondly, however, there is negotiation in the sense implied by Strauss and his colleagues when they describe an organisation as a "negotiated order". This refers to the ways in which the behaviour expected of the employer and his representatives in the authority structure of the firm and of the worker is "negotiated" in the daily interaction between manager and worker, worker and worker, and manager and manager. My contention is that there is no clear break between this sort of negotiation and bargaining about industrial relations as commonly understood." (9)

It must be understood that divergence of aim and outcome at these "two" levels does not imply a break between the two sorts of negotiation, but in fact confirms the opposite. It is important then not to separate these two levels, as McGoldrick does, into the duality of theory and practice [10] or any other distinct localities such as micro and macro. The locality of the two types of negotiation can vary with the level of analysis. Thus in the empirical context the outcome of the official negotiation over Relaxation of Working Practices was the agreement outlined in the last Chapter. That this agreement achieved less in practice than on paper owed much to negotiation through the "slightly

less official" channel of managers, shop stewards and workers as well as through the daily negotiated order of the workplace.

The overlapping nature of these "two" types of negotiation are illustrated well in Tony Elger's study, part of which looked at the Marine Engineering section of Doxford and Sunderland Ltd. [11]. The empirical study in this research was carried out between 1968 and 1970 and attempts to give an account of the rationalisation scheme launched in the engine works, which was addressed in part towards helping to solve the crisis of profitability and in part as an attempt to secure government funds under the auspices of Wilsonian modernisation. The account is sophisticated and brings out well the complexities of the craft ethos and individual differences between the skills and social positions of the workers. Within the context of rational- isation Elger points to the fact that

> " ... Doxfords management patrolled the boundaries of craft organisation and the division of labour without any concerted attempt to attack those boundaries ... " (12)

Thus the centrepiece of the rationalisation became the pay structure. The replacement of payment by piece to one based on merit was an attempt to return some power to the foremen. The payment system amounted to measured day work with several bands of achievement in three areas, those of Efficiency, Industry and Accuracy.

> "The implications of the scheme as a whole, however, continued to depend crucially on just how the assessment process was worked. That process placed considerable

potential power in the hands of the foreman since, though he
was just one member of a management "Assessments Committee"
of five, he would clearly be the source of the
"recommendations" and judgements underlying their
decisions." (13)

It would seem that the potential power of the foreman was

not, or could not be, realised in practice for Elger noted that

assessments produced only a narrow range of scores clustered

towards the top end of the range, and a noticeable drift into the

top merit level over time.

> "These results appeared to be a consequence of both a
> reluctance on the part of foremen to award scores below 8 or
> 9 for Efficiency and Industry (with 10 as the norm for
> Accuracy), and the willingness of management to revise
> scores upwards on appeal ... shop-floor organisation had
> sustained some degree of mutuality and wage push in the new
> conditions, thus exemplifying the point that changes in
> payment systems may modify the expression of conflict on the
> shop floor but cannot simply suppress or transcend the bases
> of that conflict." (14)

The willingness of workers and shop stewards to go through

the "slightly less official" channel and challenge management

scores combined with the elements of "negotiation" implied in the

foreman's unwillingness to award low scores served to frustrate

the realisation of the aim involved in the rationalisation of

wage scales.   This is a useful account then as it covers the two

types of negotiation outlined by Brown.   However it leaves

largely unanalysed the intensity of the moral dimensions of the

employment relationship, the extent to which the enduring forms

of worker control are partially located in an essential identity

of the skilled worker, the dimensions of which owe as much to

practical as discursive consciousness.   The importance of under-

standing this level of reality, not in isolation but in as far as
it relates to, supports and is supported by other levels, is
crucial.

It is within this multiplexity of levels that the tenacity
of the day to day craft "control" of the division of labour in
the shipbuilding industry lay. A setting relatively more complex
than that confronting the single occupational group of "turners"
in Elger's study. Within a shipyard the wide variety of distinct
occupational identities has been seen to interact with the
physical (and therefore locational) complexity of the workplace
and historically different payment systems to encourage the
development of a workforce whose attitudes and "images of
society" have been characterised more by "paradox ... than
pattern" [15].

The heterogeneity characteristic of the orientations and
images of the shipbuilding workforce outlined by Cousins and
Brown are seen to be influenced most importantly by the immediate
social context, particularly the objective market and work
situations, and are therefore historically contingent. From their
vantage point of the early 1970s they suggested that changes in
the industry [16] would increasingly lead to a realisation of a
"latent proletarianisation" and therefore a relative rise in the
importance of collective as against sectional action, thus
implying a relative shift towards more "official" forms of
negotiation. Their argument is worth quoting at length.

"These changes (see note 16) have meant that increasingly
shipbuilding workers on Tyneside - and elsewhere - have come
both to share common market and work situations, and to be
aware that they did so. Particularism in relations between
management and men is increasingly giving way to universa-
lism - in larger and necessarily more bureaucratic organis-
ations. Because of the need, in management's view, to
secure mobility of labour between jobs and yards a
deliberate attempt has been made to break down demarcation
lines and to secure greater all-round flexibility in the use
of labour. But this can only be achieved at the cost of
creating a much more homogeneous and potentially unified
workforce. Shipbuilding workers now more nearly share the
same market situation and have fewer chances to pursue
particular individual strategies in their pursuit of pay and
security; collective action against a common employer is the
most obvious possibilty for them. They are now more likely
to experience the same range of work situations - and to
have fewer, if any, chances of escaping from deprivations
and grievances in one yard under one employer by going to
another employer; collective action is again the most
obvious strategy. If men's social consciousness is
influenced by their immediate social context, and if we are
right in stressing the importance of the market and work
situations as influencing consciousness, then, one must
expect "proletarian" social perspectives to increase in
importance." (17)

It will be argued as one of the themes of this Chapter that

the above view, whilst a reasonable projection when originally

formulated, is in fact deficient in a number of respects.

Firstly it underestimated the tenacity of the "non-formal"

negotiation of order and thereby treated the implementation of

formal agreements and the translation of change at the corporate

level onto the shop floor as relatively unproblematic. Secondly

it offers a vision of the change between sectional and collective

action as primarily a question of the qualitative expression of

the contradictions inherent in the employment relationship. In

both of these respects the analysis fails to take adequate

account of the wider fortunes of the industry insofar as this
implies a changing balance of power between capital and labour.
Thirdly, and in some ways most seriously, the analysis of images
of society of shipbuilding workers largely on the basis of
questionnaire data treats as unproblematic the relevance of
replies about the numbers of "classes" in society as this relates
to potential action at the point of production. The dangers of
mistaking action primarily motivated by a temporary "instrumental
collectivism" for more solidaristic and class wide action must be
guarded against.

In the next section an attempt to rectify some of these
shortcomings will be made by outlining some of the diverse forms
through which the day to day negotiation of order was
accomplished in the yards in the period prior to 1979. Such a
"static" account of some of the processes of control and identity
will be supplemented at a later point with reference to the
historical development of the industry in general but with
specific reference to the Wear.

Part II

The Context, Control and Co-operation

a) Physical Location and Control

One of the hardest features of the shipbuilding industry to
convey to people who have never seen a shipyard is the sheer
complexity and size of the physical workplace. Even in
relatively small yards such as those on the Wear the absence of a
single workspace is compounded by a multiplicity of activities
occurring in differing vertical as well as horizontal planes.
The dizzying effect of this complexity and size I remember well
from the Monday morning early in September 1975 when I began work
as an apprentice plumber at the Deptford Yard of Sunderland Ship-
builders (formerly Laings). It is perhaps useful to outline some
of the observations I can recall from that first day of
participant observation, of the most direct kind, in order to
attempt to convey some of the complexity of the physical layout
of the yard.

A friend and I walked the three miles or so from Hylton
Castle Estate to the yard that first morning. On crossing Queen
Alexandra Bridge we turned left down the bank towards the yard.
The first large building encountered was the joiners shop
actually outside the yard gates. The double doors were flung
open and the sight and sound of circular saws in action dominated
the immediate interior of the shop. Down at the gates
themselves, opposite the Saltgrass pub, other new apprentices

were gathered. We joined them and sat on the path waiting for

the training officer to take us into the yard [18]. While sitting

there on the ground I remember looking up at one of the two

massive pre-fabricating sheds. Its proximity and size dominated

the view and reminded me of a secular version of Durham Cathedral

without the ornamentation.

The training officer arrived and we began the walk through

the yard towards the canteen. Groups of blokes were walking

about or standing talking, some gave "wolf whistles" and shouted

various comments about apprentices. We walked past the offices

round to the left, past the second pre-fabricating shed and more

men, some of whom appeared to know me.

"There's another bloody Roberts"; "Hey, I know your father
and he's fucking crackers". (19)

After a "pep talk" from the training officer which largely

consisted of telling us how lucky we were to have got an

apprenticeship and how if there was any nonsense we would be out

because for every one of us in here there were fifty lads outside

the gate who would gladly take our place, we went on a tour of

the yard. This started in front of the offices where the general

layout of the yard was explained. From there we zigzagged

through a maze of cabins down to the berth and from there into

one of the pre-fabricating sheds. The noise was deafening and

the air was thick with fumes. It wasn't the wide open space

inside the shed that I had expected. Instead there were cabins

two storeys high and several partitions which restricted a wide

view. This was compounded by the sections being fabricated,

again their size and angular construction blocking an overall

appreciation of the "space" in the shed. We wandered across the

shed dodging in and out of the vertical girders and round several

partitions and emerged out of a door on the far side. Outside

there were a number of buildings, stores and "shops" including

the plumbers shop. We were split up and sent off in separate

directions according to our designated trades. I and three other

lads went to the plumbers shop. It was very warm inside what was

a rather ramshackle building, with ancient-looking machinery and

tools lying about everywhere. Our journey to get here had taken

several hours with what seemed like miles walked, up and down

steps through a myriad of little connecting doors and passages or

walkways, turning through 360° so often that any sense of

direction evaporated. For that first week, before we were sent

to Wearside College, the confusion was such that plenty of time

had to be allowed for toilet trips to ensure finding the correct

location before desperation set in! All this in what was a

relatively small yard. Moreover as new apprentices we were not

allowed on the ship, where we were assured things could be even

more complicated. An abiding impression left by these

experiences was not only the conception of spatial complexity but

also of physical movement, men walking everywhere, individually

or in small groups, or standing talking or was it waiting

purposefully for something? As a new recruit this wasn't clear

to me and furthermore by the reaction of the training officer or

some of the other managers it was not clear to them either!

Within such a complex physical setting the managerial

problem of the physical control of labour is immense. There are

several dimensions to this problem. Firstly workers can use the

size of the yard or a ship simply to hide. As Brown et al found

in their study of shipbuilding on the Tyne when talking to a

manager,

> (Prompt) "I've noticed on the ferries little stickers on the
> cabins. I gathered this is a new scheme which has been
> introduced?"
>
> "This was done for a specific reason on the ferry because
> as you will appreciate there are a lot of cabins on there -
> there are about 320 cabins. On a normal ship there are
> about 50 cabins ... In the past the ships have been such a
> hell of a mess through lack of information, lack of
> drawings. lack of equipment that all the cabins are wide
> open till the very last day. Every single cabin on the ship
> there is somebody working in. You will appreciate that with
> 320 cabins you can't afford to do this. So what I did was
> sectionalised the ship in such a way we closed up about 20
> cabins a week, starting at a certain time. This was ideal
> that we should have everything into that cabin, complete,
> washed out, painted, locked up on a certain day.
>   I did a preliminary inspection to make sure that all
> the work was finished behind the ceilings to get the ceiling
> up and then a fortnight afterwards to get the cabin locked.
> I do an inspection on a Friday of these two sections, one of
> the ceiling work and one of the cabin work. But as I said
> before some days we would be very short of plumbers on this
> ship, I found on inspection of the ceiling that the plumbers
> just hadn't finished behind the ceilings. And it is
> possible they're a week late and consequently the cabin was
> out a week or a fortnight. Perhaps it wasn't exactly
> finished in a week, but I don't object to this provided that
> I can see the ship being closed up regularly as it did
> happen. You can't be so very rigid in shipbuilding and the
> scheme has worked. And by doing this method we've closed up
> the sections, got people out of the cabins where they tend
> to hide and into passageways where you can keep them moving

and the ship is being closed up."

(Prompt) "Into the cabins where they can hide?"

"Well if you get a man into a cabin he can shut the door
behind him and he can make the work last if he wants to, but
if you get a man out of the cabin he's got nowhere else to
go so he's got to get on with his work in the passage-
ways." (21)

In the absence of cabins other parts of the ship can be used

not just as a place to "take a breather", but also for a multi-

tude of other activities, of a greater or lesser degree of

illegitimacy, which comprise elements of "leisure in work" (22).

Thus one worker recalled how when he and the "mate" he was

working with started to "feel the cold" on a refrigeration ship

on which they were working,

> " ... we used to knock off and go into one of the
> refrigeration units ... it was like a big room all covered
> in cork tiling - very warm. And we would start - you know,
> first of all just throwing light punches, but then we would
> get carried away and really start lacing into each other.
> In the end Ronnie always used to get the better of me - he'd
> end up with my left arm caught under his and he's give me
> rights to the side of my head. I'd shout "right, we're warm
> enough now, we'd better get back to work"." (23)

Being the tradesman had the advantage of being able to determine

when work should interrupt the boxing!

Another more extreme example of using the "company's time"

creatively was given by a plumber working at Greenwells who

remembered one labourer who would go missing to melt down and

steal the lead insulation from electric cables (24).

The ability to cease work when desired was not only the

prerogative of those who would go and hide, for the complexity of

the production process offered plenty of opportunity to come off

the job for "legitimate" reasons. One of the most common of

these is to go in pursuit of either tools or equipment. Once

away from the area of "direct supervision" of an individual

foreman, a worker could if desired "go walk about". The length

of such excursions was limited only by the plausibility of the

story the worker could think of to tell the original foreman.

Such plausible stories were not hard to come by, for often delays

could have basis in fact. Thus in some cases the hunt for

equipment could take several days, and in one case a worker

recounted an experience at Shorts yard in the early 1960s where

after waiting a fortnight for a foreman to supply a welding set

he became so bored that he left and went to another yard. The

search for tools and equipment does not exhaust the battery of

semi-legitimate reasons for leaving one's work; visits to the

ambulance room for everything from indigestion tablets to

sticking plaster to keep spectacles on are combined with trips

to perform one's natural functions. Indeed the culture of the

toilet usually features very large in most accounts of working in

the shipbuilding industry. Furthermore absenting oneself from

the job is only one strategy - others can include delaying

tactics in starting in the first place (about which more will be

said later) and even under certain circumstances going home after

clocking in. This latter attempt at "working a flanker" could be

tried when contractors were working in a yard. If they were

working overtime it was sometimes possible for a night shift

worker to leave when they did having made the requisite arrange-

ments for "clocking out" [25].

b)   Of Foremen and Workers: The Interpenetration of Personal and

      Industrial Relations

In the situation where yards had amalgamated and the

simplistic management structure of the family firm was replaced

by the more bureaucratic structure of professional management,

and with less reliance on piecework, the importance of the fore-

men to ensure that work was being done grew. For as personnel

were transferred between yards and the rate of turnover of

managerial staff increased [26], together with the use of

contract labour, this ensured that the days when the owner or

senior management knew the trade of all the men in the yard had

gone for ever. Increasingly it was only individual foremen in

direct "control" of groups of workers who had any idea of who

should be doing what. Ironically however it was also during the

period of the long boom, as we saw in the last Chapter, that the

coercive force of the foreman declined.

If ensuring that workers were in the right place at the

right time was a problematic feature of the foreman's

responsibility, then even more so was their responsibility for

the effort expended by the workforce. For as Brown et al argued,

> "So far as control of workers is concerned, this tends to be
> the responsibility of the foremen. Control of effort and
> pace of work largely depends on direct supervision." (27)

However these same authors quote to good effect three managers

whose views of how foremen achieve "control" differ.

> " ... the management and foremen do control this (the pace
> of work) whether by getting men to do more work or putting
> more men on the job - they control pace."

> " ... craftsmen do set the pace of work: you need to have
> one supervisor per man to do otherwise. You feel like that
> sometimes."

> " ... the foreman doesn't have to stand over them. He may
> have the matter of ten men working for him. He'll detail
> each of them off to a job and he'll follow that job. He'll
> go round and lets the men see he knows he's on the job and
> watching the job and this acts as an incentive for them to
> work. He doesn't interfere with them in any way, just asks
> them how the job is going; if he's stopped, can he help him
> in any way; and so on." (28)

Another paper based on this same research suggests that the last

quotation may be a realistic portrayal, as 72% of workers

questioned said they never experienced time checks with the

figure being as high as 90% of platers and 88% of plumbers [29].

In this sense the above authors are correct to stress the

importance of the internalisation of standards of work of the

craftsmen themselves.

There are several important features which stem from this

realisation. Firstly, due to the decline in the coercive power

of the foremen, itself based upon the wider changes in the

economy and the labour market, the importance of those

internalised standards as an element in the effort bargain grew

in the period of the long boom. Secondly, following from this

shift away from the "objective" determinacy of the wider labour

markets towards the "intersubjective" regulation of the standards
of "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay", the effort bargain
was potentially more volatile as a direct creation or negotiation
of intersubjective agency. Thirdly this implies a growing
importance of the non-coercive aspects of the relationship
between foreman and workers and to this extent the
particularistic form of that relationship is to be understood in
both its moral and economistic contexts. It is to this issue
that we will now turn our attention.

In attempting to confront these issues we are faced with the
problem that there does not seem to be any well-developed frame-
work for their analysis. Where efforts have been made to
recognise the validity of these issues, they often end up merely
by restating the problem or stopping short of a move which they
see (wrongly) as propelling them towards elements of individual
psychology. Thus for example two authors were not prepared to go
any further than noting:

> "Many of the responses to the workplace are individualistic
> and escapist." (30)

This is not to deny, however, that some useful attempts have been
made to capture the complexities of the negotiated order at the
point of production. The work of Burawoy and, preceding him,
Donald Roy, did tackle some of these questions in the context of
a machine shop. In describing the control of the labour process
the importance of the notion of "making out" is seen to lie in
the fact that such a system:

> " ... inserts the worker into the labour process as an
> individual rather than as a member of a class distinguished
> by a particular relationship to the means of production.
> Workers control their own machines instead of being
> controlled by them, and this enhances their autonomy.
> ... The system of reward is based on individual rather than
> collective effort. Second, the combination of autonomy with
> respect to machines and dependence with respect to auxiliary
> personnel has the consequence of redistributing conflict
> from a hierarchical direction into a lateral direction, in
> which individual labourers face one another in conflict or
> competition. The constitution of the worker as one among
> many competing and conflicting others masks their common
> membership in a class of agents of production who sell their
> labour power for a wage, as distinct from another class of
> agents who appropriate their unpaid labour." (31)

Here then the objective character of the labour process is

used to explain the fragmentation of the workers at the point of

production.   However such fragmentation as an element of

organisational integration has been noted in industries with

labour processes far different to those of the machine shop,

indeed as we have seen in the work of Brown et al division

amongst the workforce in shipbuilding is possibly more character-

istic than wide solidaristic stances.   Clearly there is a need to

situate these problems in a more general context than that of an

individual labour process which cannot accommodate all the

aspects of the negotiation of order in the workplace.

This realisation was implicit in the work of Donald Roy, who

concluded of his own research that:

> " ... attention has not been drawn to intragroup role and
> personality variations in intergroup relations.   Such
> additional discriminations and the questions that they might
> raise in regard to the study of institutional dynamics must
> be left for future discussion." (32)

Similarly Burawoy himself bemoans the lack of a Marxist

psychology which can extend the understanding of the production

of consent.   Thompson acknowledges this problem, suggesting that:

> "An analysis of the existential aspects of the production
> and reproduction of identity must therefore be situated in
> the "theoretical black hole" between capitalist/patriarchal
> structures and individual action.   This is indeed necessary,
> but indicates why a Marxist psychology will not be the
> vehicle.   Such concerns with individual identity do not
> enter the Marxist analysis of capitalism.   Therefore the
> conceptual tools cannot be generated from within
> Marxism." (33)

In attempting to contribute towards a theory of the "missing

subject" we must beware of restating the vexed dualism of

individual and society.   What is missing is not a psychology,

Marxist or otherwise, but rather an understanding of the inter-

penetration of structure and agency such as that sought by Philip

Abrams outlined in Chapter One.

> " ... the process of identity formation and the process of
> social reproduction are one and the same.   Insofar as we can
> understand personal identity and social structure not as
> distinct states of being but as elements of a single process
> of becoming; historical sociology is freed from the spurious
> dualism which puts knowledge of the individual beyond the
> reach of social science.   But the bases for such an under-
> standing are to be found not in general assertions of its
> desirability but in the empirical study of the "becoming" of
> identities and societies." (34)

The question cannot then be reduced to one of "individual

psychology", and yet "individualistic" responses are often a

crucial element in what is more than merely a fragmented labour

force.   The tendency to polarise collective (class) stances to

individualistic (psychological) response is fundamentally

inadequate.   In most situations the employment relationship and

the contradictions inherent in it are produced and enacted by

people who bring far more with them to work than purely a class

position. The terrain on which the contradictions are lived out

is often moulded as much by moral concerns as any more purely

structural locations. In other words we have to give attention

not only to the importance of individuals as constitutive of

collectivities (and vice versa) but also to the importance of

technical and affective rationality insofar as this leads to the

interpenetration of private and public statuses, of personal and

industrial relations.

As far as the relationship between foremen and workers in

the yards is concerned, I wish to stress two aspects of the

mutual relationship, those of strategies and sociability. Again

these two aspects are not often distinct in the empirical

situation; their division is more a discursive device than

representing any more fundamental divisions. Strategies then are

pursued by both foremen and workers [35]. Typically the

objectives of such strategies are manifold and overlapping. For

the foreman elements involved may include getting enough work

done so as not to incur the wrath of his own superiors, whilst

also not being seen to be too "bossy" by the workers who could

also make his life awkward. Such a balance also includes

dimensions of the production and reproduction of identity, to

both his "superiors" and "subordinates" he must not be seen as

too "soft" but particularly to the latter group he must attempt

to encourage the belief that he is "fair" [36]. Individual

workers must also avoid being seen as soft or as too much of a

"willing horse", but also as craftsmen it is often important for

it to be known that one can perform most of the tasks of one's

trade if one feels like it. The importance of these individual

elements of identity differs between individuals and it is upon

these differences that the strategies adopted often depend.

Again it must be stated that such differences cannot be reduced

to individual psychology, as identities are created and recreated

socially, and often historical contingencies can play a major

role.

For example, it was noted in the last Chapter that some

older workers retained their fear of foremen based on their

experiences of the inter-war period. However this only

represents a small potential group which foremen can "encourage"

to work in a direct way. For others different strategies will be

used. Identification of "willing horses" can be an element which

foremen can use to good effect. There are those in the yards who

in spite of everything do not internalise group norms over pace

of work [37]. The appeal to the "willing horse" can take

different forms. Thus one plumber recalled how a foreman used to

encourage one worker in the group shop to undertake jobs no-one

else wanted.

> "He would come out onto the shop floor with a sketch and
> would announce that he had an impossible job, maybe a big
> eight inch diameter pipe with loads of offsets and bends.

> As soon as Morris would hear this he would grab it and put
> it with his other jobs. We would all laugh and Vincent
> would return to his office smiling. This happened all the
> time." (38)

In this case then the foreman, and almost everyone else, knew

that this individual worker liked to rise to a challenge, as long

as the job was "almost impossible" this worker would grab it.

The importance to this worker of being seen as the most highly

skilled worker in the shop was used well by the foreman. In

other cases foremen would use reason, cajole, scorn or threaten

workers with transfer of location or shift in order to ensure at

least a minimum performance of the group as a whole, with the

willing horses taking most of the flogging. However given the

possibility of thwarting any direct pressure by disappearing or

"botching up" jobs, many foremen rely on the internalised

standards of the craft workers themselves. In this respect much

effort is expended on retaining convivial relations with

individual workers, and in some cases attempting to elicit

feelings of sympathy for a difficult position.

> "Sometimes he would come over like a big daft labrador - he
> would say "Jim, we've still got these jobs to finish, and
> I've been getting a lot of flack from Charlie (the head
> foreman) 'cause we're not getting through them quick enough.
> Do you, do you think you could manage another one?" And I'd
> say, "oh all right then", and he would walk away saying
> "thanks Jim"." (39)

Some workers were even beyond this sort of appeal. On several

separate occasions the account of the plumber who did the tank

tests at Thompson's was mentioned. This was a man that all the

foremen were frightened of.

> "He had his own shed and one of them (a foreman) would poke
> their head round the door and say "will it be alright for
> you to do this?" and just leave the paper and get away
> quick." (40)

Apparently the individual concerned had been in a Japanese

prisoner of war camp with the head foreman and it was believed

that "he had something on him", either that he had taken beatings

on behalf of the foreman or "knew something dodgy about him".

Anyway what ever the reason this worker was treated very warily

by all the foremen.

This is perhaps an extreme case, however in other accounts

there were references to the existence of a high degree of

"negotiation" between foremen and individual workers with

reference to the allocation of particular jobs. It is important

to note not only that the worker evaluates the job but also the

identity of the foreman and the way the foreman asks the worker

to do the job. The issue was rarely one of worker refusing to do

the job, (although some individuals could get away with this),

that kind of direct opposition would provoke a crisis whereby the

foreman could operationalise the formal inequalities of power in

the employment relationship and refer the matter to a manager.

Rather the opposition to a job would take the form of "cocking it

up" or not performing to the best of one's ability. Thus one

worker, in assessing his own ability at his job, went on to

conclude:

> "I was fairly capable of doing what I was asked to do.
> Probably wouldn't always do it to the best of my ability,

depending on which way I was asked to do it."

(Prompt) "So from that point of view would personalities come into it?"

"Oh certainly yes, if you were approached the right way you would probably do a job and make a good job of it. Whereas if somebody spoke to you as if they were talking to a dog - if you like, you could gamble there would be something wrong with the job like." (41)

Such a response would seem to lie somewhere between Dubois' categories of "instrumental sabotage" (with limited objectives) and "demonstrative sabotage". It has an instrumental (defensive) element in that it aims to change the behaviour of someone in authority and yet its focus is the demeanour of an individual not a collective stance of management. Thus it is not demanding a change in "working conditions" that could be legislated by management (42). Whilst it shares this feature with "demonstrative sabotage" it diverges from other features that type of sabotage.

"Demonstrative sabotage is not demanding any improvement in working conditions - but this does not mean that it is simply gratuitous. It is expressing a real discord, a class enmity. It may be sheer vengeance, the only thing left to do when all else has failed, a cry of despair, a last gasp: "The boss has attacked us, and we are having revenge on his goods". It can also be a way of indicating that the interests of owners and workers are at variance: "Why produce good quality, work enthusiastically, economise on materials, do all that is laid upon us, why bother, in short, for a boss who is simply exploiting us?" (43)

In our case the response is not expressing "a class enmity" in any direct sense. Surely the hierarchical ordering of the division of labour is a central aspect of the structural ordering of statuses of domination and subordination, but this is not felt

by the worker to be the central problem. Being treated like "a

dog" is the problem, one which depends largely on how one is

approached. In the context of the complexities of the labour

process in shipbuilding then with the potential porosity of the

working day [44] characteristic of non-machine paced work, one of

the main centres of negotiation of the effort bargain becomes the

moral ground of individual sociability. Dyadic interaction which

is nonetheless structured by formal inequalities deriving from

the employment relationship become the centres of negotiation.

The elements of such relationships go further than any facile

notion of the "human relations" approach, at one level they are

"structured" by the inequalities of the employment relationship

with its formal statuses of domination and subordination, whilst

at another level they include evaluations of individual identity

which introduce an asymmetry in what individual foremen can "get

away with".

On the latter point the assessment of identity of individual

foremen by workers includes both occupationally relevant and

non-relevant features. A foreman is evaluated both in terms of

his past and present mastery of his craft. Sometimes there is a

feeling that a foreman has really been "demoted upwards" - in

other words was a lousy craftsman on the tools. Others are held

to be competent craftsmen whose knowledge can be trusted when

help is needed. Indeed in particular situations foremen can gain

much in the eyes of workers by demonstrating high levels of

expertise. In this sense one worker gave an account of an

accident on a ship at Doxfords when a fire in the shaft tunnel

killed several men:

> "The firemen arrived and were just standing, they didn't
> know how to get in, if there was a short cut or anything.
> But then Charlie Kirkham worked out if they cut into the
> tail end of the after end tank they could get into the
> tunnel. It was just that knowledge that nobody else seemed
> to have - he chalked on the sections ... everybody else was
> just standing ... I didn't like the fella mind, he was like
> a bull in a china shop, but sometimes you need that to get
> things done." (45)

Other elements in the identity of foremen which do not

relate directly to work based issues can play a part in how much

an individual worker will put up with from a foreman. Thus one

worker explained how during a prolonged period of his daughter's

illness and subsequent death one foreman who "was a right swine"

had "gone easy on him" and thus demonstrated that he was "really

a gentleman". Whilst such demonstrations of "humanity" would

occur in most work places, the point is that given the lack of

machine pacing, technical control, payment by results and the

potential to subvert directives, such positive evaluations assume

a direct importance in the creation of consent.

All of this becomes of prime importance when it is realised

that some jobs within a craft are considered to be worse than

others, and also that specialisation within a trade tends to

occur as a "natural" process of negotiation. It is when a bad

job needs to be done that a foreman has, as one option, to rely

on his authority as seen by individual workers.

"You found over a period of time blokes would tend to get
the same job on the following ship; if they made a
reasonable job on one particular ship they would probably
get the same job to do on the next one. Therefore you would
get blokes that was always used to fitting air pipes because
they did them on the last boat. ... It was good in some
respects and bad in others, depending on what particular job
it was. If it was a job where you were working in confined
spaces - in the double bottoms and what not, which there
wasn't very many people keen on doing, you wouldn't be very
happy to do it every ship. So it was a case of if you made
too good a job of it you were going to get it on the next
boat, so if there was a few leaks introduced in the pipes
the chances are you probably wouldn't get the job on the
next boat." (46)

In relation to such bad jobs and cases where "botched jobs"

had to be put right, or jobs required the application of surplus

skill, foremen often relied upon more than their own authority.

The principal element in such situations was the negotiation of

"perks". The approach of the foreman on such occasions were

characteristic of someone "asking a favour":

"The foreman would approach you and ask you, "hey, will you
do that job for us?" and you could gamble that if a foreman
approached you with a "will you do us a favour" attitude
that it was a bit of a horrible job. So you would say
"What's in it for me like? Like if I do it as fast as you
want it doing what am I likely to get out of it?" you know
... be it a half shift booked in for you or whatever, or a
job and finish which as soon as you'd finished the job you
could get away home or whatever." (47)

The importance of the use of devices such as these is that

the negotiation of the effort bargain extends beyond the scope of

the employment contract and involves the illegitimate use of

overtime payments or time off. It should be emphasised that many

such jobs occur on each ship and are therefore, to some extent,

routine occurrences which nevertheless are seen to require the

use of "perks". Moreover there was a clear belief amongst workers

that higher management colluded in these negotiations, between

foremen and workers, by their "knowledge" of these processes.

> (Prompt) "Did the upper management know that this went on?"

> "Well I think they did but ... I think it was for "kidem
> stakes" - they used to make it try and look as if it was
> just between the foreman and the man on the shop floor - so
> you didn't bring management into it. Yes they probably knew
> about it, it was a case of "oh· give the lads whatever you
> need to, for to get the job done", aye." (48)

The idea that higher management colluded in these practices

is underlined by the fact that once control of yard exits was

tightened up, foremen were still willing to issue written pass

outs for workers with whom they had agreed a "job and knock" (job

and finish).

> (Prompt) "If you were given a job and knock how would you
> get out of the gate?"

> "At one time earlier on you could just walk out. Later on
> you would get a pass out, the foreman would present you with
> a pass out." (49)

Again this points to the lack of any controls over the workers in

terms of the negotiation of the effort bargain or their physical

presence, other than those stemming from the foreman and

importantly the internalised standards of performance, both

quantity and quality, of the workers themselves. This element of

self control is of particular importance, for as we have already

seen, attempts at direct control by foremen can be subverted by

"botching up" or going missing. Both of these tactics carry some

risks to the worker however. If attempted too often or in too

overt a manner, their oppositional intent becomes manifest [50].

This can result in either formal disciplinary procedures being

invoked, or more usually the individual is branded a trouble

maker or a "barrack room lawyer" and transferred between sections

and workgroups. The stability of status of trouble maker then

tends to become solidified in a process not unlike that of the

"looping effect" described by Goffman, where the expectations of

those in authority of "further deviance" are matched by the

assumption of an immediate defensive stance on behalf of the

individual.   This wariness is then interpreted by those in

authority as evidence of the correctness of their original expec-

tations, and so on [51]. The initial expectations of the foremen

are usually formed through information passed within their own

ranks.   Thus during a period of several days spent with the

training officer at Doxfords (Pallion Yard) in 1981 I was witness

to a discussion between a foreman plater and my "host" [52].

We entered a shed on the floor of the covered-in yard,

whereupon the foreman ordered about three other people out,

closed the door and began a diatribe against an individual who

had just been transferred to his squad. Amidst the cursing and

references to "barrack room lawyers" were appeals for the

training officer to ask other foremen about the man. "They know

what he is like". Halfway through this diatribe the foreman

noticed my presence and broke off mid-sentence. Stabbing a

finger in my direction he demanded,

"Who the bloody hell's he?"

The training officer replied, "It's alright, he's from Durham

University". Whereupon the foreman continued to fume. The

ferocity of his outburst was remarkable. However the training

officer reassured him that:

"You know you won't be stuck with him for long."

That such individuals are kept on the move is well recognised by

the workers themselves. As one shipwright put it,

> "I'm sick of it. I get shunted about all over, I've been to
> Thompsons (North Sands) and Laings (Deptford) - they even
> sent me to Smiths Dock on Teesside. When I came here
> (Doxfords, Pallion) the foreman just walked up to me and
> said "I know about you"." (53)

Given the pitfalls of being seen as a trouble maker, the

realisation of how far you can go in opposition to particular

foremen becomes part of a stock of knowledge on the shop floor.

Some strategies used do not carry as great a risk of being seen

as oppositional (both to authority and the individual) as others.

One such approach seeks to prompt the foreman, or further

encourage him into excursions of self indulgency. Here the

knowledge of the interests and temperaments of individual foremen

is crucial. Thus in one case,

> "All you had to do was go in and start talking about
> (tropical) fish. You would say, you know: "Jacky, I was in
> Armstrong's Aquatics with the bairns on Saturday and we saw
> this fish, it was sort of black and swam funny - you know,
> like this - do you know what it was?" If it worked he'd
> start asking if it had fins here or did it swim on the
> bottom or top or whatever. Once he started you could be
> there for hours, talking about how they breed and what ill-
> nesses they get - it was all interesting, mind." (54)

In other cases a more collective attempt to encourage the

self indulgency of a foreman would work, and examples of these

occasions are fondly remembered and retold to others involved,

particularly where a certain arrogance can be detected in the

foreman, such as pretentions at being a great orator:

> "Harry Hunter, he used to have this bench outside his office
> in the Plumbers shop. Every now and again he would come out
> when everybody had just got in and he would stand on the
> bench with his hands on his lapels. "Now then, men" he
> would say, and we'd all start to gather round, "Now then,
> I'm sorry to have to announce the death of brother so and so
> at the age of 80 odd who worked in this yard 40 odd years
> man and boy." Then he would go on about what jobs this man
> had worked on and what ships he'd been on. By this time
> we'd crowd round tighter and especially if it was raining or
> we didn't want to go out we used to offer up useful
> comments, "Wasn't he the bloke that used to grow leeks?" or
> something like that, and he'd go off on another tangent.
> All the time we'd be whispering to each other out of the
> corner of our mouths "go on Harry, go on Harry" - by this
> time half the morning shift could have gone by." (55)

Many of the tactics of indulgence and avoidance incorporate

elements of behaviour which have direct parallels in the school

situation. It is therefore perhaps not merely a coincidence that

Corrigan's perceptive study of working class boys' experience of

school was, given the findings, based in Sunderland. Here the

author suggests that the "major single point" to be learnt from

the research is:

> " ... that it is impossible to extricate the behaviour of
> the individual from the power situation. "Carrying on"
> represents at one and the same time taking no notice of the
> teacher, being aware of the teacher's power, and doing what
> the teacher doesn't want you to do. The only link between
> these three is that the boy is asserting his right, in the
> given power situation of the classroom, to take part in
> whatever action he feels like. That action is not dominated
> by values of a pro- or anti-school nature; instead it is

about the power situation perceived and experienced in that
school. Given that for the boys the teachers are "big-
heads", and they try to rule you, the boys are presented
with a problem of initiating their own action. To start
using the analogy of a guerilla struggle, "carrying on in
class" represents the ability of the boys to continue their
normal way of life despite the occupying army of the
teachers and the power of the sch··ol, as well as their
ability to attack the teachers on the boys' own terms." (56)

The analogy with the school situation is an imperfect one,

for the role of the foreman involves important contradictions,

which will be developed later, and cannot be seen as

approximating to that of the school teacher. However where

managerial action was forthcoming, to increase or rather enforce

direct control, resistance which is sometimes recounted as almost

"prankish" could be forthcoming. Thus one worker told of how

periodically a particular manager would attempt to prevent

workers leaving the ship 15 minutes before "knocking off" time:

> "He would arrive at the end of the gang plank about twenty
> minutes before the buzzer. When we got mind of what he was
> doing we started to come off half an hour before finish, and
> so on. On a few occasions he would see someone he thought
> should be somewhere else and chase them. I remember one time
> when he was chasing all of us round and round the sheds."
> (57)

It ought to be pointed out that those involved in such chases

were not just the "young and daft" element in the yard, but

included men right up to retiring age, some, as in the case of

this individual, mature men with teenage or adult offspring much

taken to talking of "common sense" and "respect". Clearly for

the craftsmen the imposition of direct control of this kind was

taken as an attempt to treat them in a "childish" manner. If the

response could be seen as in some respects adequate to this

challenge then the explanation lies in the context rather than

purely in the psychological characteristics of the individuals

concerned.

Again the point should be made that such frustrations of

managerial objectives stops short of overt refusal to perform,

hence the "prankish" nature of some of the avoidance strategies.

Where non-performance cannot be hidden, attempts to neutralise

potential sanctions of foremen are made. Such attempts often

call for the use of skillful "patter" in order to introduce

humour into the situation. Thus an example was given of where a

degree of "mucking about" had resulted in a pipe going over the

side of a ship. The dialogue between the "chief patter merchant"

and the foreman then went as follows:

> "Why isn't that pipe in yet?"
>
> "Oh Gordon can I ask you a question ... If you know where something is have you lost it?"
>
> "What are you on about?"
>
> "Just that ... If you know where something is, have you lost it?"
>
> "Of course it isn't bloody well lost if you know where it is."
>
> "Oh I'm glad about that, because I know where the pipe is, it's down there - (pointing over the side of the ship)."
>
> "Yer daft bugger, go and get another one." (58)

In this case the potential row between the foreman and the

plumber has been deflected by the skillful use of discourse. The

use of humour as a defensive strategy amongst the British Working

Class has been pointed to by Michael Mann, who suggests that it

re-emphasises "a strong cultural sense of group identity" whilst

also providing:

> " ... a way of apparently overcoming, but in reality
> accommodating to, the threat and the vulnerability." (59)

In the yards the ability to incorporate the foreman into the

"cultural sense of group identity" stems from his contradictory

position of being on the one hand an agent of management and yet

on the other a craftsman whose authority is based, in part, on

being "one of the lads".

The importance of establishing authority as one of the lads

rather than a more raw exercise of power is of course

historically contingent. The emphasis upon the importance of

sociability as an element in the negotiation of the effort

bargain became of increasing importance in the post-war period,

and from a managerial point of view such negotiation was seen as

problematic. As Hopkins noted in 1971,

> "It is well known that industrial relations are not as good
> as they used to be; on the other hand, people assert that in
> former times, the situation was firmly held by the fear of
> want of a drastic sort." (60)

This realisation is important, for the existence of the

objective constraints of the "fear of want" outlined in earlier

chapters served to confuse issues of authority and power. Thus

Hopkins' assertion that the "worsening" industrial relations in

Wearside shipbuilding can be seen as a breakdown in a previous

moral code, a loss of pride in craft and the bureaucratisation of

the work situation does not compare like with like. Given the

degree of constraints and power inequalities in the employment

relationship in the pre-(second)war period one must be careful

not to confuse issues of consent and acquiescence at the point of

production. For as Weber noted,

> "Obedience will be taken to mean that the action of the
> person obeying follows in essentials such a course that the
> content of the command may be taken to have become the basis
> of action for its own sake ... Subjectively, the causal
> sequence may vary, especially as between "submission" and
> "sympathetic agreement". (61)

Given this, the intriguing question is not the moral decline of

the working class but rather, given the tactics available to the

worker of "going missing", "botching up", "indulging the

foremen", "negotiating perks" and "the humour of patter", why any

ships got built at all? Despite the tactics available to workers

foremen do still make a difference and importantly individual

craft workers themselves show internalised standards with respect

to both quantity and quality of work. As Brown et al concluded

in their study of shipbuilding,

> " ... control over effort does appear to depend very much on
> the foreman and on the internalised standards of the worker
> himself, especially in the many situations on the berth or
> ship where a worker inevitably spends long periods of time
> out of sight of any foreman or manager." (62)

Moreover,

> " ... the control of quality of work during production rests
> very much with foremen and managers, and again with the
> workers himself, insofar as he has internalised certain
> standards of craftsmanship." (63)

Given the decline of the objective content of coercion (i.e.

loose labour markets) it would seem that in the period of the

post-war long boom the importance of "responsible autonomy" as a

feature of the mobilisation of labour grew. However we should

beware of committing an inversion of the failings of Hopkins.

The growth of the importance of responsible autonomy was relative

and not absolute. This feature of the regulation of the effort

bargain in shipbuilding is indicated in both the craft process of

production and the craft administration of labour. Its existence

cannot be reduced purely to a "strategy" of management. The

tenacity of responsible autonomy as a feature of the labour

process in shipbuilding leads one to doubt that its existence is

as contingent upon labour market forces as, for example, Friedman

suggests:

> "The Responsible Autonomy strategy requires secure
> employment. It may be possible to persuade workers to
> behave responsibly while employed, but it is difficult to
> get those workers to behave "responsibly" in accepting lay-
> offs without a struggle." (64)

The evidence from the shipbuilding industry in the inter-war

period, when lay-offs were accepted as part of the "natural order

of things", suggests that this view is mistaken. Moreover it red-

uces behaviour to strategies, in this case managerial strategies,

and to an extent underestimates the degree to which both

management and workers were acting "in good faith". There is an

important sense in which a degree of responsible autonomy has

historically been given or allowed, and taken or accepted by

craftsmen in the British shipbuilding industry as part of an

existential identity. This feature should not be underestimated

in as far as it has contributed to the tenacity of the craft

division of labour. Again, elements of organisational and moral

categories become interwoven to the extent that their analytical

separation inevitably produces distortion.

In this way the craftsmen become responsible not only for

the operation of their own autonomy, but also for the work rate

of the ancillary workers, "their mates". In this respect skilled

workers more easily identify with foremen or "white collar"

engineers than unskilled workers. Thus Braun and Fuhrmann quoted

a time served craftsman and engineer:

> "Blue collar workers have to do a bit more manual labour,
> but I don't think there is any difference in the economic
> situation. And that's as it should be. And I can't think
> of any differences (in the styles of life). For that
> matter, there are no differences in the way they think. At
> least not in respect to craftsmen. But a simple labourer,
> he hasn't developed himself intellectually, so naturally he
> thinks differently. He can't see how things are connected,
> and if someone tells him something, he parrots it. But an
> intellectually alive person thinks his own thoughts,
> independently of whether he is a blue or white collar
> worker." (65)

Similarly perceived differences in the technical, intellectual

and moral capacities of craftsmen and unskilled labourers in the

Wear shipbuilding industry survived into the 1980s [66]. One

incident in the Deptford yard in 1979 serves to illustrate the

symbolic importance of the hierarchy between skilled and non-

skilled workers. In this case a squad of plumbers were working

overtime to complete fitting out for sea trials. The foreman

sent out for suppers, as was the norm when excessively late

working occurred, ordering the "errand boys" to get:

> "Fish lots for the craftsmen, Pattie lots for the
> labourers." (67)

This caught the imagination of the rest of the workers in the

yard, the tale has passed into "legend" and to this day labourers

are sometimes referred to as "Pattie lots". The point is that

the inferior status of labourers serves to bolster the identity

of the craftsmen as a responsible worker. Historically the

notion of the labour aristocrat implied both autonomy and

"responsibility".

One should not however overstress the importance of

"responsibility" as an aspect of ensuring that a certain amount

of work gets done. Other more mundane factors also play a part.

Firstly the coercive effects of boredom are often overlooked as a

spur to do some work, thus the frustrations felt by workers

waiting for tools or space is often real enough. Secondly the

organic nature of the production process ensures to some extent

that, unless in dispute, sectional groupings of workers are

anxious to complete their work, and be seen to do so, as it fits

into the wider production process. This form of self-discipline

is indeed an essential part of the craft division of labour, and

in this sense the upper level of output is set by social rather

than technical limits. Indeed in the changed circumstances of

the U.C.S. work-in:

" ... so great was the enthusiasm that a major problem
became the restraint of production to pre-occupation
levels." (68)

In the more "normal" circumstances of a shipyard, however,

where "fatalism" [69] towards the social organisation of industry

is perhaps more characteristic than attempts at radical change

the craftsman, as Sabel argued, sees technical mastery as an

important element in individual identity. Thus,

"What counts for him ... is technical prowess, not place in
an officially defined hierarchy of jobs: Titles are not
important, savoir faire is." (70)

Clearly such prowess can only be demonstrated by doing work.

Moreover as we have already seen, such good work pays dividends

in being able to negotiate further autonomy in terms of perks

etc. Thus it is important to realise that for workers in ship-

yards control can be manifested as much by performing work as

avoiding it, this again emphasises the craft nature of the prod-

uction process. Finally, without wishing to labour the point,

work, including the physical activity of labour, is a source of

satisfactions as well as deprivations. As Studs Terkel noted

work is not only about the scars, "psychic as well as physical":

"It is about a search too, for daily meaning as well as
daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonish-
ment rather than torpor; in short for a sort of life rather
than a Monday through Friday sort of dying." (71)

Whatever the exact combination of these factors in

individual cases, the point remains that whilst demand for ships

has existed the workforce in the yards has been prepared to work.

Some harder and technically better than others, and, as a whole,

rarely as hard as management would wish them to. Nevertheless the craft division of labour in shipbuilding has proved to be tenacious enough to last into the second half of the twentieth century, often enough with the "support" of the employers as well as the Unions.

In the next section I will attempt to outline the context in which those "controls" dealt with earlier in this chapter became seen to be problematic by management, not just in an ideological sense, but as a practical problem to be effectively dealt with at the point of production.

Part III

When the Courtship was Over: Court Line to Nationalisation

So far in this Chapter I have been concerned to explicate some of the features of the production and reproduction of control at the point of production in the post-war period. I have avoided looking at the issue in terms of specifically trades union development not because this is unimportant but rather because the issues have been well dealt with elsewhere [72]. In general terms the shipbuilding industry displayed a pattern similar to most other large industries in the post-war period. On the basis of the long boom, the inter-war period pattern of relatively strong localised union representation remained, although supplemented (and sometimes contradicted) by strong (both financially and increasingly as a negotiating centre) central organisations. At the point of production the importance of the shop steward was acknowledged by most workers. Some pointed to the growth of health and safety functions as well as wide ranging bonus negotiations as evidence of greater union activity in the post-war period. In another case a worker joining the Deptford yard from the building trade in 1972 spoke of his amazement at the level of union organisation and the authority of the shop stewards.

However another constant theme, in the non-activist workers' view of the trade unions within the yards, was the increasing sense in which the union was seen as an external body. There

were several levels to such views. Firstly the division between

the official union structure and the less official post of shop

steward was emphasised particularly as this represented itself in

relation to unofficial action. Thus there was almost universal

condemnation of examples where union officials had ordered men to

resume work after their action was deemed unofficial [73]. At

another level some workers displayed resentment over the practice

of periodically having to show their union cards in order to

prove that they were fully paid up members. Such showing of

cards amounted to almost a ritualistic display and for some

emphasised an individual subordination in the face of the union's

external authority. At another level workers were suspicious of

the motives of individuals who sought the role of shop steward.

The position could be "used" by the ambitious as a springboard

into management. This was particularly so in the post-war period

with the growth of professional management functions, as Hopkins

noted of the Wear:

> "The experience gained by a really able shop steward
> resulted in quite a number of them going into personnel
> work." (74)

And even earlier,

> "During the war I remember Jack Gibson, in Doxfords, being
> made "Labour manager" when he ceased to be Chairman of the
> Shop Stewards." (75)

As the labour market tightened during the long boom and stewards

were afforded more facilities, the position was seen to offer the

potential for the realisation of "ambition" of a different kind.

"Some worked it as a cushy number, they could openly walk
around all day talking to their mates, if anyone said any-
thing they were on Union Business." (76)

The recognition made by, amongst others, the Donovan Com-
mission (77) that a distinction between the union and workgroup
should be made needs then to be supplemented by an understanding
that the workgroup cannot be reduced to their "unofficial" union
representative, the shop steward. The individual worker himself
could be out of sympathy with both the official union and the
workplace representative, and on a day to day basis find himself
occupying a stance of "desubordination" with respect to both
Management and Unions (78). It should be emphasised that this
does not mean that workers in the yards were or are opposed to
trades unionism in general, for, as will be demonstrated later,
workers saw unions as necessary and, in relation to management,
the unions are evaluated in positive terms. But such general
appreciation is not always transformed into an uncritical
endorsement of day to day practice in the yards themselves.

As illustrated in relation to the "career" potential of the
shop steward's role, such issues are situated historically.
Similarly the increasing division between the national union and
local representatives and the drift towards national bargaining
has been well captured by McGoldrick (79). The other side of this
coin however has been the changing nature of the corporate form
in the post-war period. On the Wear the post-war period has seen
the demise of the family owned firm and the rise and fall of the

conglomerate ending in the Nationalisation of most yards on the

river in 1974 with final nationalisation of Austin and

Pickersgill in 1977.

The Changing Corporate Form

Such changes are important for several reasons. Firstly the

tendency towards the agglomeration of individual capitals has

been seen by Marx as an inherent structural imperative within

capitalism itself [80]. Thus, as Aaronovitch has argued,

> "There is no more familiar story than the evolution of the
> firm: from the entrepreneur who owned and directly
> controlled the enterprise, through various forms of
> partnership and associations, to the full development of the
> modern joint stock company, which has become the dominant
> form of the organisation of capital in all advanced
> capitalist economies." (81)

Secondly, and of more importance for our purposes than the

empirical expression of a general structural tendency, is the

fact that changes in the corporate form can imply shifts in the

qualitative aspects of capital as well as the purely quantitative

agglomeration. These changes are of particular significance

insofar as they affect the capital-labour relationship. Again

there can be both quantitative and qualitative aspects to these

changes. Thus the agglomeration of individual capitals can imply

a fundamental change in the relative resources of capital and

labour. The workforce located at an individual organisational

level has now to contend with multidivisional capital. This

presents the workforce with the problem of the growth of the

strategic resources of capital as well as a growth in their

absolute power (resources) [82]. Furthermore changes in the

corporate form may provide not only the objective resources with

which to carry through a change in management strategy towards

labour but under certain circumstances may also provide a crucial

change in the willingness of agents of management to carry

through such changes. In other words such changes underpin the

extent to which the specific form of managerial control

strategy in a particular situation is the outcome of both the

objective resource endowment of capital (and labour) and the

agency of management (and workforce).

    In order to illustrate the relevance of these considerations

we must return to the empirical level and follow the changes in

the corporate form and managerial strategies as they occurred on

the Wear. Whilst the demise of the shipbuilding company as a

wholly privately owned (stock) firm belonged in general to an

earlier era, the retention of family control of the voting stock

and thereby actual control of the organisations survived in some

yards on the Wear into the post-war period. However "family"

yards came under increasing pressure and with the closure of the

two smallest remaining yards, Crown and Shorts, the attractions

of amalgamations were heightened. Whilst there had been a long

history of informal co-operation between individual yards and

more formal connections in terms of overlapping directorships,

the pressures now indicated a need for formal corporate

amalgamations.   In the two decades after the war there were
several moves in this direction.   Austin and Pickersgill   merged
in 1954 and the Sunderland Shipbuilding Dry Docks & Engineering
Co. Ltd. was formed with the amalgamation of Sir James Laing &
Sons, T.W. Greenwell & Co., the Sunderland Forge & Engineering
Co., John Lyon & Co. and the Wolsingham Steel Company.
Eventually two groups emerged on the Wear, the Doxford &
Sunderland group, formed in 1961, and with the post Geddes
incorporation of Bartrams, the Austin & Pickersgill group.   In
the case of the former grouping, individual yards had largely
kept their own identities and existing management teams.   The
amalgamations in this group had, on the whole, been associated
more with developing a more secure (i.e. larger) financial base
than with any widespread or radical changes in product range or
organisation of production.   As far as the control of labour was
concerned at Doxford and Sunderland, continuity was more
characteristic than change, the craft administration of labour
was not challenged and control of work was largely a feature of
the self regulation of the craftsmen on the one hand, and the
influence of labour market conditions, insofar as this shaped the
context of the relationship between the foremen and the
workforce, on the other.

In the case of the Wear, then, the agglomeration of capital
can be seen as a necessary but not sufficient factor in
determining managerial and organisational change.   The

"character" as well as the size of capital unit needs to be taken

into consideration.   In the other Wear grouping, Austin and

Pickersgill, the acquisition of a majority share in the company

by London Overseas Freighters in 1957 (and a share buy-out in

1970) resulted in changes on the board and a shake up of top

management.   Perhaps as a development of this the company became

more innovative in product design and more aggressive in

marketing, as evidenced in their eventual success of their

replacement "liberty ship" the SD14, first launched at Bartrams

yard in 1968.   A change in managerial strategy towards labour was

forthcoming in the Doxford & Sunderland group, following its

takeover by the Court Line group.   Importantly such a change

occurred as part of a wider strategy of change both in terms of

market orientation and production techniques. It is these changes

upon which we will now concentrate.

On Monday 8 May 1972 the Sunderland Echo reported that there

was speculation in "the city" that Court Line would soon make a

bid for the Doxford and Sunderland group.   The evidence for such

speculation was given as Court Line's review of the Wearside firm

and the fact that already the firm's shares were rising in the

stock market, indicating the presence of an interested

party [83].   On 17 May a £10 million bid for the company was

announced by Court Line.   Despite losses made by Doxford and

Sunderland of £1,249,000 in the 1971-72 financial year the

Managing Director of Court Line was optimistic that the firm

could be made profitable. The context for such an attempt was

seen to be one of change. Change in market strategy, in

production techniques, in relations with the workforce and

importantly in the full integration of existing and proposed

production sites. As Court Line's Managing Director put it:

> "We are convinced that with the backing provided by the
> Government's regional development plan and the co-operation
> of the trade unions we could make Doxford and Sunderland Ltd
> a very profitable business ...
>
> ... We are confident we could help increase productivity in
> the existing yards to the benefit of all concerned. It
> would also be our intention to construct a new covered
> shipyard to provide at least 1,000 additional jobs in
> Sunderland as soon as possible." (84)

The improvement in co-operation between management and workforce

was seen to be a cornerstone of Court Line's project on the Wear.

Indeed Jim Venus, the man Court Line were to put in charge of the

Wearside development, had already achieved success in the

development of the covered yard at Appledore in Devon. In

relation to that success he laid great emphasis upon:

> " ... the co-operation between management, employees and
> trade unions that has made this development (Appledore)
> possible." (85)

After an initial hesitation on behalf of the unions, and worries

that the Court Line bid would lead directly to a single group on

the Wear (86), they eventually were persuaded that the take-over

would be beneficial to their members. Thus on the day that the

Doxford and Sunderland Directors advised acceptance of a slightly

improved Court Line offer the "Echo" lead with an article

entitled "Court Line Backs Wear Against the World" in which:

> "Mr. Henry Wilkinson, district secretary of the Amalgamated
> Union of Engineering Workers, welcomed the news today. He
> said Court Line would inject much-needed capital investment
> into the area.
>
> The company was progressive in its outlook and made a point
> of involving its workers in all aspects of development. He
> regarded the situation as the beginning of a new era for
> shipbuilding in Sunderland." (87)

The initial outline plan of Court Line involved considerable

changes in the function of all the yards in the group to create

an integrated product line. The most radical change was to be

the construction of a covered in yard. The Managing Director of

Court Line, Mr. Young, said that Greenwells would be the site of

the new covered in yard which was to have an area of 250,000

square feet and be capable of building vessels of up to 30,000

tons. Moreover,

> "He envisages the yard concentrating on smaller highly
> specialised ships of around 4,000 and 5,000 tons built two
> at a time, slightly larger than those built at the Appledore
> covered in yard." (88)

Each of the other yards was to concentrate on a particular

specialised type of tonnage. At North Sands (Thompsons) with its

single large berth giant natural gas carriers of up to 150,000

tons were to be built, with its former forte of bulk carriers

being "left to foreign competition". The Deptford yard (Laings)

was to build ships of up to 70,000 tons, particularly specialised

tonnage for the transport of chemicals and refined oils. Finally

the Pallion yard (Doxfords), which was in the process of being

run down, was to be used for "barges, rig platforms and other

complex and unorthodox structures for drilling rigs." (88)

Following a feasibility study it was decided that the covered in yard should not be built on the site of Greenwells dock, but rather that the Pallion yard should be the site of the new development. To this end a loan was secured, the first to a major shipbuilding company, under the selective assistance provision of the 1972 Industry Act. The loan of £9 million depended upon Court Line itself supplying a further £3 million. Work began on the construction of the covered in yard at Pallion in October 1973, and was eventually finished in December 1976. The investment in the covered in yard was not the only capital expenditure that the firm committed itself to, so much so that by the time of the demise of Court Line in June 1974 a £22 million investment programme was under way.

The Court Line takeover of Doxford and Sunderland was done in an atmosphere of confidence. People were encouraged to draw direct parallels between the success of the Appledore yard and the plans that the company had for the yards on the Wear. The welcome given to the takeover by the Unions was shared by the workforce. The programme of capital expenditure was seen as firm evidence of the long term commitment of the company towards the yards. Other features of Court Line were seen as beneficial too. Ironically, as it was to prove, the size of the firm was seen to indicate that a greater degree of security existed than in the days of "local" owners. There was even a rumour which developed at the time that the firm would provide, through its other

interests, free holidays for the workers. The mood of optimism

for the future had rarely been as evident.

This buoyant mood was further encouraged by changes

occurring within the yards. The provision of amenity blocks and

cabins close to the berths were appreciated by the workers.

> "We got toilets with wash hand basins, soap and towels, and
> hot water! It had never been heard of before." (89)

> "It was at this time that safety gear was introduced, ear
> defenders, hard hats and what-have-you. Overalls, we were
> given overalls for the first time, before that we had to
> come in our own work clothes - just, you know, your old
> clothes ... " (90)

In looking back at the Court Line period there is almost

universal agreement amongst workers that a kind of "golden age"

appeared to have dawned. Importantly, it was not just the

physical environment that was seen to have improved.

> "When Court Line came into being there was an easing off
> period inasmuch as there was nobody leaning on you as much
> as there had been previously. When Court Line appeared you
> started getting different amenities - cabins and such like,
> places where you could sit down and eat a meal rather than
> sort of sit on a block or crouch down somewhere to eat your
> meals ... When Court Line came along, from the bloke on the
> shop floor's point of view everything seemed to pick up,
> everything seemed that much better .. Control eased up but I
> wouldn't say output eased up, I would say there was probably
> as much work done from a work point of view because people
> were happier, there was nobody actually leaning on you then.
> There didn't seem as though there was the pressure upon
> people (that there was) prior to Court Line coming in ...
> there was a more relaxed atmosphere." (91)

For the first time it seemed that a strategy of "responsible

autonomy" was being pursued enthusiastically by management rather

than being granted grudgingly as the inevitable outcome of a

craft technology. The change was noticeable not only at the non-activist level but life also became easier for shop stewards. One ex-steward spoke of the difficulty of restraining a "grin breaking all over your face" when one went in to ask management for something, confident in the knowledge that they would usually deliver.

> "Once we even got the steward to raise the issue of the water being too hot in the wash block, it was dangerous - you could scald your hands ... they regulated the temperature, no problem." (92)

Not everything was applauded, however; the increase in managerial personnel was, at this point, greeted with a degree of bemusement.

> "That was when all the different coloured hats started to appear. There was green ones, red ones, white ones, that was when the place started to look like a bloody billiard table." (93)

Moreover when the benign policies had a control implication these were quickly spotted and dealt with. Thus for example whilst the company's policy on issuing boilersuits was, in general, well received the fact that different trades were issued with different coloured boiler suits was seen as a "dodgy move". Rather than promoting a pride in one's craft it resulted in men from different trades swopping garments and thus neutralising any potential that colour coding had for control over the physical movement of labour within the yards.

When the plunge in Court Line's share prices was reported in the Sunderland Echo on 20 June 1974 it took Wearside by surprise

despite the fact that Court Line's difficulties had been reported

to the Secretary of State for Industry as early as February of

that year [94]. Following the suspension of dealing in Court

Line's shares on 21 June the Labour M.P. for Sunderland North,

Fred Willey, gave guarantees over the future of the yards after

talking to Industry Minister Tony Benn [95]. By 27 June the

future of Court Line's shipbuilding interests were sealed, they

were to be wholly Nationalised. The impact of the Court Line

crash on Wearside was considerable, and even now workers are at

pains to point out that it was the holiday side of the company

which brought about its demise, not the shipbuilding

section [96].

Nationalisation on the Wear

The context of the nationalisation of Court Line's interests

on the Wear was not as straightforward as the speed of its

execution might suggest. Whilst the Labour Party were returned

to office in February 1974 with a policy of nationalising the

industry, support for this move locally was less solid. As the

Sunderland Echo was at pains to point out,

> "Last November when shop stewards and union officials met
> the then Minister for Trade and Industry (Mr. Christopher
> Chataway) to discuss the final development plans for
> Sunderland Shipbuilders Ltd., the unions gave Government a
> "hands off" warning on behalf of all the shipbuilding
> workers on the Wear.
>
> Men in the Austin and Pickersgill Group also passed on the
> the Government their opposition to Nationalisation." (97)

In the same article, two days before Tony Benn announced the

nationalisation of the group, the district secretary of the

A.U.E.W., Mr. Henry Wilkinson, suggested that whilst there would

be government intervention he expected it to be "in the form of

partnership (rather) than direct state control." After the

Nationalisation plans were announced some local politicians

displayed great enthusiasm for the move. Thus in a Council

meeting on 27 June Councillor Robert Kirby noted that:

> "I cannot put into words the despondency that was going
> around the yards. But when they heard the news you would
> have thought they had won the football pools." (98)

However Fred Willey displayed a more defensive attitude

towards the move, emphasising the pragmatic issues and distancing

it from any wider ideological standpoint.

> "The fact is that Sunderland Shipbuilders is going into
> public ownership because there is no other bidder ... Lack
> of interest in Sunderland Shipbuilders had nothing to do
> with any Government nationalisation plans ... it was because
> the company was committed to a £22,000,000 investment
> programme.
>
> No-one but the Government was prepared to make any kind of
> offer to Court Line, said Mr. Willey." (99)

Another issue in the muted response of the workers and the

unions to the nationalisation package was their enthusiasm for

the Court Line management teams in the yards. This concern was

again voiced by the district secretary of the A.U.E.W.:

> "Of the future of Sunderland Shipbuilders Mr. Wilkinson said
> he was sure the vast majority of workers would wish the
> present senior executives to remain in control. "I know
> they would get the full support of the workers because they
> have a good working relationship with the employees and the
> unions", he said." (100)

However the local M.P. pointed out subsequently that there could

be no guarantees on this issue.

> "Mr. Willey also warned that State ownership of Court Lines
> interests on the Wear did not carry any guarantee that there
> would not be changes in management. Court Line had not
> hesitated to change the management structure when it arrived
> on the Wear." (101)

Despite reservations Henry Wilkinson of the A.U.E.W. endorsed the

idea of the nationalisation of the yards, saying that

> "Now we have gilt edged security with the finance to carry
> out all that is necessary ... I think it will be of supreme
> importance to this town." (102)

Workers' responses were mainly characterised by relief that

the yards would not close. With hindsight some of them have

developed a more critical view of the "rescue" package, comparing

favourably the situation under private enterprise and describing

Court Line's collapse as "the worst possible thing that could

happen".

The Court Line period is for the most part remembered

positively by the workforce. The spirit of co-operation

displayed by the management amounted to the adoption of

"responsible autonomy" as a management strategy rather than a

technological implication of the division of labour. However it

would have been interesting if the company had survived to see if

this spirit could have been maintained in the face of changes in

working practices to bring them into line with the modernisation

of plant that they initiated. As it happens the demise of Court

Line occurred at the very point when demand for tonnage slumped

dramatically. On a world scale the tonnage of ships on order

fell from 120.7 million g.r.t. in 1974 (128.9 million g.r.t. in

1973) to 82.3 million g.r.t. in 1975. In Britain new orders fell

dramatically from a high point of 4.4 million g.r.t. to 0.9

million g.r.t. in 1974 and only 67,000 g.r.t. in 1975. This then

was the context in which the newly nationalised yards on the Wear

faced the world in the Autumn of 1974.

Before going on to look in more detail at the continuities

and changes on Wearside after nationalisation, it is perhaps

useful to take a wider look at the world market in the demand and

supply for ships. No attempt will be made here to address the

notion of the "crisis" in shipbuilding, rather general historical

patterns will be referred to insofar as these are relevant to the

pressures that were to be exerted upon the division of labour and

working practices in the yards.

Part IV

The Shifting Contours of World Shipping

Speaking of the British Economy between 1870 and 1914 Peter Mathias has noted that:

> "Shipbuilding has been mentioned as one area where British world hegemony and technological leadership remained unchallenged." (103)

Similarly J.R. Parkinson has written that:

> "In the second half of the nineteenth century the British Shipbuilding industry eclipsed all others in its rate of growth and, in the fullness of its competitive power, overwhelmed all markets until it produced for a time over 80% of the world's ships." (104)

The conditions of this dominance have been well researched by others (105). However attention should be drawn to the fact that the industry in Britain benefited by the headstart given to "The First Industrial Nation". This was so not in terms of a direct headstart for the metal shipbuilding industry but rather stemmed from the historical consequences of that "headstart" in other areas. A first consequence of this was the favoured access to a largely protected market built upon colonial expansion. Secondly the emergent technologies in earlier "engineering" industries ensured a supply of relatively skilled labour for the industry as it emerged. Given this element in its success some relative decline in the standing of the industry was inevitable as other nations developed their industrial strength. And indeed this proved to be the case from the beginning of the twentieth century until the Second World War. The development of German, U.S.,

French, Dutch and in the latter part of the period Japanese ship-
building industries reduced the British share of world output to
a figure consistently below 50%.

Those who point to the fact that the British share of the
world market has consistently declined (with temporary resurgence
at some points) since the 1890s fail to appreciate that the
external conditions of the wider world system have changed
dramatically over the period. This fact makes the search for a
single pathogenic factor in the decline of the British industry
overly simplistic. Moreover the changing international location
of the industry involves implications for competitive
productivity which, even in the absence of the complicating
factor of subsidies, go beyond the immediate labour process.

As noted above the relative decline of the British industry
up until the Second World War could be seen in some ways as a
"natural" process of dethroning the monopoly position of the
first industrial nation. The decline was relative to other first
world nations. In the post-war period Britain's relative position
declined at an increasingly faster rate, even in conditions of a
massive absolute increase in world tonnage up until 1973.

The features of this accelerated decline are complex, for as
was argued earlier the construction nature of the industry and
the fact that the majority of the cost of a ship is bought-in
means that it was unlikely that any improvement of efficiency
within the yards could overcome the inefficiencies occurring in

supply industries. In this sense the fortunes of the industry

were inextricably tied to the wider fortunes of the British

manufacturing industry and performance of the economy as a whole.

On these wider issues it has been convincingly argued by John

Eatwell that in the post-war period Britain became firmly

entrenched within a vicious cycle of cumulative causation. It is

through the process of these effects, rather than any static

comparisons, that the competitive potential of states is to be

appreciated.   Thus,

> "It is the dynamics of the principle of cumulative
> causation, rather than in the static idea of comparative
> advantage, that an explanation of the structure and develop-
> ment of trade between the manufacturing countries is to be
> found. The self-reinforcing dynamic of industrial expansion
> will ensure that competitive strength is maintained and
> enhanced. In the longer run, the location of competitive
> strength may be altered by new institutional arrangements,
> or by an inability to adapt to the changing market
> conditions inherent in major inventions, or by the rise of
> competing nations. But fundamentally the free market works
> to strengthen the competitive advantage of successful
> economies and weaken the position of the unsuccessful. The
> successful will tend increasingly to dominate trade, while
> the unsuccessful decline." (106)

At the level of the national economy then, the decline of

Britain as a manufacturing centre provided one context in which

the shipbuilding industry has to be located.   Accounts focusing

upon the industry itself have detailed the way in which the

specific division of labour which was the source of the

industry's strength in the nineteenth and early twentieth century

became increasingly inappropriate in the post-war period.   As

Lorenz and Wilkinson have noted,

> "We have argued that the failure of the British response in
> shipbuilding can be understood only by considering the
> particular technical and market conditions in which firms
> operated, and the ways these conditions interacted with the
> system of industrial relations. The fragmentation of output
> in small-scale yards and the system of craft specialisation
> it spawned, hallmarks of nineteenth century success, led to
> competitive failure in the twentieth century." (107)

Several authors have stressed the primary part played by workers

in "resisting at the point of production" the potential for

change in the division of labour [108]. This study has demon-

strated that on the Wear it was the reticence of employers rather

than the actual reticence of the workers which acted as a brake

on the transformation of the division of labour. Such resistance

was of course based on far more complex and substantial issues

than a certain "conservatism" amongst employers. This view

avoids the pitfalls of a "labour-led theory":

> " ... that is, the sort of theory in which labour is not
> only seen to be able to affect productivity outcomes,
> through the strength of its organisations, but is assumed to
> be actually in control, and able to determine the overall
> pattern of capital accumulation and investment as
> well." (109)

Ironically it could be argued that one of the factors

involved in the employers' reticence to invest in a "modern"

division of labour in the immediate post-war period was not

primarily the strength of labour at the point of production, but

its institutionalised weakness in the wages sphere contributing

to a low-wage economy. As R.B. Shepheard argued in his review of

the prospects for welding and mass production techniques in ship-

building in 1946,

"The reason for the relative backwardness of some sections
of industry in this country and for the reluctance to
convert monotonous processes into fully mechanised jobs is
that human labour is still relatively cheap." (110)

This directs attention to the strategy of management and

employers:

" ... unless perhaps, through some alienated logic, U.K.
workers are to carry the can because, by virtue of putting
up with low wages, they have failed to make their managers
invest more." (111)

If the division of labour in British shipbuilding became

increasingly inappropriate to meet its competition in the post-

war period, the evidence from Wearside is that the primary

responsibility for this lies with the owners and managers of the

yards. If the policies of the employers and managers handicapped

the industry relative to their European competitors, more

structural and locational change was to decrease further the

decisiveness of the effort bargain at work as the final arbiter

of competitive success.

The processes involved here have been well described by

Charles Sabel in his book Work and Politics. Of interest for our

purposes is the point that the relatively consistent and large

growth in demand during the post-war long boom fostered the

development of capital intensive divisions of labour using mass

production techniques. However given the associated growth and

penetration of the capitalist world system outlined earlier, the

stability of the mass market and the advantages of mass

production techniques meant that manufacturing industries could

become internationally foot-loose.

> "Consider the way mass-production industry in the core
> industrial countries is being crowded out of markets by
> pressure from formerly or currently low-wage competitors on
> the periphery, such as South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Mexico,
> and Eastern Europe. The industrialisation of these
> countries is doubly linked to the triumph of Fordism in the
> United States and elsewhere. For breakthroughs in mass
> production techniques in some countries not only make
> industrialisation an urgent matter for the others, but
> provoke successful competition with the leaders as
> well." (112)

If Britain was being increasingly left behind in the ship-

building industry by the more capital intensive industries in

continental Europe and Japan then the entrance of the newly

developing countries into the industry added a new twist to the

story. The disadvantage of Britain's low-wage, low capital and

therefore low productivity industry relative to the high-wage,

high capital and there high productivity industry of continental

Europe (and to some extent Japan) became compounded with the

arrival of the low wage, high capital and therefore high

productivity and low cost industry of the newly developing

countries. It should be noted that the aggregate effect of

individual industries with such a profile in newly developing

countries is that low wages between individual workforces and

employers are associated with a very low social wage. In other

words the cost advantage of these countries lies both at the

level of the firm and at the more macro level of the reproduction

of the labour force. The implications of this for Britain and

other first world nations is either that they have to make up the

cost difference, not only at the level of the firm but also at

the level of the social reproduction of the labour force, by

superior productivity or they have to avoid direct competition

with such countries.

This development in the second half of the twentieth century

found even countries that had modernised their division of labour

at a disadvantage compared to the newly developing countries and

in relation to the (now) enduring market leader, Japan. Further-

more with the collapse of world demand in the early 1970s and

then again in the late 1970s and early 1980s even some of the

most technically advanced shipbuilding nations found the pressure

of cost competition unbearable.

> "Sweden's retreat from shipbuilding illustrates the danger
> to the core countries. In order to minimise the
> disadvantage of high labor costs, the Swedes concentrated on
> the construction of relatively unsophisticated large ships
> in series by automated methods. In the early 1970s Sweden
> was the second largest shipbuilder in the world. But ship-
> yards in Brazil, Korea and Spain soon adopted the new
> techniques, and paid their workers at rates a quarter or
> less of what Sweden's were earning. When the world market
> for merchant ships began to collapse (launchings dropped
> from 35.9 million gross tons in 1975 to 15.4 million in
> 1978), Sweden was unable to hold its share of the declining
> orders for standard ships. Beginning in 1977, one major
> yard after another was taken over by government. By 1980
> there remained only two private shipbuilders, and Sweden
> ranked eighth in the world league tables of
> launchings." (113)

Increasingly, as we have seen in the case of Court Line,

Britain adopted a market strategy of attempting to avoid direct

competition with countries producing unsophisticated large ships

to concentrate on less standardised higher value tonnage [114].

The net effect of this strategy of attempting to establish a
market niche was to accept the position as a marginal producer.
The problem with this is that marginal producers become
particularly vulnerable to overall fluctuations in demand. As
their "product line" is small, large rises in overall demand tend
to produce proportionally smaller rises in "specialised tonnage".
Moreover the acceptance of the role of marginal producer ensures
that there can be little movement towards capturing part of the
more mass market in times of boom. However in times of slump
marginal producers come under pressure from market leaders who
can attempt to retain an optimum use of their plant by
diversifying into more specialised areas. With the collapse of
world demand in the second half of the 1970s it was this latter
scenario which increasingly materialised. Thus for example the
growth of the South Korean industry between 1975 and 1982 was
matched by a diversification into ever more complex tonnage so
that they "moved into" the market in which Britain was competing.
Symptomatic of this position was the placing of an order, in
1982, on behalf of the Central Electricity Generating Board. This
was for a cable laying ship with a Korean yard. The question was
one not only of the efficiency of production within the yards.
Material and wage costs were lower in Korea, and the presence of
state subsidy and below cost tendering were seen as issues.

> "There has been a rapid growth in the Korean yards in recent
> years from a negligible base in 1975, to second only to
> Japan in merchant ship building. In 1982, South Korean yards

produced 1.6 million g.r.t. of shipping. The yards of Daewoo
and Hyundai have been undercutting European prices by as
much as 35% - as can be seen from the C.E.G.B. order. Korean
wages are much lower than those prevailing in European and
Japanese yards and Korean steel is also significantly
cheaper. However western shipbuilders feel that these
factors do not account for the price differences, and claim
that the Koreans are quoting prices below cost to secure the
orders needed to fill their vast new shipbuilding capacity."
(115)

This then was the developing context in which the yards of

Sunderland Shipbuilders were nationalised in 1974. Over the

coming years the issue of Government attitude towards the

industry was to prove crucial. For it seemed unlikely that the

solutions to the "crisis" facing the British shipbuilding

industry could be found at yard level alone. Ominously for those

working in the yards, if Government should prove unsympathetic

the chances that what had been lost in other spheres could be

recaptured with change in the division of labour seemed unlikely.

However in the immediate aftermath, very little changed

within the yards.

"It happened that fast, it changed overnight and it was all
just the same people after the event. There was no line
drawn and said "this is before and this is after" you know.
Everything continued on the same. The same workforce and
the same management." (116)

What had been affected however was the optimism which was

evident under Court Line. Whilst some drew solace from the fact

that it was not the shipbuilding side of the corporation which

had caused the collapse, others were more cautious. However, even

in the face of collapsing world demand, there existed an under-

lying scepticism as to whether things were as bad as some said.

Moreover a belief did exist to some extent that public ownership would ensure that jobs could be preserved. Thus in my own case on coming up to leaving school in 1975 with little idea of what I wanted to do, my father advised me that getting a trade in the yards was about the best that could be hoped for. He explained that the outlook for the yards was probably no worse than it had been at other times, and it was better to be working outside than to be shut in an office all day. The careers officer visiting the school enthusiastically endorsed my decision to apply to the yards, and on finding that my father and brother worked there eagerly crossed my name off the list and refused my request for information on a career with the Forestry Commission. That skilled work in the yards amounted to "a good job" was emphasised by the jealous references of some of my contemporaries to the fact that I had relatives to "speak for me" [117]. In 1975 there was then no shortage of applicants to work at Sunderland Shipbuilders, a point reinforced by the training officer's disclosure that for every one of us successful candidates there were another eighty unsuccessful ones.

If there was little change in management personnel during this period, there was nevertheless a feeling, in retrospect, that during this period the momentum established under Court Line had been lost. A long term strategy appeared not to exist [118]. This situation was to change with the Nationalisation of the whole of the shipbuilding industry in 1977.

Part V

The Industry Nationalised

By the time the Labour Government's nationalisation plans

for the industry, developed during the period 1970 to 1974, came

to fruition on vesting day, July 1st 1977, the market demand for

ships had declined dramatically. More generally the objective

conditions underlying the "long boom" had changed. Economic

problems began to emerge as an immediate and overt challenge to

the post-war industrial and political consensus. These changes

were to set the context for the shipbuilding industry in the

coming years. As Hogwood has noted,

> "This change in demand altered the prospects of the U.K.
> industry from those expected when the Labour opposition drew
> up its nationalisation proposals in conjunction with the
> unions, and it seemed inevitable that the proposed
> nationalised body would have to preside over the contraction
> of British Shipbuilding." (119)

At once these wider contexts placed a question mark over

another of the main aims of the nationalisation: the promotion of

industrial democracy. This aim amounted to an attempt to promote

and develop a consensual approach to industrial relations issues.

As the British Shipbuilders corporate plan of 1978 pointed out,

> "The Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act placed upon
> the Corporation the obligation to promote industrial
> democracy in its undertakings and the undertakings of its
> wholly-owned subsidiaries. British Shipbuilders believes
> that the main objective of industrial democracy is to create
> a climate which will enable the performance of the industry
> to be raised." (120)

The prospects for such a consensus approach to industrial relations were unlikely to succeed in the face of mass redundancies which would result from the adoption of any three of the four options facing the industry outlined in the corporate plan. These options were presented as follows:

Option 1 - Maintenance of Capacity and Employment

Under present marketing circumstances, the most optimistic strategy which could be considered is to maintain the current capacity level of 630,000 c.g.r.t. and employment of 33,300 in merchant building.

The total subsidy requirement to support 630,000 c.g.r.t. depends on the assumptions made on price levels, but it is reasonable to assume that in a deteriorating market, the subsidiary would be very high if all capacity were to be filled by "buying in" work.

Option 2 - Maintenance of Market Share

This option assumes that capacity would be reduced in line with anticipated world demand, with a traditional aggregate market share being maintained. It must be further assumed that yard closures, but not major profit centre closures, would be inevitable to qualify for (E.E.C.) Intervention Fund and to provide a sound base for future improvements.

Option 3 - Naval Support plus Competitive Yards

Option 3 considers a reduction in capacity to a level of 330,000 c.g.r.t. at the anticipated trough in demand in 1980/81. This figure is commensurate with maintaining a small number of internationally competitive merchant building yards, along with the "mixed" yards whose continued involvement in merchant and naval work is regarded as strategically necessary.

Option 4 - Naval Support

Option 4 sets out to meet the national strategic objective identified earlier - namely, to have sufficient yards within

the "mixed" groups involved in merchant shipbuilding such
that capacity exists to protect national interests in times
of crisis. This option represents the situation wherein
250,000 c.g.r.t. of capacity would be retained, but it
assumes that many of the merchant yards would not survive a
continued depression in ship-building demand (121).

After considering the consequences of all four strategies

the report made the following recommendation:

The Proposed Strategy

From the preceding discussion it can be seen that Option 2
goes significantly further than Options 1, 3 and 4 towards
adequately meeting the objectives set for the merchant
shipbuilding sector.

The cut-back in capacity required for Option 2 would itself
improve the efficiency of the Sector if the closure of some
yards with an historically poor productivity record were
effected; but a strategic aim of British Shipbuilders must
be to improve productivity to a level comparative with
European competition. For this reason, the Proposed Strategy
will be to reduce capacity to the 430,000 c.g.r.t. level by
1980/81, as in Option 2; but thereafter a 25% improvement in
product-ivity will be sought over the last two years of the
plan whilst holding manpower levels constant. This will
result in higher levels of output than shown in Option 2 and
a larger market share than historically obtained. The
Proposed Strategy will thus be to achieve the following
capacity and employment levels; and to incur the following
support costs:

	78/79	79/80	80/81	81/82	82/83
Capacity	632	530	430	475	530
Employment	33,300	27,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Intervention Fund £m (at 430 cgrt level)	85	110	110	85	50

British Shipbuilders proportion of world output will rise
from 3.1% in 1980/81 to 3.3% in 1982/83. (122)

The possibility of pursuing this option was compromised by
the fact that the analysis of market trends was hopelessly optim-
istic. Instead of British shipbuilders increasing their market
share of Merchant tonnage to 3.3% of world output by 1982/83 with
a workforce of 21,000, it declined to 1.3% and the workforce was
cut to 14,505 [123]. In subsequent years the decline continued so
that by April 1988 the total workforce of British Shipbuilders
amounted to some 6,000 employees [124] compared to a total for
the merchant sector of 41,659 immediately after nationalisation
in July 1977 (87,309 for British Shipbuilders as a whole) [125].
This massive decline in employment within the nationalised
industry obviously had an effect upon workers' perceptions of the
worth of nationalisation.   On the Wear where, as we have noted,
enthusiasm for nationalisation even as early as 1974, and in the
context of a "bail-out", was muted, the lesson that nationalisat-
ion was no friend of the working man was hammered home.   As one
worker wrote in 1982,

> "Nationalisation, once hailed as the only means of getting
> better working conditions in the old days, has become
> reality. The civil servants got to work with their pruning
> knives - railways and collieries first, pit closures, talk
> of uneconomic mines then the closure of railway lines. Coal
> routes which had all led from local collieries to the
> Lambton and South Dock staithes were closed - teamers and
> trimmers made redundant, a reduction in collier fleets; no
> new tonnage ordered and the small yards which catered for
> coal owners went to the wall. A river with a capacity to
> build dozens of ships a year, with enough personnel to man
> the yards now found that not enough work was coming in from
> other sources. Now we have a nationalised shipbuilding
> industry and it is happening again. The civil servants want
> a further reduction in manpower, early redundancy for older
> men and no replacements ...

> ... Our yards were always able to compete favourably with
> their rivals and I am certain that if many of our local
> yards were not nationalised many of our local men would be
> employed. I may be wrong, and I have no doubt that the
> shipbuilding emperors who dictate policy to the industry
> will deny it, but politics come into it. Our destiny is
> decided and policies formulated away from Wearside. Many
> Wearsiders believe that if a yard, for instance in Scotland,
> was uneconomic and had no orders and if the political
> climate was uncertain with closures and pressure from the
> Scottish Nationalists on the cards, an order won by a Wear
> yard would be diverted to Scotland. Certainly I believe
> that the Tyne has some considerable political pull." (126)

It would be wrong to conclude from such statements that

workers on Wearside saw private enterprise or the old owners in a

very positive light; rather the choice is seen to be one amongst

lesser evils. As another worker put it,

> "In the past it was really bloody bad. I mean I hate them,
> I hate them families, I hate the Thompsons and the Marrs on
> this river. I think there's a hell of a lot of hatred for
> them. Yet I hate even more the breed which came up after it
> was nationalised - and from that time the decline went (on)
> - you could see it going. First of all you got more
> managers, every manager wanted someone underneath him, the
> fellow underneath him wanted somebody to help him out.
> Before you knew where you are you had a personnel officer
> with about fifteen assistants!" (127)

The terms in which these workers condemn the nationalisation

are qualitative as well as quantitative. Their reservations are

based upon very personal experience, not only of the redundancies

but also of the changes in working practices which have been

forced through in the face of union impotence and even their

acquiescence. Changes objected to both in their content and form,

the former in as much as they imply a deskilling of the craft

worker and the latter in the way that the management of these

changes have been seen as an assault upon the dignity of the
worker as a human being. Moreover in the eyes of the workers
these assaults are seen to be directly connected with the
managerial problem of producing enough "voluntary" redundancies
given the position adopted by the unions that there should be no
compulsory redundancies [128]. The following sections attempt to
give an account of these changes as they unfolded on Wearside.
The context of the crisis in British shipbuilding is inescapable,
but my focus is more specific; it attempts to understand the
behaviour of the workers at the point of production in their own
terms, and render intelligible the apparent lack of collective
resistance by the workforce. In doing so it inevitably has to
resume the analysis of wider issues such as the changing nature
of the relationship between work and the community, relations
between generations and indeed the whole area of the nature of
the working class.

Part VI

Working for British Shipbuilders

> The importance of paying proper attention to industrial and
> human relations in any plan for a viable shipbuilding
> industry cannot be overstated, as success depends upon the
> commitment of all parts of the workforce from senior
> management to tradesmen. From the outset British
> Shipbuilders has worked for improvement in these areas, and
> the process is ongoing." (129)

The period of uncertainty which had been the hallmark of the

position of Sunderland Shipbuilders from the collapse of Court

Line in 1974 was ended with the nationalisation of the whole

industry in 1977. The development of the corporate plan made one

thing certain in the future: there would be redundancies. The

certainty was hardly easier to bear than the uncertainty. A

feeling of despondency was widespread in the Wear yards, amongst

managers and workers alike. In this atmosphere of doom,

managerial control of the work process slackened its already

loose grip. Moreover the responsibe autonomy of the workers

became less and less "responsible" as morale worsened.

Aspects of sociability at work flourished during this

period, the usual pastimes such as card schools became only one

strand in an increasing array of leisure pursuits including

everything from fishing to film shows. At the Deptford yard for

example the "porno king" brought in cine films and with the

incorporation of foreman the cabin was open for business most

afternoons (130). It was on night shift however, where

managerial control was traditionally at its least, where the

collapse of the moral self regulation of the craftsmen was most

evident.

The system of work allocation involved a number of jobs

detailed on dockets being left for distribution by the foremen.

At the end of the shift uncompleted jobs were replaced in wallets

to be returned to the dayshift. There seemed to be little in the

way of a control system over the amount of work expected or done.

Indeed, the only pressure being mentioned by workers was that

exerted in the form of animosity from workers on day shift at the

"lazy sods" on nights. In this situation, then,

> "The foreman was over the tip if you did anything. He would
> be happy if you fit just one pipe, anything." (131)

Again pressure to end "leisure pursuits" was more forth-

coming from external agencies than from management. This was the

case at the Deptford yard in relation to salmon poaching. It is

interesting that even in relation to this example there is a high

degree of sectionalism evident. Thus it is unclear who started

the poaching, the plumbers claiming they did, the joiners

claiming they did and both of these groups claiming that the

boilermakers didn't. Salmon were poached in nets and then

disposed of to a local pub. All went well, according to one

plumber, until the "loud mouthed" boilermakers joined in. They

were intent on netting the full width of the river and to this

end used a rubber dinghy to get the net across to the far side,

with half a dozen men holding a rope tied to the dinghy in case

of trouble.   The competing groups of "fishermen" must have drawn

attention to themselves for one night the police launch

approached at speed with spotlights glaring.   The boilermakers

put their retrieval plan into operation.   The dinghy skipped back

across the river.   In the darkness one of the "ropemen" fell into

a hole and broke his leg.   All the men escaped but the nets were

captured.   The police complained to management the following day

and dire warnings were issued, the men having already decided to

cease activity for a while.

Perhaps the commonest non-work activity on night shift at

this time was sleeping.   Indeed my own father regularly went to

work with sleeping bag and alarm clock.   It was usual to "show

willing" by working for three or four hours of the shift

beginning at nine o'clock and then at around midnight to "get

your head down" until six or half past the following morning.

Finding a good place to sleep could be a problem.   However the

"irrational" fears of some workers could be used to good effect

by others.   Thus at Deptford several huts gained a reputation for

being haunted.   This enabled a select band of men not frightened

of ghosts to "get their full stretch" in sparsely populated

cabins whilst others attempted to snooze in crowded cabins amid

the noise emanating from card schools.

At North Sands (J.L. Thompsons) there again grew up rumours

of hauntings, although these were strangely given greater

authority than the "hauntings" at Deptford even by those not

fearing "the ghost" at the latter yard.   At North Sands a

practice grew up among night shift workers going to the medical

room for very large doses of "Benylin" to help them sleep.   Even

on dayshift where control could be tighter there grew up "games"

amongst workers to see how long one could go without actually

doing any work.   In the context of decline where every new order

was qualified by the thought that it could be the last, workers

were acutely aware that they could be working themselves out of a

job.

        This is not to say that workers were happy that they could

take their regulation over the pace of work to an extreme extent.

Many did work rather than face boredom after the initial amuse-

ment that they could "get away with murder". For a minority the

situation could be used to express a "capitalist ethic", the idea

of the greatest return for the smallest input.   However a more

general conclusion upon this period is that of unease.   The

traditions of self regulation did not easily die even in this

context of decline.   The unease could be clearly detected in

accounts given by workers. After detailing the latest leisure

pursuits or how little work they had been doing, there were

increasingly comments that the situation was getting out of hand.

> " ... No seriously, it's getting too bad down there now ...
> Somebody's still building the ships but it's hard to see who
> it is." (132)

> "It's serious, you almost get embarrassed, how little work's
> getting done." (133)

These feelings coupled with the expectation that it could not

last suggest that Hughes' objection to the use of the term
"restriction of production" may be ill founded. He suggested
that:

> "This term contains a value assumption ... namely, that
> there is someone who knows and has a right to determine the
> right amount of work for other people to do. If one does
> less, he is restricting output." (134)

In this case the "right amount of work" was seen to be, in part,
a function of the stocks of knowledge of the workforce themselves
who increasingly were beginning to feel guilty at the extent to
which they were restricting output. The expectation that things
could not go on as they were goes some way towards explaining an
initial hesitancy to reply to what was to become a managerial
attack on working practices. To some extent, in its initial
phases, the assertion of control by management was seen as
legitimate in view of how much had been "got away with" during
this period.

The option advocated by British Shipbuilders placed prime
importance upon reducing capacity and employment during the years
between 1978 and 1982. Thereafter the plan envisaged increasing
productivity whilst holding manpower levels constant. This did
not happen, the reduction of capacity and employment continued
and it was in this context that moves towards increasing labour
productivity occurred. Moreover the election of the Thatcher
Government in 1979 held direct implications for the shipbuilding
industry, both in terms of the absolute level at which the

industry would be maintained, and the concept of an integrated

naval and merchant state sector.   In a wider sense, however, the

policies of the Conservative Government were to have a direct

effect upon the balance of forces between capital and labour.

The collapse of the long boom growing apace throughout the

1970s signalled the end not only of the industrial relations

consensus, but as the election result of 1979 indicated, the

political consensus which had dominated British politics since

the war. It must be noted that this change was not only one of

emphasis.   As Roger Simon suggests,

> " ... by the end of the 1970s British capitalism entered a
> period, not only of economic crisis, but also of organic
> crisis in Gramsci's sense of the term.   The system of
> political representation, which had served to ensure the
> hegemony of the capitalist class for the previous fifty
> years, began to disintegrate, and an intensive search for a
> new system, a new alignment of political and social forces,
> was pursued." (135)

The triumph of Thatcherism then not only presented problems

for an increasingly polarised Labour party leading to the

emergence of the S.D.P., but its policies had very direct

implications for industry.   For two of the main strands of

Thatcherism involved:

> "First, it rejected the Keynesian methods of running the
> economy with the aim of securing full employment that were
> followed by Labour and Conservative governments alike during
> the long post-war boom.   Instead, it adopted an extreme form
> of monetarist doctrine: the government was not responsible
> for what happened to the economy but only for maintaining
> sound money, free competition and the security of property
> and contract; the source of economic prosperity was
> individual enterprise, and government activities should be
> reduced to a minimum.   Second, since trade unions obstructed
> the free working of market forces, their legal rights had to

be severely curtailed in order to shift the balance of
bargaining power in favour of the employers; the system of
corporatism was to be ended." (136)

Not only were the legal rights of unions curtailed as an
element of shifting the balance of bargaining power, but perhaps
more importantly rising unemployment contributed to what some saw
as a "new realism" on the shop floor. As Nichols points out,
soaring unemployment in 1980 was associated with a fall in
industrial disputes to a post war low, and a decrease in male
absenteeism on the grounds of ill health, and that:

> " ... whether consideration is given to the fall in trade
> union membership or to the very marked decline in the extent
> to which official trade unionism had the ear of the govern-
> ment, it is not difficult to argue that at the outset of the
> 1980s the trade unions had been weakened." (137)

The effect upon workers was suggested by Ron Todd in 1981:

> " ... we've got three million on the dole, and another 23
> million scared to death." (138)

The apparent inability of the Labour movement to respond
effectively to the new situation exposed the "Myths of Trade
Union Power" (139), and led a former head of the Treasury to
suggest that:

> "What has emerged in shop-floor behaviour through fear and
> anxiety is much greater than I think could be secured by
> more co-operative methods." (140)

Whilst this general scenario was characteristic of the early
years of the 1980s, a note of caution should be introduced, the
mediation of this general context in relation to shop floor
behaviour is complex and as Nichols suggests we must be aware of
the ideological terrain on which we are moving:

" ... such is the potency of the "new realism" as an
ideological force that it always threatens to lure us into
accepting simplistic assumptions. Prominent among these is
the idea that there was one shop-floor world before Thatcher
and that this was subject to a radical transformation after
- the change being such that, according to Thatcher herself,
and Howe, even by the years 2T and 3T the changed work
practices and effort levels on Britain's shop-floors had
already translated into dramatic improvements in labour
productivity." (141)

With this point in mind we must return to a consideration of

the issue of control at the point of production and see how the

increasing managerial offensive attempted to break new ground by

challenging the traditional status of the craftsman as a

representative of a particular trade. This offensive also

attacked, largely for the first time, the craft administration of

labour itself.

In these developments the positions adopted by the unions

are important and have been well analysed by McGoldrick [142].

He points to the desire of the unions to move from sectionalism

towards collectivism in terms of a common wage rate for workers

in the industry. This desire was fuelled by the "responsible"

position adopted towards the industry in the light of National-

isation, but also drew on the practical lessons learnt during the

Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in and the debacle over the Polish

order.

The eventual agreement between the C.S.E.U. and British

Shipbuilders, "Wages and Salaries Restructuring, Harmonisation

and Productivity" (W&SRHP) was completed in the light of the

manpower plan agreed in August 1979 in which the Government:

> " ... more or less extended existing policy and finance for
> another two years, within which time they expected to see a
> turnaround in the industry's losses and a "rapid attainment
> of high levels of efficiency and productivity"." (143)

The W&SRHP agreement envisaged a national uniform wage scale, but

the retention of local agreements over working practices,

although these were increasingly guided by national definitions.

The situation seemed in some respects to resemble an inversion of

the position in the inter-war period where, over the introduction

of welding, the national structure of the Unions had been able to

capitalise on the local divisions amongst the employers.   The

monolithic structure of British shipbuilders now confronted

unions divided between shipbuilding centres and individual yards.

On the Wear especially Austin and Pickersgill's yard had been run

as a separate entity from Sunderland Shipbuilders - wages at

Austin and Pickersgill were higher but working practices had been

sold to achieve this.   The tension implied in this situation was

brought out at the delegate conference convened to formulate

attitudes to what was to become the W&SRHP agreement.   Thus a

delegate from Austin and Pickersgill said that they had already

achieved "full interchangeability":

> "We have consolidated allowances, we have got nothing left
> to sell, we have sold the lot for £103.00 ... " (144)

The question then was could the employers use the leverage

that such disparities in working practices between yards implied

in the same way that the unions had exploited those differences

to force the employers' hand in the inter-war period? More

generally the question remained, as ever, could agreements on

changing working practices achieved on paper be translated into

actual changes on the shop floor?

In the yards that comprised Sunderland Shipbuilders in the

period up until phase four of the W&SRHP agreement, it started

slowly. A change of attitude began to manifest itself in the

form of a tightening of control over work allocation and time.

Gradually the job content in the "job and knock" negotiations

assumed a larger proportion. These processes occurred unevenly

between locations and shifts. The traditionally looser form of

direct control on night shift remained, but even here men

complained of not being able to "get their head down" as much as

they used to. Similarly, control in "shops" tightened up more

appreciably than on the ship. This meant that simultaneously

there existed different forms of the effort bargain at different

locations within the same yard. Thus on a night shift in the

Deptford yard in 1982 whilst one group of plumbers on the ship

were still negotiating "job and knock" another section of

plumbers in the "group shop" were working for almost the full ten

hours. The work pace differed accordingly in the two locations.

On the ship a hectic pace was the norm in order to finish as soon

as possible, whereas in the "shop" the pace was more sedate:

> "I don't hurry at all, I just plod because you know when one
> job is finished there's always another one." (145)

Similarly the covered yard at Pallion was looked on as worse than

Deptford and North Sands from the point of view of the degree of
control exercised by foremen and managers [146].

An interesting feature of this period was the lack of
resistance offered by the workforce to this increase in
managerial control The attitude was that there was an
inevitability about this tightening up. Whilst these moves were
not particularly welcomed, they were seen to some extent as
legitimate, given that by their own standards things had
previously begun to get "too bad". However as time passed the
managerial offensive continued until it started to encroach on
areas clearly deemed illegitimate by the workforce. Thus even on
night shift the foreman announced that men would not be allowed
out (of the plumbers shop) twenty minutes before knocking off
time to turn their cars around "for a quick getaway", as had
traditionally been the practice. This was seen as going "a bit
far" by the men. During this period discussions of the changes
usually included comments upon the extent to which foremen
appeared to be "living in fear", and much sympathy was evident
for their predicament.

However as the tightening up continued, that sympathy began
to wane, as frustrations built up. The position in which some
men could get away with more than others continued however, and
could be a source of light relief at times. One incident
recalled fondly at Deptfords involved a foreman trying to prevent
workers leaving a ship some twenty minutes before "knocking off"

time.   One man, a plumber called Gordon, came down the plank

first.   The foreman said:

> "I'm sorry Gordon, but if you leave the boat I'll have to
> put your name in the book" (for a written warning).

The reply was to the point:

> "You put my name in that book and I'll rip your fucking
> spine out." (147)

He then pushed past the foreman who tried to retrieve the

situation by shouting that the worker was desperate to go to the

toilet and, amid the roaring laughter of the other workers, that

no-one else could leave the boat.

The feeling among the workers was now that the management

were trying to go too far, a feeling apparently confirmed by the

video that the management commissioned and then showed to the

workforce.   The substance of the video was the amount of working

time lost by late starting and early finishing.   The film began

by noting the different levels of productivity between British

and Japanese shipbuilding workers [148].   It continued by showing

scenes of the Wear yards with men standing talking or drinking

coffee, repeatedly returning to a shot of a clock with a voice

asking, "Why are these men still here? Work should have begun

twenty minutes ago", etc.

The response of the workers was one of outrage.   If the film

was intended to increase their commitment to work it could not

have had a more opposite effect.   Questions were asked as to what

management spent their time doing?   And why they started at nine

o'clock when everyone else started at 07.30?   A feeling was

rising that management had decided to act daft and the only

response that individual workers could initiate was to act twice

as daft.   The position of the shop stewards became impossible,

with workers raising more and more grievances and management

becoming less and less responsive.   Many stewards gave up their

posts or volunteered for redundancy, the work having become "just

too much hassle" [149].   This exacerbated the problem, for

replacement stewards, when they could be found, were

inexperienced in a situation which demanded the maximum of

negotiating skills. Research on Tyneside showed that in one ship-

building group the constituency size of shop stewards grew from a

ratio of 1:40 in the 1970s to 1:65 in 1984 [150], indicating a

decline in the level of shop floor organisation in the yards.   It

is likely that a similar decline took place on Wearside.

It is hard to exaggerate the levels to which feelings rose

in the yards of Wearside during the first half of the 1980s.

Union response was almost totally disabled by the deteriorating

employment prospects within the industry.   Thus by the beginning

of 1983, 26,000 jobs had been lost within the industry since

nationalisation in 1977.   A further 3,000 redundancies were

announced in the first month of 1983, followed in quick

succession by 9,000 more in April of that year.

Part VII

Redundancy

The first mention of 9,000 redundancies was made in "The

Times" industrial notebook on 20 April 1983. The figures

announced by the outgoing chairman of British Shipbuilding, Sir

Robert Atkinson, were seen to imply the "devastation" of ship-

building communities, and the paper questioned whether the

Government could allow this to happen?

> "In an election year, can Mr. Jenkins really afford to see
> more communities, admittedly not in Tory strongholds,
> devastated and the country subjected to another bout of
> depressing news of big industrial closures? For that, in
> essence, is Sir Robert's message." (151)

It seemed that such pragmatic political considerations were

likely to be the only retarding force in the path of the proposed

redundancies. For as the article continued,

> "At the Govan yard on the Clyde, where there are new orders,
> the mood of shipbuilding workers throughout the country was
> summed up by a shop steward who dismissed as futile any move
> to begin a strike against further cuts. The battle, he
> warned, was against the Government." (152)

By 3 May 1983 it was clear that British Shipbuilders were intent

on pressing ahead with the redundancies and that still more were

to come. As the Guardian reported,

> "Delegates representing 64,000 shipyard workers will decide
> tomorrow how to fight at least 9,000 redundancies, in the
> knowledge that British Shipbuilders has already drawn up
> contingency plans for a more drastic rundown of the ailing
> industry ...
>
> ... "Job losses could be significantly greater than the
> 9,000" Sir Robert Atkinson, the departing B.S. Chairman,
> told startled managers in a report less than a month ago.

His industrial relations director, Mr. Maurice Phelps,
added: "Unfortunately, large-scale redundancies cannot now
be avoided". (153)

There were signs emerging that the Unions had had enough and
that some kind of industrial action would be forthcoming. More-
over, local managers appeared to be growing increasingly critical
of the "heavy handed" tactics of the B.S. central administration.

> "Union officials appear convinced that Sir Robert is
> determined to press ahead with the 9,000 redundancies - and
> if he does, that could provoke a militant response. For
> over the past few years most of the redundancies have come
> from "volunteers". It is questionable whether another
> rundown could be achieved without compulsion. On this
> occasion the shipyard workers can count on the support of
> 1,500 managers who have simply had enough." (154)

The conference backed a call for industrial action to stop
the redundancies and to pressurise the Government into providing
an emergency package to save the merchant industry. The tactic
of yard occupations and sit-ins was the one favoured by the
unions. The proposal was condemned by British Shipbuilders and
the majority of the press. However even the media were not
altogether without sympathy for the unions' case.

> "Last week's response by the Unions was a predictable back-
> lash by an increasingly angry labour force to the threat of
> yet more cuts and the rapid fall of shipyard workers down
> the pay league in recent years ... But to make good the
> threat and turn the sit-ins into a reality would be an act
> of desperation." (155)

In the face of the sit-in threat, British Shipbuilders
responded to the pragmatic political pressures upon the
Government in the run-up to the general election. A point
recognised by the Guardian:

" ... the State company - which will soon press the new
Industry Secretary Mr. Cecil Parkinson, for emergency aid to
prevent a collapse of the merchant building sector - post-
poned the redundancy programme until after the election.
... Under the original plan B.S. had hoped that its
subsidiary yards would have begun declaring redundancies by
now." (156)

The delay in carrying through the redundancy plan and the re-

election of the Tory Government had served to weaken the

unanimity of the unions' opposition, as the Guardian continued:

" ... in spite of union resistance to compulsory
redundancies, there are indications at several yards -
particularly on Wearside - that the required number of job
losses can be achieved by voluntary severance." (157)

Of the 9,000 redundancies 1,150 were to be from the Wear yards.

The move towards "voluntary" acceptance of this number of

redundancies sank any prospect of a unified struggle against job

losses. British Shipbuilders were to achieve this target and

more in the future in an apparently unproblematic fashion.

Furthermore the willingness of individual workers to accept

voluntary redundancy was seen to damage the prospects for the

"Save Our Shipyards" campaign being run by Tyne and Wear

Metropolitan Council and made a nonsense of their claim that:

"United We Stand.

The avalanche of support for the "S.O.S." campaign has
surpassed all expectations." (158)

It seemed that the "avalanche of support" was forthcoming from

everyone apart from the workforce in the industry. Moreover this

was not the first time that the local organisers of a campaign to

resist redundancies had been in effect undermined by the work-

force. On 5 February 1981 at the beginning of the job losses the

Secretary of the Wear C.S.E.U., Henry Wilkinson, boldly announced

that:

> "There should be no doubt in anybody's mind that the River
> Wear as well as the rest of the country will combat any
> enforced redundancies." (159)

The question of enforced redundancies never arose, for as

the Sunderland Echo of 28 February pointed out:

> "More than 700 men have indicated a readiness to accept
> redundancy even in an area of 17% unemployment." (160)

The Regional Organiser of the General and Municipal Workers'

Union resigned in disgust, saying:

> "They are betraying their forefathers, throwing away - for
> short-sighted and selfish reasons - job opportunities for
> the young and putting shackles on their trade union
> negotiators ... I say the shipyard workers on the Tyne and
> Wear need a bit of fight in their bellies like the miners.
> Do they not realise we are a maritime nation and as such
> shipbuilding in this country could never be finished." (161)

Was this a fair comment? Were the motives for taking

voluntary redundancy simply reducible to "Short-sighted and

selfish reasons"? At a deeper level did the willingness to "sell

ones' job" indicate a change in the quintessential nature of the

traditional working class? There were those who thought so:

> "It has always been the Left's critique of capitalism that
> it must hide its true purposes from the people who, if they
> recognised its true nature, would rise up against it. It
> was Mrs. Thatcher's priviledge to shout its true nature from
> the housetops to the plaudits of the people who, far from
> rising up, inclined themselves to its will. As industry
> after industry shrank in the early 1980s - steel,
> shipbuilding, engineering, cars, chemicals, construction -
> the workers accepted the common sense of capitalism, took
> their redundancy payments and were glad." (182)

The reality of the redundancy issue on the Wear is perhaps more complicated than either a lack of moral fibre of a "lack of fight in their bellies" of the workforce. The redundancy issue has to be seen directly in the context of the changing nature of working practices and the wider political environment. If such an analysis is forthcoming it is at least as easy to argue the case that the "ease" with which the "voluntary" redundancies were achieved on the Wear was in part due to the high level of the struggle within the yards rather than the opposite.

A point forthcoming from Wear workers when discussing the redundancy situation on the Wear in the first half of the 1980s was that:

"The old time stewards were the first, they got out 'cause they knew what we were in for." (163)

Some of what they were "in for" has already been outlined. The managerial offensive began by tightening up on the movement of labour and the "productive input" of the working day. The aforementioned "durable aspects" of worker control began to break down under extreme pressure from above. The foremen and middle management were exposed to extraordinary pressure from senior management. In the minds of the workers the person ultimately responsible was Eric Welsh, the Managing Director of the Sunderland yards. One worker from Pallion summed up these feelings in a reply to a questionnaire issued by the company.

"Mr Welsh would have done well in S.S.." (164)

This did not mean Sunderland Shipbuilders! The intense pressure

exerted by the senior management and the fear that this generated

in the lower supervisory grades in the face of the possibility of

forced redundancy or even the closure of all the yards on the

river ensured that for the first time managerial control initiat-

ives were not diluted in their transference to the shop floor.

Importantly these control initiatives were increasingly being

linked to changes in working practices being fostered under the

auspices of the phases of the W&SRHP plan already agreed by the

unions.

The union agreement to the general idea of such changes in

working practices coupled with the "enthusiasm" with which they

were pursued by higher management in their creation of an

atmosphere of fear precluded any collective response. However

individual responses were forthcoming. More active expressions

of "botching up" began to emerge, which bordered on sabotage. As

one universally acknowledged "responsible worker" explained,

> "They get you that way, as sick as a parrot. There's
> sabotage now, I've started rubbing the chalk marks off pipes
> in the pallet that are ready to go out." (165)

The pipes pre-fabricated in the group shop are numbered with yard

and detail position location numbers - to obliterate these would

involve a considerable delay in their delivery to the right

place. But this was mild by comparison to some of the acts going

on. The removal of pieces of machinery, the deliberate fusing of

lighting systems in inaccessible places, electric welding

machines left arcing to earth until they burned out were just

some of the ways that frustrations were vented. There was little

comfort in such acts however, as managerial offensive continued.

Foremen were obliged to keep written records of the progress of

jobs to be submitted weekly, under relentless pressure. Some-

times they booked jobs in that were not completed and they

appealed to or cajoled men to finish quickly. The "catch phrase"

of one foreman at Deptford, when making such appeals, caught on

and men greeted each other with A.L.'s words,

> "You've got to do it Bob, they'll chew my balls off if you
> don't." (166)

The workers knew that the pressure was coming from senior

management and more specifically its personification in the form

of Eric Welsh, but the effects were felt on the shop floor in the

deteriorating quality of relationships between workers and their

immediate supervisors. Access to higher management was

restricted and even the personnel department appeared to be

remaining aloof. As a worker from the Pallion yard asked,

> "Why does it take three weeks to see personnel?" (167)

When senior management were spotted in the yards their

reception was hostile. Thus one worker recalled, the reaction of

his friend at seeing a group of managers:

> "We were working up on one of the masts when he spotted
> them. He was hanging on with one hand shouting "Bastards,
> bastards". They took no notice!" (168)

The "big brother" approach was seen as particularly sinister by

some.

> "They've got videos down there, they can sit in an office
> and see who isn't where they should be. Their computer
> monitors the use of power, if there's a shortfall in any
> area of the yard they want to know why." (169)

Amid all of this, intense individual struggles went on in

circumstances where the union was seen as impotent.

> "Health and Safety, all the time I stopped them with that.
> On one occasion I was working in the double bottoms when a
> plate slid over the tank top and dropped down a manhole.
> "I'm not working here", I said to the head foreman, so he
> got a manager. He asked what could be done to help, could I
> suggest anything? I told them a lip should be erected
> around the manholes to stop things sliding down. On another
> occasion they were lining sections up using lasers. Now I
> noticed when they first started using lasers they used to
> rope areas off and put up signs - "Danger Lasers", all that
> had gone. So I got onto them about it, work stopped while
> they roped off the main area and put signs up. I don't know
> what it was we had to beware of, but I got the signs back.
> The problem was it didn't hit the management, it only annoy-
> ed the blokes working on the job - they now had to rope off
> areas and put up signs as well as their other work." (170)

Again, the problem was how to hit back at management rather

than to increase the general level of "hassle" on the shop floor.

It seemed an intractable problem which added to the frustrations

all the more. Where direct attacks could be made upon management

they were eagerly grasped. One such event gained great notor-

iety. It occurred on the night shift at Deptford, but by the end

of the following day shift was being celebrated in the rest of

the yards on the river. The Deptford night shift had been "get-

ting out of hand" for some time. On one particular ship no matter

how hard the supervisors and management tried the men kept

managing to paint "S.S. Rubber Duck" on the hull in large

letters. More management were drafted onto the night shift. One

night the lads spotted Eric Welsh on the quayside. The spot-

lights were turned on him and an assortment of bolts, flanges and

other objects were thrown at him. He got away but not before a

few direct hits were registered. In calmer moments some of the

perpetrators confessed that it was a stupid and dangerous thing

to do, but that they could not help themselves.

The problem of such individual resistance is, as we have

seen, that its target cannot always be hit and thus in some

circumstances only serves to make an intolerable situation worse.

Moreover with the tightening of control and increasing issue of

written warnings individuals were risking "the sack". For many

of those most active in resisting, this likelihood persuaded them

that taking redundancy would pre-empt their increasingly inevit-

able dismissal and loss of entitlement to any redundancy payment.

The importance of redundancy entitlement built up over a

number of years in the absence of occupational pensions etc. is

often underestimated. As Elger found at Doxfords Engine Works in

the late 1960s, the redundancy entitlement was for some workers a

major reason why they didn't look for work in more attractive or

higher paid jobs.

> "If I leave now I'd lose £400 redundancy so it would take a
> lot to shift us." (171)

Ironically it was the threat of losing redundancy entitle-

ment which inclined many of the workers at the yards in the 1980s

to leave. Not only was it a way of escaping the "torture" that

the work situation had become,

"Every Monday morning you go in you might as well bend over
- you're waiting to be buggered!" (172)

but also it forestalled the loss of entitlement by dismissal.

Moreover the plans of the Tory Government to privatise the

Warship yards were well advanced by this time. The fear was that

if a buyer could also be found for individual merchant yards

these would be sold with no guarantee that long standing

redundancy entitlement would be honoured. Again it was the

threat of its potential loss which encouraged some workers to

take the payment and leave.

Such decisions were not taken easily. For weeks and

sometimes months workers and their families agonised over making

the right decision. And all the time the pressure at work

increased until some could take it no more.

"It's become a matter of dignity - I got to get out." (173)

Individual decisions were taken in the light of financial

circumstances at home. This inevitably meant that the workforce

were divided by their individual home circumstances and many of

those who did not leave wished that they could have done. How-

ever such was the pressure that some "had" to leave even in the

face of unfavourable circumstances at home. Despite the claims

of Maurice Phelps, British Shipbuilders' Industrial Director,

that:

"nobody wants to force people out of the industry" (174)

the net effect of the managerial offensive on the river was to do

just that. As a twenty seven year old shipwright, married for

two years with a new mortgage and a pregnant wife, who had just

applied to "take his lot", put it:

> "I don't care what anyone says, there has not been one
> voluntary redundancy on this river. Blokes have been
> hounded, abused and pushed into it." (175)

Another responded to the accusation that he was selling his son's

future job.

> "I wouldn't wish that set-up on my worst enemy let alone my
> son. He's better off without it. I've got my dignity and
> my redundancy." (176)

The redundancy issue on the Wear was clearly tied to changes

in working practices.

Part VIII

The End of Craft Control?

Initially felt as a tightening of managerial control, the offensive developed into formal changes "disguised" as wage and productivity agreements under the auspices of W&ARHP and with union agreement. Phase 4 of the W&SRHP scheme was outlined to the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee on 12 October 1983, and the local details of the productivity deal and changes in working practices and technology were formulated over the winter months. There was by this time a feeling that resistance should be offered to any management proposals. But the prospects for a collective stand were not good. Any industrial action was seen by the unions and shop stewards as equivalent to walking out of the yards never to return. As well as the shorter term work based tactical considerations, more long term processes had weakened the potential resources upon which workers could call to fight against changes in the labour process. Several of these issues are apparent under the general tendency towards the growing gulf between the work and non-work community situation of Wearside shipbuilding workers.

Despite claims in the Save Our Shipyards campaign or of banner headlines in the Sunderland Echo of the town rallying to save jobs, division was more characteristic than solidarity. The differences in the home circumstances and financial commitments of individual workers could, as we have seen, exert a determining

effect upon their willingness to take their redundancy, and the
same was true of attitudes towards industrial action.   More
generally the increasingly heterogeneous non-work environment of
workers had over the years begun to destroy what little
"patterning of paradox" had existed in the past.   That this was
to some extent a legitimate development was tacitly acknowledged
in the "community".   An illustration of one strand of this
process was forthcoming in a discussion between three shipyard
workers, about another worker, in a Sunderland pub.

(a)   What I can't understand is P... - which way does
         he kick?

(b)   He's a Tory.

(c)   Bastard.

(b)   He had an inheritance. His Dad had money.

(c)   Bastard.

(a)   He's a canny lad though.

(b + c) Oh aye he's canny.

(a)   You've got to keep an eye on him though.

(b)   Oh aye, you've got to watch him.

(c)   Bastard.

What was odd about this conversation was that the Tory
sympathies of the worker under discussion were seen to stem
naturally from his being left money (enough to buy a large
terraced house in an upmarket part of Fulwell).   In other words
that his political affiliation was determined solely by his non-

work situation and that he was nevertheless a "canny lad" [177].

Another feature of the divorce between the work and community situation was used by the management to put pressure upon workers to accept the "productivity" offer. The consequences of mailing the details direct to each individual home were outlined by one worker.

> "When my wife opens the letter and sees the figures that's all she thinks about. She sees it in terms of how much more that amount will buy in the shops. She doesn't see what I would have to do to get it." (178)

Finally in a more general sense the division between work and community and changing patterns of family life have isolated generations from each other. The generation of shipyard workers beginning their working life in the inter-war period have now retired. The relative decline in the industry over which they presided was masked by the absolute growth in the post-war period. For them the crisis of British Shipbuilding is in no way tied to them. Ironically the unchallenged degree of authority that they experienced over the production process is projected onto their sons and grandsons, and it is here that the responsibility is seen to lie:

> " ... as time went on you got people who weren't interested and nowadays - there's no buzzer blows in the shipyards, them days eight o'clock in the morning the buzzer blew ... I was walking home one day (I'd been on night shift) and I met a lot of big lads coming along and I said "when the buzzer blows you're supposed to be starting work not getting out of bed", and that is it at the present day - this morning the shipyards - none of them will be started before nine o'clock because they'll be discussing the Manchester United Cup Final from last night - because they're not on piece, they're on bonus because the whole system has gone rotten

> ... I could do better than some of the 18 year olds now and
> I'm 72 years old ... I'm talking about work, not putting
> hours in and that's the trouble with them at the present day
> ... nowadays they couldn't care less - couldn't care less
> about it." (179)

The heterogeneity emerging from the breakdown of the
occupational community, outlined in earlier chapters, serves to
shatter the potential for solidaristic support. In such an
atmosphere and with the shop stewards advocating acceptance the
phase 4 deal was voted for by a majority of the workforce.
Although as to how many had given their "informed consent" there
was dispute.

> "Nobody knew what the hell they were voting for. The motion
> proposed by the stewards had about four amendments which had
> to be voted on first. Blokes were asking me, "What are we
> voting for now?" (180)

What they were endorsing is attached in Appendix (3)   The
main points in the national agreement included the following
sections:

"Interchangeability/Flexibility

The nature of the work in the industry is such that it is
essential for employees at all levels to work effectively,
and to recognise that change will be a normal part of the
working life. Therefore, all employees must be prepared to
acquire new skills, and to remove customary practices where
they are no longer appropriate. To meet the demands of
competition it is accepted that new working practices will
be adopted which match those of our international
competitors and enable companies to respond to changing work
priorities, product and workload fluctuations. The key
elements of these new practices which need to implemented
urgently and to the fullest effect are:

Interchangeability

1.   All levels of staff will be interchangeable as required
     according to their individual skills and experience.
2.   Hourly paid employees will be interchangeable within
     their main group, i.e. within steelworking, outfitting
     and ancillary groups.
3.   Skilled employees will also be required to be inter-
     changeable across groups and trades, providing they are
     capable of undertaking the work required, and will also
     undertake ancillary work as appropriate.
4.   Ancillary employees will also be required to undertake
     tasks within their ability, including work which
     skilled employees have in some cases traditionally
     retained, but which can be completely undertaken by
     other employees after retraining.
5.   All employees will be fully mobile within their company
     and between areas and departments including maintenance
     and production.

Flexibility

6.   Skilled employees, in order to progress the completion
     of their own work will undertake their own servicing.
7.   As part of the above arrangements, it is agreed that in
     order that employees will use the full range of their
     skills and abilities to maximum advantage, companies
     will have the option of establishing area supervision
     and integrated groups of workers as required." (181)

The local agreement restated in a bolder fashion the points

in the national agreement.   Thus area supervision and integrated

work groups were labelled "Composite Groups" - they were used to

signify the end of the single trade work group [182], thereby

rendering demarcation concerns which arose, in particular between

plumbers and fitters at the North Sands yard, an issue which

could be handled by an "independent" foreman.   Demarcation

increasingly became a matter of individual group dynamics rather

than an issue uniting a whole trade.   The principle of craft

exclusiveness had been surrendered, although the consciousness of

individual workers as belonging to a particular trade remained.

This again increased the frustrations on the shop floor, and some

workers talked of a "sell out" by their representatives.

The local agreement also went further on the introduction of

new techniques, and the point of introduction, before discussion

was conceded.

> "We should try new techniques first and get them working
> while talks are going on about these other matters (Trade
> Unions, pay, demarcation). That means no delay in using the
> techniques that have helped foreign shipbuilders grab a
> bigger share of our markets." (183)

The agreement at a national level headed off a threatened

national strike. The new Chairman of British Shipbuilders was

well satisfied:

> "After 13 hours of talks a national shipyard strike -
> accompanied by yard occupations - had been averted. "A hell
> of a good day's work", said a smiling Mr. Graham Day (Salary
> £80,000 plus performance bonus) ...
>
> ... The unions had been pressing for an increase on basic
> rates as a precondition of further productivity talks. Mr.
> Day has persuaded Mr. Murray, and 29 shipyard delegates who
> endorsed the outline deal, to accept a productivity
> agreement as a precondition for getting more money." (184)

Once again the tying of wages to working conditions had

helped British Shipbuilders to further the aim defined by Graham

Day in the Financial Times:

> " ... the craft basis on which B.S. has operated - rigid
> demarcation lines, fierce protection of skills and the like
> - has to be altered. We've got to get from a craft to a
> system basis." (185)

The workers received £7 a week for accepting the deal, on

union advice. The changes were felt very quickly on the Wear, as

a painter explained in February 1984:

> "It's ridiculous. I've been working in the joiners shop
> today, sweeping up - me, a skilled painter!" (186)

As for the composite work groups it was explained in the local

agreement that training would be given,

> "The groups will be responsible for unit or area completion,
> usually with one Supervisor, and the people in it will have
> the skills required. Each person will be expected to carry
> out whatever work is necessary to complete the job,
> including work that has been thought of as "belonging" to
> only one group. Retraining will be organised ... " (187)

According to Mr. R.D. Clark, the personnel director on the

Wear, such training amounted to "multi-skilling", and the manage-

ment welcomed the rising skill level in shipbuilding (188). He

went on to say that whilst the changes in working practices had

been "driven through in the face of an adverse economic climate",

workers were now happier and more involved in their work because

they could follow through the processes on the yard floor (189).

The reality on the shop floor was rather different. The

retraining was seen as a mockery, but workers took the £75 given

to those who volunteered. As a shipwright explained:

> "I served a five year apprenticeship to become a shipwright
> but now after three days hanging about with the welders I'm
> a welder, three days I'm a rigger, two days I'm a burner and
> two days and I'm a plater!" (190)

Mr. Clark made the claim that the workforce were happy with

the changes occurring only one month after Sunderland

Shipbuilders had commissioned a piece of survey research looking

at worker attitudes in the firm. In the light of the results of

that research (which he had at the time of the interview) his

analysis seems odd to say the least. Dissatisfaction with the

situation in the yards clearly ran through most of the replies to

a large majority of individual questions (see Appendix 4). Thus,

for example:

"Question 5

"Sunderland Shipbuilders is a pretty good place to work - I
would recommend a friend or member of my family to work
here."

	% Agree 1 and 2	3	% Disagree 4 and 5
Pallion	16	9	74
Deptford	17	11	71
N. Sands	11	7	81
Main Office	36	20	44
Aggregate	18	10	70

As the survey research firm commented,

"Clear indication that the considerable majority of
employees feel that this is not a good place to work. In
other questionnaires we have carried out, it is possible to
observe that whilst there are many complaints and grumbles
about one's workplace it is still possible to feel that
overall it is a fairly good place to work, and consequently
that one would recommend it to family and friends. It is in
answer to this question that we see that the concerns that
the workforce have go particularly deep." (191)

In answer to the statement that

"Senior management can be trusted to make sensible decisions
for the Company's future",

79% of Deptford's manual workers disagreed, and the figures for

Pallion and North Sands yards were higher still at 80% and 81%

respectively. As far as industrial relations were concerned, the

results were even more clear cut. Thus:

Question 12

How would you describe relations between management and
trade unions at Sunderland Shipbuilders at present?

	% Excellent 1 and 2	3	% Poor 4 and 5
Pallion	1	3	95
Deptford	3	5	89
N. Sands	2	3	89
Main Office	9	10	82
Aggregate	2.5	4	90

(192)

The results are clear cut and suggest that the workforce
were far from happy with changes in the yards. Moreover given
the context of the survey, coming as it did in 1986 after several
rounds of large scale redundancies when some of the more critical
workers had already left in desperation, and, with shop stewards
advocating that men should not co-operate with the survey, it is
likely that some of the more critical workers left in the yards
did not complete the questionnaire.

The depth to which the morale of the workforce had been
driven is even more apparent in the replies and comments to the
"free answers" and "open questions" sections of the survey. In
all three yards the largest single response to the question of
what was liked about working for Sunderland Shipbuilders was
"Nothing". This was written by 66 men from Deptford, 60 from
North Sands and 209 from Pallion. The next most popular "like"
in all yards was that "It is a job/better than dole".

The individual quotations again make the situation crystal

clear.   Some of these expressed a deep sense of injury to the

self:

> "What do I have to do to get management to realise I am a human being, not a mindless unfeeling robot! HELP!"

> "Attitude of management to workforce is one of hatred and hysterics."

> "Being treated unfairly (you've got to work here to understand that)."

> "Men - totally demoralised - need to be encouraged and nurtured - sick of being stamped into the ground."

> "This is the worst job I've had in 45 years in shipbuilding." (193)

Other comments were more concise:

> "Management stinks - are corrupt."

> "Management back-stabbing." (194)

Management behaviour towards the workforce was seen variously as

ignorant and flippant, high-handed, dogmatic, bullying, arrogant,

petty, persecuting.   Even attempts at being witty carried the

same message:

> "Treated like idiots, led by idiots, paid like idiots."

> "Thank Mr. Welsh for his effort on our behalf." (195)

Specific issues featured in replies too, the ending of

canteen facilities producing hot meals for manual workers yet

their continuance free to staff members was a large concern.

Similarly the non-payment of a £500 bonus which had been

"promised" by Eric Welsh was mentioned several times with

comments such as

"Where's our £500 - thieves."

A whole section of replies referred to the work itself, where

comments included:

"Not being able to develop new skills."

"Quality control system not working."

"Seeming lack of standards in inspections which causes lack
of confidence when working with owners reps and having to
reply "I don't know" to 90% of any questions relating to
specific standards of tolerance."

"Misuse of skills."

"Lack of training."

"Responsibility of job taken away from tradesman."

"Taken away job satisfaction."

"No faith in new workpacks."

"Too much new work."

"Departments working against each other."

"Rundown of craft trades."

"Too many supervisors know nothing of the particular trade
they're responsible for."

The list goes on, throwing serious doubt on the claim that

the workforce was "happier" with the new working practices which

seemed indeed to have been "driven through". The management had

by 1986 been able to "drive through" almost every change that

they had desired. Composite group working had become the norm

and a computerised stock control system "Artemis" had been

installed. Movement was being made towards a continental split

shift system worked on a four set, three shift basis.

Throughout the whole period of these changes the redundancies had continued. One man leaving British Shipbuilders in 1986 was Graham Day. After spending less time as Chairman of B.S. than manual workers spend as apprentices Day, who complained "I am earning here well below my capacity in Canada", was off to British Leyland. In an article entitled "Buoyant amid the Wrecks" the Guardian noted that:

> "One man's timbers remain unshivered by the gurgling noises emanating from North-eastern shipyards ... Day's achievements at B.S. are said to have so impressed Mrs. Thatcher that he was being considered as Big Mac's (Ian McGregor) successor. Particularly endearing to the boss was his nononsense approach. He was reported to have said of a shop steward: "I would love to get him behind the shed and take my jacket off to him".
>
> Instead, he stripped down the workforce to 9,000 - a tenth of the numbers at nationalisation in 1977 - thus surmounting widespread opposition to his productivity proposals. He also engineered the sale of profitable warship yards. He admitted that the plan was uncommercial, and astonished M.P.s by disclosing that he had only been informed of the Government's decision hours before it was announced in the Commons."
> (197)

Leaving Wearside in 1986 was Eric Welsh, who, after organising the details of the shutdown of Smiths Dock on Teesside as the head of North East Shipbuilders Limited, reopened part of the works as a private ship repair company. He also had "achieved much", on the shop floor the core workforce had been whittled down to approximately 2,000 workers plus an increasing proportion of subcontract workers.

The craft administration had apparently given way to the constant flow principle based on the composite work group and

CAD/CAM systems dominated the stages of both pre-outfitting and

the more established prefabrication of structural steel units.

As an article written by a manager of N.E.S.L. in the Durham

University Industrial Society Magazine put it,

> "At Pallion, as in all British shipbuilders yards, the
> building process is on the workstation principle. That is
> to say that the whole ship structure is broken down in
> design terms, into a great number of sub-assemblies.
>
> There are workstations throughout the yard, each specialis-
> ing in the production of one kind of sub-assembly. Starting
> with the smallest, each sub-assembly moves on to the
> following stage where it is further enlarged, until a main
> unit is created. That is then taken to the building berth.
>
> This whole operation is an exercise in precision. Each unit,
> built to drawings produced by computer, must fit snugly and
> exactly with the others at the point of assembly in the
> berth. When it is considered that units may weigh a hundred
> tons or more and stand as high as a church, the task is
> obviously an exacting one." (198)

"An exercise in precision" - is this how it actually worked

at the point of production? As has been outlined the changes were

"driven through" with little regard for the views of the work-

force, and the new system of working was imposed without detailed

consultation. The result was a hybrid of the new system of organ-

isation of work and some of the older detail working practices,

executed in an atmosphere in which no one wanted to be identified

with mistakes, the consequences of which, if they occurred in the

early phases of the transformation of plans into reality, could

be far more wide ranging than in the earlier systems.   The

consequences of this in relation to the requisite degree of

precision were profound. A plumber explained how the new system

worked in practice:

"1.   The plans arrive and are to be converted into detail
       sketches.   The sketchers draw the individual pipes to
       be fabricated.   But as they would be no good if they
       end up too small, they add 100mm extra.
2.   The sketch is numbered and entered on the computer and
       the sketch goes to the group shop for "fabbing".
3.   When the pipe is fabbed it is then fitted with a tag
       detailing its location and palatised among many more.
4.   The palate is delivered to its location which is not
       necessarily the right one or even the right yard.
5.   When the palate is delivered the paper tags are often
       torn or get soggy in the rain or just fall off.   So a
       labourer has to rummage through the palate for the
       right pipe.
6.   When the pipe is found it's too long (remember the
       sketcher left 100mm extra).   Therefore if another one
       looks a better fit you take that.   Or you get a hacksaw
       and cut it or take it back to the shop to be cut.   As
       you would have done in the old days." (199)

In this example then, the supposed divorce between
conception and execution and the fragmentation of work locations
and tasks is frustrated by the decisions of the sketchers and the
consequent decision of the craftsman to use the pipe that "looks
the better fit".   The formal system is not translated unproblem-
atically into "systemised response" at the point of production;
the discretion of the individual worker is to some extent left
intact. A point borne out in the company's survey where 78% of
the workers at Pallion and 77% and 72% at Deptford and North
Sands respectively replied that they always felt personally
responsible for the job they did (200).

The persistence of the craft ethos among the manual
workforce and their immediate superiors represented itself in an
even more dramatic way at times.   Thus when under pressure from

superiors to speed up the work in order to finish a ship nearing

the end of its completion time there was a tendency for the new

system to break down and the old patterns of working to re-

emerge.   In such a situation foremen order workers to bypass the

computerised stock control and allocation system and physically

go and obtain their materials and tools, on their authority, as

they would have done under the old system.

Moreover the specific craft identities deemed irrelevant to

the composite work groups also reassert themselves as the basis

of the physical procurement of tools and materials.   Thus for

example plumbers complained that stock-keepers in the stores

belonging to the A.E.U. would not hand over materials to them,

but if a "friendly" fitter could be found they just walked in the

back of the store as was the practice in the past.   A similar

tendency has been noted in a study of the Aerospace Industry

where the physical movement of plans and designs re-emerges and

dominates the new CAD/CAM system when deadlines are tight:

> " ... examples were cited where reverting to manual methods
> has to happen in order to get the work out on time ...
> ... I was directly involved in getting the last project off
> CAD/CAM, to meet the deadline.
> ... such situations tend to strengthen the resolve of those
> who prefer the old ways and make it easier for them to
> abandon the struggle to adapt." (201)

The point to be made about both these examples of the re-

emergence of older working patterns is not that the workers are

fighting at the point of production to retain their "archaic"

craft specific skills, but rather, they are fighting to get the

job out in time. In the yards it is not the intensity of the

conflict between capital and labour that leads workers to revert

to more traditional working patterns. Rather it is the case that

in spite of everything else that management has done, the workers

still see themselves as having a responsibility towards their

work and "getting the job done". This comes across in the

Sunderland Shipbuilders survey:

"Question 26

"I feel personally responsible for the job I do."

	Always 1 and 2	3	Never 4 and 5
Pallion	78	8	14
Deptford	77	9	13
N. Sands	72	11	14
Main Office	92	4	4
Aggregate	77	8	12

As the summary put it,

> "Overall, something slightly more than three-quarters of the
> population feel personally responsible for the job that they
> do. The majority moves up to 92% in the main offices. As
> with one or two earlier questions, this hints at a basic
> feeling of pride in one's work which should be a source of
> strength for the organisation. However if this feeling does
> not have an outlet, if people feel that their work is not
> worthwhile ... then it can be a source of some frustration."
> (202)

The feeling of personal responsibility for one's work, a

hallmark of the craft worker, was not easily extinguished, even

in the face of technical changes in the labour process. This is

the key to understanding the high levels of both conflict and co-

operation which were, during this period, displayed by the same

individuals.   The co-operation sprang from a personal
responsibility to see the job through.   The conflict arose not
primarily because of objective technical changes, but rather due
to the management offensive in relation to its direct control
strategy and more generally in relation to its whole human
relations approach.   This "offensive" represented the empirical
manifestation of the external pressures working upon the
industry.   Those of the modernisation of capital and working
practices as an element in achieving large growths in productiv-
ity in the context of overall reduction of capacity and cost.

A belated appreciation of the realities of the managerial
offensive was given in the House of Commons in July 1987 by the
town's two Labour M.P.s.   Chris Mullin, for Sunderland South,
described the management as "bone headed" and went on to say:

> "In Sunderland the yards had a management that is more
> interested in pursuing the class war than in shipbuilding.
> They have exploited the crisis in shipbuilding to inflict
> further humiliation on a workforce that has already made
> great sacrifices." (203)

Bob Clay, for Sunderland North, spoke of the management's

> " ... arrogance, secrecy and hostility to the workforce ...
> The number of managers that have been turned over in
> Sunderland in British Shipbuilders even exceeds the number
> of Government Ministers we have had dealing with these
> debates, or the number of chairmen of British Shipbuilders
> we have had at a national level.
>
> How can you expect workers in a shipyard to feel any
> confidence in the future when they see managers come and go
> in sometimes extremely mysterious circumstances.   There
> needs to be a whole inquiry even now into the way British
> Shipbuilders has been managed." (204)

There was no inquiry however, and the M.P.s were berated in

the media for damaging the image of Sunderland Shipbuilders. The

response from the new managing director of Sunderland Ship-

builders sought to exploit the "irresponsibility" of the M.P.s.

He said:

> "I am not prepared ... to conduct any part of the company's
> business through public debate either in the media or
> elsewhere." (205)

The "hidden abode" of the workplace was to remain obscured from

public view then, on the pretext that to discuss such issues

would damage the company's image.

By this time however the ferociousness of the managerial

offensive had abated somewhat. The desired agreements over

working practices had been achieved and the requisite number of

"voluntary" redundancies had been forthcoming. Union resistance

to managerial initiatives had been weak and short lived. However

the workers still found themselves in a state of desubordin-

ation, the changes in the labour process had not totally des-

troyed either the craft ethos or a willingness to exercise non-

formal controls over the mobility of labour. One such example

where the management did not appear to realise that control needs

to be created and recreated and is rarely finally won was in

relation to the four set, three shift basis of working.

The system was introduced without union agreement and on a

"purely voluntary" basis late in 1986. Most workers were opposed

to its introduction, however as the direct controls over physical

attendance were relaxed they found that the system could be used.

Because if the four set pattern within an individual shift there was nearly always one section of the workforce who had a legitimate right to be in the amenity block or moving to or from it. Thus the overlapping nature of coffee and dinner breaks was used to good effect by workers who could escape a "booking" by choosing, in explanation, the "right set" to belong to. So well was this tactic used by the workforce that the pattern of shift working was withdrawn by the management early in 1988 as "unworkable". The nature of the respite from constant managerial pressure was well understood by workers:

> "Aye, they're leaving us alone at the moment, they've got what they want ... it'll start again soon though, there's talk of more redundancies again." (206)

Conclusion

The changes in the organisation and control of the division
of labour in the Wearside shipbuilding industry which took place
between the time of publication of the first British Shipbuilders
Corporate Plan in 1978 and 1988 were massive. Formal agreements
between management and unions, which in the past had only been
partially realised at the point of production, were implemented
in full. Within the ten year period however there was not a
uniform offensive waged on behalf of the management. Rather the
key period in which the changes were "driven through" at the
point of production began in 1983 and continued until 1987. This
period began at the same time as the appointment of Graham Day as
the Chairman of British Shipbuilders, and coincided with the
"rule" of Eric Welsh as the Managing Director of Sunderland
Shipbuilders. This is not to suggest that these men alone caused
the rundown of the industry and the offensive for the sake of it.

Rather they were willing to attempt to drive through changes
in the organisation and control of labour which aimed to increase
productivity in the context of a projected decline in state
support. In this respect the enthusiasm with which they pursued
their work was directly translated into a level of ferocity on
the shop floor. A move which was seen by Robert Atkinson as
largely pointless and one that he was unwilling to undertake. As
he put it on the "World in Action" programme in June 1984:

" ... In early April 1983 I made it clear that the problem
was the world recession and the absurd dumping of ships by
Korea and Japan, and the solution lay totally outside of the
control of British Shipbuilding. It was Government, it was
EEC and it was O.E.C.D..."

(Commentary) The Department (of Industry) took a different
view and looked around for a chairman who would share that
view. They came up with Canadian lawyer Graham Day ...
During the two months that they spent at British
Shipbuilders before Sir Robert left the two men rarely spoke
to each other.

"I wouldn't be a party to decimating that great British
Industry. I really believe that certain Ministers would
like to see it run down and have nothing to do with
Government." (207)

This view was to prove correct. Day presided over the priv-

atisation of the warship yards, a move he himself acknowledged as

being against the overall interests of the corporation.   The

"asset stripping" went on with the piecemeal closure or privatis-

ation of yards throughout the country. By March 1988 the Guardian

reported that the Trade and Industry Secretary, Lord Young, was

" ... considering removing the safety net of subsidies for
British Shipbuilders by setting a deadline for ending state
support in a radical review of options for privati-
sation." (208)

On Wearside the Sunderland Echo pronounced that the closure

of all the yards of N.E.S.L. which would surely follow the ending

of subsidies would "rip the heart out of the town".   It went on,

"The time to organise another co-ordinated, all out campaign
has come. We cannot afford the luxury of awaiting Govern-
ment announcements - by then it will be too late.

Meanwhile Wearside shipyard men and their families are
undergoing agonies about their future. The rumours have
reached boiling point and British Shipbuilders as a
corporation could disintegrate." (209)

Such disintegration was indeed a reality, as the Guardian noted:

> "The Government yesterday signalled the break-up of the
> state owned British Shipbuilders group, with news of
> possible buyers for the Govan yard on Clydeside, which
> employs 1,750 people and Appledore, in Devon which employs
> 1,500.
>
> The announcement places a question mark over the future of
> the N.E.S.L. yards at Sunderland, employing 2,500 people,
> which has run into contractual problems with its £100
> million contract to build 24 ferries for a Danish
> financier." (210)

The breakup of what was left of British Shipbuilders will in

all probability lead to the end of shipbuilding on the Wear. The

selling off of the Govan yard means that there is no longer any

pretence of the corporation being able to offer an integrated

product range. The Wear yards are left with the capacity to

build highly specialised tonnage; a market which whilst providing

insulation from the fiercest of far Eastern competition is never-

theless a niche in the high risk end of a high risk industry.

This point is underlined by the collapse of the firm which had

ordered an oil-rig support vessel in 1987; the ship was

eventually sold at a price well below its cost. The latest blow

to the industry on the river was the cancellation of five of the

24 ferries ordered by a Danish consortium. For the workers in

the yards the anguish over these cancellations was mixed with

anger over the explicit reason given by the firm for the

cancellation: the poor quality of work, with the chairman of the

V.R. shipping company saying of the two ferries already delivered

> " ... they were so bad they had become "laughing stocks" in
> Denmark." (211)

It is at present doubtful whether the yards on the Wear can recover from this series of blows.

This then has been the context under which the changes in working practices have been achieved. Organised resistance has been largely absent for several reasons. Firstly the nature of the crisis in shipbuilding led the unions to accept the changes largely on pragmatic grounds. Secondly the ideology of co-operation established within the nationalised industry under the Labour Government could not easily be reversed, given the context, under the Conservative Government. Thirdly the de facto acceptance by the unions of voluntary redundancy ensured that the potential workforce solidarity would be uneven and the point at which to make a stand would be unclear.

Thus it would seem to be this generation of workers in the yards who will bear the final conclusion of the decline of the British Industry which began at the turn of the nineteenth century. In this context the apparent acquiescence displayed by these workers is to be seen as "submission agreement" rather than "sympathetic agreement". Individually their resistance to the changes has been both non conflictual by intent in terms of their continuing tendency to assume responsibility for their work. But also the more overt challenges of management have been tenaciously resisted as an exercise in the dialectic of control and de-subordination. If the work has become deskilled the workers have not, and this survival of the craft ethos constantly

threatens managerial control.

Ideologically the workers have apparently nowhere to go.
Nationalisation has been in their experience the vehicle of their
oppression.   A feeling that you cannot fight the state, borne out
by the result of the miners strike, again diffused the
possibility of collective action.   Yet the attacks by the
representatives of labour on those selling their "birthright" by
taking their redundancy is misplaced.   It has been the failure of
the labour and trades union movement to take initiatives on
behalf of the workforce during the years of strength which has
resulted in such an apparently easy victory for those currently
running down the industry.   Given this run-down the changes in
the organisation of the division of labour confronted workers
merely as an attempt at a humiliation of the "captives" before
their final "execution".   On the evidence available this seems in
some respects not to be too far from the truth.   In a situation
where any resistance to the "will" of management was deemed
illogical or deviant the aspirations of the workers were, in
contrast, modest.   As Derek Duffy of the Deptford yard put it:

> "We are not political men.   All we want is the right to work
> ... All I want is to come to work, build ships, and take a
> pay packet home on a Friday night." (212)

Notes to Chapter Five

1   Cousins, J.M. and Brown, R.K. "Shipbuilding" in:
    Dewdney, J.C. (Ed) Durham County and City with Teesside,
    Durham, British Association for the Advancement of Science
    1970, p326.

2   More, C. "Skill and the Survival of Apprenticeship" in:
    Wood, S. (Ed) The Degradation of Work?, London, Hutchinson
    1982, p118.

3   As Roger Penn has pointed out the occupational socialisation
    of skilled workers involves not only technical mastery of
    processes - but the very access to the tricks of the trade
    will depend upon other aspects such as socialisation. Thus:

    "The acquisition of appropriate tools and dress
    predisposes older craft workers to take the apprentice
    "seriously" and to be more willing to provide access to the
    "tricks of the trade". Conversely, failure to conform can
    seriously handicap an apprentice. Not only will he become
    an object of fun and perhaps ostracism, but vital knowledge
    will be withheld or at best grudgingly provided."

    Penn, R.D. "Socialisation into Skilled Identities: An
    analysis of a neglected phenomenon." Paper at Aston/Umist
    conference "Organisation and Control of the Labour Process",
    April 1986, pp3-4.

4   More, C. Op.cit. p120. Other benefits accrued to the
    employer from the apprentice system. As the apprentice was
    regarded as a minor it was historically the case that the
    agreement, sometimes an indenture, was made between the
    employer and the apprentice's parents or guardian. This
    agreement was not seen to be legitimate territory for detail
    collective regulation and therefore apprentices were not
    eligible for full membership of the relevant trades union.
    The legacy of this position continued in the yards where
    apprentices were not seen as subject to a collective dispute
    of their trade, and in some circumstances could be used by
    the employers to mitigate the effects of any dispute. This
    for example during the 118 day strike by maintenance fitters
    at J.L. Thompsons in 1962 mentioned in Chapter 4 complete
    shutdown of the yard was avoided because of the maintenance
    work undertaken by the foremen and apprentices.

    S.S.R. Vol.99, 7 June 1962, p767.

5   Brown, R.K. and Brannen, P. "Social Relations and Social
     Perspectives amongst Shipbuilding Workers - A Preliminary
     Statement" (Part Two) in "Sociology" Vol.4 No.2 1970, p197.

6   Falk-Pederson, S.D.S. "Production Information and Control
     Systems in Shipyards", unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation,
     Durham University Business School, 1969.

7   Ibid

8   Brown, R.K. "The Sociology of Organisations" in "Mens en
     Maatschapzuj" Vol.49 No.4, 1974, esp. pp382-383.

9   Brown, R.K. 1974 Op.cit., pp382-383.

10   McGoldrick, J. "Industrial Relations and the Division of
     Labour in the Shipbuilding Industry since the War", October
     1982, reprinted in "British Journal of Industrial
     Relations", Vol.21 No.2, July 1983, p25.

11   Elger, A.J. "Affluence, Rationalisation and the Skilled
     Worker: a critique of the Affluent Worker paradigm and a
     local case study." Unpublished Ph.D., University of Durham
     1987.

12   Elger, A.J. Op.cit. p95.

13   Elger, A.J. Op.cit. p105.

14   Elger, A.J. Op.cit. p107.

15   Cousins, J. and Brown, R.K. "Patterns of Paradox:
     Shipbuilding Workers' Images of Society." Durham University
     Department of Sociology and Social Administration Working
     Papers in "Sociology" No.4 1972, p33.

16   They list six of the most important changes:
     i)   The amalgamation of trade unions.
     ii) The introduction of standardised schemes of apprentice
          training.
     iii) The creation of shipbuilding consortia.
     iv) As a consequence of (iii) a tendency to specialise
          between yards - and therefore less diversity of work
          tasks and work situations.
     v)   The negotiation of common terms and conditions of emp-
          loyment for all yards in the group and of "productivity
          agreements" in which higher rates of pay were secured
          in return for mobility of labour and flexibility and
          inter-changeability.
     vi) As a consequence of the need to negotiate agreements at

the level of the whole consortium, the creation and/or
strengthening of negotiating committees of shop
stewards and full-time union officials within each yard
and for the whole consortium.

17   Cousins, J. and Brown, R.K. Op.cit., pp36-37.

18   That first morning we had to report at 9.00am rather than
     the usual starting time of 7.30am.

19   There was no malice intended in this comment, and it was
     said in a jocular fashion. However it did bring home to me
     one difference between work and school, and that was that
     the ordinary "inmates" could swear openly in front of
     authority figures, i.e. the training officer. One thing was
     similar to school however, and this concerned the hurling of
     abuse directly at authority figures in a semi covert fashion
     with the perpetrator pretending to hide the utterance and
     the authority figure pretending not to have heard it. Thus
     throughout the whole of our guided tour of the yard the same
     comment was forthcoming from several quarters and directed
     at the training officer:
          "Where's your handbag?"
     The shouts were clear as was their source, but the officer
     concerned ignored them as best he could. The implication of
     homosexuality I later found out was based on the fact that
     the individual concerned prided himself on his appearance,
     never swore, wore leather gloves and was "soft". As I was
     to find out later the view that he was "very dodgy" was also
     shared by some of his managerial colleagues, who often used
     him as the "fall guy" when problems arose. Nevertheless so
     impressed were some of the first day apprentices with this
     phenomenon that by the end of the day the call of "where's
     your handbag?" could be heard emanating from the midst of
     our group, with the difference that the perpetrators ensured
     that they were well hidden!

20   The old plumbers shop has since been replaced by a new
     "group shop" serving the whole of the river, which is
     located up the bank from the Deptford yard.

21   Brown, R.K. et al, Final Report to SSRC: "Orientation To
     Work and Industrial Behaviour of Shipbuilding Workers on
     Tyneside", p24.

     In a paper drawing on the same research project, Jim Cousins
     outlined the variations in work locations of a yard of
     Tyneside:

"There were trade shops which, to varying extents, approximated to conventional factory situations (17.0% of the 1969 sample). There were the large metal prefabrication sheds which, though covered, were vulnerable to external conditions of heat and cold; and were more or less under the foreman's eye (12%). There were the exposed and often dangerous building berths which were difficult for foremen to control (36%). Finally there were the very variegated working conditions of the fitting out stage which were unheated and noisy though not always exposed; and in the final stages of construction an absolute jungle of pipes, wires, bulkheads, companion-ways and different scattered groups of workers that were very hard for the foreman to control (27%).

Cousins, J.M. "Factors Affecting the Quality of Life in the British Shipbuilding Industry", paper at the British Association for the Advancement of Science Conference 1973, p4.

22   See: Brown, R.K., Brannen, P., Cousins, J. and Samphier, M. "Leisure at Work: the "occupational culture" of shipbuilding workers." in:
Smith, M., Parker, S. and Smith, C.(Eds) Leisure and Society in Britain, London, Allen Lane 1973.

23   J. Roberts (Snr)

24   Alan Bell's Shipyard Tales include the following account:

"In the docker's cabin with the lights out, just in case the dock police got nosy, Dan started his evening shift. The stove was half full with glowing coke, it was the usual cast iron pot bellied type with a little round hatch on top, open fire bars in front and an ash pen underneath to catch the ash and burnt cinder. Out of the top was a four inch stove pipe which led up through the roof. Being winter it was dark outside and Dan had locked both front and rear doors. Soon he was stuffing the cable into the hatch. As it dropped onto the coals the rubber ignited and the lead melted. The molten lead ran down finding its way through the fire bars and pattering down in a red molten stream into the ashcan.
Dan gleefully pushed more and more cable in and soon the stove was glowing and the sweat was running down his face. The molten lead was by now half filling the ashcan and he was well on the way to having a great big ingot. The cabin got hotter and Dan stripped off his coat then his overalls. It was a bitterly cold night outside but the cabin was roasting. Dan was by now so engrossed as he

feverishly fed the stove he failed to notice that by some
odd form of combustion the stove pipe had begun to draw
flames up to the outside air ... Then, not only was the
stove hot but the pipe began to glow dull red near the base,
then bright red all the way up. Where it passed through the
roof space, the wood began to smoulder and the roof felt
grew soft while the pitch in it began to bubble.

The docker's cabin was well on the way to catching fire
and at last Dan stopped feeding the flames when he realised
that the glow from the fire might be seen by passers-by
through the windows. He went to look out and realised that
the area around the cabin was as light as day. We had
finished our work for the evening and were coming off the
ship. We had to walk along the dock past the docker's
cabin.

The sight that met our eyes was amazing. The stove
pipe was belching flames and sparks like a volcano, there
was a breeze sweeping down the dock and it was pressing
clouds of black evil smelling rubber smoke and burning
particles down and driving them along the dock before
dispersing them in and around the shipyard. The alarm had
already been given and the shipyard's own firefighters were
converging on the cabin while in answer to an emergency
phone call, the fire brigade was on its way. We could hear
the engine racing along the dock, siren screaming, and in no
time we were running towards the cabin along with dozens
more shipyard men who had turned out to watch the
excitement. We were just in time to see a figure hurtle out
of the rear door. It was a cold night ... but Dan was
stripped down to his vest, he had to leave his loot behind,
he disappeared into the dark, vanishing among the piles of
machinery and equipment stacked under tarpaulins further
along the dock near to the engine works, from where he
eventually made his way to our cabins. He stood there for a
while cursing the loss of his loot before his natural good
nature took over. Luckily our chargeman was a man with a
sense of humour. He knew what Dan had been up to and
although he could not approve he warned him to watch his
step and avoid the docker's cabin."

Bell, A. Shipyard Tales, (unpublished), pp16-17.

For similar accounts of the ease with which one could
absent oneself from official work at a shipyard on the Clyde
see:
Gallacher, T. Apprentice, Sevenoaks Coronet 1983, esp.
pp68-71.

25   The potential to circumvent what active management control
      attempts existed was traditionally greater on night shift

where grades of management other than foremen were largely
absent until 1983.

26   Tony Elger has outlined the situation in Doxfords in the
      late 1960s where he noted:
           " ... the coincidence between successive rounds of new
      management appointments and new management initiatives in
      negotiations. Both management and union informants, looking
      back over this period, remarked in similar terms on the
      manner in which "a succession of managers and technical
      people were brought into the company in an attempt to
      modernise methods on the shop floor". There was also some
      agreement that "this led to an extremely chaotic position
      because each had different policies for success" while "few
      were really acquainted with the industry".
      Elger, A.J. Op.cit., pp95-96.

27   Brown, R.K. et al: Final Report to S.S.R.C. p24.

28   Brown, R.K. et al: Final Report to S.S.R.C. p25.

29   Cousins, J.M. 1973 Op.cit. p14.

30   Ehrenreich, J. and Ehrenreich, B. "Work and Consciousness",
      in "Monthly Review", Summer 1976, Vol.28 No.3, p17.

31   Burawoy, M. 1979 Op.cit. p81.

32   Roy, D. "Work Satisfaction and Social Reward in Quota
      Achievement: An Analysis of Piecework Initiative" in
      "American Sociological Review", Vol.18 1953, p162.

33   Thompson, P. 1986 Op.cit. p17.

34   Abrams, P. 1982 Op.cit. p262.

35   We must beware of bestowing too great a degree of cohesion
      and coherence on the phenomenon we are discussing by using
      the work "strategy". Such strategies can be pre-planned in
      some situations, especially where something has gone wrong,
      but in others they may include ad hoc responses to
      unexpected contingencies. However it is important to
      realise that even in these situation responses, or indeed
      initiatives, will draw upon elements of "practical
      consciousness" and "common stocks" of knowledge.

36   Being "strict" or "hard" does not necessarily preclude the
      development of the identity of being fair however. Although
      it may have consequences with regard to sociable relations
      with the workers.

37   Those who work flat out all the time could be seen as similar to rate busters in the machine ship. But given that there is no direct individual payment system the explanation of their behaviour is more problematic. Whilst in some cases it can be put down to fear of the foreman this is by no means always the case. It would seem likely however that the answer lies in some other aspects of the individual's socialisation, and self-image.

38   C.T., plumber.

39   J. Roberts (Snr).

40   C.T.

41   J.S.

42   Management did not and could not, during the time under consideration (i.e. prior to 1979-80), legislate the grounds of sociability upon which foremen interacted with workers. However as will be argued later they subsequently applied pressure which "ironed out" many of the divergences in a negative way from the point of view of the workforce. This pressure eliminated much of the scope for negotiation of the ground rules of sociability and the removal of "perks" for "special jobs" removed much of the objective basis for such negotiation.

43   Dubois, P. Sabotage in Industry, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1979, p62.

44   The difference between the apparent duration of work and the abstract social labour time devoted to production has been explained by Jesus Ibarrola as representing the "porosity" of the labour process.

      "The working day remained for a long time relatively porous, made up, of course, by some particularly intense periods but also of periods of inactivity. It is in the nature of machinery to systematically eliminate porosity."

      Quoted by Palloix in C.S.E. The Labour Process and Class Strategies, London, Stage 1 1976, p49.

45   J. Roberts.

46   J.B.R.

47   J.B.R.

48   J.B.R.

49   J.B.R.

50   Oppositional in this sense is to be understood as implying
     opposition to authority in terms of subverting the control
     of the authority figure. But perhaps of greater "phenomeno-
     logical force" is the extent to which the opposition is to
     an individual foreman, a person with a particular identity.
     Great worth is put upon the ability of a worker to be seen
     as a "patter merchant" to get anyone, not just foremen, to
     believe dubious stories. The more ridiculous the
     explanation that a worker can get a foreman to believe the
     greater the esteem in which that worker is held by others.
     Moreover once someone, not necessarily a foreman, is
     identified as gullible, a "plonker", "not a full box of
     matches" etc., they are fair game for lesser skilled patter
     merchants.

51   As Goffman puts it:
          " ... "looping": an agency that creates a defensive
     response on the part of the inmate takes this very response
     as the target of its next attack."

     Goffman, E. Asylums, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1968, p41.

52   This time spent in the yard with the training officer was
     during a period of negotiation of access in order to
     undertake a study of the "ship" "shop" division amongst
     plumbers. This attempt ended in failure due to management
     suspicion and more importantly to a strike by Electricians,
     who turned the power off before leaving, creating a crisis
     in the yard.

53   I.C.

54   J.S.

55   J. Roberts (Snr).

56   Corrigan, P. Schooling the Smash Street Kids, London,
     Macmillan 1979, p58.

57   J. Roberts (Snr).

58   J.S.

59   Mann, M. "The Working Class", in "New Society", 4 November
     1976, P240; also reprinted in The New Classes, London, New
     Science Publications.

60   Hopkins, C.H.G. The Moving Staircase: Sunderland 1939-72,
     Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd. 1972, p131.

61   Weber, M. The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation,
     London, Macmillan 1964, p327.

62   Brown, R.K. et al: Final Report to S.S.R.C. "Orientations
     to Work and Industrial Behaviour of Shipbuilding Workers on
     Tyneside", p25.

63   Ibid

64   Friedman, A.L. Industry and Labour, London, Macmillan 1977,
     pp101-102.

65   Quoted in: Sabel, C.F. Work and Politics, Cambridge, C.U.P.
     1982, p86.

66   The submergence of this segmentation of the workforce has
     been accomplished in recent years by the increasing
     disappearance on the ancillary worker from the yards.

67   A fish "lot" is fish and chips. A pattie is a potato
     fritter.

68   Coates, K. Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy,
     Nottingham, Spokesman 1981, p36.

69   For a development of the concept of fatalism see:
     Lockwood, D. "Fatalism: Durkheim's hidden theory of order"
     in: Giddens, A. and Mackenzie, G. (Eds) Social Class and
     the Division of Labour, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1982, pp101-118.

70   Sabel, C.F. Op.cit. p84.

71   Terkel, S. Working, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1975, p1.

72   See: McGoldrick, J. "Industrial Relations and the Division
     of Labour in the Shipbuilding Industry Since the War" in
     B.J.I.R., Vol.21 No.2, July 1983.
     Also:
     Lorenz, E. and Wilkinson, F. "The Shipbuilding Industry
     1880-1965" in: Ellbaum, B. and Lazonick, W. (Eds) The
     Decline of the British Economy, Oxford, O.U.P. 1968.

73   One such occasion was remembered by several plumbers who
     recalled how an official "from Tyneside" had been chased out
     of the Deptford yard after "ordering a return to work".

74   Hopkins, C.H.G. The Moving Staircase, Sunderland, Wearside
      Printing Co. Ltd. 1972, p41.

75   Hopkins, C.H.G. 1972 Op.cit. p43.

76   J.B.R.

77   As Robert Taylor has emphasised, both the Donovan Royal
      Commission of 1968 and the Labour Government's ill-fated "In
      Place of Strife" made a distinction between unions and
      workers, stressing the "responsibility" of the former group.
      Thus in speaking of restrictive practices, "In Place of
      Strife" noted that:

          " ... On the whole such practices are operated, not by
      Unions themselves but by groups of employees, who see them
      as a way of protecting their jobs or of maintaining their
      earnings."

      Quoted in: Taylor, R. Workers and the New Depression,
      London, Macmillan 1982, pp83-84.

78   The concept of "de-subordination" is in this context an
      important one, and speaks of the lack of incorporation of
      the British Working Class into either capitalism or the
      contemporary labour movement. As Ralph Miliband put it,

          "De-subordination means that people who find themselves
      in subordinate positions, and notably the people who work in
      factories, mines, offices, shops, schools, hospitals and so
      on do what they can to mitigate, resist and transform the
      conditions of their subordinators. The process occurs where
      subordination is most evident and felt, namely at "the point
      of production" and at the workplace in general, ... "

      Miliband, R. "A State of de-subordination", in "British
      Journal of Sociology" Vol.29 No.4, December 1978, p402.

79   McGoldrick, 1983 Op.cit.

80   See; Marx, K. Capital: Volume Three, London, Lawrence and
      Wishart 1959, esp. Ch. XXVII, "The Role of Credit in
      Capitalist Production."
      One problem with much "Marxist" analysis of the tendency
      towards the growth of large capital has been the association
      of this movement with what became an automatic assumption
      that the size of productive unit would also grow - whilst
      this was perhaps an understandable extrapolation from
      empirical evidence it should not have been elevated to the
      level of a general principle as the flight from large scale

and search for the flexible firm has shown us in the aftermath of the collapse of the long boom.

81   Aaronovitch, Sam "The Firm", Chapter Sixteen in: Aaronovitch et al: The Political Economy of British Capitalism, London, McGraw Hill 1981, pp243-244.

82   The strategic resources afforded to a multidivisional company in relation to their handling of individual workforces is well illustrated in Beynon and Wainright's account of the "Vickers" corporation. See: Beynon, H. and Wainright, H. The Workers' Report on Vickers London, Pluto Press 1979. For an example from the shipbuilding industry of where the nationalised corporation "successfully" used their strategic power against the action of workers on the Tyne, see the account of the "Polish Order" in: Foster, J. and Wolfson, C. The Politics of the U.C.S. Work- In, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1986, pp424-425.

83   The Sunderland Echo, 8 May 1972.

84   The Sunderland Echo, 17 May 1971. In the budget of March 1972 the Conservative Chancellor had announced new (or rather re-introduced old) measures to assist traditional industries in regionally depressed areas. See: Hogwood, B. Government and Shipbuilding, Farnborough, Saxon House 1979, pp164-166.

85   Quoted in an article about Appledore Shipyard, "Inside Story", in "Esso magazine", London Esso Petroleum Company, Summer 1970, pp10-13.

86   This fear was based on the fact that Court Line was already involved in a joint venture with Austin and Pickersgill in the form of "A. and P., Appledore", a consultancy advising on shipbuilding technique and yard layout.

87   The Sunderland Echo, 7 June 1972.

88   The Sunderland Echo, 28 May 1972. The Appledore yard could build ships up to 10,000 gross tons, although the majority of their output tended to average around 3,000 tons.

89   C.T., Deptford Yard.

90   S.P., North Sands Plater.

91   J.B.R., Deptford.

92   C.T.

93   J.S.

94   Hogwood, B. Op.cit. p179.

95   The Sunderland Echo, 21 June 1974.

96   Although it is true that the shipbuilding side of the
      concern made an operating loss of £6.5 million in the year
      to September 1974.
      Hogwood, B. Op.cit. p179.

97   The Sunderland Echo, 26 June 1974.

98   Quoted in The Sunderland Echo, 27 June 1974.

99   The Sunderland Echo, 28 June 1974.

100   The Sunderland Echo, 27 June 1874.

101   The Sunderland Echo, 28 June 1974.

102   The Sunderland Echo, 27 June 1974.

103   Mathias, P. The First Industrial Nation, London, Methuen
      and Co. 1969, p404.

104   Parkinson, J.R. The Economics of Shipbuilding in the United
      Kingdom, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1960, p3.

105   See: Pollard, S. and Robertson, P.L. The British Ship-
      building Industry, 1890-1914, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard
      University Press 1979.

106   Eatwell, J. Whatever Happened to Britain, London, B.B.C.
      1982, p91.

107   Lorenz, E. and Wilkinson, F. "The Shipbuilding Industry
      1880-1965" in Elbaum, B. and Lazonick, W. (Eds) The Decline
      of the British Economy, Oxford, O.U.P. 1986, p128.

108   Lorenz, E. "The Labour Process in British and French
      Shipbuilding from 1880 to 1930", in "Journal of European
      Economic History", 13 (3) 1984.
      and
      McGoldrick, J. "Crisis and the Division of Labour: Clydeside
      Shipbuilding in the Inter-war Period" in Dickson, A. (Ed),
      Edinburgh, John Donald and Co. 1982.

109 Nichols, T. The British Worker Question, London, R.K.P. 1986, p70.

110 Shepheard, R.B. Article in Shipbuilding and Shipping Record, 24 January 1946, p96.

111 Nichols, T. 1986 Op.cit. p71.

112 Sabel, C. Work and Politics, Cambridge, C.U.P. 1982, p195.

113 The notable exception here is of course Austin and Pickersgill with their standard SD14 built as a replacement for the liberty ships. Austin and Pickersgill's success with this single design was to be limited however, as a contemporary observer noted:
     "The current success of one or two standard British ship designs is likely to be short-lived, if they are not up-dated by innovations to suit a changing market. In 1977, there were available from British, Danish, German, Spanish and Japanese shipyards between twenty and thirty types of standard ship. The Japanese were also developing other standard ships of more sophisticated design."
     (Quoted in: Spence, J. 1987 Op.cit. p90.)
     Indeed from 1979 orders for the SD14 began to decline and the profit making yard of Austin and Pickersgill began to return operating losses.

114 Sabel, C. Op.cit. pp196-197.

115 Save Our Shipyards information pack, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear County Council, March 1983, p9.

116 S.P.

117 Great hostility was forthcoming from those without relatives in the yards that one of the written questions on the application form was an inquiry into whether the applicant had relatives within the yards, and if so, who they were.

118 This is not to say that all development for the future halted. Indeed the covered in yard at Pallion was brought to completion in December 1976.

119 Hogwood, B. Op.cit. p178.

120 British Shipbuilders Corporation Plan 1978-983, Ch.27/4 (B.S.C.P.)

121 B.S.C.P. Ch.21, "Merchant Shipbuilding 21/8 to 21/12".

122 B.S.C.P. Ch.21, 21/12 to 21/13.

123 British Shipbuilders Annual Report 1984/85, p57.

124 The Sunderland Echo (Shipbuilding Special), 19 April 1988.

125 British Shipbuilders Annual Report 1983/84, p51.

126 Bell, A. "Shipyard Tales", unpublished.

127 J.M.

128 The position on compulsory redundancy adopted by the union
     eventually broke down in the face of accelerating decline.

129 B.S.C.P. Ch.17, Introduction 27/1.

130 These film shows ended not through managerial pressure, but
     when the "porno King" "caught religion" after the illness
     and subsequent recovery of his wife.

131 J.B.R.

132 J.B.R.

133 J.S.

134 Hughes, E. "Work and Self", article in:
     Esland, G. et al (Eds) People and Work, Edinburgh, Holmes
     McDougall 1975, p212.

135 Simon, R. Gramsci's Political Thought, London, Lawrence and
     Wishart 1982, pp56-57.

136 Simon, R. Op.cit. p55.

137 Nichols, T. The British Worker Question, London. R.K.P.
     1986, p173.

138 Quoted in: Beynon, H. "False Hopes and Real Dilemmas",
     Chapter in: Ticken, H. (Ed) Critique 16, Glasgow 1983, p7.

139 See: Taylor, R. Workers and the New Depression, London,
     Macmillan 1982, Ch.7 "The Myths of Trade Union Power".

140 Quoted in: Nichols, T. 1986 Op.cit. p176.

141 Nichols, T. 1986 Op.cit. p181.

142 McGoldrick, J. "Job Control, Industrial Relations and the

State; Changes in British Shipbuilding since nationalisation." Paper presented at Kings College Research Centre Colloquium "Job Control and the State", 27-29 September 1982.

143 McGoldrick, J. 1982 Op.cit. p21.

144 Quoted in: McGoldrick, J. 1982 Op.cit. p28.

145 J. Roberts, quoted in: Roberts, I.P. "The Labour Process in the Shipbuilding Industry", unpublished B.A. Dissertation, University of Durham Department of Sociology and Social Policy 1982, pIII.

146 The covered in yard at Pallion was in fact disliked by many of the workers from the start. For despite the good P.R. image of the "high-tech" yard it seems likely that it was not designed with the interests of the workers in mind. A universal complaint about this yard was that there was not enough extraction of fumes, and "Doxie's throat" was elevated to the position of an industrial illness amongst the workforce. Also shipwrights in particular frequently drew attention to the fact that work on the bottom of the dock below the outside water level was in conditions frequently colder than work on an outside berth.

147 This man had previous convictions for G.B.H. and was known by everyone as a "head case". He was eventually sacked for beating up a fitter he found in the plumbers shop apparently doing "plumber's work".

148 Of course it did not include any mention of the managerial input into labour productivity as outlined by Theo Nichols, 1986 Op.cit..

149 J.S

150 Stirling, J. and Bridgford, J. "British and French Shipbuilding: the industrial relations of decline", in Industrial Relations Journal Vol.16 No.4, Winter 1984, p11.

151 The Times, 20 April 1983.

152 Ibid

153 The Guardian, 3 May 1983.

154 Ibid

155 The Observer, 8 May 1983.

156   The Guardian, 16 June 1983.

157   Ibid

158   S.O.S. Campaign Bulletin, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear County
      Council 1983, p3.

159   Quoted in: Spence, J.   Op.cit. p97.

160   Ibid

161   Ibid   The situation for the G.M.W.U. was becoming more
      serious than for the craft unions, as the redundancies were
      not spread evenly and the disappearance of the ancillary
      worker was to become a characteristic development in the
      yards.

162   Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J.   A World Still to Win,
      London, Faber and Faber 1985, p151.

163   S.P.

164   Attitude Survey undertaken in April 1986.   "Pallion -
      Comments from "Free Answers"."

165   J. Roberts.

166   A foreman plumber referred to everyone as Bob.

167   Attitude Survey, April 1986 Op.cit..

168   C.T.

169   I.C.

170   J.B.R.

171   Elger, A.J.   1987 Op.cit. p125.

172   I.C.

173   J.B.R.

174   Quoted in" The Sunderland Echo, 5 May 1983.

175   I.C.

176   J.B.R.

177 It is interesting that many of the workers interviewed
    during the course of this research were very cagey about
    talking about politics. Some agreed with the sentiments
    expressed by one woman in Roy Greenslade's book:

    "We have a rule in this house. You can talk about anything
    except politics and religion. They're banned. They always
    lead to arguments."
    (Greenslade, R. <u>Goodbye to the Working Class</u>, London,
    Marion Boyars Ltd. 1976, p161.)

178 C.T.

179 Albert Baxter.

180 J.S.

181 "National Framework Agreement For Survival", British Ship-
    builders 12 October 1983, pp3-4.

182 Ironically the shift to these "composite work groups"
    implied greater direct control by management. This is the
    exact opposite of the original intention of those who
    developed this notion of the composite group, where it was
    seen as a method of developing more responsible autonomy in
    the work group. Most notably, see:
    Trist, E.L. and Bamforth, K.W. "Some Social and Psycho-
    logical Consequences of the Longwall method of coal-getting"
    in Human Relations, Vol.4 No.1, 1951.

183 Sunderland Shipbuilders Ltd. "Productivity Agreement" 1984,
    p3.

184 The Guardian, 4 November 1983.

185 Financial Times, 9 November 1983, quoted in:
    Stirling, J. and Bridgford, J. Op.cit. p11.

186 G.W.

187 Sunderland Shipbuilders Ltd. 1984 Op.cit. p2.

188 Indeed if one only looked at the proportion of skilled to
    non-skilled workers there would seem to be an indisputable
    case for rising skill levels, given the "disappearance of
    the ancillary workers". But Burawoy's distinction between
    deskilled work and deskilled workers can be usefully
    inverted to make the point that the individual "skilled"
    worker increasingly undertook a greater range of unskilled
    work.

189 The interview with Mr. Clark took place in May 1986. Having
     failed to get any useful access via the management at
     Sunderland Shipbuilders during a period of negotiation that
     went from 1982 to 1985, I had almost resigned myself using
     only unofficial channels. However during 1986 I was working
     for Durham University Business School, whereupon I used
     these credentials and wrote to British Shipbuilders national
     headquarters explaining merely that I was doing a paper on
     the shipbuilding industry. Within a week I was invited to
     Sunderland Shipbuilders to speak to their (luckily) new
     personnel director, Mr. Clark.

190 I.C.

191 Sunderland Shipbuilders/Employment Relations Survey
     (S.S.E.R.S.) results, 29 April 1986, p2.

192 S.S.E.R.S. Op.cit. p9.

193 S.S.E.R.S. Op.cit. "Comments".

194 Ibid

195 Ibid

196 The Guardian, 15 May 1986.

197 Ibid

198 "Shipbuilding", article in Durham University Industrial
     Society magazine 1987, pp12-13.

199 J.S.

200 S.S.E.R.S. Op.cit. p21, Question 26.

201 Lee, G.L. "Technology Driven Organisational Change: A Case
     From the Aerospace Industry", paper at Aston/Umist
     Organisation and Control of the Labour Process, March 1988,
     p16.

202 S.S.E.R.S. Op.cit. p22.

203 The Sunderland Echo, 10 July 1987.

204 Ibid

205 Ibid

206 J.S.

207 World in Action, 11 June 1984.

208 The Guardian, 4 March 1988.

209 The Sunderland Echo, 19 April 1988.

210 The Guardian, 19 April 1988.

211 The Journal, 23 April 1988.

212 The Sunderland Echo, October 1984.

Conclusion

"Cartesianism has such a grip on philosophical thinking that opponents appear either extravagant or mad."

The theoretical aim to which this project was addressed as outlined in Chapter 1 has indeed proved to be almost impossible to achieve in practice. Unthinking the dualism of structure and agency necessitates the mediation between all levels of social life from the individual utterance to the world system. Moreover to be undertaken successfully such a project needs to incorporate the uneven nature of temporal flow, from individual life times to the rise and fall of world hegemonic powers. In as far as this thesis has actually grappled with these issues it has merely hinted at possible directions and typologies for further analysis. In this sense, for me personally, it will serve as a pilot study. It has re-emphasised how much I still need to learn and the responsibility that one, as a sociologist, owes to the subjects of study. If I have achieved nothing else in this thesis I hope I have provided a "sympathetic" but "realistic" account of the non-activist worker in the Wear shipbuilding industry. Workers who have at times been berated both by capital, for being unreasonable, and by trades union officers, for not having enough "fight in their bellies". I hope I have shown that both these views are mistaken.

In another, more personal, sense this study has successfully overcome one dualism. At one point during the research I used to

describe this work as one of exorcism, of externalising my own
past in order to get on with the future. Having completed this
(stage of the) project I now evaluate far more positively the
"role strain" I have at times experienced whilst undertaking this
study.

For this research was formulated out of the confrontation of
two sources of experience. On the one hand my experience of
higher education and academic sociology led me towards a
literature concerning the working class and industrial organisat-
ions. On the other hand my continued location in a working class
community, as far as my home and family life were concerned, gave
a critical impetus to my academic studies. The objects of both
these centres of experience were the same, namely the working
class and the world of work. However a crucial difference lay in
the "distance" from which these "objects" were viewed.

The distance and detachment of much academic sociological
study of "the class" contrasted with my participation in the
lives of those referred to in such studies. Importantly my
participation in the culture of my own community was not as an
organic intellectual in the Gramscian sense. Rather than being
concerned primarily with issues of political and industrial
activism this environment was my home, the shipyard workers were
my father, my brother, old school friends, mates with whom to
relax and have a few (too many) drinks. Such relationships
ensured that any attempts to make generic statements about "the

workers" had to be framed carefully if the authenticity of their lives was to be respected.

It was this concern that led me to appraise critically the existing sociological work upon the shipbuilding industry. This criticism deepened during the period of the research itself and the original problematic as to why, if the workers could retain control over the labour process in the inter-war period, they had apparently totally relinquished that control with little resistance in the 1980s, was overly simplistic. In developing my analysis of shipbuilding on the Wear in the inter-war period it became obvious that the secondary literature was flawed in several respects.

The accounts of McGoldrick and Lorenz based their analysis primarily on the Clyde, with some mention of the Tyne, and focused especially upon the introduction of the S.E.F. welding plan. Such analyses cannot give a basis for generalisation about the nature of British Shipbuilding. Their accounts of the conflicts surrounding the introduction of the S.E.F. welding plan are not convincing in relation to the industry on the river Wear. There are several reasons for this. Firstly due to differences in product type the timing at which the issue of welding would become a practical issue differed, indicating a need to under-stand the uneven development of the industry at a national level. Combined with the latter point was that fact that structural welding was far from a universally accepted technique even

amongst owners themselves.   Thus these two issues ensured that on

the Wear at least the employers' offensive was largely in theory

and not in practice.   Indeed on the Wear, not only was riveting

seen to be a far superior process, and would remain so even into

the post-war period, but the employers remained enthusiastic

advocates of the craft division of labour.   Not only was the

welding issue of marginal importance on the Wear, but the

evidence for workers resisting expropriation of control at the

point of production is not forthcoming.   On this river such

employer attempts to expropriate control at the point of

production are not generally in evidence.

This raises important analytical issues for the study of the

division of labour.   Namely, that one cannot deduce the strength

of capital or labour solely from the objective contours of the

labour process.   Such contours need to be related to the product

market and, importantly, to the situated social action of capital

and labour which cannot be deduced simply from their supposed

roles implied in the personification of structural categories

(i.e. capital and labour).   This further indicates the need to

relate the control issue within the workplace to the wider

community and the control potential of what Alan Warde has called

"local political hegemony" [2].

In the context of Wear shipbuilding in the inter-war period

such an analysis developed in Chapter 2 demonstrates the need to

understand the moral dimension of the division of labour existent

within the objective and experiential unity of the work and non-
work community. In this way workers on the Wear in the inter-war
period inhabited a single "small world" rather than a series of
"small life-worlds" in the phenomenological sense. Thus Chapter
2 suggests that in the inter-war period there was little evidence
of an employer offensive aimed at attacking the craft control of
the division of labour on the river Wear. Given the fact that
conditions for successful capital accumulation were as bad, if
not worse, on the Wear than elsewhere, this again suggests that
we must be careful in linking employer offensives at the level of
the labour process directly and immediately to conditions of
capital accumulation. Indeed during this period and more
especially during the Second World War it was workers on the
river who berated employers for their conservatism in relation to
changes in the division of labour.

     This pattern continued into the post-war period. However,
on a general level, the position of Britain as a "victorious"
power, and the political colour of the government which initiated
the building of the post-war consensus, ensured that British
industry did not restructure its industrial division of labour
(especially labour practices) to the extent of other countries.
Moreover the event of the "long boom" produced a relatively
stable, and growing, market demand. Conditions in which Fordist
and constant flow techniques of production could be used to
maximum advantage. Whilst initially the British shipbuilding

industry held on to an absolute level of output its relative
decline accelerated. Furthermore the massive increase in the
penetration of the capitalist world system brought out the
potential for "footloose industry" and the phenomenon of rapid
technology transfer indentified by Sabel. This implied that on a
global scale the "efficiency" of the division of labour in
production was of decreasing importance as the arbiter of costs
and market success. Increasingly as the developing countries
entered the market the costs to capital in terms of the
reproduction of national society as a whole (including the social
wage) became important.

These developments held the implication of crisis for the
British shipbuilding industry, with its "traditional" division of
labour. However we should avoid the temptation to see the
detailed working of these processes as the manifestation of some
inevitable historical law. Such a view would merely replicate the
tendency to portray the epoch of stable demand built upon the
post-war long boom as the normal operating conditions of
Capitalism. However with the benefit of the hindsight of the
1970s and 1980s it becomes apparent that the period of the long
boom may have been an exceptional period in the development of
the capitalist world system. In this sense the triumph of
quantity production techniques of shipbuilding in the post-war
period and the rapid decline of the British industry may have
rested upon exceptional conditions. Indeed, as Lorenz and

Wilkinson have argued,

> "European firms are now showing a distinct preference for
> less capital-intensive and more flexible methods than those
> characteristic of the 1960s, and under these conditions it
> is unclear whether large-scale specialised facilities will
> prove an advantage or a handicap." (3)

The period of the "long boom" brought not only buoyant

product markets but also helped to sustain relatively tight

labour markets, particularly for skilled labour. The net effect

of this development for the shipbuilding workers on the Wear, as

for workers elsewhere, was a rise in prosperity. The

consequences of this process need to be clearly stated. The

account provided in this research suggests that a "drift" began

to occur between the spheres of work and non-work. Most

importantly this represented itself in a breakdown of the

physical and geographical boundaries of shipbuilding community.

The upshot of this was that the moral (or immoral) order of local

political hegemony built upon the unitary experience of the work

and non-work spheres lessened.

In the context of greater affluence the non-work world

became an arena in which, over time, individual life styles

served to introduce a degree of heterogeneity into a community

previously re-produced within the constraints of closely defined

physical and social limits. The most manifest expression of this

fragmentation was the increase, especially amongst skilled

workers, of private home ownership.

Such a process, once started, became cumulative over time

and when associated with other characteristics of the "respectable" working class, such as a tendency towards smaller families, the degree of fragmentation grew with each generation. It must be understood however that such fragmentation does not amount to a transformation of the non-pecuniary elements of class, even though the changes transformed individual life styles. In relation to education and other aspects of culture the skilled workers' reference groups remained working class [4]. Whilst this remained so, the magnitude of the changes within the working class were seen in an exaggerated form from the "inside".

What all this meant was that whilst changes were underway which in theory would reduce sectionalisation at work and make manifest a "latent proletarianisation", in the non-work situation pressures were operating in an opposite direction. Not only did advocates of the latent proletarianisation thesis [5] over-estimate the degree to which changes at work would reduce sectionalism, but they also failed to grasp the increasing degree of fragmentation in the non-work sphere, based not only on the withering of the physical occupational community, but also on the uneven incorporation of individuals into the cash nexus. The implication of these processes in the work situation was an acceptance of a weakened determination to defend craft statuses as the "master status", the institutional recognition of this development on behalf of the trades unions was expressed in an increasing willingness to "sell the book" and agree to changes in

working practices.

The willingness to enter into such agreements also included ideological changes amounting to the "new realism" of responsibility in the post-Geddes era and a situation in which on the whole more flexibility was paid for than was forthcoming at the point of production. Again the reason for this cannot solely be accounted for in terms of worker resistance or the strength of labour relative to capital. Rather employers did not make concerted attempts to introduce effective control systems which could overcome the more enduring forms of organisation and practice on the shop floor ranging from the special privileges accorded to particular individuals to the craft administration of labour as a dominant form of organisational structure.

All this was to change however with the deepening crisis and the nationalisation of the whole of the British industry. The survival package as laid out in the first British Shipbuilders corporate plan of 1978 was tough enough. Redundancies and changes in working practices were accepted by the unions and in return they were reassured by the commitment to industrial democracy which was stated as a primary duty of the corporation:

> " ... to promote industrial democracy in a strong and organic form in its (the corporation's) undertakings." (6)

This attempt to continue and develop the industrial relations consensus which had been the hallmark of post-war years of the long boom was to falter due to the severity of the slump in demand which now faced the shipbuilding industry, and more

graphically the election of the Conservative government in 1979

ensured that consensus policies with regard to industry were

largely a thing of the past.

The break with the past consensus by the Tory government

embraced both political and industrial elements. The form of

nationalised organisation, the public corporation had been

devised by the Labour party in the 1930s, its "independence" with

board members being chosen on "grounds of ability" was meant to

preclude its use for the pursuit of sectional interests. Such an

objective could only work within a wider framework of political

and industrial consensus. For as Tomlinson argued,

> " ... the public corporations form was constructed so as to
> work for the general public interest ... as against
> sectional interests. The weakness of this kind of justifi-
> cation for non-representation of particular interests is
> that it assumes that the fact of "non-representation" will
> itself guarantee pursuit of the (unproblematic) general
> interest." (7)

Not only did the Conservative governments from 1979 onwards

re-define the general interest as involving a move away from the

mixed economy towards private enterprise, but also within this

overarching ideology they applied the criteria of "success" of

nationalised industries as involving the production of profit,

whilst at the same time obliging them to sell off assets which

were attractive to private enterprise. Clearly these two aims

could not be met, privatisation of assets yet the production of

profit in remaining centres involved a paradox which was to

exacerbate problems of redundancies and exert greater pressure at

the point of production to recover in productive "efficiency"
what had been lost in the fragmentation of overall financial
viability. This was the context in which the managerial assault
upon working practices took place in the 1980s. The public
ownership of the industry initially loosened management from
immediate market constraints whilst continuing to expose workers
to them to an increasing extent [8].

Objectively the potential for collective resistance to the
assault upon working practices was low given not only the
introduction of sophisticated control systems but also the
massive reductions in the numbers of the workforce. The severity
of the changes on the Wear however can only be grasped when it is
understood that it was not only the case that reductions in the
workforce were used as a lever to changes in working practices,
but also that changes in working practices were used as a lever
to ensure that sufficient "voluntary" redundancies were forth-
coming. In such a context the "power" of the trades unions
appeared to have evaporated. The stewards that remained no
longer went to the foreman's office with a smile on their faces
eagerly anticipating another victory. More often they were to
reply to a worker's grievance "there's nothing I can do about
it!". Workers' commitment towards trades unionism on the shop
floor was continually kept in check by the inability of the
stewards to get results. A fundamental aspect of the cumulative
power of the trades unions had been thrown into reverse.

> "For the nature of power is ... like to fame, increasing as
> it proceeds; or like the motion of heavy bodies, which the
> further they go, make still the more haste." (9)

Not only was the objective basis of trades union "power" dealt a

severe blow in the 1980s, with loose labour markets and mass

unemployment, but also their inability successfully to articulate

the concerns of their members at work reduced their appeal, for:

> "Reputation of power, is Power; because it draweth with it
> the adherence of those that need protection." (10)

The irony of the situation should not be lost upon us. The

effective power of capital to pursue changes in the labour

process was all the more enhanced by the fact that it was state

capital in its nationalised form which "drove through" the

changes. Moreover the unions in the yards who, in some cases,

such as the boilermakers, had advocated nationalisation of the

industry consistently in the post-war period, were now

apparently helpless to resist a vicious onslaught at the point of

production.

It would be wrong however to finish this account implying

that there had been a total collapse of control on behalf of the

shipbuilding workers on the Wear. The feeling of despondency

amongst the remaining workforce is hard to overstate.

Ideologically they have nowhere to go. The unions are seen as

ineffective, and nationalisation (seen by many as equivalent to

socialism) does not work to their interests as perceived from

"the present". Nevertheless quiescence should not be mistaken for

total submission. Resistance to the imposition of managerial

power continues, its form is that of de-subordination, its

application is "subversive" with respect to managerial objectives

even when it emerges as a concern to get the job done. At such

times the importance of craft sectionalisation re-emerges even

though the changes in production technique identified by R.K.

Brown et al are well established. This again points to the fact

that the intersubjective disposition of the workforce cannot be

deduced from the overt contours of the physical division of

labour.

The second half of our initial problematic is clearly in

need of restating then. The collapse of craft control in the

1980s is not total, its submersion is one of degree and is

temporally contingent. Control needs to be asserted and re-

asserted over time, the first wave of the managerial offensive in

the yards on the Wear which took place between 1982 and 1986

appeared to carry all before it, however as the failure of the

four set, three shift working pattern demonstrated, resistance

had not disappeared. Similarly the breakdown of the new system

when under pressure illustrates that managerial control is not

omnipotent. Whilst it could be objected that the re-emergence of

older patterns of working is a temporary feature of a

transitional period, it seems likely that such re-assertion of

older working practices will survive as long as the industry

itself does on the Wear. The important point to be noted then is

not necessarily the collapse of craft control in the Wear yards in the 1980s, but rather, given the ferocity of the managerial onslaught and paucity of the objective resources for resistance, the notable feature is that resistance continues. A resistance that owes as much to a workforce desire to get the job done as it does to more directly oppositional forms of protest such as the withdrawal of labour.

The Nature of the Wearside Working Class:

Towards a More Complex Problematic

One of the central themes running through the whole of this project has been an attempt to understand the nature of the workers in Wearside shipyards. This concern framed the initial problematic in relation to the secondary literature on the inter-war period and re-emerges several times in attempting to explicate the changes occurring between then and now. The complexities of the issues involved cannot be neatly summarised in a conclusion, but hopefully do emerge from a full reading of my account. Rather than attempting a summary I will conclude by addressing some of the views of the working class presented implicitly or explicitly by others, in the light of my study of Wearside. Again, my aim is not to prove other accounts wrong, but rather to raise issues which demand an understanding in order to appreciate the full complexities of class.

The work of Lorenz and McGoldrick on Clydeside shipbuilding has already been dealt with to some extent. Their inversion of Braverman's passive view of labour on the basis of the objective contours of the labour process must be qualified by two factors. Firstly the locality of their study must be taken into account. Clydeside, and to a lesser extent Tyneside, have particular political cultures which in the inter-war period could not be assumed as characteristic of Wearside. The heterogeneity of local political hegemony must be addressed if the inter-subjective as

well as the more objective issues of class are to be dealt with.

An issue of greater criticism with respect to their work is the sources through which their accounts are established. A reliance upon Employers and Union minutes and events around which industrial action occurred screen out the more routine processes of the reality of class at work, and the complexities of the inter-subjective views of the non-activist worker are given no voice. This approach ignores any reference to moral frameworks of meaning through which elements of hierarchy may be accepted upon pragmatic grounds, or even deemed legitimate to some extent.

Moreover in neglecting the non-work context, these studies neglect the extent to which class was reproduced in a unitary fashion across the work-non-work divide. The resources for possible struggle at work were reproduced in what was, on Wear-side at least, a strictly ordered society. The "small world" of the occupational community may have upheld the dignity of the "working man", but as the women who experienced work in the yards in wartime testified, for them such work was seen as a form of liberty relative to the more restrictive routine of the non-work community. The radical potential and traditions of the inter-war working class should be seen in its context relative to the rigidities, produced from both within and outside, of the community. Whilst it is perhaps true that the "class" had a greater sense of identity during this period than subsequently, it should not be thought that this identity was, in total,

autonomously created.   In some ways the coherence of the identity

was a product of the rigidities surrounding the community.   Such

an identity could, given other factors, facilitate a radical

response, but equally such an identity could merely indicate the

rigidly structured subaltern position of the class.   We must not

then mistake coherence and identity for radical self assertion,

·and sensitivity to life styles and language [11] must also guide

our appreciation of the inter-war working class.   Such an

approach, linked to one that does not assume that the inter-

subjective disposition of even a section (i.e. male workers) of

the class can be deduced from the existent contours of the labour

process must be adopted if we are to avoid producing an unreal

"benchmark" against which to assess the working class in the

post-war period.

   Indeed it is this change from the working class of the

inter-war period inhabiting the "small world" of the occupational

community to the post-war working class inhabiting the "small

life worlds" of "modern society" that has led some theorists to

talk of the integration of the working class or even of its

disappearance altogether.   Early versions of the integration

hypothesis, such as that of Marcuse in "One Dimensional Man"

emphasised how the working class, particularly in the USA, had

been "bought off" by "successful" capitalism.   Such accounts

emphasised the ability of capitalism to overcome limitations of

the market by creating the warfare/welfare state.   Underpinning

these accounts was the view that the economic conditions of the
long boom were now the norm.

However with the collapse of the long boom, and the re-
emergence of the cyclical tendency of boom and slump, it seemed
that the institutionalisation of the working class was no longer
conditional upon the material success of capitalism. Gorz, for
one, bid a non too fond "Farewell to the Working Class". Others,
such as Seabrook and Blackwell, continued the earlier themes of
the incorporation.   Thus in their account of "The Working Class
in the 1980s" they suggest that:

> "Margaret Thatcher sensed the "sea change" that was
> occurring at the heart of the working class, and she
> believed that it was sufficiently advanced for her to be
> able to detach large sections of the working class from an
> allegiance, which had become enfeebled, to organised labour
> and its movement. She could accomplish this the more
> convincingly because capitalism itself had been transformed
> from satanic mill to shopping mall, from an irrational and
> inhuman system which inflicted suffering and deprivation
> into a sagacious and beneficent means of distributing the
> good things of life." (12)

Their account seems plausible because it resonates to some
of the populist portrayals of the "feeling" of the class
available in any letters page of local newspapers or snatches of
conversations overheard on bus journeys, and indeed these form
some of the sources used by Seabrook. Yet such a view,
characterised by its clarity and coherence, remains a view from
outside of the class. In some senses it merely inverts the
failings of Lorenz and McGoldrick. Where they concentrated on
the work situation to the neglect of the non-work situation,

Seabrook does the opposite.   Where they focus upon the activist

worker and situations where capital and labour "confront" each

other, Seabrook does the opposite. There are similarities as well

however, - both approaches appear to deduce, in a rather simple

fashion, the inter-subjective disposition of the class from the

objective contours of aggregate formations. For Lorenz and

McGoldrick the existent form of the labour process implies a

strong labour force actively struggling to retain control.   For

Seabrook the success of Thatcherism at the ballot box is

indicative of change occurring at the "heart of the working

class". Ironically Seabrook's account would harmonise well with

those of Lorenz and McGoldrick, each the polar opposite of the

other.   The active working class of the inter-war period becomes

transformed into the fragmented, pacified class of the 1980s.

Both views hold some truth, but neither can be seen as a

definitive account, they are partial accounts masquerading as a

general truth. On this point the work of Seabrook is more at

fault than that of the other two authors.   His inversion of their

tendency to portray workers as being engaged in active struggle

is pursued with dedication.   As Beynon has noted, his skills as a

writer are used to overcome his partial presentation.   Those

skills are indeed great, as his account of Sunderland

demonstrates:

> "Sunderland.   The river opens the town, a deep wound in its
> granite base, and the cliffs glitter like silver beneath the
> grass that partly covers them." (13)

An evocative portrayal, and yet one which immediately puts

someone from Sunderland on their guard as to the thoroughness of

the research. Sunderland has a limestone base, not granite! A

small point, maybe, but as his account of the town and the people

in it unfolds the accuracy of his geological description can be

seen as similar to his social description. The unemployed in the

town are seen as turning to crime, or sexual fantasy, their every

day life being one of degradation. The concluding paragraph is

given over to the words of Dave,

> "I'm very right-wing. There's too many people in the nick
> who ought to be at the end of a rope. You go and do a bank,
> spill blood like it was milk, only eight or ten years. It's
> ridiculous. I've got no time for worrying about mankind,
> I'm too busy worrying about myself. I think everybody is
> selfish, everybody is out for himself. All our brothers!
> What brothers? I don't believe it. What happens in Asia,
> Africa, that's their fucking bad luck. And when they come
> here, give them hand-outs, offer them houses. It's asking
> for trouble if you can't house your own people. I don't
> believe in unions - the only union I believe in is a guy and
> a chick coming together for a good fuck; I don't worry about
> the bomb either; the only big bang I'm concerned about is
> the one I might get tonight." (14)

The selectivity of Seabrook's account is again an inversion

of those radical academics who wish to portray the working class

as inherently revolutionary but always subject to betrayal by

their leaders. Because he has consigned the "older" traditions

of working class self-support to the dustbin of history he does

not look for any signs of its continued existence. He polarises

the class into those who have work and are "doing alright thank

you very much", and those who are deemed to have fallen into a

state of absolute degradation, both groups paying a one dimen-

sional homage to the cult of commercial culture. He is happy with

programmatic statements from individuals, such as the one quoted,

and having confirmed his "theory" he leaves to re-confirm it

somewhere else. He does not ask the question as to whether the

totalising statements produced in an interview situation with a

stranger actually relate to the processual life style of these

individuals. Neither does he see the other working class people

in the town: fathers who still take their sons fishing; women on

the estates who club together to get trips to the beach organised

during summer holidays; teenagers amassing skill and knowledge in

dismantling (and re-assembling) motor bikes; reciprocal

arrangements for child care between families; the coming together

of communities in the face of some tragedy. In short his account

is too simple, it catches only one, undeniable, element in

contemporary working class life but it does not hear the "double

tongued signs" that are still there for those that will listen.

Seabrook claims to portray the reality of working class life

in the post war period and to listen to the voices that Labour

politicians have been deaf to. Yet his portrayal of the "common

man" (and, to a lesser extent, woman) ends up as condescension.

> "We are left with a view of the working class which gives no
> place to popular culture as an imminent, dynamic form and
> this elitist adjudication of cultural practice weighs
> heavily upon the account." (15)

The view of the shipyard workers on Wearside produced in

this study is not to be seen as a general definition of the

working class. However any such definitive statements about the
class must take into account such particular portrayals. The aim
then is the promotion of an adequate understanding of the
complexities involved in such attempts at general accounts rather
than the provision of such an account here. Nevertheless it is
possible to make some comments which engage with more general
debates even on the basis of such a particular study.

Firstly, whatever the material gains that have been made by
workers on Wearside in the post-war period it would seem that
those gains are very vulnerable. Such vulnerability is still a
feature of working class life, in the absence of occupational
pensions and the vicissitudes of manual work, to an extent not
experienced by those in more middle class occupations. Perhaps
more importantly however is the continuance of cultural
inequality. The reproduction of inequality through generations,
via the mechanisms of the education system and the attitudes
enshrined therein, ensure that cultural capital remains unequally
distributed. In this environment we have not, despite some
individual indicators, said "Farewell to the Working Class".
Present quiescence should not be mistaken for integration or
harmony. Pragmatic conditions indicate against active outbursts,
but, if a widespread boom was to occur, as some suggest, in the
1990s [16] horizons would again rise and the reference group may
become "those above" rather than "those below".

The basis of such potential activism stems not from any

direct symbiosis between the working class and the labour

movement.   Indeed its form may not be associated with the

official labour movement.   But one thing this study of the ship-

yards on the Wear has brought home to me is that the position of

these workers under capitalism remains one of "de-subordination".

Surely, the pattern is complicated by the asymmetry which has

developed between the work and non-work spheres, yet whilst most

workers on the Wear do not, and cannot afford to, dwell on the

issue they know that somewhere along the line they are getting

"ripped off".   When this realisation cannot be ignored and even

"fantasy equality" [17] cannot be sustained some leave the yards,

others, under the force of the cash nexus or the work ethic,

remain.   One thing is certain however, and that is that whatever

happens to the shipyards on the Wear the present generation of

workers will not forget how management kicked them when they were

down; as to how they respond to that experience in the future,

that is less clear.

> "For these workers experience the class struggle every day
> of their lives.   If, in the way they cope with it, they
> produce a politically confused situation that's just too
> bad.   Radical intellectuals may put their hands to their
> heads in despair but that doesn't help either." (18)

Ideally this conclusion should finish here.   However by way

of a post script I should perhaps return to the issue of the

relationship of the "theory" outlined in Chapter 1 to the rest of

this study.   If, on reading the first chapter, one expected that

it would provide a strict theoretical framework into which the

more empirical data could be slotted, disappointment with the
work as a whole will most likely have followed. In my own
defence I wish to re-emphasise that it was never my desire to
construct an all-embracing formal theoretical structure.

Rather, the aim of the first chapter was to engage with
existing theoretical approaches in a positive (opportunistic?)
way to develop their strengths in as far as they could handle the
interpenetration of structure and agency, and yet to purge them
of any tendency towards a positivistic theoretical imperialism.
What I saw this as providing was a perspective rather than a
logical, but static, framework. I hope I have written this study
in a way which admits a reflexive interaction between theory and
empirical data. I have tried to respect the meanings implied by
the actors and yet to contextualise the action within the
contexts of multifarious flows of temporality, location and
culture. Contexts enabling as well as constraining, produced and
experienced.

Finally I hope the "perspective" has allowed for the intro-
duction of some of the aspects of social reality often neglected
by sociologists - those of feelings. The actors are human, not
just "cultural dopes", or even aggressive economic "men",
although at times they may approximate these caricatures, they
have feelings, hopes, fears, desires and "standards". They can
be seen at times as their own worst enemies, or at others as
their own severest critics. As an individual I have learned a

lot from "analysing the behaviour of my subjects". Not only
about their social relations and situations, but at a more
personal level about the dangers of gauging human behaviour
against an inflexible rule of coherence or "rationality". In
short I have learned a lot about dignity, a phenomenon which
cannot always be dismissed with reference to false consciousness.
These lessons, which have been of profound importance to me both
as a person and social scientist, have, I believe, been learnt
all the more easily because of the relatively loose perspective
which I developed and modified over the course of this project.

When I see a welder striking up an arc on the Wear I see a
person who may be working due to direct control or because of an
internalised "responsible autonomy". I see a craftsman, hierarch-
ically removed from labourers and demarked from other trades,
although he may share leisure pursuits with men from either
group. I see his use of a technology adopted relatively late on
the river. I see a man worried about the future, and I see the
massive shifts in the geographical location of industry on a
global scale. I see his home region in relation to the rest of
the country and ultimately the cleavage between the advanced
world and developing nations. I see a man who had, as a child, a
particular experience of the education system and parental advice
about the world that played a part in his "choice" of career. I
see then an individual, but through his life I see a society,
human society. Its totality is there in a series of presences

and absences of the present and the past, of human being and

striving of the absolute and the relative. This is what the

perspective I developed in Chapter 1 tries to do, it attempts to

"ground" the sociological imagination for the purposes of this

study. This was the aim; as to whether I have succeeded in this

to any degree is not for me to say.

Notes to the Conclusion

1   Backhurst, D. and Dancy, J. "The Dualist Straightjacket" in
    the Times Higher Education Supplement, 22 April 1988.

2   Warde, A. "Industrial Discipline: Burawoy, Factory Regimes
    and the Case of Lancaster", Paper at Aston/Umist Labour
    Process Conference, March 1988.

3   Lorenz, E. and Wilkinson, F. "The Shipbuilding Industry:
    1880-1965" in Elbawm, B. and Lazonick, W. (Eds) The Decline
    of the British Economy, Oxford, O.U.P. 1986, p129.

4   On the importance of reference groups see:
    Urry, J. Reference Groups and the Theory of Revolution,
    London. R.K.P. 1973.

5   See For example: Cousins, J. and Brown, R. Patterns of
    Paradox: Shipbuilding Workers' Images of Society, Durham,
    University of Durham Department of Sociology and Social
    Administration Working Papers in Sociology No.4 1972.

6   British Shipbuilders Report and Accounts 1978/79, p6.

7   Tomlinson, J. The Unequal Struggle? British Socialism and
    the Capitalist Enterprise, London, Methuen 1982, p72.

8   A point well understood by workers on the Wear who, often
    citing the miners' strike as an example, expressed the view
    that you cannot fight the state, in the form of public corp-
    orations, in terms of strike activity, and win. In this
    sense the balance of the "structural" forces of Capital and
    Labour had been profoundly affected by the intervention of
    the "Agency" of the Thatcher Government.

9   Hobbes, T. Leviathan, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1968, p150.

10 Ibid.

11 One issue which made a particular impact upon me while
    looking at the inter-war period is just how much the
    "official" language of newspapers has changed. The use of
    class labels (i.e. lower class, working class etc.) appeared
    frequently in reports in the Sunderland Echoes of the inter-
    war years. The disappearance of such labels in the post-war
    period does not, of course, necessarily relate to changes in
    the more "objective" indicators of class, but does hold
    important implications for the external production of the
    rigidities of class identity.

12   Blackwell, T. and Seabrook, J.   A World Still to Win,
     London, Faber and Faber 1985, p150.

13   Seabrook, J. Unemployment, London, Quartet Books 1982,
     p107.

14   Seabrook, J., 1982, op.cit. p151.

15   Beynon, H. "Jeremy Seabrook and the Working Class" in
     Socialist Register, London, Merlin 1982, p291.

16   Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein, following a
     Kondrtieff analysis, suggest the likelihood of another
     expansionary phase of the world system beginning in about
     1990. See:
     Amin, S. et al Dynamics of Global Crisis, London, Macmillan
     1982.

17   Ditton and Brown have suggested that the ability to "fiddle"
     and the hidden economy contribute towards feelings of
     "fantasy equality" within the manual working class. In the
     yards one effect of the managerial offensive was to make the
     taking of materials out of the yards far harder. Such
     "pilfering" did continue; however, the assistance of someone
     with a small boat was required to ship "goods" down the
     river rather than walking out of the gate with them. On
     fantasy equality, see:
     Ditton, J. and Brown, R.   "Why don't they revolt?
     "Invisible Income" as a neglected dimension of Runciman's
     relative deprivation thesis." in the B.J.S., Vol.32 No.4,
     December 1981.

18   Beynon, H. Working for Ford, East Ardsley, E.P. Publishing
     Ltd 1975, p319.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

ABENDROTH, W. A Short History of the European Working Class, London, New Left Books, 1972.

ABRAMS, P. (Ed) Work, Urbanism and Inequality, London, Wederfield and Nicholson, 1978.

ABRAMS, P. Historical Sociology, Shepton Mallet, Open Books, 1982.

ALLEN, G.C. British Industries and their Organisation, London, Longmans, 1959.

ALTHUSSER, L. Politics and History, London, New Left Books, 1972.

ALTHUSSER, L. For Marx, London, New Left Books, 1977.

ALTHUSSER, L. & BALIBAR, E. Reading Capital, London, New Left Books, 1970.

AMIN, S. et al Dynamics of Global Crisis, London, Macmillan, 1982.

ANDERSON, K. Wartime Women, New York, 1981.

ANDERSON, P. Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism, London, Verso, 1978.

ANDERSON, P. Arguments Within English Marxism, London, Verso, 1980.

ARMSTRONG, P., GLYN, A., HARRISON, J. Capitalism Since World War II, Glasgow, Fontana, 1984.

ARONOVITCH, S. et al The Political Economy of British Capitalism New York, McGraw Hill, 1981.

ASHWORTH, W. An Economic History of England, London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1960.

BARNETT, C. The Audit of War, London, Macmillan, 1986.

BARRAT-BROWN, M. The Economics of Imperialism, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974.

BAUMAN, Z. Culture as Praxis, London, R.K.P., 1973.

BELL, C. & NEWBY, H. Doing Sociological Research, London, George
    Allen & Unwin, 1977.

BENDIX, R. Work and Authority in Industry, California,
    University of California Press, 1974.

BERGER, P.L. & LUCKMAN, T. The Social Construction of Reality,
    Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967.

BEYNON, H. Working for Ford, Wakefield, EP Publishing Ltd.,
    1973.

BEYNON, H. & WAINWRIGHT, H. The Workers Report on Vickers,
    London, Pluto Press, 1979.

BLACKBURN, R. (Ed) Ideology in Social Science, Glasgow, Fontana,
    1972.

BLACKWELL, T. & SEABROOK, J. A World Still to Win: The Reconst-
    ruction of the post war working class, London, Faber, 1985.

BOTTOMORE, T. (Ed) Karl Marx, Oxford, Blackwell, 1979.

BOTTOMORE, T. & NISBET, R. (Eds) A History of Sociological Anal-
    ysis, London, Heinemann, 1979.

BRAVERMAN, H. Labour and Monopoly Capital, New York, M.R.P.,
    1974.

BROCKIE, W. Sunderland Notables, Sunderland, Hills and Co.,
    1894.

BROWN, R.K., BRANNEN, P., COUSINS, J. & SAMPHIER, M."Leisure in
    Work: the "Occupational Culture" of Shipbuilding Workers"
    in:
SMITH, M., PARKER, S. & SMITH, C. (Eds) Leisure and Society in
    Britain, London, Allen Lane, 1973.

BULLOCK, A. The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Vol.2., London,
    Heinemann, 1967.

BULMER, M. (Ed) Working Class Images of Society, London R.K.P.,
    1975.

BURAWOY, M. Manufacturing Consent, Chicago, University of Chicago
    Press, 1979.

BURN, D. (Ed) The Structure of British Industry, Vol.2,
    Cambridge, C.U.P., 1958.

CAIRNCROSS, A.K. & PARKINSON, J.R. "The Shipbuilding Industry"
     in:
BURN, D. (Ed)   The Structure of British Industry Vol.2.
     Cambridge, C.U.P., 1958.

CALVOCORESSI, P. "The British Experience 1945-75"
     in:
MARWICK, A. British Society Since 1945, Harmondsworth, Penguin,
     1982.

CHILD, J. Man and Organisation, London, George Allen & Unwin,
     1973.

CIPOLLA, C.M.C. (Ed) The Fontana Economic History of Europe:
     Contemporary Economies - 1, Glasgow, Fontana, 1976.

CLARKE, J.F. "Shipbuilding on the River Wear 1780-1879"
     in:
STURGESS, R.W. (Ed) The Great Age of Industry in the North East,
     1770-1920, Durham, Durham County Local History Society 1981.

CLARKE, S. Marx Marginalism and Modern Sociology: From Adam
     Smith to Max Weber, London. Macmillan, 1982.

CLARKE. T. & CLEMENTS, L.   Trade Unions Under Capitalism,
     Glasgow, Fontana, 1978.

CLEAVER, H. Reading Capital Politically, Brighton, Harvester,
     1979.

COATES, K. Work-ins, Sit-ins and Industrial Democracy,
     Nottingham, Spokesman, 1981.

COHEN, G.A. Karl-Marx's Theory of History: A Defence, Oxford,
     Clarendon Press, 1978.

COLE, M. The Life of G.D.H. Cole, London. Macmillan, 1971.

CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMISTS The Labour Process and Class
     Strategies. London, C.S.E., 1976.

CORFE, T. Sunderland: A Short History, Newcastle, Frank Graham,
     1973.

CORRIGAN, P. Schooling the Smash Street Kids, London,
     Macmillan, 1979.

COUSINS, J.M. & BROWN, R.K. "Shipbuilding"
     in:

DEWDNEY, J.C. (Ed) Durham County and City with Teesside, Durham,
     British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1970.

CROCE, B. "The Limitations of Materialistic Theory"
     in:
BOTTOMORE, T. (Ed) Karl Marx, Oxford, Blackwell, 1979.

CROUCH, C. The Politics of Industrial Relations, Glasgow,
     Fontana, 1979.

CROUCHER, R. Engineers At War: 1939 - 1945, London, Merlin, 1982.

CURRAN, J., STANWORTH, J. & WATKIN, D. The Survival of the Small
     Firm, Aldershot, Gower, 1986.

DAVIS, H. Beyond Class Images, London, Croom Helm, 1979.

DAWE, A. "The Two Sociologies"
     in:
THOMPSON, K. & TURNBULL, J. Sociological Perspectives, Harmonds-
     worth, Penguin, 1976.

DAWE, A. "Theories of Social Action"
     in:
BOTTOMORE, T. & NISBET, R. (Eds) A History of Sociological
     Analysis, London, Heinemann, 1979.

DE FEYTER, C.A. Industrial Policy and Shipbuilding, Utrecht, H&S,
     1982.

DEUTSCHER, I. The Prophet Unarmed, Trotsky: 1921-29, Oxford,
     UUP, 1970.

DEWDNEY, J.C. (Ed) Durham County and City with Teesside, Durham,
     British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1970.

DICKSON, T. (Ed) Capital and Class in Scotland, Edinburgh, John
     Donald Ltd, 1982.

DOUGAN, D. The History of North East Shipbuilding, London,
     George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1968.

DOUGAN, D. The Shipwrights, Newcastle, Frank Graham, 1975.

DOUIE, V. Daughters of Britain, Oxford, George Ronald, 1950.

DUBOIS, P. Sabotage in Industry, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979.

EAST END HISTORY PROJECT Them were the days - or were they? Life
     in Sunderland's East End in the 1930s, Community Arts

Project, Sunderland, 1985.

EATWELL, J. Whatever Happened to Britain, London, BBC, 1982.

EDWARDS, R. Contested Terrain, London, Heinemann, 1979.

ELDRIDGE, J. Industrial Disputes, London, RKP, 1968.

ELDRIDGE, J. Recent British Sociology, London, Macmillan, 1980.

ELMBAUM, B. & LAZONICK, W. (Eds) The Decline of the British
    Economy, Oxford, OUP. 1986.

ESLAND, G. et al (Eds) People and Work, Edinburgh, Holmes-
    McDougall, 1975.

FERRAROTTI, F. "Notes on Marx and the Study of Technical Change"
    in:
MCQUARIE, D. Marx: Sociology, Social Change and Capitalism,
    London, Quartet, 1978.

FLINN, M.W. An Economic and Social History of Britain Since 1700
    London, Macmillan, 1970.

FOSTER, J. Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, London,
    Methuen, 1974.

FOSTER, J. & WOLFSON, C. The Politics of the USC Work-in, London,
    Lawrence & Wishart, 1986.

FRIEDMAN, A.L. Industry and Labour, London, Macmillan, 1977.

GALLACHER, T. Apprentice, Sevenoaks, Coronet Books, 1983.

GAMBLE, A. Britain in Decline, London, Macmillan, 1981.

GIDDENS, A. Studies in Social and Political Theory, London,
    Hutchinson, 1977.

GIDDENS, A. Central Problems in Social Theory, London,
    Macmillan, 1979.

GIDDENS, A. A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism,
    London, Macmillan, 1981.

GIDDENS, A. "Power, the dialectic of control and class
    structuration"
    in:
GIDDENS, A. & MACKENZIE (Eds) Social Class and the Division of
    Labour, Cambridge, CUP, 1982.

GIDDENS, A. The Constitution of Society, Cambridge, Polity
      Press, 1984.

GIDDENS, A. & MACKENZIE (Eds) Social Class and the Division of
      Labour, Cambridge, CUP, 1982.

GLUCKMAN, M. (Ed) Closed Systems and Open Minds, Edinburgh,
      Oliver & Boyd, 1964.

GOFFMAN, E. Asylums, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968.

GORZ, A. Farewell to the Working Class, London, Pluto, 1982.

GOSPEL, H.F. & LITTLER, C. (Eds) Managerial Strategies and
      Industrial Relations, London, Heinemann, 1983.

GOULDNER, A. Enter Plato, London, RKP, 1967.

GOULDNER, A.W. For Sociology: Renewal and Critique in Sociology
      Today, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975.

GRAMSCI, A. Selections from the Prison Notebooks, London,
      Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.

GREGG, P. A Social and Economic History of Britain, London,
      Harrap & Co., 1961.

GREGG, P. The Welfare State, London, Harrap & Co., 1968.

GREENSLADE, R. Goodbye to the Working Class, London, Marion
      Boyars Ltd., 1976.

HARRIS, S. Post War Economic Problems, New York, McGraw-Hill,
      1943.

HILL, S. Competition and Control at Work, London, Heinemann,
      1981.

HILLEL-RUBEN, D. Marxism and Materialism, Sussex, Harvester,
      1977.

HOBSBAWM, E.J. Industry and Empire, Harmondsworth, Penguin,
      1968.

HOGGART, R. The Uses of Literacy, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1958.

HOGWOOD, B. Government and Shipbuilding, Farnborough, Saxon
      House, 1979.

Bibliography   - 522 -

HOPKINS, C.H.G. Pallion 1874 to 1954: Church and People in a
    Shipyard Parish, Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd.,
    1954.

HOPKINS, C.H.G. The Moving Staircase: Sunderland 1939-1972,
    Sunderland, Wearside Printing Co. Ltd., 1972.

HOUSE, J.W. Industrial Britain: The North East, London, David
    and Charles, 1969.

HUGHES, E. "Work and Self"
    in:
ESLAND, G. et al (Eds) People and Work, Edinburgh, Holmes-
    McDougall, 1975.

HUTT, A. British Trade Unionism, London, Lawrence & Wishart,
    1975.

HYMAN, R. Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, London,
    Macmillan, 1979.

JAY, M. The Dialectical Imagination, London, Heinemann, 1973.

JONES, L. Shipbuilding in Britain: mainly between the two World
    Wars, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1957.

KENDAL, W. The Labour Movement in Europe, London, Allen Lane,
    1975.

KOLAKOWSKI, L. Main Currents of Marxism, Vol.III, Oxford,
    Clarendon Press, 1978.

KOLKO, G. & KOLKO, J. The Limits of Power: the World and US
    Foreign Policy, New York, Harper & Row, 1972.

LANE, T. The Union Makes Us Strong, London, Arrow Books, 1974.

LITTLER, C.R. The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist
    Societies, London, Heinemann, 1982.

LOCKWOOD, D. "Fatalism: Durkheim's hidden theory of order"
    in:
GIDDENS, A. & MACKENZIE, G. (Eds) Social Class and the Division
    of Labour, Cambridge, CUP, 1982.

LORENZ, E.H. "The Labour Process and Industrial Relations in
    British and French Shipbuilding: the Inter-War Years" -
    paper at SSRC Shipbuilding Seminar:
    Scottish and Scandinavian Shipbuilding: Development Problems
    in Historical Perspectives, 21-23 September 1980.

LORENZ, E. & WILKINSON, F. "The Shipbuilding Industry 1880-1965"
     in:
ELMBAUM, B. & LAZONICK, W. (Eds) The Decline of the British
     Economy, Oxford, OUP, 1986.

LUCKMAN, B. The Small Life Worlds of Modern Man"
     in:
LUCKMAN, T. (Ed) Phenomenology and Sociology, Harmondsworth
     Penguin, 1978.

LUCKMAN, T. (Ed) Phenomenology and Sociology, Harmondsworth,
     Penguin, 1978.

LUPTON, T. & SHIRLEY-WILSON, C. "The Kinship Connections of Top
     Decision Makers"
     in:
WORSLEY, P. (Ed) Modern Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975.

LUXEMBURG, R. Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, New York, Pathfinder, 1970.

McGOLDRICK, J. "Crisis and the Division of Labour: Clydeside
     Shipbuilding in the Inter-War Period"
     in:
DICKSON, T. (Ed) Capital and Class in Scotland, Edinburgh, John
     Donald Ltd, 1982.

McLELLAN, D. Marx's Grundrisse, London, Paladin, 1973.

MACPHERSON, C.B. (Ed) Hobbes: Leviathan, Harmondsworth, Penguin,
     1968.

McQUARIE, D. Marx: Sociology, Social Change and Capitalism,
     London, Quartet, 1978.

MAIR, L. An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Oxford,
     Clarendon, 1972.

MANDEL, E. Marxist Economic Theory, London, Merlin, 1972.

MANDEL, E. Late Capitalism, London, NLB, 1975.

MARCUSE, H. Reason and Revolution, London, RKP, 1955.

MARCUSE, H. One Dimensional Man, London, Sphere Books, 1972.

MARSHALL, A. Principles of Economics, London, Macmillan, 1922.

MARTIN, B. A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change, Oxford,
     Basil Blackwell, 1981.

Bibliography   - 524 -

MARWICK, A. Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the
     USA Since 1930, Glasgow, Fontana, 1981.

MARWICK, A. British Society Since 1945, Harmondsworth, Penguin,
     1982.

MARX, K. Capital: Volume Three, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1959.

MARX, K. The German Ideology, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1970.

MARX, K. Grundrisse, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973.

MARX, K. & ENGELS, F. Selected Works, London, Lawrence & Wishart,
     1968.

MARX, K.& ENGELS, F. Selected Works, Vol.1, Moscow, Foreign
     Languages Publishing House, 1962.

MATHIAS, P. The First Industrial Nation, London, Methuen, 1969.

MEAD, M. Culture and Commitment, New York, Anchor Books, 1978.

MEZAROS, I. Marx's Theory of Alienation, London, Merlin, 1970.

MILIBAND, R. "Reply to Nicos Poulantzas"
     in:
BLACKBURN, R. (Ed) Ideology in Social Science, Glasgow, Fontana,
     1972.

MILIBAND, R. The State in Capitalist Society, London, Quartet,
     1973.

MITCHELL, W.C. History of Sunderland, Sunderland, Hills, 1919.

MORE, C. "Skill and the Survival of Apprenticeship"
     in:
WOOD, S. (Ed) The Degradation of Work?, London, Hutchinson, 1982.

MORTIMER, J.E. History of the Boilermakers Society, London,
     George Allen & Unwin, 1982.

NAIRN, T. "The English Working Class"
     in:
BLACKBURN, R. (Ed) Ideology in Social Science, Glasgow, Fontana,
     1978.

NICHOLS, T. The British Worker Question, London, RKP, 1986.

OLLMAN, B. Alienation, Cambridge, CUP, 1976.

PAGNAMENTA, P. & OVERY, R. All Our Working Lives, London, BBC, 1984.

PALLOIX, C. "The Labour Process: From Fordism to Neo-Fordism" in:
The Labour Process and Class Strategies, London, CSE, 1976.

PARKINSON, J.R. The Economics of Shipbuilding in the United Kingdom, Cambridge, CUP, 1960.

PATTERSON, E.M. An Introduction to World Economics, London, Macmillan, 1948.

PELLING, H. Modern Britain 1885-1955, London, Cardinal, 1974.

PELLING, H. A History of British Trade Unionism, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979.

PFEFFER, R.M. Working for Capitalism, Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1979.

POLLARD, S. & ROBERTSON, P.L. The British Shipbuilding Industry 1890-1914, Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University Press, 1979.

POTTS, A. (Ed) Shipbuilders and Engineers, North East Labour History Society, Newcastle, 1987.

POTTS, T. Sunderland, a History of Town, Port, Trade and Commerce, Sunderland, B. Williams, 1892.

POULANTZAS, N. "The Problem of the Capitalist State" in:
BLACKBURN, R. (Ed) Ideology in Social Science, Glasgow, Fontana, 1972.

PREBBLE, J. The Highland Clearances, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984.

RAINNIE, A. & SCOTT, M. "Industrial Relations in the Small Firm" in:
CURRAN, J., STANWORTH, J. & WATKIN, D. The Survival of the Small Firm, Aldershot, Gower, 1986.

RICE, K.A. Geertz and Culture, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1980.

ROBERTS, G. Demarcation Rules in Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing, Cambridge, CUP, 1967.

Bibliography   - 526 -

ROBERTSON, D.J. Factory Wage Structures and National Agreements,
     Cambridge, CUP, 1960.

ROBSON, B.T. Urban Analysis: A Study of City Structure,
     Cambridge, CUP, 1969.

SABEL, C.F. Work and Politics, Cambridge, CUP, 1982.

SAMUELSON, P. "Full Employment After the War"
     in:
HARRIS, S. Post War Economic Problems, New York, McGraw-Hill,
     1943.

SCHAFF, A. Language and Cognition, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1973.

SEABROOK, J. What Went Wrong?, London, Victor Gollancz, 1978.

SIMON, R. Gramsci's Political Thought, London, Lawrence &
     Wishart, 1982.

SMITH, J.W. & HOLDEN, T.S. Where Ships Are Born: Sunderland
     1346-1946, Sunderland, Thomas Reed and Co., 1947.

SMITH, M., PARKER, S. & SMITH, C. (Eds) Leisure and Society in
     Britain, London, Allen Lane, 1973.

SMITH, R. "The Historical Decline of the UK"
     in:
ARONOVITCH, S. et al The Political Economy of British Capitalism,
     London, McGraw Hill, 1981.

SMITH, R. "Patterns of Growth in World Capitalism"
     in:
ARONOVITCH, S. et al The Political Economy of British Capitalism,
     London, McGraw Hill, 1981.

SOHN-RETHEL, A. "The Dual Economics of Transition"
     in:
     The Labour Process and Class Strategies, London, CSE, 1978.

SPENCE, J. "Industrial Relations in Wearside Shipbuilding 1945-
     1981"
     in:
POTTS, A. (Ed) Shipbuilders and Engineers, North East Labour
     History Society, Newcastle, 1987.

STEVENSON, J. & COOK, C. The Slump, London, Jonathan Cape Ltd,
     1977.

STEWART, M. Keynes and After, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967.

STURGESS, R.W. (Ed) The Great Age of Industry in the North East
        1770-1920, Durham, Durham County Local History Society,
        1981.

SUNDERLAND CORPORATION TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT People and Transport
        Sunderland, 1964.

TAYLOR, R. Workers and the New Depression, London, Macmillan,
        1982.

TERKEL, S. Working, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975.

THOMSON, D. England in the Twentieth Century, Harmondsworth,
        Penguin, 1982.

THOMPSON, E.P. The Poverty of Theory and other essays, London,
        Merlin, 1978.

THOMPSON, K. & TURNBULL, J. Sociological Perspectives,
        Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976.

THOMPSON, P. The Nature of Work, London, Macmillan, 1983.

TOMLINSON, J. The Unequal Struggle? British Socialism and the
        Capitalist Enterprise, London, Methuen, 1982.

TROTSKY, L. Where is Britain Going?, London, New Park
        Publications, 1970.

TUCKETT, A. The Blacksmiths History, London, Lawrence & Wishart,
        1974.

TURNBULL, C. The Mountain People, London, Picador, 1973.

VAIZEY, J. The Squandered Peace, London, Hodder & Stoughton,
        1983.

WEBER, M. The Methodology of the Social Sciences, New York, Free
        Press, 1949.

WEBER, M. The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation,
        London, Macmillan, 1964.

WEINER, M.J. English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial
        Spirit 1850-1980, Cambridge, CUP, 1982.

WESTERGAARD, J. & RESLER, M. Class in a Capitalist Society,
        Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976.

WILKINSON, E. The Town That Was Murdered - The Life Story of Jarrow, London, Left Book Club, 1939.

WILLIAMSON, W. Class, Culture and Community, London, RKP, 1982.

WOOD, S. (Ed) The Degradation of Work?, London, Hutchinson, 1982.

WORSLEY, P. (ed) Modern Sociology, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975.

WRIGHT-MILLS, C. The Sociological Imagination, Harmondsworth, Pelican, 1970.

YOUNGSON, A.J. "Great Britain 1920-1970"
    in:
CIPOLLA, C.M. (Ed) The Fontana Economic History of Europe: Contemporary Economies 1, Glasgow, Collins, 1976.

ZEITLIN, I.M. Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, London, Prentice-Hall, 1968.

ZIMBALIST, A. (Ed) Case Studies on the Labour Process, New York, MRP, 1979.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

ARCHER, M.S. "Morphogenisis versus Structuration: on Combining Structure and Action" in BJS, Vol.33, No.4, December 1982.

BEYNON, H. "False Hopes and Real Dilemmas"
    in
TICKTIN, H. (Ed) Critique 16, Glasgow, 1983.

BROWN, R.K. "Sociologists and Industry - In Search of a Distinctive Competence" in Sociological Review, Vol.29, No.2, 1981.

BROWN, R.K. "The Sociology Of Organisations" in Mens en Maat-schapzuj, Vol.49, No.4, 1974.

BROWN, R.K. & BRANNEN, P. "Social Relations and Social Perspectives amongst Shipbuilding Workers - a preliminary statement" (Part 2) in Sociology, Vol.4, No.2, 1970.

BROWN, R.K., SAMPHIER, M.L., BRANNEN, P. & COUSINS, J.M. "The Contours of Solidarity: Social Stratification and Industrial Relations in Shipbuilding" in British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol.10, 1972.

BURAWOY, M. "Towards a Marxist Theory of the Labour Process: Bravermann and Beyond" in Politics and Society, Vol.8, 1978.

CAMERON, G.C. "Post War Strikes in the North East Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing Industry" in BJIR, Vol.2, No.1, 1954.

COOMBS, R. "Labour and Monopoly Capital" (Review Article) in NLR, 1978.

COUSINS, J. AND BROWN, R.K. Patterns of Paradox: Shipbuilding Workers' Images of Society, Durham, University of Durham Department of Sociology, Working Papers in Sociology, No.4, 1972.

CRESSEY, P. & MACINNES, J. "Industrial Democracy and the Control of Labour" in Capital and Class, No.11, 1980.

CUTLER, T. "The Romance of Labour" in Economy and Society, Vol.17, No.1, 1978.

DALLMAYR, I.R. "Agency and Structure" in Philosophy of the Social Sciences, Vol.12, 1982.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY "Shipbuilding" in Durham University Industrial Society Magazine, 1987.

EHRENREICH, J. & EHRENREICH, B. "Work and Consciousness" in Monthly Review, Vol.28, No.3, Summer 1976.

ESSO MAGAZINE Inside Story, London, Esso Petroleum Company, Summer 1970.

FOX, F.A. "The Brittle Fracture of Structural Steel" in Science News, No.36.

JACOBY, R. "Labour and Monopoly Capital" (Review Article) in Telos, No.29, 1977.

LITTLER, C. & SALAMAN, G. "Braverman and Beyond: Recent Theories of the Labour Process" in Sociology, Vol.16, No.2, 1982.

LORENZ, E.H. "The Labour Process in British and French Ship-building from 1880 to 1930" in Journal of European Economic History, 13 (3), 1984.

McGOLDRICK, J. "Industrial Relations and the Division of Labour in the Shipbuilding Industry since the War" in BJIR, Vol.21, No.2, July 1983.

MANN, M. "The Working Class" in New Society, 4 November 1976.

MILIBAND, R. "A State of de-subordination" in BJS, Vol.29, No.4, December 1978.

NICHOLS, T. "Labour and Monopoly Capital" (Review Article) in Sociological Review, Vol.25, No.1, 1977.

ROY, D. "Work Satisfaction and Social Reward in Quota Achievement: An Analysis of Piecework Incentive" in American Sociological Review, Vol.18, 1953.

SABEL, C. & ZEITLIN, J. "Historical Alternatives to Mass Production: Politics, Markets and Technology in Nineteenth Century Industrialisation" in Past and Present, No.108, 1985.

STIRLING, J. & BRIDGEFORD, J. "British and French Shipbuilding: the Industrial Relations of Decline" in Industrial Relations Journal, Vol.16, No.4, Winter 1984.

STARK, D. "Class Struggle and the Transformation of the Labour Process" in Theory and Society, Vol.9, No.1, 1980.

STOREY, J. "The Means of Management Control" in Sociology, Vol.19, No.2, 1985.

THRIFT, N. "Bear and Mouse or Bear and Tree? Anthony Giddens' Reconstruction of Social Theory" in Sociology, Vol.19, No.4, November 1985.

TICKTIN, H. "The Transitional Epoch, Finance Capital and Britain" in Critique 16, Vol.16, 1983.

TRIST, E.L. & BAMFORTH, K.W. "Some Social and Psychological consequences of the Longwall method of coal-getting" in Human Relations, Vol.4, No.1, 1951.

URRY, J. "The Constitutions of Society" (Review Article) in Sociological Review, Vol.34 (2), 1986.

UNITED NATIONS Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, Vol.8, No.9, September 1954.

WALLERSTEIN, I. "A World System Perspective on the Social Sciences" in BJS, Vol.27, 1976.

WARDE, A. "E.P. Thompson and 'Poor' Theory" in BJS, Vol.33, No.2, June 1982.

Bibliography   - 531 -

CONFERENCE PAPERS

COUSINS, J.M. "Factors affecting the Quality of Life in the
     British Shipbuilding Industry", Paper at the British Assoc-
     iation for the Advancement of Science Conference, 1973.

LEE, G.L. "Technology Driven Organisational Change. A Case from
     the Aerospace Industry", Paper at Organisation and Control
     of the Labour Process, Aston/Umist, March 1988.

McGOLDRICK, J. "Job Control, Industrial Relations and the State:
     Changes in British Shipbuilding since Nationalisation",
     Paper at Kings College Research Centre Colloquium
     Job Control and the State, 27-29 September 1982.

McINNES, J. "The Labour Process Debate and the Commodity Status
     of Labour: Some Problems", Paper at a conference
     Organisation and Control of the Labour Process, Umist, 23-25
     March 1983.

NEIMARK, M. & TINKLER, T. "On Rediscovering Marx: Dissolving
     Agency - Structure in Dialectical Unity", Paper at
     conference Organisation and Control of the Labour Process,
     Aston/Umist, April 1986.

PENN, R.D. "Socialisation into Skilled Identities: an analysis
     of a neglected phenomenon", Paper at Organisation and
     Control of the Labour Process, Aston/Umist, April 1986.

ROBERTS, I.P. "Industrial Relations in Small Firms: In Search of
     a Framework", Paper at Ninth National Small Firms Policy and
     Research Conference, Gleneagles, 20-22 November 1986.

THOMPSON, P. "Crawling from the Wreckage. The Labour Process and
     the Politics of Production", Paper at conference
     Organisation and Control of the Labour Process, Aston/Umist,
     April 1986.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS Annual Report, 1977-1986, London, HMSO.

COMMISSION ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS Shipbuilding and Ship-
     repairing, Report No.22, London, HMSO CMND 4756, 1971.

HALLSWORTH, H.M. "The Shipbuilding and Ship-repairing Industry"
     in
     An Industrial Survey of the North East Coast Area, HMSO,
     Board of Trade, 1932.

INMAN, P. Labour in the Munitions Industries, London, HMSO, 1957.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR Report of an Enquiry into Apprenticeship: 1925-26, London, HMSO, 1926.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR Wartime Employment of Women in Shipbuilding and Allied Industries, 1942. Held in Imperial War Museum.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR Regional Strike Data, 1947-64.

SHIPBUILDING INQUIRY COMMITTEE Geddes Report 1965-66, London, HMSO, 1977.

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES AND NEWSPAPERS

BELL, A. Shipyard Tales, unpublished, undated.

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS British Shipbuilders Corporate Plan 1978-1983, unpublished.

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS National Framework Agreement For Survival, British Shipbuilders, October 1983.

BROWN, J.A. The General Strike, 1926: Sunderland, Undergraduate Dissertation, University of York, undated.

BROWN, R.K. et al Orientations to Work and Industrial Behaviour of Shipbuilding Workers on Tyneside, Final Report to SSRC, 1972.

CORDER, W. The Corder Manuscripts, unpublished long-hand account of life in Sunderland in 22 Volumes (late 19th-early 20th century). Held in Sunderland Central Museum and Library.

ELGER, A.J. Affluence, Rationalisation and the Skilled Worker: a Critique of the Affluent Worker paradigm and a Local Case Study, unpublished PhD, University of Durham, 1987.

ENNIS, F. The Jarrow March of 1936 and the Symbolic Expression of Protest, unpublished MA thesis, University of Durham, Department of Sociology, 1982.

FALK-PEDERSON, S.D.S. Production Information and Control Systems in Shipyards, unpublished MSc dissertation, Durham University Business School, 1969.

FINN, R. Social Conditions in the County Borough of Sunderland during the 1930s, unpublished BA dissertation, University of Durham, Department of Sociology, 1985.

THE GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER.

THE JOURNAL NEWSPAPER.

LORENZ, E.H. The Labour Process and Industrial Relations in the British and French Shipbuilding Industries from 1880 - 1970: Two Patterns of Development, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1983.

THE OBSERVER NEWSPAPER.

OWEN, A.N. The History of the Education and Training of Apprentices in the Shipbuilding Industry in Sunderland, unpublished MA thesis, 1969.

REID, A. The Division of Labour in the Shipbuilding Industry, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

REID, A. The Division of Labour and Politics in Britain 1850 - 1920, unpublished paper, Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, 1981.

ROBERTS, I.P. The Labour Process in the Shipbuilding Industry, unpublished BA dissertation, University of Durham, Department of Sociology, 1982.

SHEPHEARD, R.B. "Developments in British Merchant Shipbuilding" in Shipbuilding and Shipping Record, 29 August 1946.

SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPPING RECORD.

THE SHIPBUILDER AND MARINE ENGINEER.

THE SUNDERLAND ECHO.

THE TIMES NEWSPAPER, London.

TYNE AND WEAR COUNTY COUNCIL Save Our Shipyards Information Pack, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear County Council, March 1983.

SHIPBUILDING EMPLOYERS FEDERATION Man-hours Lost as a Result of Strikes and Stoppages: 1957-61, unpublished data, 1964.

SUNDERLAND SHIPBUILDERS Sunderland Shipbuilders Employment Relations Survey, Sunderland Shipbuilders Ltd., 1986.

SUNDERLAND SHIPBUILDERS Productivity Agreement, Sunderland
     Shipbuilders Ltd., 1984.

WEAR SHIPBUILDING ASSOCIATION   Minutes, 1920 onwards.

APPENDIX 1

Table I Leading building ports in 1790-1 and 1804-5 and 1814[5]

	1790-1 peace years	1804-5 war years		1814	
	tonnage	tonnage		tonnage	
London	16,372	12,680			
Newcastle*	12,444	15,054	(1st)	8,481	
Whitby	11,753	9,950		3,813	
Hull	8,193	10,839		7,926	
Liverpool	6,710	4,154		3,896	
SUNDERLAND	3,951	14,198	(2nd)	14,330	(1st)
Whitehaven	3,630	6,750		4,711	
Bristol	3,071	1,623			
Total: English ports	104,010	127,901			
Scotland	18,817	23,306			
G. Britain				82,855	

* these figures are for the Tyne and at least half of this output
  would have been in the County of Durham.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE XXXI

Tonnage commenced, launched, and under construction at the end of each quarter, 1920–39 ('000 gross tons)

Date	Commenced	Launched	Under construction	Date	Commenced	Launched	Under construction
1920 I	708	454	3,394	1930 I	427	345	1,615
II	589	523	3,570	II	230	468	1,392
III	594	483	3,731	III	161	379	1,117
IV	506	580	3,709	IV	132	297	909
1921 I	393	433	3,799	1931 I	33	146	694
II	69	322	3,530	II	23	170	556
III	51	308	3,283	III	39	80	417
IV	55	467	2,640	IV	105	71	401
1922 I	51	334	2,236	1932 I	26	35	373
II	39	149	1,920	II	28	69	281
III	82	307	1,617	III	11	48	238
IV	231	261	1,469	IV	7	39	225
1923 I	335	228	1,492	1933 I	77	13	252
II	241	239	1,338	II	50	11	288
III	112	66	1,271	III	40	42	304
IV	245	115	1,395	IV	75	65	332
1924 I	228	362	1,474	1934 I	203	35	481
II	375	365	1,517	II	147	36	587
III	253	360	1,468	III	77	183	604
IV	195	353	1,297	IV	93	207	597
1925 I	202	339	1,165	1935 I	144	106	556
II	190	298	1,094	II	108	116	560
III	261	225	1,009	III	119	113	531
IV	161	216	885	IV	311	132	743
1926 I	193	191	843	1936 I	233	194	842
II	168	172	841	II	282	168	849
III	68	208	775	III	293	212	929
IV	152	68	760	IV	273	280	964
1927 I	580	128	1,217	1937 I	253	176	1,014
II	437	269	1,390	II	368	253	1,200
III	370	356	1,536	III	219	266	1,185
IV	377	499	1,580	IV	217	223	1,125
1928 I	342	407	1,441	1938 I	173	179	1,089
II	279	403	1,203	II	157	286	1,037
III	245	388	1,090	III	87	309	885
IV	432	246	1,243	IV	88	241	780
1929 I	362	270	1,357	1939 I	71	158	597
II	428	393	1,454	II	402	138	791
III	360	369	1,448				
IV	499	473	1,560				

TABLE I

LAUNCHINGS OF SHIPS OVER 100 g.r.t. EXCLUDING WARSHIPS

Source : Lloyd's Register of Shipping

YEAR	UK Nos.	UK Tons	WORLD Nos.	WORLD Tons	UK % of World	UK % Export of Launchings	NORTH EAST Nos.	NORTH EAST Tons	% of World
1892	681	1,109,950	1051	1,358,045	81·7		251	570,296	41·9
1893	536	836,383	846	1,026,741	81·4		192	431,405	41·9
1894	614	1,046,508	932	1,323,538	79·0		252	544,768	41·1
1895	579	950,967	880	1,218,160	78·0		222	497,564	40·8
1896	696	1,159,751	1113	1,567,882	74·0		280	611,727	39·0
1897	591	952,486	990	1,331,924	71·4		236	498,594	37·4
1898	761	1,367,570	1290	1,893,343	72·3		299	763,825	40·0
1899	726	1,416,791	1269	2,121,738	66·7		276	766,282	36·0
1900	692	1,442,471	1364	2,304,163	62·5	23·0	264	794,300	34·4
1901	639	1,524,739	1538	2,617,539	58·2	23·0	279	872,723	33·4
1902	694	1,427,558	1650	2,502,755	57·0	19·0	258	701,005	28·0
1903	697	1,190,618	1650	2,145,631	55·5	20·0	252	581,343	27·0
1904	712	1,205,162	1643	1,987,935	62·0	19·0	257	671,580	33·7
1905	795	1,623,168	1576	2,514,922	64·5	21·5	276	872,314	34·6
1906	886	1,828,343	1836	2,919,763	62·6	20·3	334	1,005,148	37·4
1907	841	1,607,890	1788	2,778,088	58·0	34·1	297	817,510	29·4
1908	523	929,669	1405	1,833,286	50·7	40·3	154	355,859	19·3
1909	526	991,066	1063	1,602,057	62·0	24·4	197	434,810	27·1
1910	500	1,143,169	1277	1,957,853	58·4	19·5	196	578,315	29·5
1911	772	1,803,844	1599	2,650,140	68·0	22·4	331	977,278	36·8
1912	712	1,738,514	1719	2,901,769	60·0	23·9	267	888,683	30·6
1913	688	1,932,153	1750	3,332,882	58·0	21·7	267	974,109	29·2
1914	656	1,683,553	1319	2,852,753	59·0	24·4	262	854,697	30·0
1915	327	650,919	743	1,201,638	54·2	14·75	110	352,825	29·2
1916	306	608,235	964	1,688,080	36·0	—	108	353,445	20·9
1917	286	1,162,896	1112	2,937,786	39·6	—	136	611,233	20·8
1918	301	1,348,120	1866	5,447,444	24·7	—	162	736,858	13·5
1919	612	1,620,442	2483	7,144,549	22·6	6·0	184	716,295	10·0
1920	618	2,055,624	1759	5,861,666	35·0	41·0	210	948,902	16·5
1921	426	1,538,052	1379	4,356,843	35·3	38·5	137	662,753	15·2
1922	235	1,031,081	852	2,467,084	41·8	26·0	90	432,137	17·4
1923	222	645,651	701	1,643,181	39·2	2·9	89	255,542	15·5
1924	494	1,439,885	924	2,247,751	64·1	15·3	202	631,258	28·0
1925	342	1,084,633	855	2,193,404	49·5	16·4	108	382,855	17·4

Source: *Lloyd's Register*

YEAR	UK Nos.	UK Tons	WORLD Nos.	WORLD Tons	UK % of World	UK % Export Launchings	NORTH EAST Nos.	NORTH EAST Tons	% of World
1926	197	639,568	600	1,674,977	38·2	14·0	57	198,979	11·8
1927	371	1,225,873	802	2,285,679	53·6	21·8	129	567,197	24·8
1928	420	1,445,920	869	2,699,239	53·6	20·2	162	641,120	23·9
1929	489	1,522,623	1012	2,793,210	54·5	17·1	199	679,321	24·8
1930	481	1,478,563	1084	2,889,472	51·2	44·0	148	608,476	21·0
1931	148	502,487	596	1,617,115	31·1	40·7	35	168,796	10·4
1932	100	187,794	307	726,591	25·8	31·2	30	72,252	9·9
1933	108	133,115	330	489,016	27·2	9·1	23	37,419	7·5
1934	173	459,877	536	967,419	47·5	10·2	40	66,717	6·8
1935	185	499,011	649	1,302,080	38·3	12·8	43	134,929	10·3
1936	328	856,257	999	2,117,924	40·4	10·9	96	340,922	16·1
1937	309	920,822	1101	2,690,580	34·2	13·5	96	341,199	12·6
1938	267	1,030,375	1119	3,033,593	34·0	19·8	87	398,100	13·1
1939	201	629,705	941	2,539,424	24·8				
1940	229	842,910	495	1,754,198	48·1				
1941	245	1,185,894	510	2,491,173	47·6				
1942	273	1,270,714	1300	7,815,369	16·4				
1943	243	1,136,804	2078	13,884,776	8·0				
1944	279	919,357	1738	11,169,503	8·1				
1945	307	893,515	1326	7,192,679	12·7	2·03	112	433,758	6·1
1946	314	1,120,526	690	2,114,702	53·3	10·2	107	509,995	23·9
1947	343	1,192,759	787	2,102,621	56·9	31·6	103	474,842	22·6
1948	342	1,176,346	872	2,309,743	50·9	34·9	105	500,681	21·6
1949	320	1,267,467	926	3,131,805	40·5	41·2	96	531,121	16·7
1950	275	1,324,570	1013	3,492,876	38·0	33·3	82	538,956	15·4
1951	261	1,341,024	1022	3,642,564	36·8	44·9	77	616,894	16·9
1952	254	1,302,548	1074	4,395,578	29·6	31·8	72	540,333	12·5
1953	220	1,317,463	1143	5,096,050	25·9	27·7	73	612,110	12·0
1954	253	1,408,874	1233	5,252,631	26·8	34·2	72	576,111	10·9
1955	276	1,473,937	1437	5,314,850	27·7	36·6	75	623,970	11·7
1956	275	1,383,387	1815	6,670,218	20·7	31·4	72	639,304	9·5
1957	260	1,413,701	1950	8,501,404	16·6	18·5	72	624,187	7·3
1958	282	1,401,980	1936	9,269,983	15·1	24·1	78	688,626	7·4
1959	274	1,372,595	1808	8,745,704	15·7	8·4	70	618,581	7·1
1960	253	1,331,491	2020	8,356,444	15·9	11·0	66	614,980	7·2
1961	247	1,191,758	1990	7,940,005	15·01	23·6	61	568,442	7·1
1962	187	1,072,513	1901	8,374,754	12·8	15·4	46	461,420	5·5
1963	160	927,649	2001	8,538,513	10·9	30·6	36	440,171	5·1
1964	179	1,042,576	2147	10,263,803	10·1	14·3	45	530,108	5·1
1965	158	1,073,074	2280	12,215,817	8·8	12·7	35	455,120	3·7

	Hartlepool and Whitby		Middlesbrough and Stockton		Newcastle		Sunderland		TOTALS	
	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.
1892	36	98,623	46	103,725	94	181,508	75	186,440	251	570,296
1893	28	79,120	46	89,707	70	144,261	48	118,317	192	431,405
1894	30	81,839	45	104,071	106	190,601	71	168,257	252	544,768
1895	37	95,819	47	115,003	86	161,476	52	125,266	222	497,564
1896	29	82,093	63	112,932	103	200,746	85	215,956	280	611,727
1897	25	65,686	38	88,827	113	169,585	60	174,496	236	498,594
1898	44	125,791	51	140,729	120	238,551	84	258,754	299	763,825
1899	41	128,034	51	146,599	112	249,038	72	242,611	276	766,282
1900	40	140,623	44	144,164	110	265,142	70	244,371	264	794,300
1901	41	150,607	46	161,058	116	292,989	76	268,069	279	872,723
1902	21	81,824	40	108,230	130	280,860	67	230,091	258	701,005
1903	28	80,808	39	91,675	125	219,360	60	189,500	252	581,343
1904	31	96,154	38	110,236	116	236,055	72	229,135	257	671,580
1905	36	124,006	40	132,748	126	310,391	94	305,169	276	872,314
1906	44	144,603	44	147,857	149	385,987	97	326,701	334	1005,148
1907	28	94,469	48	138,621	131	292,814	90	291,606	297	817,510
1908	13	37,843	18	57,210	83	174,259	40	86,547	154	355,859
1909	18	57,712	27	62,492	95	182,235	57	132,371	197	434,810
1910	23	86,295	44	108,754	69	203,831	60	179,435	196	578,315
1911	34	135,557	95	141,934	117	412,959	85	286,828	331	977,278
1912	30	121,725	71	143,570	86	317,654	80	305,734	267	888,681
1913	33	153,071	62	154,743	94	366,331	78	299,964	267	974,109
1914	29	124,419	70	137,165	91	315,585	72	277,528	262	854,697
1915	13	59,308	30	58,574	36	124,001	31	110,942	110	352,825
1916	11	54,295	27	31,342	35	133,336	35	134,472	108	353,445
1917	13	65,622	23	109,306	52	231,907	48	204,398	136	611,233
1918[1]	25	100,413	24	109,298	55	266,594	58	260,553	162	736,858
1919	20	82,233	36	119,943	64	239,836	64	274,283	184	716,295
1920	16	73,221	44	195,452	83	365,775	67	314,454	210	948,902
1921	6	34,101	28	129,559	73	354,813	30	144,280	137	662,753
1922	4	18,822	17	45,814	42	240,788	27	126,713	90	432,137
1923	5	23,864	23	42,709	44	137,408	17	51,561	89	255,542
1924	14	55,804	56	105,707	76	275,672	56	194,075	202	631,258
1925	9	37,874	25	58,786	51	194,614	23	91,581	108	382,855
1926	3	14,814	21	22,369	25	126,609	8	35,187	57	198,979
1927	13	65,588	18	64,783	61	274,056	37	162,770	129	567,197
1928	9	39,743	33	93,223	70	300,508	50	207,646	162	641,120

Table II—*continued*

	Hartlepool and Whitby		Middlesbrough and Stockton		Newcastle		Sunderland		TOTALS	
	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.	No.	g.r.t.
1929	15	70,385	61	91,824	65	271,601	58	245,511	199	679,321
1930	14	39,481	40	71,935	54	323,750	40	173,306	148	608,476
1931	—	—	9	38,990	19	120,992	7	8,814	35	168,796
1932	7	31,911	14	13,487	7	24,226	2	2,628	30	72,252
1933	—	—	14	14,685	4	11,033	5	11,701	23	37,419
1934	2	1,100	21	16,238	9	30,169	8	19,210	40	66,717
1935	2	10,228	14	12,582	19	80,736	8	31,382	43	134,928
1936	9	41,015	40	51,667	21	109,441	36	138,799	96	340,922
1937	10	43,615	30	39,740	18	102,121	38	155,723	96	341,199
1938	11	47,633	16	39,569	25	141,897	35	169,001	87	398,100

WAR YEARS

	Hartlepool and Whitby		Middlesbrough and Stockton		Newcastle		Sunderland		TOTALS	
1945	10	45,270	15	50,342	37	122,635	49	215,511	111	433,758
1946	13	46,653	14	87,279	35	184,052	45	192,011	107	509,995
1947	11	43,309	16	56,072	35	185,914	41	189,547	103	474,842
1948	12	40,443	25	75,348	30	206,845	38	178,045	105	500,681
1949	7	27,967	22	104,075	30	217,971	37	181,108	96	531,121
1950	7	35,693	19	105,344	22	206,501	34	191,418	82	538,956
1951	9	50,506	16	125,556	24	243,499	28	197,333	77	616,894
1952	8	45,347	13	122,756	25	201,338	26	170,892	72	540,333
1953	6	29,180	13	153,544	27	234,714	27	194,672	73	612,110
1954	7	45,891	11	125,076	28	214,967	26	190,177	72	576,111
1955	6	32,665	10	130,776	30	238,146	29	222,383	75	623,970
1956	6	39,916	10	129,120	27	259,391	29	210,877	72	639,304
1957	5	38,238	10	111,877	29	263,274	28	210,798	72	624,187
1958	5	39,143	11	131,303	32	249,837	30	268,343	78	688,626
1959	3	20,305	7	92,875	32	257,874	28	247,527	70	618,581
1960	2	23,503	7	120,959	34	262,085	23	208,433	66	614,980
1961	2	19,559	5	95,628	27	193,942	27	259,313	61	568,442
1962	—	—	3	50,275	22	196,790	21	214,355	46	461,420
1963	—	—	5	81,830	15	154,355	16	203,986	36	440,171
1964	—	—	7	72,047	20	226,533	18	231,528	45	530,108
1965	—	—	2	43,513	18	158,930	16	252,677	36	455,120

Notes:

[1] In 1918 Whitby figures were included with those of Middlesbrough and Stockton rather than with Hartlepool

[2] Some small sailing vessels built by North East in this period, but negligible

TABLE III

MERCANTILE WORK IN HAND IN GROSS TONS

Source: Lloyd's Register of Shipping

	Hartlepool and Whitby	Middlesbrough and Stockton	Newcastle	Sunderland
1910				
June 30th	65,283	70,967	194,537	108,500
September 30th	54,048	65,648	204,016	109,273
December 31st	42,135	74,587	206,692	126,897
1911				
March 31st	69,430	76,408	241,159	156,803
June 30th	69,506	86,649	246,504	195,104
September 30th	51,686	81,908	255,247	185,808
December 31st	64,353	68,357	240,913	194,648
1912				
March 31st	78,230	84,077	261,471	201,050
June 30th	101,582	88,842	310,529	214,062
September 30th	97,725	91,196	320,843	210,105
December 31st	98,844	108,403	312,763	232,180
1913				
March 31st	106,805	108,210	335,310	245,674
June 30th	88,518	106,980	312,620	238,080
September 30th	81,502	100,973	297,250	236,450
December 31st	80,630	91,404	302,375	231,220
1914				
March 31st	83,750	83,315	319,227	204,066
June 30th	85,406	82,504	285,157	172,103
September 30th	79,880	69,258	302,831	191,064
December 31st	71,610	72,035	267,226	187,051
1915				
March 31st	61,830	86,915	300,997	161,342
June 30th	71,350	83,165	270,854	162,836
September 30th	73,530	85,855	263,591	176,685
December 31st	60,640	60,475	260,546	163,639
1916				
March 31st	72,800	43,405	294,116	169,129
June 30th	69,625	51,670	310,577	197,359
September 30th	72,275	76,480	401,926	220,004
1917				

	Hartlepool only	Middlesbrough Stockton and Whitby	Newcastle	Sunderland
1918				
June 30th	93,450	137,370	333,275	242,050
September 30th	82,000	130,100	330,755	218,245
December 31st	77,200	146,820	378,015	241,175
1919				
March 31st	75,600	148,420	433,932	259,467
June 30th	76,450	163,280	498,204	269,018
September 30th	77,320	227,565	536,960	286,390
December 31st	90,100	225,920	593,189	299,465
1920				
March 31st	89,140	217,790	629,408	346,215
June 30th				
September 30th	107,640	256,503	660,726	322,098
December 31st	97,960	281,031	658,112	327,120
1921				
March 31st	106,300	231,181	710,752	339,375
June 30th	89,965	213,258	680,334	328,488
September 30th	89,880	190,018	603,194	291,276
December 31st	67,405	134,075	516,776	203,654
1922				
March 31st	56,680	99,987	438,154	181,457
June 30th	46,530	75,124	384,304	144,301
September 30th	52,680	57,493	353,761	116,676
December 31st	32,340	83,395	265,097	102,583
1923				
March 31st	41,367	95,247	276,781	119,753
June 30th	31,127	72,513	222,652	127,495
September 30th	22,677	49,878	230,257	117,777
December 31st	41,597	52,615	247,850	139,064
1924				
March 31st	45,467	52,615	247,850	139,064
June 30th	45,090	70,508	258,568	135,638
September 30th	34,410	71,740	249,582	132,604
December 31st	40,680	54,735	224,019	103,734
1925				
March 31st	31,430	41,255	198,185	80,770
June 30th	28,745	39,649	222,221	71,262
September 30th	18,245	30,680	207,849	57,840
December 31st	18,115	31,670	165,586	46,910

	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough Stockton and Whitby	Newcastle	Sunderland
1926				
March 31st	29,760	22,617	160,237	53,478
June 30th	29,320	42,580	155,685	61,978
September 30th	19,620	43,810	127,344	46,425
December 31st	29,320	39,810	160,977	37,767
1927				
March 31st	45,730	94,961	251,842	114,488
June 30th	30,670	78,721	264,578	132,950
September 30th	45,100	77,232	254,871	166,197
December 31st	38,414	97,902	272,136	194,678
1928				
March 31st	41,108	83,020	246,004	162,346
June 30th	21,832	73,999	210,753	111,863
September 30th	16,990	45,364	160,366	65,146
December 31st	30,825	48,047	154,912	102,091
1929				
March 31st	39,058	78,903	178,990	157,601
June 30th	36,513	77,687	225,101	161,181
September 30th	34,930	57,977	224,446	175,864
December 31st	28,760	79,204	263,628	192,028
1930				
March 31st	38,440	70,944	324,423	149,236
June 30th	22,000	44,741	331,067	109,255
September 30th	6,200	59,500	251,926	63,097
December 31st	—	43,930	193,384	31,518
1931				
March 31st		39,720	141,317	21,260
June 30th		35,680	113,073	16,176
September 30th	5,400	9,055	80,318	10,920
December 31st	26,350	10,986	44,304	7,020
1932				
March 31st	26,350	12,917	35,760	7,020
June 30th	25,600	2,205	16,600	9,660
September 30th	10,400	—	11,140	9,648
December 31st	10,400	—	2,950	7,020

	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough Stockton and Whitby	Newcastle	Sunderland
1933				
March 31st	4,800	10,000	10,730	8,540
June 30th	4,800	16,430	14,705	16,040
September 30th	4,800	16,040	20,505	11,000
December 31st	4,800	10,750	15,140	12,180
1934				
March 31st	4,800	5,027	28,800	11,200
June 30th	5,880	10,613	51,650	13,200
September 30th	5,880	10,711	61,430	18,260
December 31st	4,800	11,188	59,905	14,880
1935				
March 31st	10,140	7,600	52,960	14,862
June 30th	10,140	6,460	53,575	20,518
September 30th	10,140	35,720	44,805	30,480
December 31st	23,840	37,084	65,215	55,706
1936				
March 31st	26,295	39,925	93,230	88,170
June 30th	30,150	23,927	108,663	109,450
September 30th	30,260	11,943	111,190	90,630
December 31st	35,070	16,130	119,463	130,605
1937				
March 31st	43,580	29,330	126,690	113,830
June 30th	46,890	39,405	138,919	140,960
September 30th	49,630	48,196	141,241	160,126
December 31st	46,985	39,846	129,611	169,697
1938				
March 31st	35,530	34,995	146,852	155,542
June 30th	30,370	35,760	158,603	125,737
September 30th	27,310	26,800	130,001	95,461
December 31st	13,700	29,012	129,385	61,601
1939				
March 31st	13,450	5,610	80,180	44,879
June 30th	26,922	25,630	91,036	118,955
1945				
September 30th	40,250	147,902	244,177	245,270
December 31st	40,970	112,336	292,089	223,198

	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough Stockton and Whitby	Newcastle	Sunderland
1946				
March 31st	39,060	93,352	314,968	197,310
June 30th	44,410	75,236	346,098	192,615
September 30th	49,310	105,876	358,522	203,170
December 31st	58,580	109,730	381,105	193,700
1947				
March 31st	53,100	102,838	410,485	206,803
June 30th	52,360	92,679	408,085	226,440
September 30th	53,010	93,751	412,235	228,186
December 31st	54,220	116,296	432,115	239,950
1948				
March 31st	54,370	120,921	408,025	225,920
June 30th	57,580	118,079	417,305	232,450
September 30th	55,272	120,314	425,260	231,975
December 31st	57,474	123,899	435,660	224,775
1949				
March 31st	49,739	123,700	392,930	215,765
June 30th	62,742	157,718	392,300	210,530
September 30th	48,072	173,530	403,770	207,194
December 31st	41,780	171,633	388,967	206,625
1950				
March 31st	49,080	135,553	399,253	200,626
June 30th	52,483	127,477	373,040	207,862
September 30th	53,840	132,209	379,293	241,821
December 31st	55,104	150,267	400,208	219,437

APPENDIX 3

P.O. Box 1
Pallion, Sunderland SR4 6TX
Telephone Sunderland (0783) 670143 & 75473
Telegrams Doxford Sunderland
Telex 53165

TO EMPLOYEES OF SUNDERLAND SHIPBUILDERS

he papers sent with this letter are those given to the Shipbuilding
egotiating Committee (S.N.C.) by British Shipbuilders at the
eeting on Wednesday, 12th October, 1983.

t Sunderland Shipbuilders the figures show a surplus of 89 employees:
hese could be selected from over 100 volunteers but we would need
o agree on more interchangeability to match people who want
edundancy with jobs actually surplus. With agreement, we could
eal with this without compulsory redundancy.

ince the loss of the Falklands barges, lay-offs cannot however be
uled out in the short term.

ooking at productivity, you have a copy of the National Survival
lan and linked with acceptance of this is an offer of £3.50 per week
or 26 weeks. In our Company we have a new Bonus Scheme ready for
cceptance with £121 already earned. The £3.50 could be paid in
ddition to this providing the Survival Plan is also agreed.

e need agreement on the Survival Plan for our own future; many of
he proposals contained in it are well known to Managers and Stewards
fter many hours of meetings on these subjects.

f everyone had been at work we should have given time to discuss
ith you the points in these papers; as it is, I hope you will see
hat contained in them is ultimately a message of hope for Sunderland
hipbuilders providing we are prepared to change.

R.D. CLARK
PERSONNEL MANAGER

MARKET FORECAST

WORLD

- WORLD SHIPBUILDING OVERCAPACITY IS CURRENTLY APPROX. 40 PERCENT

- DEMAND FOR NEW SHIPS WILL FALL UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF 1984 TO A LOW OF APPROX. 13M GRT

- FROM MID 1984 DEMAND IS EXPECTED TO RISE TO APPROX. 25M GRT by 1990

MARKET FORECAST

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS

- 1983-84   ACTUAL TO DATE PLUS EXPECTED   90,000 CGRT

- 1984-85   FORECAST   180,000 CGRT

- 1985-86   FORECAST   200,000 CGRT

- 1986-87   FORECAST   200,000 CGRT

B.S. COMPETITIVENESS

TO COMPETE WITH EUROPEAN SHIPYARDS ON A COSTS BASIS BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS MERCHANT SUBSIDIARIES MUST:

- REDUCE MATERIALS AND COMPONENTS COSTS

- REDUCE OVERHEADS AT SUBSIDIARIES AND AT THE CENTRE

- REDUCE PRODUCTION MANHOURS

   - MANAGEMENT AND STAFF MUST PLAN AND ORGANISE BETTER

   - WORKFORCE MUST APPLY COMPETITIVE WORKING PRACTICES

EUROPEAN COMPETITION

EXAMPLE

PANAMAX BULK CARRIER

1980   -   650,000 MANHOURS

1983   -   400,000 MANHOURS

23 PERCENT REDUCTION

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS REQUIRES MORE THAN 650,000 MANHOURS FOR SIMILAR SHIP

B.S. ORDERS POTENTIAL

- NOT MORE THAN SIX POSSIBLE ORDERS ARE FORESEEN FOR MERCHANT VESSELS IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

- MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ORDERS FOR 2 X TYPE 22 FRIGATES AND ONE SUBMARINE ARE EXPECTED.

- A SMALL NUMBER OF MOD (N) SUPPORT CRAFT ORDERS ARE POSSIBLE.

- A LIMITED AMOUNT OF MISCELLANEOUS WORK IS EXPECTED.

- ANTICIPATED BUSINESS WILL BE INADEQUATE TO SUSTAIN ALL FACILITIES.

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS LOSSES

- B.S. LOSSES FOR 1983-84 MAY APPROXIMATE £100M

- TO REDUCE LOSSES B.S. MUST:

    - IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS

    - DISPOSE OF SURPLUS ASSETS

    - CONCENTRATE ON MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES

- GOVERNMENT LOSS FUNDING MAKES UNLIKELY EEC APPROVAL OF ANY IMPROVED DIRECT PRICE SUPPORT

PAY

- FOR 1983-84 BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS CANNOT AGREE TO ANY GENERAL WAGE INCREASE

- BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS HOPES TO NEGOTIATE QUICKLY A SELF-FINANCING PRODUCTIVITY PAYMENT SCHEME

B.S. MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES

BS WILL CONCENTRATE ON MERCHANT SHIPBUILDING

BS WILL CONTINUE IN OFFSHORE SUBJECT TO COMMERCIAL LEVEL OF ORDERS AND PERFORMANCE

BS WILL DISPOSE OF SURPLUS ASSETS TO REDUCE COSTS AND REALISE CAPITAL

BS WILL REVIEW ALL NON MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES AND WILL DISPOSE OF NON PROFITABLE PARTS

BS WILL ACT UPON ANY WARSHIPBUILDING DISPOSAL DECISIONS BY GOVERNMENT

BRITISH SHIPBUILDERS

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR SURVIVAL

PREAMBLE

At the present time, B.S. is facing a major workload crisis and to
secure further work must achieve major reductions in the cost-price
gap. The industry must obtain substantial improvements in productivity
and unit costs to improve its competitive position and long term
survival. To achieve this, B.S. is seeking a radical reappraisal of
its operations and particularly;-

(i)   Design, planning, scheduling and production engineering,
        production methods, quality control and computer applications.

(ii)   Improved supervision, work organisation, flexibility,
        interchangeability and communications.

Much of this work will require the introduction of advanced
manufacturing techniques and computer systems. To succeed, will
require a fundamental change in the basic approach to our business and
the active support, acceptance and co-operation of all employees is
crucial.

It is mutually agreed therefore that this section provides the basis
for subsidiary companies to jointly review their operations and to
conclude local agreements which support this National framework:-

1. ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TECHNIQUES AND COMPUTER SYSTEMS

    1.1. It is recognised that to improve performance and
       • productivity, companies need a radical reappraisal of their
         existing operations. As part of this, both parties agree to
         the introduction of advanced manufacturing techniques and
         computer systems involving better and earlier planning and
         production engineering, scheduling and material control,
         improved work organisation and production methods.

         It is agreed that these new techniques, equipment and systems
         will be introduced and will be used on an ongoing and
         continuous basis, and will involve:-

         (i)   Communication and training programmes aimed at
                  familiarising employees with these new techniques
                  and providing the necessary skills.

(ii)·   New methods of working, new systems both manual and computer for scheduling and monitoring the progress of work, for time charging and for cost control.

(iii)   Redefined duties to operate these advanced techniques.

(iv)   Use of control techniques (e.g. quality and accuracy control) including self certification.

1.2.   Both parties agree to the following approach for both advanced manufacturing techniques and computer systems.

1.3   Consultation on all applications during which, discussions will take place on the following:-

   (i)   The scope of application involving the type, location, and areas of work affected.

   (ii)   The timing of introduction including any trial periods.

   (iii)   Health and Safety aspects.

   (iv)   Training.

1.4.   An introductory period of 12 months during which a full evaluation of the effects of the application can be carried out. To assist with the evaluation, companies can introduce techniques such as activity sampling, job analysis, systems charting and the like. Any disputes will be resolved using the National Procedure Agreement.

• Note: The 12 month period will commence when the plant/equipment/process is available and operational.

1.5. Where applications in the form of new techniques or computer systems are introduced, then it is accepted that they will continue to be used or operated throughout any introductory period referred to in 1.4. above, even though the procedure agreement may be exhausted.

1.6. It is jointly agreed that benefits to employees resulting from the operation of new techniques/computer systems shall accrue through the operation of approved productivity bonus schemes. No payment other than through the operation of approved productivity bonus schemes shall be made to employees, other than where the evaluation referred to in 1.4. above has identified a significant change in individual skills and responsibility. In such a case, the individual employee will be re-graded using existing domestic wage and salary structures.

1.7. In the case of major capital expenditure full agreement will be required on all aspects of use and operation, including manning and employee provisions, prior to the Corporation approving the investment of its limited resources.

3. INTERCHANGEABILITY/FLEXIBILITY

The nature of work in the industry is such that it is essential for employees at all levels to work effectively, and to recognise that change will be a normal part of their working life. Therefore, all employees must be prepared to acquire new skills, and to remove customary practices where they are no longer appropriate.

To meet the demands of competition it is accepted that new working practices will be adopted which match those of our international competitors and enable companies to respond to changing work priorities, product and workload fluctuations. The key elements of these new practices which need to be implemented urgently and to the fullest effect are:-

INTERCHANGEABILITY

3.1. All levels of staff will be interchangeable as required according to their individual skills and experience.

3.2. Hourly paid employees will be interchangeable within their main group, providing they are capable of undertaking the work required, i.e. within steelworking, outfitting and ancillary groups.-

3.3. Skilled employees will also be required to be interchangeable across groups and trades, providing they are capable of undertaking the work required, and will also undertake ancillary work as appropriate.

3.4. Ancillary employees will also be required to undertake tasks within their ability, including work which skilled employees have in some cases traditionally retained, but which can be competently undertaken by other employees after retraining.

3.5. All employees will be fully mobile within their company and between areas and departments, including maintenance and production.

FLEXIBILITY

3.6. Skilled employees, in order to progress the completion of their own work will undertake their own servicing and particularly:-

     (i)   Outfit trades will undertake servicing activities of drilling, tack stud and other non structural welding, hi-cycle grinding, slinging, good housekeeping and simple maintenance and similar activities;

     (ii)   Steelworking trades to undertake servicing activities of caulking, burning, drilling, tack and other non structural welding, slinging, good housekeeping and simple maintenance and similar activities.

     (iii)   Machine operators to operate, clean, remove finished parts and remove swarf etc.

3.7. As part of the above arrangements, it is agreed that in order that employees will use the full range of their skills and abilities to maximum advantage, companies will have the option of establishing area supervision and integrated groups of workers as required.

For Example

     (i)   Area supervision with full acceptance by both staff and hourly paid.

(ii)   Multi-trade manning of workstations, with full flexibility/interchangeability to progress work and reduce waiting time within the group.

(iii)   Pipeworker squads including plumbers, coppersmiths and fitters, so that all pipework can be manufactured and installed by one pipeworking group.

(iv)   Ancillary worker groups.

(v)   Redleaders and painters to form joint painting squads.

3.8.   It is stressed that the above provisions will be used against the basic belief that employees work best in their own skills,and therefore it is in the interest of the industry to use its employees on work which fully utilises their skills and experience.

NOTES:

(i)   Any detailed Agreement reached under the above paragraphs must take full account of any retraining which may be necessary; the individual competence of the employee(s) involved and all aspects of safe working practices and health protection.

(ii)   The terms and conditions of existing working practice agreements in companies shall be superseded by any arrangement concluded within the terms of this framework agreement.

4.   MANPOWER RESOURCES

In order to reduce the cost-price gap and improve performance, it is recognised that a full reappraisal of any traditional manpower scales or ratios will be required. Both parties agree that:-

4.1.   Management is responsible for establishing effective organisation structures together with a balanced work force and for determining manpower scales or ratios, on the basis of productive methods of operation and workload.

4.2.   Management is responsible for determining the manning requirements for operating equipment, processes, and

other Production functions as well as plant and machinery, on the basis of the most productive methods of working, the competence of employees and all aspects of safety and health protection.

4.3. It is management's responsibility to balance manning with workload and to determine priority actions. In doing so, it is recognised that a range of measures will need to be employed, which will include the following:-

(i) Temporary transfers to and from other B.S. subsidiaries.

(ii) Recruitment, including the use of short term/fixed term contracts.

(iii) Sub contracting, in respect of materials, work and special skills, both within and outside the Corporation.

(iv) Overtime working.

(v) Shift working, including where necessary, nightshift, double dayshift, linkshift and continuous manning.

(vi) Lay off and short time working.

4.4. It is agreed that all the above measures will be used, but where separate national understandings exist or are agreed nationally on any single measure, then the terms of the national agreement will be overriding.

4.5. It is further agreed that consultation will be essential to the effective operation of all of the above measures, but recognising the critical nature of the need to maintain or recover the programme, it is agreed that local consultation will be completed and the measures implemented if necessary, within 5 working days from the commencement of joint discussions.

5. PRODUCTIVE USE OF THE WORKING DAY

5.1. Currently within the industry, a large proportion of the working day is lost through poor planning, scheduling, lack of materials, tools and equipment and by lost time associated with tea breaks, and starting and finishing practices.

It is recognised that it is management's responsibility to organise and control the measures by which productive working can be significantly improved, and the areas which will require urgent attention at local level include:-

(i) Planning and scheduling arrangements.

(ii) The availability of materials, tools, equipment and technical information.

(iii) Shift arrangements and particularly periods of overlap.

(iv) Management and supervisory involvement at workstations.

(v) Timekeeping and absenteeism control at all levels.

(vi) Controlled starting and stopping times.

(vii) Phasing of tea and meal breaks at times to meet employee and production needs.

6. MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

The most effective use of resources detailed in Phases 1-4 are re-affirmed except where ammended or superseded by this document.

7. CONCLUSION

It is agreed that the above measures are essential for the survival of the industry. It is jointly accepted that it is critical for each company and each workplace to produce agreements based on this framework, related to their own particular needs. For such actions to work the commitment at all levels will be essential, and although the document stresses the managerial role, it is a core ingredient that the trade unions, their representatives and employees are fully involved. Survival will be a joint effort.

...IDIARY	REDUNDANCIES July/Aug/Sept'83	REDUNDANCY ANNOUNCEMENT Oct/Nov/Dec.	ADDITIONAL JOBS AT RISK Jan/Feb/March'84	TOTAL
...n & ...rsgill	752	-	-	752
	450	280	400	1130
...'s Dock	78	150	-	228
...rland	263	-	-	263
...Hunter	660	-	-	660
	34	.	-	34
...nds	53	Last Del. Nov. - (405)	-	53
	36	Last Del. Dec. - (370)	-	36
...son	29	-	-	29
...Robb	322	Last Del. Oct. - (390)	-	322
...L MERCHANT	2677	430	400	3507
...k Hawthorn	46	-	Review after 3 months)	46
...Kincaid	110	50	)	160
...TS) Limited	19	-	)	19
...erland Forge	110	-	)	110
...send Slipway	0	82	)	82
...L ENGINEERING	285	1..	0	417
...ell Laird	0	650	750	1400
...t Lithgow	818	734	600	2152
...L OFFSHORE	818	1384	1350	3552
...UK) limited	69	68	362	499
...lay Curle	98	56	-	154
...ke Marine	0	-	150	150
...ers S & E	0	-	150	150
...L WARSHIP	167	124	662	953
...TES) Limited	20	-	-	20
...odynamics	0	28	-	28
...L OTHERS	20	28	0	48
...SECTORS	3967	2098*	2412	8477*

...ludes jobs at risk indicated thus ( ).
...ludes Shiprepair.

SUNDERLAND SHIPBUILDERS LIMITED

PRODUCTIVITY
AGREEMENT
1984

A GUIDE TO THE PROPOSALS

1. The Reason for the Agreement is to help win
    back work that has been going to the more
    competitive European and Far Eastern Shipyards.
    For example, these yards are quoting 450,000
    hours for a similar class ship to 865 ship, the
    Hupeh, compared to 825,000 hours which we
    took and which for us was a good improvement.

    The Agreement is just part of what we are
    doing—but a very important part—to increase
    each person's contribution and to help keep down
    costs.

    We also hope that the Agreement will give
    everyone a real opportunity to improve earnings
    through our bonus incentive scheme.

THE MAIN POINTS

2. WORKING TOGETHER means bringing together

1

people who between them have the skills to carry out and finish the job. That way there will be less wasted time, a better job and more job satisfaction.

The term in the Agreement for this is 'Composite Groups'. The groups will be responsible for unit or area completion, usually with one Supervisor, and the people in it will have the skills required. Each person will be expected to carry out whatever work is necessary to complete the job, including work that has been thought of as 'belonging' to only one group. Re-training will be organised and jobs on which Composite Groups will work have been identified.

The same idea is applied to staff such as technical, commercial and production staff working in teams together and sharing information and problem solving to produce a better result more quickly and with less misunderstanding.

Interchangeability and Trade Groups

Our Steelworkers have already shown what is possible with interchangeability; the Outfit Trades still have some training to be completed and Ancillaries are 100% interchangeable. The Agreement gives full interchangeability within each main trade group.

Sharing the available work helps to keep everyone

in Sunderland Shipbuilders Limited employed. When there is a shortage of work, what is available will be shared between trades and trade groups, after re-training. The Agreement gives complete interchangeability across trade groups during periods of shortages or surpluses of manpower.

Ancillary employees could help with parts of a job that do not need a skilled man's experience leaving skilled employees with more time for their trade skills. The Agreement means that Ancillaries will undertake some work where there is no definable skill content.

4. Introduction of New Techniques

Many of us recognise the need to update equipment (e.g. computers) and techniques but find problems in that this conflicts with our other interests such as Trade Unions, pay, demarcation.

We should try new techniques first and get them working while talks are going on about these other matters. That means no delay in using the techniques that have helped foreign shipbuilders grab a bigger share of our markets.

5. Local Review of Manning Levels

No one likes to think his job is over-manned; but probably everyone will agree that all long

2

3

established practices need review occasionally. This review will be carried out using proper methods. If there is no agreement then the Procedure for the Avoidance of Disputes can be used but the changes can take place for a three month trial period while we talk the matter through.

Voluntary Two-Shift Working

In just some areas, two-shift working can be useful, e.g. preparation, painting, berth erection. It can help to avoid bottlenecks which hold up other people. It is worth on average £20.00 per week (for a Tradesman) and in addition full consideration will be given to overtime opportunity.

It will be worked on a voluntary basis only so if a shiftworker's circumstances change and shifts do not suit him, then he can go back to daywork.

Change the Coffee Break

Taking a break to have a hot drink during a work period is quite a boost especially on a winter's day if you have been working in the open air. The problem is that it knocks a hole in the morning's work — jobs stop, paint sets, everyone moves around on and off ships — and we reckon it costs about half an hour on average per person over and above the actual break time.

We want to move the break to 7.30 a.m. — 7.50 a.m. so that people can have a hot drink, etc., between arriving at work and starting work. This would give four hours before the next break and if this seems a long time to some, then take a snack or hot drink onto your job and have it there. We will not object providing everyone is sensible about it.

8. **Half-Hour Dinner Break**

An hour's dinner break can seem a long time and compared to half an hour's break it is also extra time to heat and light the Yards. So there is a double bonus — there is an energy saving and you can get home half an hour earlier instead of sitting in the amenity waiting for the buzzer.

9. **The Local Productivity Agreement 1984**

This booklet is a guide only and full details are available from Personnel Officers or members of Management. The guide does cover the main points — nothing has been deliberately left out and the wording has been kept simple avoiding the legal type jargon in which Agreements tend to be written.

10. **Reaching Agreement by 10th February, 1984**

Providing we can reach agreement by 10th February, 1984, then a payment of £7.00 per

normal week will be added to earnings AND backdated to 1st November, 1983. On 10th February that will be worth more than £100 back pay (for full attendance).

If we do not reach agreement by 10th February, then the back pay is lost for good.

We will be meeting representatives throughout and your views are vital. GET THE FACTS. Think of our future, then decide.

APPENDIX 4

NORTH SANDS DISLIKES

Everything	4

Management

Do not like management	7
Bad management	6
Bad organisation	1
No planning	3
Attention of management to workforce (ignorant and flippant, high handed, dogmatic, bullying, arrogant, petty, persecuting)	67
Treated like children, dirt, serfs, slaves, animals	8
Too much hassle/harassment, facist dictatorship	3
Too many threats, bookings	2
More inteterested in times than getting jobs done	4
No respect from management	2
No trust from management	1
Poor workforce management relations,	8
No trust, no discussion	1

Work

Lack of job security	6
No team work	1
14 day working clause	1
Working practices do not seem to be working	2
Too many contractors do not like using stud gun	
Bad inter-department communications	
No training to allow movement to other departments	
Do not like working in both	2

NORTHSANDS LIKES

Nothing	60
It is a job / better than dole	46
Friendship of workforce	9
Steady job	2
Proximity to home	13
Interesting and valid work	8
Educational policies	1
Satisfaction of job completion	2
Working outside	2
Pay day	6
Holidays	2
Nightshift	1
Overtime	1

Ship building has been my life for 29 years. I like
the place.
Life long association.
It was better 30 years ago.
Challenge of overcoming adversity.

Air of gloom and despondency hangs over yard
Company from top to bottom has no wish to foster a team
spirit
Management back-stabbing
Total disenchantment of workforce with company
confrontational attitude constantly adopted by management
I was proud to work for S.S.B. years ago but not now
Company has introduced Japanese practices but not for
themselves - still have free meals etc.
1 director said 'get this rabble home' meaning workers who
had just got back from shiptrials at sea
This is the worst job I've had in 45 years in shipbuilding
Disciplinary rules misconstrued and abused by management
Are management prepared to give up perks to preserve future
of company as men have had to do, by giving up canteen
facilities
How can management take man out of yard with shipyard
property to his home to do work in company hours
Workforce have some excellent ideas on improving company
performance but most are frustrated by management,
supervisors not committed or don't care

PAY

Poor	212
A & P comparison	77
No bonus or incentive	52
Bonus promised and not paid	11
Where is our £500	5
Contractors	43
Little job security	34
Poor overtime rates	2

Overtime too long on ½ shifts
That I am only temporary
Poor redundancy pay
No one understands bonus system
Inequality between staff and workforce
  especially re sick pay
Personal rewards not adequate for expected
  contribution
Wages lower than other yards but we have more
  training and interchangability
Why do contractors get more for same work
Why after all cutbacks are we still worst paid yard

PALLION - COMMENTS FROM "FREE ANSWERS"

DISLIKES

Everything   28

Management

Bad Management	64
Bad attitude of managers and supervisors	254
Treated like children	35
treated like an animal	1
treated like slaves	2
treated like machines	1
treated like a number	5
Management by victimisation and threats	10
Management by fear	2
Too much harrassment	19
Too much booking and nametaking	52
Management too concerned with petty things	4
Bad atmosphere	7
dictatorial attitude	4
Management have no respect for workforce	20
Workforce dont trust management	16
Workforce have no confidence in management	6
'us and them' attitude of management	7
dogmatic attitude of management	3
victorian attitude of management	3
narrowminded attitude of management	1
no co-operation between management and workforce	11
no negotiation/consultation of workforce	4
no communication between management and workforce	20
poor management/workforce relations	73
management don't listen	5
too many managers and supervisors	27
supervisors no training in craft they are supervising	4
Management don't know what they are doing	5
Management should adopt more honest approach	3
Workforce oversupervised	
lack of leadership	
lack of organisation	10
No or bad planning	8
Low morale of workforce	9
Broken promises from management	3
Management attitude of 'jobs for the boys'	
Too many management posts	5
disregard shown to unions	6
Certain Managers always upsetting workforce	
Management "blackmailer"	
"bully boy tactics of Management"	
"obey Managers or else"	

Regimented attitude of management
Junior supervisors and management seem incompetent in
liaisons with workforce - see things only their way
Management unable to get good working relationship
There is feeling of mutual contempt between management and
shopfloor
Being treated unfairly (you've got to work here to
understand that)
Being told we're alone but we're getting less money and
poorer working conditions
Class distinction - i.e. directors calling workforce
'rabble'
Treated like idiots, led by idiots, paid like idiots
Petty management
Management stinks, are corrupt
Management are concerned with time wasted and petty things
rather than time wasted waiting for materials which could
have been bought locally.
Management upstarts in wrong job
Poor feedbacks and misleading information from management
Total lack of meaningful discussion between management and
men
Men- totally demoralised - need to be encouraged and
nurtured - sick of being stamped into ground
Management more concerned with policing methods instead of
encouraging me to turn out a good job
Management lack of concern about individual
Being social outcast and always being depressed
Attititude of management to workforce is one of hatred and
hysterics
Jobs for the boys
Management don't know how to talk to workforce
Management don't go about getting people to work together
in the right way
Passing the blame to workforce, 'buck stops here'
Management don't listen and have killed off any job
satisfaction and enjoyment I once had
After 21 years working here not a lot to like now with this
management
Perks for management i.e. free work done on property, done
during working hours
Management hellbent on upsetting workforce - no harmony at
all
Too much private work done for mangement
Relations and members of certain bodies get promotion
When will we be able to enjoy coming to work?
Management won't listen to sound judgement of workers with
vast amounts of experience
Too much politics not enough negotiation
Total commitment of management to make everyone's life
total misery.
 No sense of get up and go
Strategy seems more important than trust
Failure to understand that underlings can contribute
without threats
Failure of senior management to recognise that individuals
matter

PALLION LIKES

Nothing	209
its a job, better than dole	175
payday	55
interesting work	37
proximity to home	27
working undercover	14
job security	4
good working conditions	5
friendly atmosphere amongst workforce	32
training and education	5
job satisfaction	5
selection: 'end of day buzzer'	
'Friday 4.20','the road out', 'Saturday'	30

DEPTFORD LIKES

Nothing		66
It is a job	46	57
Better than dole	11	
Local		3
Freindly atmosphere (on shopfloor)		10
Good attitude of management and workforce		1
Good working conditions		1
Job security		6
Overtime		1
Flexibility of holidays		1
Helpful supervisors		1
Management of further education		1
Certain amount of decision making allowed		1

Only time I like working here is when there are
signs of spirit and atmosphere of yard as it was
4 or 5 years ago.

DEPTFORD DISLIKES

Nothing written down	8
Nothing disliked	10
Everything	10

Management

Bad management	13
Attention of management and supervisors	41
Bad industrial relations	9
Too many managers and supervisors	3
Treated like school children	3
Warnings and threats given too much	4
'All take no give'	2
No communication between management and workforce	4
Manager cheated employees out of £500	10
Low morale	2
Promotion by 'who not what' you know	4
Blame for problems passed down to workforce	1
Management perks (especially free hot meals)	8
Lack of or bad organisation	2

Only time we work well together is when there is
a rush eg. for launch and trials when management
ignore everything

Pay

Low pay	53
No bonus incentive	12
Compensation with A and P	5
Not paid £500 by management as promised	5
Having to work overtime	1
Poor redundancy pay	2
Working in a short contract	1

Conditions

Poor	25
Poor first aid facilities	1
Low safety standards	1
Working with insulation welding	1
Poor amenities	9
Specifically: lack of canteen facilities	10
toilets in poor condition	3
less overalls than before	3
cold conditions	4

DEPTFORD – COMMENTS FROM OPEN QUESTION

Bad management	13
Bad attitude of management and supervisors	26
Too many threats and warnings	4
"All take and no give"	2
Too many supervisors and managers	9
Management do not like suggestions	2
Bad/poor organisaiton	2
Bad industrial relations	5
Management perks (especially canteen)	4
Low morale	2
Shifting of blame down to workforce	3
"have no faith in company"	
"attitude of men is one of despair"	
No communication	3

Pay

Too low	29
Should compare with A and P	12
No bonus or incentive	15
Where is our £500	12
Conditions poor	8
Ammenities	2
Specifically – No canteen	6
Disgusting state of showers and toilets	4
Lack of overalls	2
Poor safety	6
Cold	2
Staff get better sick conditions than workforce	2
Not enough leave when close relative dies	2
Should be longer paternity leave	1

Job

No job satisfaction	2
Little or no security	5
Equipment unsuitable or inadequate	6
Not enough training	2
Contractors	2
Prep and fab poor	1
Dislike temporary employment	1
Feel there is no future for me as ancillary worker	1
Not enough information	2

Would like more information on company, its
   future and any new orders   53
Poor quality and lack of availability
   of tools and machines   11
Boring repetitive work
Not being able to develop new skills
Poor prospects lead to apathy
Q.C. system not working
Seeming lack of standards in inspections
   which causes lack of confidence when working
   with owners reps and having to reply
   'I don't know' to 90% of any questions
   relating to specific standards on tolerance
Misuse of skills
Lack of training
Responsibility of job taken away from tradesman.
taken away job satisfaction
Employees should be given more trust to work
on their own
Disagree with interchangability
Constantly having to move equipment - general
outlining of jobs poor
Inability of company to use employees skills
and abilities to greater extent
No faith in new workpacks
Too much re-work
Departments working against each other   3
Everyone too concerned with production, and
ignoring training which is future of
   shipbuilding
Run down of craft trades
Material shortage prevents job progression
Not enough help for apprentices
Too many supervisors know nothing of the
particular trade they're responsible for
Material allocation should be sorted out
Would like to see Artemis system looked
into
Plant department undermanned.   Planners sould
be trained in use of CADCAM
Commissioning departments should be given
   technical status
Working here was a pleasure - now a drag
no job satisfaction   2

CONDITIONS

Poor working conditions	55
Poor health and safety	13
Fumes	14
Poor amenities	17
Poor ventilation	2
Polution in atmosphere	9
Red leading	
Poor toilet facilities	10
Poor canteen facilities	3
Too cold	13
Noise	2
No facilities for drying overalls	2

working inside
safety greatly ignored
ventilation not up to standard
 e.g. houses accommodation all completed
 before windows put in
dislike going home scruffy - can't get
muck from hands and nails
bring back coffee machines

Any information about company you would like to receive

Information on future job prospects
   and orders   11.
Generally more information about firm   4

COMMENTS

Why does management tell lies?   Less lies
Why can't Mr Welch explain points to unions and men without coming with
the 'take it or leave it' attitude
Why does it take three weeks to see personnel
Why does management persecute sick and disabled
Where's our £500 pound 'thieves'
Bombastic attitude of company
What do I have to do to get management to realise I am a human being,
not mindless unfeeling robot! HELP!
More manpower needed to compete with other yards in completing delivery
dates
What are management and staff ratios compared to shop floor work force
Forced old jobs and procedures by Big Brother
Company promised through Mr Welch that we would be envy of shipbuilding
industry (i.e. more wages and bonuses). We are now bottom of all
shipyards in wage league and still waiting for bonus
Thank Mr Welsh for his effort on our behalf
Lies told by management re wages and bonus which we never get
Slave labour
Management don't give a damn about workforce
Management - dictators
No faith in company
✗ Mr Welch would have done well in SS
More protective equipment
Contractors costing more than when workforce did jobs and then it was
much safer
Want to be treated like human being not number
Who is getting back handers for allowing contractors in
Improved talks between management and men
More trusting relationship must exist between both sides

[handwritten] Bri.. Welsh - rose from shop floor to become M.D. was "ease-out"
- 1986 - now running an outfit on Teeside.

QUESTION 3

"Sunderland Shipbuilders is recognised as a leader in its field."
(circle the number which corresponds most closely to your view)

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	46	19	32
Deptford	37	19	40
N Sands	41	27	29
Main office	72	15	12
Aggregate	46	19	30

The above indicate a relative split in opinion on this question, with a majority of three to two amongst thoseholding any opinion that Sunderland Shipbuilders is indeed a recognised leader in its field. Whilst this is not a particularly high figure, it does approach half of the working population, and given the low morale indicated elsewhere it does seem to indicate that there is still a strong reservoir of pride.

There are interesting differences between the various geographical sites on this question. Pallion Yard and North Sands express similar views on this matter, whereas Deptford Yard has a slight majority in favour of this who feel that Sunderland Shipbuilders is not a recognised leader in its field.   Some 8% more than Pallion and 11% more than North Sands feel that it is not a recognised leader.   The most interesting difference is that expressed by those in the main offices. It can be seen from these statistics that 72% of those questioned in the main offices felt that Sunderland Shipbuilders is a recognised leader in its field, whereas only 12% felt that this was not the case.

QUESTION 4

"Sunderland Shipbuilders does not have a good image on Wearside.

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	50	13	35
Deptford	53	14	29
N Sands	55	16	26
Main office	39	15	46
Aggregate	49	14	34

Approximately half of the population agree that Sunderland Shipbuilders does not have a good image on Wearside, and approximately one-third disagree.   Compared to the answers to Question 3, this would indicate that whilst a proportion of the workforce feel that the company is a recognised leader in the industry, that its image locally is not good.

Again there is a difference of opinion between the localities. · The overall figure of 49% agreeing that Sunderland Shipbuilders does not have a good image on Wearside masks the slightly higher percentage of people within each yard who feel that that is the case and the low per centage of 39% within the main offices who feel that the company has a poor image locally. Indeed, within the main offices a majority of 46% indicate that they feel the company has a good image locally.

It is interesting to note that although on other questions the main offices have given more positive answers than have those employees in the yards, on this question there is a stronger feeling that Sunderland Shipbuilders is not a good place to work; 44% as against 36%.

QUESTION 5

"Sunderland Shipbuilders is a pretty good place to work - I would re-commend a friend or member of my family to work here."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	16	9	74
Deptford	17	11	71
N Sands	11	7	81
Main office	36	20	44
Aggregate	18	10	70

Clear indication that the considerable majority of employees feel that this is not a good place to work. In other questionnaires we have carried out, it is possible to observe that whilst there are many complaints and grumbles about one's workplace it is still possible to feel that overall it is a fairly good place to work, and consequently that one would recommend it to family and friends. It is in answer to this question that we see that the concerns that the workforce have go particularly deep.

QUESTION 6

How successful do you think we are in this company?

	Very successful		Not successful at all
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	25	30	44
Deptford	23	24	49
N Sands	24	28	47
Main office	51	20	27
Aggregate	27	27	43

Just over a quarter of the population thinking that the company is successful, a similar proportion unsure about the situation, and something under a half feeling that it is not successful. One way of judging these responses is for management to determine how it thinks the workforce ought to have answered here. For example if management think the workforce should be aware that the company is not successful at the moment, then it would be of concern that 27% still feel it is. However if management feel the company is being successful at the moment, there would be even more concern that 43% do not seem to share that view. Whichever of these is the most realistic appraisal, the spread of opinion itself is of some concern in that there is no clear picture of the current performance of the organisation. Given that this is the case, any initiative or plan taken by management is bound to receive a mixed response from these differing opinion bases. This mixed response is likely to militate against the success of any initiative. It is important then to establish as far as possible a common view of the current position.

As with other questions, the aggregate answer accords fairly well with the individual scores of the yards. The position in the main offices is almost the reverse in that half feel that the company is successful and 27% feel that it is not successful. We are clearly beginning to build up considerable differences of opinion betweeen those employed in the offices and those employed in the yards. Of those expressing an opinion there is a majority of 3 to 1 for the view that the company does not have a good record in improving productivity. On this question the majority of those expressing an opinion in the main offices agree with the majority of their colleagues in the yards. However, the feeling is less strong; 44% to 35%.

QUESTION 7

How good do you think the Company's record is in improving productivity?

	Very good		Not good at all
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	18	16	65
Deptford	19	16	62
N Sands	18	15	66
Main office	35	21	44
Aggregate	20	16	61

General agreement within the yards that the company's record is not good, the view less widely held in the main offices.

QUESTION 8

How do you rate Sunderland Shipbuilders' business prospects over the next year compared with last year?

| | Much better | | Much worse |
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	20	21	58
Deptford	16	13	68
N Sands	12	19	65
Main office	30	20	50
Aggregate	20	19	59

Overall a 3 to 1 majority of those expressing an opinion feeling that business prospects will become worse over the next year. All locations agree with this. The view being held slightly less strongly in the main offices, with 30% of the main office staff feeling that the situation will be better in the next year.

QUESTION 9

"Senior management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the Company's future."

| | Agree | | Disagree |
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	10	9	80
Deptford	12	6	79
N Sands	9	7	81
Main office	30	15	51
Aggregate	13	8	75

Once again, the overall figures of 75% who feel that management cannot be trusted to make sensible decisions for the company's future and 13% feel that they can, hides differing emphasis between the yards who agree with other almost totally in that within the yards the figure is approximately 80% feeling that management cannot be trusted to make sensible decisions and roughly 10% feeling that they can, whereas in the main offices 51% feel that management cannot be trusted to make sensible decisions and 30% feel that they can.

°n

What do you think accounts for hold-ups in the work flow?

	A major cause		Not a cause
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Equipment breakdowns/faults			
Pallion	39	16	32
Deptford	45	15	28
N Sands	51	17	24
Main office	17	17	53
Aggregate	38	16	32

(Quite high voids between 7.5 and 15%)

	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Special work/rework			
Pallion	58	14	15
Deptford	46	14	24
N Sands	59	19	11
Main office	57	14	18
Aggregate	55	14	17

	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Materials supply problems			
Pallion	57	10	23
Deptford	50	13	22
N Sands	62	12	18
Main office	34	15	38
Aggregates	53	12	24

	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Bottlenecks			
Pallion	48	18	22
Deptford	43	20	21
N Sands	50	17	20
Main office	34	20	31
Aggregate	45	18	22

	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Low employee performance			
Pallion	16	14	56
Deptford	20	8	54
N Sands	15	14	61
Main office	32	16	40
Aggregate	19	13	54

Poor time keeping

Pallion	11	13	64
Deptford	11	12	60
N Sands	10	14	67
Main office	9	20	58
Aggregate	10	13	62

Not enough people

Pallion	37	13	40
Deptford	45	9	32
N Sands	44	13	33
Main office	49	11	30
Aggregate	40	12	35

Inadequacies of supervision

Pallion	56	10	26
Deptford	42	11	34
North Sands	54	11	26
Main office	45	15	30
Aggregate	50	11	27

Inability to adapt to market demand/changes quickly

Pallion	26	16	45
Deptford	27	16	40
N Sands	26	19	46
Main office	18	12	57
Aggregate	24	16	45

Poor training

Pallion	32	11	44
Deptford	37	11	38
N Sands	38	11	42
Main office	39	13	37
Aggregate	35	11	41

Poor production planning

Pallion	72	10	13
Deptford	68	10	16
N Sands	74	7	12
Main office	54	17	16
Aggregate	68	10	13

Lack of information

Pallion	77	7	10
Deptford	74	7	12
N Sands	76	7	10
Main office	70	11	11
Aggregate	75	7	10

If we highlight those areas where the majority have expressed a clear
opinion we can see that those factors felt to be a major cause for
hold-ups in the flow of work are in order of importance:

> Lack of information
> Special work or re-work
> Material supply problems; and
> Inadequacies of supervision.

And those areas where a majority expressed the view that it was not a
cause are:

> Poor time-keeping; and
> Low employee performance.

QUESTION 11

Which of the following actions, if taken by the Company, do you think
would help to make more money?

	Helpful		Not helpful
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5

Cutting out waste and
unnecessary expenditure

Pallion	81	5	8
Deptford	79	6	7
N Sands	74	10	9
Main office	90	5	3
Aggregate	80	6	7

Getting everyone (including
yourself) to work harder

Pallion	39	17	33
Deptford	39	17	33
N Sands	30	20	41
Main office	61	15	19
Aggregate	40	17	32

Increasing amount of work
which is sub-contracted

Pallion	7	5	80
Deptford	10	3	78
N Sands	4	2	85
Main office	7	15	73
Aggregate	7	5	78

Improving the quality of
our work

Pallion	53	13	24
Deptford	53	9	26
N Sands	48	19	31
Main office	76	10	8
Aggregate	53	13	23

Getting work done on time

Pallion	78	5	9
Deptford	73	7	11
N Sands	72	9	12
Main office	93	2	1
Aggregate	76	6	8

Giving people more skills and
training

Pallion	60	10	21
Deptford	60	11	19
N Sands	56	12	24
Main office	78	10	9
Aggregate	61	10	19

Getting people to work better
together

Pallion	73	8	11
Deptford	71	9	13
N Sands	66	9	19
Main office	90	6	1
Aggregate	73	8	11

Increasing amount of work
which is sub-contracted

Increasing flexibility of
the workforce

Pallion	42	13	37
Deptford	41	9	40
N Sands	32	14	45
Main office	56	17	21
Aggregate	42	12	36

In order of importance those areas of action that people support in the
majority are:

Cutting out waste and unnecessary expenditure
Getting work done on time
Getting people to work better together
Giving people more skills and training; and
Improving the quality of our work.

QUESTION 12

How would you describe relations generally between management and trade
unions at Sunderland Shipbuilders at present?

	Excellent		Poor
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	1	3	95
Deptford	3	5	89
N Sands	2	3	89
Main office	9	10	82
Aggregate	2.5	4	90

A really massive expression of opinion that relations between manage-
ment and unions are very poor at the moment.   Some 90% of the popula-
tion taking that view and even though it is slightly less strongly held
in the offices, still even there 82% share that opinion.   The view is
most strongly held in Pallion where 95% of those asked expressed the
view that relations were very poor.

QUESTION 13

Senior management are committed to improving industrial relations in
the future

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	28	6	63
Deptford	28	8	62
N Sands	23	3	72
Main office	38	11	50
Aggregate	28	7	60

Despite the pessimistic view of current relations something approaching
30% of those asked (and 38% of those in the offices) expressed the view
that management is committed to improving industrial relations.   How-
ever, this leaves an overall 60% of employees feeling that management
is not so committed.   Indeed 72% of those in North Sands feel this is
the case.   From this position, of course, it is possible to detect the
level of suspicion and cynicism that there will be in response to any
management initiative.

QUESTION 14

Generally I feel that my immediate boss is doing a good job in:

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Setting work objectives clearly			
Pallion	38	13	45
Deptford	41	14	37
N Sands	29	18	46
Main office	60	12	24
Aggregate	40	14	40
Helping me to achieve my work objectives			
Pallion	30	15	48
Deptford	37	15	39
N Sands	28	17	46
Main office	52	14	28
Aggregate	33	15	43
Delegating appropriately			
Pallion	30	16	43
Deptford	36	17	36
N Sands	25	19	43
Main office	50	17	26
Aggregate	33	17	39
Communicating			
Pallion	30	11	52
Deptford	35	14	40
N Sands	30	14	46
Main office	47	15	33
Aggregate	33	12	45

Dealing with poor standards
of work

Pallion	32	17	42
Deptford	34	15	40
N Sands	30	17	43
Main office	45	24	34
Aggregate	32	17	39

Using and developing my
full abilities

Pallion	33	9	49
Deptford	33	16	42
N Sands	28	15	45
Main office	47	14	32
Aggregate	34	12	44

Furthering my career

Pallion	14	10	68
Deptford	16	10	64
N Sands	14	8	67
Main office	32	17	43
Aggregate	16	10	63

Motivating me

Pallion	22	10	60
Deptford	26	10	52
N Sands	20	10	61
Main office	42	17	35
Aggregate	24	11	55

Building teamwork

Pallion	22	14	56
Deptford	26	16	47
N Sands	19	14	58
Main office	36	15	41
Aggregate	23	14	52

Controlling quality

Pallion	26	17	46
Deptford	32	14	43
N Sands	24	19	47
Main office	42	19	31
Aggregate	28	17	43

Getting the work done on time

Pallion	40	13	40
Deptford	46	13	33
N Sands	32	17	42
Main office	65	13	17
Aggregate	42	13	45

Letting me know how I am doing

Pallion	24	7	63
Deptford	27	10	56
N Sands	21	12	59
Main office	38	14	40
Aggregate	25	9	57

Looking at the aggregate data for the total population, there is no item in which the majority of employees felt that their immediate boss is doing a good job. The nearest item that achieves this is 'setting work objectives clearly', where 40% of the population feel that that is the case and 40% disagree, and secondly 'getting work done on time' where 42% of the total population feel that bosses are doing a good job here. On the other hand 45% of the total population disagree with that. But these two items were the only areas in which the views expressed in terms of bosses' performance approached the positive. The following were mentioned by the majority, and in rank order they are:

> that immediate bosses are not doing a good job in furthering careers
> not letting people know how they are doing
> not motivating; and
> not building teamwork.

In line with the continuing pattern, opinions expressed in the offices are somewhat different and here the balance of opinion would seem to indicate that people feel that there are areas in which bosses are doing a good job, and they are, in rank order:

> getting work done on time
> setting clear objectives
> helping people to achieve objectives and delegting appropriately.

On all other items, except 3, the majority of those expressing opinions felt that their bosses were doing a good job, although the size of that majority was not great, about 10%. The three items whee there was agreement within the offices that bosses were not doing a good job were, in rank order:

> furthering careers
> building teamwork; and
> letting people know how they are doing.

It is interesting to note that, although there are different opinions expressed in the offices, the areas of agreement with the rest of the colleagues in other yards focus on the man-management aspects of superiors' performance being unsatisfactory.

QUESTION 15

"We are kept in the dark about things we ought to know."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	84	3	12
Deptford	81	4	14
N Sands	84	4	9
Main office	63	9	17
Aggregate	82	4	12

A clear majority, 82% overall, expressing the view that people are kept in the dark about information. Again, this is held less strongly in the main offices but still a considerable majority, 63% to 17%, agreeing that people are ill-informed.

QUESTION 16

How interested are you in receiving information about Sunderland Shipbuilders' financial position?

	Very interested		Not interested
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	76	9	16
Deptford	73	9	16
N Sands	76	7	14
Main office	83	5	12
Aggregate	74	8	15

Overall, 3/4 of the population are interested in receiving financial information. This view is general across the yards, but is more strongly held in the main offices, where 83% are interested in receiving financial information.

QUESTION 17

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to
information on the Company's performance given to employees?

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5

Sunderland Shipbuilders -

Is not sufficiently honest and
open in the information given

Pallion	79	5	14
Deptford	77	6	12
N Sands	79	4	12
Main office	74	11	15
Aggregate	77	5	13

Fails to put across information
in a way which is meaningful

Pallion	75	7	13
Deptford	76	5	12
N Sands	75	7	11
Main office	74	9	15
Aggregate	74	7	13

Tries hard but is not success-
ful in getting the information
across

Pallion	41	11	42
Deptford	39	13	40
N Sands	36	11	45
Main office	50	18	29
Aggregate	41	12	40

Only looks at issues from the
point of view of management

Pallion	80	3	13
Deptford	75	6	14
N Sands	78	5	12
Main office	66	15	17
Aggregate	76	6	14

Tries to mislead employees

Pallion	72	7	19
Deptford	68	8	18
N Sands	76	7	10
Main office	44	16	39
Aggregate	66	9	20

A considerable majority overall agreeing that management is not
sufficiently honest and open, fails to put information across, only
looks at the management's point of view, and two-thirds of people
feeling that the company tries to mislead its employees. The only
area of questioning which the employees disagree with the assertion
made, is the one that management tries hard but is not successful in
getting information across. Clearly 40% of the population feels that
it doesn't try hard at all.

In the main offices the broad spread of opinion is similar, the only
signficant difference being that 39% of employees in the main offices
do not believe that management are trying to mislead the employees,
whereas 44% do. Whilst this is still a majority of those expressing
an opinion, the view is held less strongly here than in the other
yards.

QUESTION 18

Listed below are some common problems with company information. How
true do you think each is in your Company?

	Very true		Never true
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Too little information is circulated			
Pallion	79	8	9
Deptford	79	8	8
N Sands	80	7	11
Main office	69	14	16
Aggregate	76	8	10

Managers and supervisors
do not pass information on

Pallion	73	11	12
Deptford	69	11	12
N Sands	69	10	15
Main office	57	19	23
Aggregate	68	12	14

Information is not exchanged
between sites/departments

Pallion	76	10	10
Deptford	68	13	11
N Sands	69	13	11
Main office	66	13	16
Aggregate	71	11	11
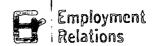
Information is too complicated
to understand

Pallion	36	21	36
Deptford	35	21	35
N Sands	34	24	35
Main office	23	20	53
Aggregate	34	21	37

Information is too general
and lacks detail

Pallion	66	10	17
Deptford	59	15	17
N Sands	70	13	12
Main office	52	17	28
Aggregate	62	12	17

Information is out of date
when I receive it

Pallion	63	15	17
Deptford	61	17	14
N Sands	60	16	18
Main office	48	21	29
Aggregate	59	16	18

The trade union passes informa-
tion on better than management

Pallion	60	16	20
Deptford	51	13	25
N Sands	67	12	17
Main office	39	28	31
Aggregate	57	16	21

Overall, there is clear support for almost all the assertions made
except that information is too complicated to understand. Whilst a
third of the population do feel this is the case, the majority of those
expressing a view do not feel that information is too complicated.

When we look at the location responses on this question of complica-
tion, we see that there is an even split of opinion in Pallion and
Deptford and in the offices 53% feel that it is not true that informa-
tion is too complicated. Another interesting point is that the
majority in all areas feel that trade unions are better at passing on
information than management. Having said that, there are differences
between the locations in response to this; in terms of rank order,
North Sands shows 67%, Pallion 60%, Deptford 51% and Main Office 39%.

This is clearly a period of high anxiety within the industry as a whole
and also within Sunderland Shipbuilders. At times of anxiety people
do want to know what is happening to them. They seek information with
will make them feel better or at least give them some picture of how
they can get out of their present troubles. However, for this inform-

ation to be accepted, it is necessary for there to be an atmosphere of some trust between those receiving the information and those giving it. One problem with the present situation in Sunderland Shipbuilders is that relationship does not appear to exist.

QUESTION 19

How important are each of the following sources of information to you?

	Important		Unimportant
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Noticeboard			
Pallion	71	8	16
Deptford	63	13	20
N Sands	69	9	17
Main office	61	10	27
Aggregate	67	9	17
Your boss			
Pallion	48	12	33
Deptford	48	12	31
N Sands	43	13	37
Main office	78	7	15
Aggregate	50	11	30
The grapevine			
Pallion	43	15	35
Deptford	48	9	32
N Sands	42	16	34
Main office	45	18	34
Aggregate	43	13	34
Your trade union			
Pallion	69	11	15
Deptford	58	10	19
N Sands	78	7	11
Main office	45	18	34
Aggregate	65	11	17
Briefing groups			
Pallion	40	12	42
Deptford	40	12	39
N Sands	36	15	42
Main office	51	14	32
Aggregate	40	12	39

"Shipbuilding News"

Pallion	29	15	49
Deptford	28	12	50
N Sands·	32	12	52
Main office	27	14	59
Aggregate	28	14	50

Overall, the rank order for sources of information are:

1. Noticeboard
2. Trade union
3. Your boss
4. The grapevine
5. Briefing groups
6. Shipbuilding News.

Indeed, whereas for the first five items the majority feel they are an important source of information, for Shipbuiding News the majority of 50% as against 25% feel that this is not an important source of information. This view is held across all locations, but is held more strongly in the main offices (i.e. in the main offices there is even less support for Shipbuilding News than in the yards themselves).

Looking at some of the differing answers within the locations, we can see that, for example in North Sands, 78% feel that their Union was the most important source of information, followed by the notice board at 69%, whereas the majority on this site felt that Shipbuilding News and the briefing groups were not an important source of information. In Pallion yard 71% felt that the notice board was the most important source of information, following by 69% expressing the view that the trade union was important. There is a fairly even split of opinion on the usefulness of briefing groups and again a majority questioning the usefulness of Shipbuilding News. In Deptford Yard, 63% feel that the notice boards are an important source, and 58% the trade unions. There is an even split of view on the usefulness of briefing groups and again a majority questioning the importance of Shipbuilding News. Once again in the main offices, the pattern is somewhat different. Here the rank order is as follows:

  78% expressing the view that their boss was an important source
      of information
  61% for the noticeboard
  51% for briefing groups; and
  45% for the trade union and grapevine as a source of information.

A majority here expressing support for briefing groups, but again an even stronger view that Shipbuilding News is not an important source of information.

QUESTION 20
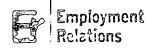
"Briefing groups are a good way of getting my questions about Sunderland Shipbuilders answered."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5 %
Pallion	29	8	59
Deptford	32	13	52
N Sands	30	8	57
Main office	48	12	33
Aggregate	32	9	52

Overall about one-third of the population feel that briefing groups are a good source of getting questions answered, whereas over a half disagree with that view. Within the locations, the position is much the same in all three yards; less than one-third feel that questions are answered through the briefing group system, and some between 52% and 59% feeling that it is not a useful route for getting questions answered. In the main offices approximately a half of the population feel that it is a useful way and a third disagree.

QUESTION 21

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Do you read "Shipbuilding News"?			
Pallion	28	59	11
Deptford	19	60	19
N Sands	26	65	7
Main office	38	55	5
Aggregate	26	59	11
Is it relevant/interesting?			
Pallion	16	62	17
Deptford	15	55	24
N Sands	13	64	18
Main office	10	80	8
Aggregate	14	62	17
Do you believe what is in "Shipbuilding News"?			
Pallion	16	67	14
Deptford	10	63	22
N Sands	13	71	11
Main office	17	74	5
Aggregate	14	66	13

QUESTION 22

"In practice, employees are kept well informed by management about the
current situation as it affects their particular site/department/yard."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	11	8	80
Deptford	7	9	82
N Sands	8	8	80
Main office	22	13	65
Aggregate	11	8	77

With three-quarters of the population feeling that employees are not
kept well-informed about the current situation; while this is felt
less strongly in the main offices there is still a majority of 65% as
against 22% expressing the view that this is the case.

QUESTION 23

"Management is aware of things that worry people at my level."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	15	5	79
Deptford	19	6	72
N Sands	16	7	74
Main office	27	8	64
Aggregate	18	5	74

Three-quarters of the population feel that management is not aware.
Whilst this view is held less strongly in the office, it is still a
view expressed by two-thirds of the population there.

QUESTION 24

"My boss is receptive and listens to my ideas and suggestions."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	27	15	57
Deptford	32	18	48
N Sands	26	14	58
Main office	62	13	24
Aggregate	32	15	50

Whilst the overall position is that half of people feel that their boss
is not receptive, and a third do, this does mask some differing
opinions on different locations. In both North Sands and Pallion
almost 60% feel that their boss is not receptive, and 26-27% feel that

he is.   In Deptford Yard only 48% feel that their boss is not recep-
tive, and 32% feel that he is.   In the main offices, the opposite view
is expressed, in that 62% feel that their boss is receptive and only
24% disagree.   A slight majority of the total population have a posi-
tive feeling at the end of the working day, whereas 29% do not.   How-
ever, in the yards, in North Sands 41% feel they have accomplished
something worthwhile, in Pallion 49% feel the same way, and in Deptford
55% feel the same way, something over 30% not feeling that way.   In
the main offices however 76% of people feel that they have accomplished
something worthwhile at the end of the working day, and only 6% not,
again evidence of a very different atmosphere in the offices as against
the yards themselves.   Whilst the more positive atmosphere of the of-
fices might be of some comfort to management, there are inherent prob-
lems with such differing views of the organisation and attitudes about
the organisation, in that it may hinder mutual understanding between
these different groups.

QUESTION 25

"As an individual, I feel that I have accomplished something worthwhile
at the end of a day's work."

	Always		Never
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	49	16	33
Deptford	55	14	30
N Sands	41	21	34
Main office	76	17	6
Aggregate	51	16	29

Evidence that a significant number still feel a sense of achievement.
Although in the yards one-third do not, in the offices three-quarters
feel a sense of accomplishment and only 6% do not.

QUESTION 26

"I feel personally responsible for the job I do."

	Always		Never
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	78	8	14
Deptford	77	9	13
N Sands	72	11	14
Main office	92	4	4
Aggregate	77	8	12

Overall, something slightly more than three-quarters of the population feel personally responsible for the job that they do. The majority moves up to 92% of those in the main offices. As with one or two earlier questions, this hints at a basic feeling of pride in one's work which should be a source of strength for the organisation. However if this feeling does not have an outlet, if people feel that their work is not worthwhile, as 29% overall did feel (as indicated in Question 25), then it can be a source of some frustration.

QUESTION 27

To what extent are you able to decide how to do your job?

	A great deal		Far too little
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	63	11	26
Deptford	66	11	20
N Sands	60	16	21
Main office	85	8	6
Aggregate	65	11	21

Some two-thirds of the population feel that they can decide how to do their job, very slightly lower in North Sands and Pallion, and the majority moving up to 85% in the main offices. In the yards, between 20% and 26% feel that they are not able to decide how to do their job, whereas only 6% share this view in the main offices.

QUESTION 28

How much say do you have on what goes on in your work group?

	A great deal		Far too little
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	27	13	59
Deptford	26	21	49
N Sands	23	15	60
Main office	50	17	32
Aggregate	29	15	53

Just over half of the population in total feel that they do not have a say in what goes on in their work group; in the yards between 23% and 26% feel that they do have a say, but the position reverses in the main offices where 50% feel they have a say and 32% feel they do not.

QUESTION 29

How much control do you have over output in your work group?

	Complete control		No control
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	26	15	58
Deptford	33	12	52
N Sands	25	17	54
Main office	48	16	35
Aggregate	29	14	53

Something over half the population feeling that they do not have control over output, and just less than 30% feel that they do, is pretty much reflecting the view of the yards, but again in the main offices the situation is reversed, where 48% feel that they have control and 35% feel that they do not.

QUESTION 30

How much opportunity is there to participate in determining work methods and procedure?

	A great deal		Far too little
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	17	11	70
Deptford	20	18	62
N Sands	14	12	69
Main office	15	11	50
Aggregate	20	12	64

Overall, two-thirds of the population feeling that they have little opportunity to participate in these areas; in North Sands and Pallion that view is held more strongly than overall, and in the main offices, while people in Question 29 indicated that they can influence output, they agree with their colleagues in the yard by 50% to 15% that they do not have opportunity to participate in determining methods and procedures.

QUESTION 31

"I would like more involvement in decisions affecting my job."

	Agree		Disagree
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Pallion	79	10	10
Deptford	75	4	12
N Sands	77	10	9
Main office	84	7	6
Aggregate	77	9	9

Over three-quarters of the population wanting more involvement in de-
cisions affecting their jobs. This view is even more strongly felt in
the main offices, where a majority of 84% express this opinion. It is
not at all contradictory to find a position in which people feel that
they can influence aspects of their work and yet feel that they want
even more, because that influence is generally seen as a motivating
factor.

QUESTION 32

Please answer each statement.

In my job I can -	True now	Not true but would like	Not interested
	1	2	3
Learn new things and develop skills			
Pallion	33	53	10
Deptford	30	52	14
N Sands	28	56	12
Main office	58	30	3
Aggregate	34	50	10
Do varied and interesting work			
Pallion	35	50	10
Deptford	33	48	14
N Sands	32	49	15
Main office	66	32	1
Aggregate	37	47	10
Decide my own pace of work			
Pallion	41	48	6
Deptford	41	48	5
N Sands	34	54	8
Main office	59	37	2
Aggregate	41	47	5
Have my views and opinions taken into account			
Pallion	22	66	8
Deptford	27	61	9
N Sands	23	62	11
Main office	50	48	2
Aggregate	26	61	7

Follow through tasks to
completion

Pallion·	30	57	8
Deptford	32	51	12
N Sands	28	56	13
Main office	67	30°	1
Aggregate	34	51	9

QUESTION 33

Which of the following factors are most important to your job
satisfaction?

	Important		Not important
	1 and 2	3	4 and 5
Opportunity for promotion			
Pallion	43	10	41
Deptford	36	11	42
N Sands	31	12	51
Main office	69	10	21
Aggregate	42	10	40
Fringe benefits, .e.g subsidised meals, social facilities			
Pallion	67	6	21
Deptford	63	9	19
N Sands	76	7	10
Main office	46	12	41
Aggregate	64	8	21
Good holiday/sick pay conditions			
Pallion	94	2	2
Deptford	90	3	1.5
N Sands	95	0	1
Main office	86	5	8
Aggregate	91	2	2
Shorter hours of work			
Pallion	81	7	10
Deptford	76	7	10
N Sands	83	7	7
Main office	59	14	25
Aggregate	76	8	11

Opportunities for overtime

Pallion	64	10	22
Deptford	56	11	25
N Sands	58	15	21
Main office	54	11	34
Aggregate	59	11	24

Good union representation

Pallion	81	6	10
Deptford	75	6	12
N Sands	86	7	3
Main office	49	11	28
Aggregate	75	7	11

Healthy and safe working environment

Pallion	95	1	1
Deptford	92	1	1
N Sands	96	0	0.5
Main office	90	4	4
Aggregate	93	1	1

Regular increases in wages

Pallion	95	2	1
Deptford	90	1	1.5
N Sands	95	0.5	1
Main office	95	2	3
Aggregate	93	1	1

Extra payment for effort

Pallion	92	2	2
Deptford	90	1	2
N Sands	92	1	2
Main office	92	2	4
Aggregate	90	2	2

status/prestige

Pallion	59	12	23
Deptford	52	15	22
N Sands	55	13	25
Main office	66	13	19

Aggregate	57	12	22

Opportunity for leadership or responsibility

Pallion	46	11	40
Deptford	39	13	39
N Sands	36	15	45
Main office	73	10	14
Aggregate	45	11	36

Opportunity to learn and develop skills

Pallion	75	7	13
Deptford	69	10	13
N Sands	70	15	9
Main office	89	7	2
Aggregate	73	9	11

Participation in decision making

Pallion	72	10	13
Deptford	62	11	17
N Sands	64	13	16
Main office	88	6	4
Aggregate	70	10	13

Guaranteed job security

Pallion	91	2	5
Deptford	88	1	4
N Sands	89	2	5
Main office	95	2	2
Aggregate	89	2	4

Recognition and praise for a job well done

Pallion	78	7	11
Deptford	72	6	14
N Sands	72	7	15
Main office	88	7	4
Aggregate	76	7	11

Good working relationships

Pallion	93	2	2
Deptford	85	4	4
N Sands	86	3	6
Main office	98	0	1
Aggregate	90	2	3

Reputation of the Company

Pallion	67	13	15
Deptford	63	10	19
N Sands	60	11	22
Main office	84	6	8
Aggregate	66	11	16

r allocation of work load

Pallion	85	6	4
Deptford	80	6	7
N Sands	77	11	6
Main office	92	3	4
Aggregate	82	6	5

Management attitudes

Pallion	82	4	12
Deptford	86	6	11
N Sands	79	5	12
Main office	98	1	3
Aggregate	81	4	10

Common terms and conditions
for everyone

Pallion	88	4	5
Deptford	89	2	3
N Sands	86	5	4
Main office	77	9	14
Aggregate	85	4	5

In rank order, the factors which are important to job satisfaction are
regular increase in wages, and health and safety second, good holiday
and sick pay joint third, extra payment for effort and good working re-
lationships. From the general data, the only areas where there is a
significant body of peoplle not interested are in 'opportunity for pro-
motion' and 'opportunity for initiative and responsibility. However
although there are significant minorities, 40% and 36% respectively,
who do not seek these factors, the majority of people would like thes
opportunities. Looking at those areas considered not important by the
main office staff, it is clear that there is far more interest in pro-
motion and leadership opportunities and less interest in fringe

benefits, e.g. subsidised meals, opportunities for overtime, union re-
presentation and shorter hours of work. Interestingly, in the main
offices the most favoured response is for good working relationships.
Again although there do seem to be better relationships in the offices
than elsewhere, the staff still feel that this is a massively important
area for them, and clearly value good working relationships.

In general, it is clear that there is strong evidence of a task-centred
culture within Sunderland Shipbuilders; obviously in an area of this
kind that may on the face of it seem quite proper. However it is a
constant theme in organisation development that tasks are achieved
through and with people. Management sometimes mistakenly take the
view that they can concentrate only on the taks or on the people, and
that in hard times they must thereford concentrate solely on the task,
with people-issues coming a poor second. However there is plenty of
evidence that successful companies are those who understand the inter-
related nature of task-management and people-management, and who real-
ise that driving for the task at the expense of people-relationships
does not even deliver good task performance; that far from being mut-
ually exclusive these things are intertwined. A clear and comprehen-
sive management philosophy and strategy for the management of relations
within the yards is an important aspect of recovery for this organisa-
ation.

WTL

29 04 86