Housing, class and politics: Ashington 1896-1939

Murphy, John Michael

HOUSING, CLASS AND POLITICS IN A COMPANY TOWN: ASHINGTON 1896-1939.

JOHN MICHAEL MURPHY

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

1982

Housing, Class and Politics in a Company Town: Ashington 1896-1939. An abstract of thesis.

The thesis focusses upon class relations in a mining town in North East England with particular emphasis upon housing as an example of these relations. Distinct class opposition is identified and coal company policy is related to attempts to circumscribe working class militancy by concrete and ideological measures. It is asserted that the extent of class conflict in Ashington has been greatly underestimated by previous students of the area because of restricting the area of study to the industrial arena. An examination of all aspects of class relations reveals extensive class opposition to the coal owners. The importance of ideology in the class conflict is emphasised and coal company policy is identified as increasingly concerned with fractioning working class unity by assertion of dominant ideological ideas.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The period chosen for the study dates from the formation of the Ashington Urban District Council which superseded the parish council in April 1896, through to the outbreak of the Second World War. This period saw continued urban and population growth which led to a tripling of population due entirely to a single industry, coal mining.

In examining the changes in the area the central concern will be that of ideology, especially that of the working class, and the impact this had on local events. In introducing the study two elements are present; first a chronological description of the changes which did occur; and secondly an outline of concepts which have been of particular use and appositeness in shaping an understanding of Ashington in the period of study.

Three distinct periods occur within this overall time scale. Each is characterised by a different stage of working class power and assertiveness with differences in approach and tactics in the conflict with the Coal Capitalists.

The period up to 1914 was one of working class ideological development characterised by a distinct move from Lib/Lab to socialism as the dominant ideological working class mood, especially of the leaders. This burgeoning mood of militancy occurred when Ashington was indeed a classic 'company town'. Moreover it was a boom town with rapid population, housing, urban and colliery development with a huge influx of population. It

took some years before a pattern of social life developed which began to change the town from a mining camp to a settled community. The earlier 'frontiersman' atmosphere of the mining camp with its individualistic emphasis had given way to a collective working class approach to relations with the coal owners by 1910. Not only an examination of relations between working class and capitalist illustrates this but the changing role of the petit-bourgeoisie, especially in local politics, contributes to an understanding of the developing strength and unity of the local working class.

Engaged as the other major element in the class struggle was a wealthy, economically developing, powerful coal company whose extensive extra-industrial enterprises brought it into daily contact and potential conflict with its employees and their families. Housing was but one of a cluster of near feudal social needs which were dominated by the coal barons in the pre- World War I period. But the struggles which increasingly developed between the miners and owners in all aspects of social relations were much more than attempts to liberalise the harsher aspects of this relationship; rather they represented repeated rehearsals of the strength of working class power with the overthrow of capitalism, especially as applied to the mining industry as the ultimate goal.

The period of gestation in the class struggle saw an uneven move from working class deference in class relations, through a tentative engagement of the enemy, culminating in a full scale

assertion of working class aims whose central element was the overthrow of capitalism as a social system. Counterposed against its economic strength and wealth was the more latent but developing power of local labour, essentially reformist in character, but with revolutionary overtones. Throughout all three periods there is a dynamic relationship between the actual and potential working class stuggle, best exemplified nationally in the 1926 General Strike. The result is a constant tension within the working class between approaches; as opposition but collaboration; and opposition as the overthrow of capitalism. What is most telling however is the extent to which both big and petit-bourgeois engaged in the ideological struggle to influence the working class to the least radical course of action after 1918. It resulted from a powerful, concerted, successful campaign by local labour leaders in the immediate pre-war period, allied to the operation of a semi-socialist system of coal production which saw partial fruition in the war time control of the coal industry.

From 1918 to 1927 saw a distinct change in the Ashington Coal Company's approach to its workforce, industrially and socially. Pre-war 'moral suasion' had been urged by some local leaders in relations with the Ashington Coal Company. 'Suasion' without the morality, of necessity became the new Coal Company weapon to divide, confuse and reduce working class attempts to destroy private coal ownership. Dominant ideological propaganda was geared to fractioning working class unity by winning moderate labourist support or at the very least neutralising it. An ideological

war was fought for the support of the uncommitted miners between on the one hand left wing socialists /co-operative party/ labour reformists and the coal capitalists/ petit bourgeoisie on the other. The local authority, in labour hands in the 1920's, was a major arena for this latter conflict and the related internal socialist debate as to reluctant co-operation with the employers or all out conflict. Not surprisingly this period is typified by a disjunction between actual and potential working class gains, depending on how the capitalists were able to subvert and confuse working class goals and principles. It must be stressed however that this was possible largely due to the lack of a confident, consistent radical counter-hegemonic ideology and unity of purpose amongst labour leaders. Against a background of local and national militancy, however, the coal owners used a gentle, persuasive, cajoling approach in marked contrast to their pre-war mood of haughter, indifference and pig-headedness. This new coal company courting of its employees was accompanied by an attempt to greatly reduce its powers and responsibilities in the non-industrial field, which had led it into frequent bitter and extensive disputes with its workforce before 1914. Ceding such responsibilities to the local authority had the undesired effects of increasing the jurisdiction and powers of its political opponents on the local authority but was necessary to reduce the areas and intensity of class conflict

at this crucial period.

1926 and the events of the General Strike produced a new relationship between the coal owners and the workers. The ideological position of the latter was greatly weakened in the 1930's by the split with the Independent Labour Party. The latter, though not electorally successful, was able to exert pressure on the labour reformists who were now squeezed between left and right wing political groupings. The new mood of accommodation with the coal owners was the result with the latter using the insecurity of the coal industry nationally (less so locally) to further reduce working class opposition to it. A similar situation has been replicated to-day in Thatcherite Britain and a similar erroneous response from the unions has been elicited. Recession producing greater docility of labour because of insecurity instead of a greater assertion of the need for a socialist system. Nevertheless it well illustrates the position of labour in Ashington up to 1939 with a continuing interplay between radical and accommodative policies.

The focus of the thesis concerns itself with the ensemble of relations between the miners and their families on the one hand and the coal capitalists and petit-bourgeoisie on the other. Although miners working at other collieries were domiciled in Ashington and Hirst, notably those employed at Hegswood (Bentinck West Hartley Colliery Ltd.), Newbiggin (Newbiggin Colliery Ltd.) and North Seaton (Cowpen Coal Company) the vast majority of the miners were employed by the Ashington Coal Company Ltd. at its complex of, by the 1930's, five mines. Colliery housing in Ashington/Hirst was Ashington Coal Company housing and the relations that mattered

to the town were those with this coal company and will be the ones concentrated upon here. The distinct physical boundaries of the "mining camp" afford a very homogenous area in which to study class relations in this period.

In organising the thesis use has been made of a number of concepts which help shape and explain the developments in the district and it is proposed to outline these here. Overlaying these concepts are a number of points from other studies which will help illuminate and clarify aspects of local class relations as well as allowing a generalised comparison with the particularities of the local scene.

The writer whose concepts have most contributed to an understanding of class relations in Ashington in the period stated has been Antonio Gramsci with his creative, non-deterministic analysis and enactment of Marxism.

Central to an analysis of class relations is Gramsci's stress upon the "ensemble of relations." All aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life are seen as interlinked elements with the potential to restructure class relations. Housing matters are therefore just as much the locus of class struggle as industrial conflict; indeed as it is hoped to demonstrate in the study it is often more so. To achieve success the working class had to recognise the need to avoid allowing its opponents to compartmentalise different aspects of its struggle, thereby fragmenting the unified thrust of its attack on capitalism. An aspect of class struggle

which will be examined therefore will be the extent to which local working class leaders were aware of, and able to exercise influence on this view of the enmeshed nature of class relations and the reaction of the bourgeoisie to prevent this occurring. At times instinctive as well as conscious recognition of the unity of social relations by both class combatants is evidence of a practical recognition of their adverserial roles, while coal company efforts to fragment working class unity is eloquent testimony of the employer's need to enter the ideological war. The use of both the concepts of ensemble of relations and the dominant ideology will I hope explain why the Ashington Coal Company enjoys the reputation as a benevolent model employer even among such informed commentators as McCord. Evidence there is of class harmony, as demonstrated by one example that of the inscription on a substantial obelisk in Holy Sepulchre Parish Churchyard... "To keep alive the memory of a master respected and beloved. This stone the last tribute of the workmen amongst whom much an honoured life was spent. Bears the name of Robert Lancelot Booth for fourteen years manager of Ashington colliery. Born January 19th 1843.
"
Died November 25th 1891.

But my assertion is that, far from being the exception, class struggle was the notable feature all social relationships up to 1930 and even in the 1930's accommodation rather than harmony was the prevailing mood. I believe that an over narrow focus of

study which confined itself largely to the industrial arena, allied to an effective coal company propagation of dominant ideological ideas, had to an erroneously eulogistic view of class relations in Ashington.

Gramsci's emphasis on the importance of ideologicl struggle in the class war and in particular his use of the concept of "ideological hegemony" widens the range of study. If class domination is achieved through the dissemination of dominant ideological ideas and values by means of literature, the education system, the mass media and culture generally then a number of responses are necessary to break the working class out of what would otherwise be a most intractable form of self imposed enslavement. A conscious recognition of the existence of the all-pervasive nature of dominant ideological control is needed. So a transformation of consciousness is needed which leads to the assertion of a counter-hegemonic view of class relations.

The latter position leads to a struggle to involve the working class in a conscious struggle to ultimately overthrow bourgeois dominance by an active, broad-fronted struggle.

A Gramscian concept which appears to have particular importance in class relations in Ashington is that of 'praxis'. As a single industry town, especially a coal town, Ashington clearly had the potential for class struggle of a fundamental nature in classic Marxist terms. Gramsci however stressed the need not only for the unity of theory and practice but of the need for commitment

to the socialist cause to achieve social transformation. To sustain a socialist campaign a rigorous analysis of class relations needed to be allied to a crusading polemicism to maintain the struggle and counteract the dominant ideological attempts to subvert this campaign.

A further approach, linked but not peculiar to Gramsci, is the need to locate the analysis temporally and spatially. The developments and flavour of class relations in Ashington give a particular shape and character to them which is explicable not just by the nature of the mining industry but by the state of local consciousness and activity. These developments were located in a national framework which exercised important influence and constraints on local changes. Bronowski has attempted to apply a scientific approach to human behaviour which he describes as "neither determined nor random. At any moment, it moves foreward into an area whose general shape is known but whose boundaries are uncertain in a calculable way. A society moves under material pressure like a stream of gas, and on the average its individuals obey the pressure; but at any instant, any individual may, like an atom of the gas, be moving across or against the stream. The will on the one hand and the compulsion on the other exist and play within these boundaries." Despite his caveats this seems to me to amount almost to determinism. However a synthesis of

'society determining consciousness' (Marx) and Gramsci's insistence on the importance of active committed, counter ideological struggle in changing consciousness and the boundaries seem to offer the most fruitful model for understanding the interplay between local and national forces.

In examining the issue of class conflict the important role of the two class fractions the labour aristocracy and the petit-bourgeoisie, will be explored. Foster in his study of nineteenth century Oldham has demonstrated the structural and functional[3] benefits to the bourgeoisie of using the labour aristocracy as a force for reducing class conflict. Cleaving the working class into'respectable artisans'(the leaders of whom were labour aristocrats) and the disreputable lumpen-proletariat was a further, planned development by capitalists to de-radicalise the proletariat. But it is important to stress the active conscious role of the working class in this development,[4] at times resisting this movement while on other occasions actively seeking it.

There is a fundamental difficulty in labour reformism however which is rooted in its very successes. Working class gains by labour reformists within a mass democracy lead to an ameloriation of the worst excesses of capitalist society. The improved conditions prove more difficult for working class leaders to mobilise opposition to capitalism as

I. Capitalism can use the enforced changes to demonstrate its

human face and ability to 'deliver the goods.'

2. There appear to be less grounds for complaint, and

3.The franchise leads to the belief that 'we are the masters now.'

Enfranchisement, first as a goal in attempts to widen it, and then apparently validated by working class successes in elections, is reflected in the change from bourgeois democracy to mass democracy and then to Corporatism. In Ashington what David Byrne has described as the 'apparent dominance by reformist labourism' antedated Gateshead by a quarter of a century. And it was this stage which had the greatest potential for working class confusion of purpose in the class struggle because the incorporation of the working class into local and national government, in itself a gain and the result of proletarian pressure and power, can lead to, especially if given bourgeois encouragement, the feeling that the working class is now master of its destiny. Participation in limited political power needs to be understood as only one element in the ensemble of relations and used as an example to wrest power from the bourgeoisie in all aspects of social relations. Hence the importance for the working class of having leaders who have a radical, strategic, consciousness and philosophy to enable changes in social relations to be seen as elements in the overall attempt to abolish capitalism, and not perceived as ultimate goals in themselves, which produces the danger of the cessation of

class struggle after each partial victory.

The incorporation of the labour aristocracy into the political and industrial power systems was the classic method of attempting to divide the working class by encompassing its most influential leaders into the process of decision making. In this study I have used the term labour aristocracy in a broader way than the likes of Foster and Gray to encompass both hewers and the engineering-skilled artisans and foremen in the coal mines, as well as blue and white collar co-operative society employees. It seems to me that this grouping of those who were influential in all aspects of local labour leadership is not just an artificial construct for the purpose of this study but a grouping of individuals who showed a common class consciousness and programme. A 'healthy clash of opinions' between labourists and capitalists within a structure and organisation which allowed the former participation and expression was seen by capitalists as greatly preferable to the working class identifying its policies and strategy in a directly oppositional, confrontational class manner. Class fractioning became, I would argue therefore, a conscious strategy of the bourgeoisie.

It is erroneous I believe to draw from the observation of an incorporatist, reformist, labour aristocracy the conclusion that this represented the tendency of respectable artisans

to gravitate towards bourgeois values as well as indicating a natural harmony in social relations between the two adjacent class fractions of labour aristocrats and petit-bourgeoisie.

Indeed I will argue later that the Ashington experience demonstrates exactly the opposite to be the case; conflict between these two groups was greater than that between any others precisely because both had a distinct, autonomous, class identity. This was not based solely on income, education, housing or any other of the related variables of social class as perceived in a Weberian analysis but related to the consciousness of individuals which made them identify with either proletarian or bourgeois. Indeed co-operative society employees who in the earlier criterion were socially superior to many of the petit-bourgeoisie viewed themselves as working class; respectable sober, thrifty but nonetheless working class. An examination of the class perception and relations of these influential groups will provide a useful indication of the cleavage between classes.

While class conflict might well suit the proletariat, the capitalists especially after the industrial conflict prior to 1914, developed methods of accommodation and incorporation of the proletariat to ensure the continuance of their enterprises. Government was concerned to achieve greater class harmony. 'The line of greatest social conflict, like the earthquake fault

between continental plates, lay through industrial politics. Here the triangular pattern of co-operation between government and the two sides of industry..... lead to the elevation of trade unions and the employers associations to a new sort of status; from interest groups they became 'governing institutions'.. But because it grew from day to day, flexibility, according to the exigencies of the time,institutional collaboration, supplemented the party parliamentary system and produced a measure of harmony in the inter-war years.' The national differences between pre and post -war moods of class conflict and accommodation would be expected to be mirrored locally and indeed they were.[5 (nbI)]

But just as it has been stressed that the working class needs to be viewed as an active, autonomous group so were the coal capitalists. Reduction in class conflict had as an important element the ability to effectively transmit dominant ideological views. Again Middlemass' comments on national trends can be applied locally 'Governments, however devoted themselves not simply to winning the lowest measure of agreement, but to the management of opinion is an unending process, using the full educative and coercive power of the state'. Within a company town many of the functions of government were performed by the[6] coal company especially before 1918; hegemony being exercised in a physical as well as ideological manner. In consequence it will be necessary to examine the role of coal company propaganda

especially in the period where it was shedding some of its local state functions after 1918.

The Conciliation Board mentioned earlier, is a reminder that both men and employers were part of a regional network of power/negotiation. The coal compant directors were also part of the wider industrial/commercial/associational bourgeois oligarchy, linked by friendship and marriage to a network of influence much wider than their activities in the local coal trade. The miners had regional industrial and political links which,[7] especially in the era of Burt and Fenwick, had an impact of local class relations. Nevertheless the geogra hical, isolation of Ashington, allied to its distinct local accent and culture, and the absence of contact with other industrial groups such as existed on Tyneside and in neighbouring Blyth, meant that the local population were less exposed to extra-local views than most towns of its size. As will be argued later this led to a lack of ideological development due to the lack of dialogue with other trade groups.

As a company town in1896 and even by 1939 a town which was still dominated by a single employer the economics of production were closely linked with the reproduction of the labour force. As a rapidly expanding coal company which needed labour it faced a number of related problems; a lack of workers in the locality; up to 1914 the need to bring in workers from outside as the growth of the industry was much greater than the local birth rate; and finally the necessity to provide housing and municipal

services from scratch. Thus there were extra-industrial costs which the Ashington coal company could not avoid paying to produce its labour force. How a coal company approaches its responsibilities in this area is an indication of its overall philosophy ranging from Lord Londonderry on the one hand to the Ashington coal company's paternalism and participatory policies on the other. Or at least that is the often held view of the Ashington coal company which I will hope to show is not warranted especially before 1914. Especially in a company town housing is thus an integral part of the social relations between the working class and the coal company as well as an important element in reproducing a healthy labour force. The extent to which the latter consideration features highly in company policy is I believe a fair yard stick by which to judge it. Colliery housing, in reality a disguised form of wages could be used by the employers to enhance their reputation[8] for benevolence by appearing to provide free housing. Moreover by the use of free housing in an area of shortage was a potential weapon for controlling working class militancy, by rewarding docile employees with free accommodation. Most importantly company housing policy changes reveal its attempts to wean the labour aristocracy away from socialism.

For the local socialists colliery housing was not simply a form of enslavement to the company. Colliery housing standards before 1914 were low; the development of municipal housing in the post-war period was a chance to demonstrate in practice the philosophy of a planned system of good quality housing

related to need and use-value in contrast to the disguised commodity form of colliery housing. Municipal housing in the early 1920's was aimed at the skilled artisan and labour aristocrat precisely the group whose allegiance was being sought by capitalism. Hence housing provision for this group became a battleground between capital and labour in Ashington.

For socialists however, provision of housing was meant to be according to need not class position. National housing policies and finances greatly restricted the housing policies of labour reformists and meant that the local authority had to devise a system of priorities for its housing policy to take account of this and the need to house labour aristocrats and allow 'filtration upwards' of the residium into houses vacated by this group.

Housing was therefore an important arena of class struggle however its local manifestations might vary. It was also an area of potential capitalist class-fraction conflict between petit and big bourgeoisie. The coal company wanted cheap housing to rent for the employees not housed in colliery houses but the urban petit bourgeoisie wanted maximum profit from their investment, and maximum house occupancy and density in opposition to the health needs of the employers. However one would expect that just as there was fundamental working class unity despite differences of policy so the shared opposition of the bourgeoisie to the working class allowed the bourgeois class fractions to

fuse their conflicting interests in the last analysis.

Ashington changed from a company camp into a town where the local authority took on some of the responsibilities formerly held by the coal company. In this process the defacto local state became confronted with a local authority intent on developing its powers. But each step by which the local authority took to increase the span of its legal and practical powers did not necessarily produce a lasting defeat for the coal capitalists. The coal company was able, by transferring much of its labour reproductive costs to the local authority, to better sustain its competitiveness and profitability in the I920's and I930's. Thus the local authority functioned as a source of surplus value to the coal owners.

The quality of local labour leadership was a crucial element in determining the character, scope and success of local class conflict. Ashington was not Chopwell nor was it Clydeside, both areas which produced distinctive working class victories against elements of capitalism. The single greatest weakness of the working class in Ashington was, I would assert, the lack of a consistent radical ideological view of society amongst local labour leaders after I9I4. The problem was not the incorporation of working class leaders; it was that this incorporation, and increasing class accommodation, was not always seen as a moment or a tactic in the class struggle but was viewed as an end in itself.

The 'curates egg' nature of local working class leadership is best revealed in the lack of inroads made into the non-local authority elements of the local state. The magistracy was bourgeois dominated throughout the period. Most critical of all, especially during 1926, was the failure of the working class to capture control of the Board of Guardians. And having gained control of the local authority this gain was lessened by allowing the 'professionals' to have an undue influence in the democratic process.

Despite these criticisms the period under scrutiny will I hope reveal the considerable working class gains made in Ashington although there could have been more. Indeed if regarded prefiguratively it may be that the experience of Ashington in the outline that follows may yet achieve even greater gains in its influence on the future.

CHAPTER 2 1896 - 1914

The development and character of Ashington was shaped by a single industry; coal mining. In I84I the population of the area was 535. Subsequent small- scale mining enterprises by two partnerships increased the population to almost I,000 by I86I. In the early I840's the first partnership consisted of[9] four men, W.Dickinson, J.Wright, R.Short and F.Turner working the Blackclose Royalty with a shaft sunk at Pity Me. After this enterprise was abandoned, the new partnership was formed in I849 with George Lee and John Henderson being added to three of the original partners as owners of the "Ashington Coal Colliery". The new workings at Fell em Doon were considerably to the North of the Blackclose workings to avoid flooding difficulties. The coal production remained small scale until the introduction of large scale finance capital in the late I860's. In I867 two wealthy capitalists, William Milburn and Jonathan Priestman came into the partnership and in the same year the Bothal shaft was sunk. The following figures indicate the scale and pace of development of Ashington and the Ashington Coal Company.

YEAR	POP. OF ASHINGTON.	NOS. EMPLOYED BY COAL CO.	TONS DRAWN AT ASHINGTON.	TOTAL TONS DRAWN.
I87I	I,27I		I54,935	I54,935
I88I	2,382		277,825	277,825
I89I	5,77I		726,063	726,063
I90I	I3,956	4,597	88I,926	I,390,594
I9II	24,583	7,I67	I,I3I,260	2,055,504

[10] [11] [12]

The above figures relate to only three of the eventual five collieries in the group (Ellington did not begin production till 1910 and only produced 38,975 tons in 1911. Lynemouth first drew coal in the 1930's). Ashington with Hirst was the domicile of the Ashington and Woodhorn miners and many of the Linton miners also lived in Ashington, commuting to work by the company's tank line.

In the earlier period of coal production in Northumberland with collieries being near to Tyneside, accommodation was available for some miners in existing urban areas. Ashington was a northerly outpost of colliery development with no sizeable conurbations nearby, and no developed transport system available. Coal mining demanded a work force living close to the shafts. The Ashington Coal Company was a rapidly developing organization with a need to attract ever increasing numbers of workers. It had to compete for this work-force with other coal companies and the ability to provide accommodation for its workforce was an inescapable part of its enterprise. Housing provision was, therefore, in the early days part of the company's fixed capital costs. The cost of the reproduction of its labour force was one that the company could well afford. The large scale development of coal mining in the Ashington area was very late in terms of Northumberland Coal production. (The Northumberland coal exploitation pattern was from south

(Tyneside) to north in contrast to the west east development in Durham). The late 19th Century early 20th Century boom in Ashington[13] also paralleled that of the national coal production boom. Consequently the directors of the coal company had the advantage of being able to use the latest coal production techniques on virgin seams with a buoyant market in which to sell their coal.

The directors of the Ashington Coal Company which became a limited liability company in 1898, were wealthy men. The two major shareholders were Jonathan Priestman and William Milburn, the shipowner. Both were wealthy Tyneside capitalists.[14] So profitable had the company become that in October 1897 it was decided to form a limited liability company with an issue of £280,000 in ordinary shares, £200,000 in preferences and £250,000 in debentures. When the company was formed in 1898 the Milburn family held £270,000 worth of shares and the Priestman's £200,000.[15] Four of the five directors were Priestman's or Milburns and it had grown into the largest colliery company[16] in Northumberland. As well as coal interests elsewhere the directors were involved in electricity generating and shipowning as well as interests in the Port of Blyth. Not surprisingly the estates left by the coal directors were large; Jonathan Priestman left £103,000 in 1888 and Francis Priestman left £220,000 on his death in 1936.

The exploitation of coal reserves in the Ashington area by members of this commercial oligarchy rather than by the local lord of the manor and chief landowner, the Duke of

Portland, followed the Northumberland pattern of landowners not generally being industrialists. Though the coal barons were actively involved in policy decisions they did leave the day to day running of the company to well-paid officials whose responsibility it was to manage the workforce. These officials were well paid. E.O.Southern, Assistant Viewer and Surveyor, earned £560 per annum in I898 and when he became manager his salary rose to between £900 and £I,000 in I902. By January I9I9 five employees earned in excess of £I000 per annum[I7] and more than a dozen had salaries between £400 and £I000 per annum.[I8] So there was a wide gulf in earnings and status between these officials and the labour aristocrats employed by the company; but just as importantly the company was demonstrating to its workforce that opportunities existed within its organization for the realization of the aspirations of the workers to "get on". The scale of the company's activities and the relatively stable future it could offer because of its proven coal reserves meant that it could develop a paternalistic approach because of the security it could offer. "A job for life" was an important company weapon for controlling its workforce.[I9] But more importantly for the purpose of this study the size, newness and profitability of the coal reserves meant that the directors could not adopt a "rip and run" extractive policy. Their investment was likely to be a long term activity and consequently fixed capital costs

in housing investment were likely to be more attractive than for other older coal companies with more limited reserves.

The directors and managers of the coal company were not however the local landowners. The Duke of Portland in Ashington and High Hirst , and Sir Charles Milburn in Low Hirst were the principal landowners with whom through their companies Portland (later Welbeck) and Milburn estates, both coal owners and local authority, had to deal.Milburn who had shares in the coal company also developed the "colliery housing" to the east of Hawthorn Road so making money as a coal owner, landlord and landowner in the area (as well as his shipping interests which were also linked to coal company activities, through coal exports.) These local landowners were the prime beneficiaries of Ashington's development increasing their capital in a number of ways; by sale and lease of land; by increased land values; by direct house building through their agents; by royalties from the coal company; and by rents from their profits. In addition they were able to shape the spatial distribution of housing and shops by the land they made available for development and use by restrictive covenants. As Ashington became a boom town land prices rose steeply. The coal company which wanted to produce the lowest cost housing possible then resorted to building much higher density housing in Hirst than it had in Ashington. This was achieved by greatly reducing the garden areas to

'pocket handkerchief' dimensions and by building flats. In consequence, Hirst, the later area to be developed became a much unhealthier and more unattractive place in which to live than Ashington. Prior to World War I there was a much clearer distinction and rivalry between the two areas, with Hirst being very much the undesirable area in which to live. "Ashington which absorbed Fell-em-Doon performed a similar digestive operation in relation to Hirst, only this time like a boa-constrictor, it has contrived to swallow something bigger than itself".

An idea[20] of the increased wealth accruing to the land capitalists can be gauged by the Reverend Wardrop's attack on poor road conditions. From agricultural land the Duke of Portland could expect[21] to receive between IOs and £I per annum per half acre. From Wansbeck Terrace he received £I-I6s per annum from each of I8 houses on a half acre site, producing £32-8s per annum. After 99 years he received the land back on the expiration of the lease. "The least therefore they could expect the Duke of Portland to do was to put the roads into decent repair". The thrust of Wardrop's complaint was misdirected; the problem lay in land being treated as a commodity form and its owners receiving massive capital appreciation as a result of working class housing need. There was a conflict of capitalists interests. "While property owners and speculators

try to extract the highest possible rents in order to make their profits, industrialists and business men want to pay the lowest possible rent in order to enlarge their profits". The same conflict related to wage costs. The results for the miners[22] were lower wages and poorer housing conditions as reflected in the following figures. The earlier Ashington rows were built on 58 acres at a density of approximately I4 to the acre. By I898 the coal company was wishing to purchase I00 cottages from North[23] Seaton Estate on $3\frac{3}{4}$ acres and to purchase vacant ground for cottages in Hirst at a housing density of over 20 to the acre. In time the coal company was able to become a major land owner[24] itself and adopt the role of landlord to the local authority.

An examination of the type, number, distribution and pattern of housing development before I9I4 reveals how directly it was related to the coal industry. In general the housing development in the Ashington ward was earlier than that in Hirst and followed the sinking of the Ashington shafts while Hirst was developed as a result of the opening of the Woodhorn colliery in I898. The two collieries were to the north west and north east of the town with all housing and commercial development being to the south of the pits which were about one mile apart. While the colliery houses in both Ashington and Hirst were built in a[25] grid pattern the rows were laid east to west in Ashington but north to south in Hirst. The reason for this change appears to

have been to avoid downdraughts in the chimneys caused by the prevailing westerly wind but the result was that Hirst lost the cleansing effect of the wind. The first rows were as usual laid abutting the colliery in Ashington and the grid layout was needed to allow the laying of a two foot gauge railway in the back streets along which coal was delivered as well as ashes and night soil removed. Furthermore the grid pattern of the terraces made for higher density building and lower building costs. The usual unimaginative naming of the streets which was typical of many mining developments also applied in Ashington. The earliest "rows" were numbered from one to eleven with Cross Row and their naming reveals the company's mentality; in housing the rows on the surface both in name, design and proximity to work were a replication of the industrial pattern underground.

All of the early rows in Ashington were built before the second boom after the opening of Woodhorn. Of these early houses over 50% were three roomed with four, two and five roomed being the next most common. Ashpits, midden and coal-houses lay across the back mud lane and water supply was by standpipe with one pipe every twelve houses in Ashington and one for twenty five in Hirst up to 1904.

Colliery water charges were 2d per house per week in Ashington and 3d in Hirst. In Hirst as already mentioned, the houses were packed more closely together and the coal company

ran into constant problems because of its shortage of land in Hirst, and the expense of buying it from North Seaton and Milburn Estates. The landowning Milburn's interests though dependent upon the coal company activities in the area were still run in a manner which was designed to extract maximum profitability from the enterprises, not used as a source of cheap housing for the coal company. The C.D.P. point about the conflict of capital interests had a novel feature in Ashington. The directors could find themselves because of the breadth of their financial undertakings in conflict with one part of their enterprise in the form of coal company production. So in September I897 there was a proposal that the directors of the coal company form a limited liability company to take over the whole of the company's housing at New Hirst. "Mr. Priestman offered to lend the coal company £20,000 at 4% interest", to finance this activity but the offer was declined. (Ashington Coal Company Minutes. Sept. I3th I897). The other main directorial power, the Milburns, were the major landowner in this area and they had plans of their own for housing profit and development in this area. So capitalism produced conflict amongst its wealthiest practitioners, but the ranks soon closed once an industrial conflict loomed.

There were also the usual problems of some sites being unsuitable for building because of mining subsidence problems or other geographical factors. In addition as the company extended its housing development into the more southerly Seaton Hirst it ran into housing competition with the Cowpen Coal Company which owned North Seaton Colliery. To attract and retain workers however the company was forced to build its own houses at least till the massive influx of workers slowed down after 1908/10. In 1889 workers living in outl ing areas such as Cresswell, Ellington, Morpeth, Newbiggin, Blyth and Barrington were paid an extra 6d per week on top of the 1/6 or 2/- rent allowance (the latter varying with coal prices) to compensate them for the inconvenience and extra expense of travelling to work. More importantly the company was losing workers and being hampered in its expansion plans by the housing shortage even though there was a substantial increase in private house construction as the following figures show.

26

COLLIERY HOUSES SUMMARY

	I898	I904	I908
No. of Colliery Houses	I393	I97I	2028
No. of private houses (Not including shops).	593	I402	I648
	I986	3373	3676

Increase

Colliery Houses (since I898)	635	=	45.58%
" " (" I904)	57	=	2.90%
Private Houses (since I898)	I055	=	I77.90%
" " (" I904)	246	=	I7.50%
TOTAL INCREASE (since I898)	I690	=	85.I0%
" " (" I904)	303	=	9.00%

In I898 the coal company owned 70% of the houses in the district.
" I908 " " " " 55% " " " " " " " .

The particular problem periods for housing were the few years preceding I898 and the period around I908. The large increase in colliery house building from I898 to I904 reduced the figure for the number of workers employed per colliery

house owned from 3.097 to 2.689 but by 1908 this had risen to 3.127. But the overall percentage of colliery housing was falling not because of lack of colliery house building but because high wages and boom town conditions which earned Ashington the name "sin city" had attracted property developers and speculators.

Ashington was a prime target for property speculators for a number of reasons and most of their building was for rental rather than for sale to owner occupiers. The population was roughly doubling every decade up to 1911. Miners were amongst the highest paid members of the working class. Their rent allowances for many made them able to afford artizan rents (though not always receive artizan wages). The rapid population influx had produced a higher than average percentage of single, high wage earning men who could produce higher dwelling rent returns than a family. In 1904 the average workmen received between four and five shillings per week in rent allowance. The speculative nature of private landlordism was reflected in the type of dwelling erected. Flats allowed landlords to produce high dwelling numbers and rent returns on expensive land. While the three roomed house was the dominant form of tenure in colliery dwellings accounting for 60% of colliery houses in 1908 with only 8% being flats, in the private sector 44% of dwellings were flats. As most of

these private flats were in the Hirst area they further added to the health hazardous conditions in newly but cheaply constructed houses in that area.

The coal company was not entirely unhappy with this private rental boom. It allowed it to strike a balance between its fixed and variable capital costs. Its workforce was housed, albeit in poor and overcrowded conditions, and was near to its workplace. And the coal company was the main provider of bricks from its brickworks which produced 20,000 bricks per day in 1912. The private building boom was not a policy determined by the coal company. The boom in coal mining in Ashington was sufficiently profitable to allow both large and small scale capitalists to prosper. But increase in land prices only offer a partial explanation for the reduced share of the housing stock owned by the coal company; a much more important factor was the increased pressure from the local authority on the company to improve the bad environment it had created. Increased land costs in the boom area were the one variable over which the company had no control as the costs of house erection had remained very cheap and stable.

The one variable which was tightly controlled by the company was the cost of house erection and this is an important element in determining the numbers of coal company houses built. The company owned a large brickworks to produce building bricks

for its industrial undertakings; so house bricks were merely an extension of its industrial undertaking which meant that brick supplies were plentiful and costs very low. To ensure very low building costs the company was ruthless in its tendering. In October I899 W.G.Gordon one of the contractors asked to be released from a previous tender because he was in financial difficulties, no doubt because of the low tenders he was forced to offer to obtain coal company business. In the following months the tender of Gordon's chief rival Douglass was felt to be too high by the company and so they asked Gordon, who was paying his creditors I0/- in the £I to begin tendering again. In all following cases the price of bricks are not included. Even allowing for bricks the price of house erection in Ashington was lower than that for equivalent colliery houses built elsewhere.

28

I897

3 roomed cottages in Severn Street.	£68.50.
5 roomed cottages in two flats. Sycamore Street.	£II9.I5.
4 roomed cottages in Maple Street.	£93.I0.

I904

3 roomed cottages in Clyde Street.	£78.
4 roomed cottages in Pont Street.	£I03.

I9I0

3 roomed cottages at Seaton Hirst.	£8I.
4 roomed cottages at Seaton Hirst.	£I08.

Additional costs such as streets (clay and ash), water (standpipes) and sewage (middens) were also kept to a minimum. At a rent allowance rate of 4/- per entitled man per week in 1904 the actual construction cost of a three roomed house excluding land and bricks was equivalent to just over 7 years rent allowance paid to the same employee. Even adding in these other costs it is doubtful if the equivalent cost exceeded 12 years rent allowance, even when rates are included.

Given the long life expected from the company's future mining fixed capital costs in Ashington were at least and probably more attractive than variable costs even when land prices rose sharply, in contrast to Daunton's argument for the North East generally.

Adding in the cost of rates does not greatly increase the coal company housing costs. The District and Poor rate costs though rising were not a major additional cost. (See note for rate in the £ figures.)[29] Most of the cottages attracted a 15% rate reduction under the Small Tenements Act (because of their rateable value below £8 p.a. and a further 15% reduction was granted). Almost all coal company houses qualified for this 30% rate reduction. By keeping their house types small and of a poor standard, and because of sympathetic overseers in the district (according to Councillor Craigs,) the company was able to significantly reduce the house rate burden and so make colliery

provision a practical proposition. The question to be answered then is why did the coal company retreat from its policy of providing colliery housing which gave it direct control of the reproduction of its labour force, when the cost of this was relatively low? The issue of free housing offers part of the explanation.

In a comparison of miner's houses in South Wales and Northumberland/Durham, Daunton has shown how the term 'free' housing was a misnomer.[30] The South Wales miners earned higher wages but did not have a 'free' house. The North Eastern custom of free housing, with its origins in the serfdom of the binding system was counterbalanced by lower wages. But it is ironic that the feudalistic tied house system was used as a weapon against the owners by the men. As Daunton says "There is in any case, little doubt that, on the whole, the workers had a much firmer commitment to the continuation of the free-house system than, generally speaking, did the owners..... In Northumberland at least there was no doubt of the desire of the owner's association to terminate the existing system". The free house paradoxically allowed the miner greater control of his life. "It is probable that on the average, between one sixth and one fifth of the total income of working class families is spent on rent and rates; the proportion raises inversely with the amount of income.

In the case of very poor families the proportion is sometimes more than a third". Reduced wages increased the value of the free house to the miner,[31] and wage fluctuations were common depending on one's "cavil". Mining was a precarious occupation in which the average miner lost over a month's work each year through injury. Under a rental system he would build up rent arrears which would reduce the value of his earnings on return to work. Most importantly they allowed the miners greater power in times of industrial conflict as well as making clearer the ensemble of relations including housing and work. "It followed that whereas housing in South Wales was distinct from the pattern of labour relations in the North East it was entangled with the wage bargain". Miners could afford to indulge in "Saint Monday" or refuse to work on[32] Baff Saturdays without reducing their ability to pay rent. In times of strike the free house miner was in a much better position than was his rent allowance colleague to sustain a lengthy stoppage and "candymen" were not a practical proposition for the owners in a town of Ashington's size[33] in the early twentieth century. It is beyond the scope of this study but it would be of interest to explore differences in attitudes to strike action between miners in the same area who received no rent allowance, those who did, and those who lived in free houses.

The issue of free housing was therefore one which could

be used as a form of class pressure on the owners in times of dispute and I feel that this more than the fixed variable costs issue helps to explain the company's shift towards rent allowances.

Between 1898 and 1913 -

Coal company employees increased by	141%
"Coal Getters" employed increased by	106%
Colliery housing increased by under	80%
Rent allowances increased in number paid by over	160%
and in cost by almost	300%

Free housing was an issue which caused dilemmas for socialists and capitalists alike. For the capitalist coal owners the paternalistic provision of housing could be used as part of its ideological war. Its industrial brochures and prospectuses certainly used this to assiduously create the image of a model employer. Free housing could be used as a reward system but the miners[34] fought this patronage system and established a system of turns. That housing provision was an expectation of the workers which was directly related to production is revealed in the following extract complaining of the six year wait for colliery houses "I think you will agree with me that the Ashington workmen have reason to complain, especially when it was considered that the night shift was commenced on the understanding that 400 houses would be erected

for the men of Ashington". Working class pressure was reminding the owners that housing was a central part of the production costs which it was their duty to bear. For active socialists and Independent Labour Party members, however, this conflicted with their view of housing as being a community resource allocated according to need and build for use value. So the thrust of the socialist attack was on the standard of housing, with some evidence shown of confusion caused by working class adherence to their power created by the free house system and its disguised commodity form.

The latter mention of the directly political opposition to the coal company leads to a wider discussion of the relations between the coal company and its widespread activities in the town, and the industrial and local authority opposition it faced because of housing and associated environmental conditions.

The activities of the coal company extended to all aspects of local life. The local authority had only been created an urban district council in 1896 and many of the coal company's activities were performed in other areas by local authorities. The period from 1896-1914 shows the local authority being increasingly prepared to challenge the coal company on the social element of its coal production (as socialist and radical liberal councillors became more numerous and influential on the council). In this period it was often a question of the local authority attempting to force a sense of responsibility

on to a company which was prepared to allow its workers to live in health hazardous conditions. This period reveals that there was more sham than substance in the coal company's reputation as a paternalistic employer. The reputation of the Ashington Coal Company as a model employer is in my view largely a myth but one that was created post-war by an active propaganda campaign. In the pre-war period there was very active opposition to the company's activities by the working class. That in itself is quite surprising for a number of reasons. The newness of the town and the constant influx of labour meant that social life was less settled and there had been less time to develop organisations for opposing the employers. Such 'frontier' conditions do not usually produce radical working class organisations (cf. the oil industry both on and offshore on Scotland). The profitability and secure employment future means[36] that the workers are relatively less likely to have grounds for opposition. This was especially the case given the local and national boom prior to 1914. The Ashington Coal Company prior to 1914 was a parsimonious hard-bitten organisation. Modifications in its attitude, and to development of welfarism in the post-war period was as a result of working class militancy at a local and national level. The socialist councillors were caught in the equivocal position of improving the coal company's enterprises by

enforcing better living standards for its employees. This was conscious Liberal policy at local and national level, A.J.Balfour having argued that social welfare was to be the Liberal's weapon for preventing the development of socialism. So the more ruthless activities of the coal company being mediated by local authority pressure was directly beneficial to coal company and Liberals. And Ashington revealed a similar pattern "Swan Song" of a Liberal revival prior to 1914 that Purdue has outlined. To survive the Liberals had to "steal the thunder" of their[37] socialist opponents who were winning an increasing share of the miner's votes, especially in Hirst. But as Purdue has shown the side of socialist advance was uneven and fraught[38] with setbacks even in a mining camp like Ashington as an examination of local politics demonstrates.

The whole political climate locally was dominated in 1896 by the influence of the two local Lib-Lab. M.P.'s both former miners. Charles Fenwick was the M.P. for Wansbeck in which constituency Ashington lay, for 32 years till his death in 1918.

The legendary[39] Thomas Burt, Secretary of the Northumberland Miner's Mutual Confident Association and M.P. for Morpeth was a nationally known "log cabin to White House" figure. After 1906[40] there was evidence of some tension in the Lib-Lab compact especially after both Burt and Fenwick refused to

sign the Labour Party Constitution even though the Miner's Federation of Great Britain had decided to affiliate to the Labour Party in 1908. Both men were, like John Wilson of Durham, essentially Liberals and the lack of Labour opposition to them at Parliamentary elections was due to their long service, work in the miner's unions and sentiment. Though their views were increasingly being rejected by local miners it seems likely that these two figures did exercise a moderating influence on the consciousness of many uncommitted miners. As Wilson put it ".....My desire was to fit myself for preaching, and to take my place intelligently in affairs of the day and all social and political movements". But there was a tension in a number of these leaders caught between their espousal of dominant ideological views and the conditions and lifestyles still 'enjoyed' by their comrades. This tension was heightened after 1906 by the increasing importance of socialist ideas in Ashington As Burt put it "Who are my masters? This to me is a vital question. Long ago I made up my mind never to have for my master a tyrant. It is often said that working men are the greatest tyrants on the face of the earth. To this I do not subscribe- it is too general, too sweeping; but I can say from bitter experience that there are in the ranks of working men, some of the greatest tyrants it has ever been my ill-fortune

41

to meet with".In the local coal mining industry such sober
42
respectable, religious workers were just the sort of men that the coal company, and especially the Priestman's, wanted to encourage. Persuasion and conciliation were their methods and conflict resolution was their aim. But the socialists represented something different. There might be little difference between radical liberal and reformist labourist criticisms of the coal company but the latter, especially allied to the revolutionary socialists, were positing changes in society which could threaten the very existence of the coal company.

Ashington and Hirst differences were also reflected in local politics with the former much more likely to elect Tories, Liberals and Independents despite the fact that most of its electorate were miners. In the elections for the first Urban District Coucil in Ashington E.O.Southern, the colliery manager, and W.J.Charlton the engineer, were both elected in the Ashington ward with Southern being elected council chairman for that and the two ensuing years with Charlton becoming chairman in I900. The contradictory nature of the class location consciousness of some miners, in Ashington Ward especially was revealed by the defeat of Joseph English, miner's secretary and secretary of the Equitable Co-operative Society in I897 with the chairman of the union

Thomas Laidler coming absolutely last. The local press referred to the paradox of the defeat of English, who had been Vice-Chairman in the previous year. McCord has argued that personal knowledge of local individuals[43] has been an underestimated factor in determining voting choices. "Religious voting" was likely to play a part (withW.J.Charlton for example being church warden of Holy Sepulchre) and the links between nonconformity and Liberalism have been well documented. But an important local factor was that the most senior coal company officials[44] were standing as candidates; the deferential would feel honoured while the astute might not want to risk offending the company. Furthermore the senior council positions held by Southern in I896 was as a result of election by fellow candidates; in terms of votes cast the "company men" were not dominant. Nevertheless there is evidence of a steady company deferential[45] vote in local elections before World War I in the Ashington Ward, a vote which was maximised by not presenting too many candidates and by playing down any "political" element in their candidature. In I9I3 Strong who stood as a "gentleman" was elected in the Ashington Ward.

Coal company representation on the council at a senior level, winning support fron non-liberals and then non-socialists provided a very important mechanism for preventing

important attacks on company activities. The extension of coal company patronage into an attempt to control the local state was no accident. Indeed the officials had to obtain sanction from the coal company to stand as candidates. On March 3rd 1899 the directors of the company recorded that "Mr. J.J.Hall Assistant Manager at the colliery was authorized to become a candidate at the approaching election of councillors". He was subsequently elected. Encouraging highly paid senior officials to expend time and energy[46] on local authority business had the added advantage of replicating the master/men relationship in a potentially conflict ridden area. It was of advantage to the company to neutralise or at least make more muted working class opposition to company activities. A Labour councillor was likely to think carefully about criticising his employer in the council chambers when his employer's representatives were also there.

The company was further advantaged by having advance warning of any potential opposition to it which might be developing in the local authority. On the issue of insufficient standpipes (2 for 35 homes) for water the following extract reveals the direct propagandist and trouble-shooting role the company's "plants" on the local authority performed.

"Mr. Southern hoped the two members who were to

accompany the surveyor would bear in mind that every new tap meant an increase in the waste of water".

Mr. Craigs, "I hope not".

Mr. Southern, "It is not a question of hoping it is a question of fact. The further people have to carry their water the less waste there is".

47

Not only were the "company" councillors able to play the role of advocate for the company, but, especially in the person of J.J.Hall who was a councillor from 1899 for almost 30 years, they were able to play groups off against each other and so use the local authority as a crucial locus for the resolution of class conflict forces. As the first world war approached however it became increasingly clear that the socialists were almost certain to take control of the council because of their dominance in Hirst. An important structural disadvantage which was an important reason why the socialists did not dominate the council earlier was the unfair distribution of seats between the two wards. Hirst with twice the population as Ashington by 1914 had only the same number of seats.

It was in the Hirst area of high density, insanitary housing conditios that the socialists prospered. Even John Craigs, a prominant radical liberal and self-propagandist, found the opposition too stiff for him in Hirst and became an Ashington councillor. The Independent Labour Party made

considerable progress in Ashington and in 1910 opened its own library which had been built entirely by Independent Labour Party members. There were socialist speakers and a debating society ae well as the usual range of activities arranged by the Co-operative Societies (the Industrial and the Equitable). They formed an intelligent and vigorous minority group who broadened their attack to encompass all aspects of life which affected their members. In May 1910 Gilbertson, a Hirst Labour councillor and member of the Board of Guardians walked out of a Guardians meeting after an "alphabetical" election. The local Independent Labour Party opposed the New Poor Law in 1911 because of its restrictions on outdoor relief. In the field of housing the socialists argued that the houses in Hirst would not have been built so close together had there been a Labour majority on the council. But there is little evidence that a sufficiently large and influential number of socialists were working out a pre-figurative struggle centred on the class struggle and opposition to coal company in the directly industrial fields .There was more talk of "tyranny of capitalism" than there was evidence of it in action. It was in the wider social relations of the coal company with its "town" that the real conflict lay. To that extent the company's even production in the industrial field caused by relatively

few major disputes was undermined by the attacks made on it in the social field, despite its representation on the local authority.

The sheer scale of the company's enterprises in Ashington meant that they were the de-facto local authority in I896 and for many years afterwards. It would be virtually impossible to exaggerate the power of the coal company in its town. The extensive nature of its enterprises meant that social and economic interests and control were fused; the consequences of this were profound and shaped the nature of the local class struggle. Housing conflict, water provision, street paving were but several of the areas in which it was impossible to unscramble the "ensemble of relations". Capitalistic hegemony therefore produced a broad-based extra-industrial opposition. Housing issues, therefore, were as important an area of class conflict as lock-outs and stoppages of coal production. The coal company provided bricks for housing and was responsible foe sewage and rubbish disposal. It had its own tramway running down the streets along which it delivered fuel. It provided the gas for domestic and street lighting and subsequently the electricity. It's farms supplied much of the district's milk and the colliery supplied domestic water, and water for street cleaning. Many streets were company owned. It owned a high percentage of the town's housing. Not surpringly, faced with

a practical as well as ideological dominance of the workforce opposition was directed at the company in a number of areas. Specifically the opposition focussed on a number of areas: the restrictive use of company roads and the conditions of the streets; the public health problem of the "midden" houses; scavenging; the health hazard of unpaved backyards; ashpits; sewage discharge; water; gas and electricity supply; the problem of a hospital for infectious diseases; and the size and dense proximity of housing.

The state of the houses and streets which were often impassable in muddy (even motor omnibuses could not get through some of the main roads in bad weather). There were regular

48

epidemics, especially in Hirst, which was the unhealthiest district in the whole of Morpeth, Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington area (and the houses were newly built! So much for the paternalism of the coal company so often eulogised about). From about I908 the council began to take a much firmer line with housing development. It returned plans to the company for 52 cottages in Hirst with suggested amendment. These included self-contained back yards, as opposed to across the street middens, and ten foot ashphalted footpaths in the front streets. The company estimated the cost to amount to £I2.5.0d per house reporting that "the local authority could not insist upon the alterations suggested but failure to comply with their requirements might cause them to adopt the street impovement act". So the local

authority was using the threat of one form of legislation to effect planning controls which it did not possess. The company chose the lesser of two evils and compromised, deciding on improvements costing £10.13.0d. per house rather than carry out the full council suggestions as, if agreed, "it would probably affect all future houses". More worryingly to the company, was the danger of being forced to retrospectively control developments already completed. In February 1909 the company noted that Milburn Estates had been forced by Newbiggin council to improve the Links Estate. If a similar order were to be made in Ashington the company estimated it would cost it £50,000. The local authority, increasingly under the influence of socialists and radical liberals, was extracting from the company some of the social costs of industrialisation and labour reproduction that the employers had tried to avoid or reduce. Local class conflict in Ashington, a company town, was focussed on all aspects of life over which the company had influence or control. Indeed the struggle against the coal company was greatest in the non-industrial area prior to 1914.

The "Back Streets" of Hirst were regarded by their inhabitants, by health officials and by the local press to be the most insanitary in south-east Northumberland and the "back streets" became a rallying cry. The local authority wanted the mud streets in Sycamore and Poplar Streets to have proper pavements with paving on the roads between the tramlines to be provided

also (53 houses were company owned and 35 private). In March 1910 the council suggestions were sent to the owners with an estimated cost of £3.11.8d per house. At first the company objected and then submitted its own plans costing 7s6½d per house, inviting private owners to share the costs. This offer was declined by the local authority which decided to go before the Justices to compel the company to carry out the stated improvements. The company then compromised "but without prejudice" to avoid the court appearance, attendant adverse publicity and legal precedence. Using company bricks and labour the final cost was £2.14.6d. per house, representing a clear victory for the local authority. The timing of this victory was significant. Syndicalism and militancy in the coal industry nationally was mirrored by the seemingly irresistible tide of socialist progress locally as reflected in local electoral success and the growth of the Independent Labour Party. More worryingly for the coal company there was evidence of increasing dissatisfaction by the rank and file of the moderate stance of their labour aristocratic leaders in parliament and in the union. (And of course Burt and Fenwick the local lib/lab M.P.'s were still influential in the union). Coal Companies reacted differently. The Pelton Fell mines were reported to be surprised by the mine owner's declaration of a pension scheme. It represented an attempt

by the coal company to strengthen the hand of the "moderates" in the union in order that collaboration and consensus rather than conflict would be the ruling feature of industrial relations. And this approach was being developed on a national scale as Middlemass has written ".....the employers generally took care also to distinguish between manifestations of syndicalist thinking and the activities of the Triple Alliance on the one hand and respectable trade unionism on the other - tacitly therefore, encouraging the T.U.C. to aspire to a larger role". In the pre-war situation
51
the Ashington Coal Company was not as perceptive as the directors of Pelton Fell but they were to be given a lesson by their workers of the power of labour which would cause significant modifications of company policy in the post-war era. The coal company's neglect of sanitary and environmental conditions in its urge to most cheaply shelter its workers was coming home to roost. Further the resistance of the company to the very modest and basic health improvements requested give the lie to the popularly held view of the Ashington Coal Company as a paternalistic employer. It had created and was prepared to perpetuate unhygienic slum conditions for its workers in Hirst. It was the pressure of working class opposition on the local authority which forced the company to improve environmental conditions

for its workers. It was apposite that in the latter case the method used the threat of litigation, was turning back on the employers the method they used against the men, having sued miners on many occasions for striking, staying off work or laying the pit idle after a fatality. But more interestingly local authority action was an important factor in helping change coal company policy on the benefits of owning its own houses and streets. Local authority pressure was a significant factor in changing coal company housing policy and after the war there was a direct transfer of labour reproduction costs and responsibility from coal company to the local authority, and that is a measure of the success of working class pressure on its employer even though the post-war situation was of benefit to the employer.

The council coal company struggles did not proceed at a uniform rate though generally there is evidence of decreasing coal company successes as the century progressed. Even so it was as late as 1906 that the councillors were voicing complaints regarding plans being submitted for buildings after they had been erected. This is an indication of how much control the council still needed to exercise and how embryonic its organisation and powers were. Even by 1914 the council's officials still only comprised a clerk, medical officer of health, treasurer, rate collector, surveyor and inspector of nuisances. Nor were the councillors

necessarily united in their attacks on landlords. The council was adopting a "Streets first, Houses afterwards" campaign in February 1913 in an attempt to improve Public Health. Rae Patterson (Labour) argued for the use of "moral suasion" with Milburn Estates over this matter. His fellow Labour councillor Warne, declared himself to be tired of this persuasive stance and was advocating the need for much firmer, legislative action. Generally however the council attempted to win improvements in local conditions through negotiation.

As the powers of the coal company were so extensive it conflicted with the council on a wide range of matters. The nature of coal mining meant that there were frequent threats of action against the company over damages caused by mining subsidence. The company were careful to calculate the likely damages arising from subsidence against the value of coal extracted. Nevertheless it faced constant claims for damages to farms and water pipes. The large burning ashheaps close to the town centre was another source of nuisance. When the council attempted to force the company to reduce the health hazard caused by these the company responded by fencing the heaps and preventing the local inhabitants from tipping there. The council was then forced to ask the company to sell it land on which such refuse was tipped.

The aim of the company was "to force the council to take over scavenging" by "bringing matters to a head". (1900). The 53
council decided to do its own scavenging but was still dependant on the company providing them with land and the use of the tram lines to remove refuse. Protracted negotiations resulted in the council coming to a new contract with the company whereby the company received increased income for the scavenging. The final agreement gave the company 7s per house for scavenging. By August 1902 the company reported a profit of £74 per annum for this work and in addition £115 per annum payment in respect of wear and tear on the tramlines (which it was using for its coal leading in any case). This illustrates quite well I feel the scale of the difficulty facing the council in its attempts to improve living conditions in its areas as well as reinforcing the earlier point about its lack of material resources. The struggle was to make the company surrender its position as the de facto local state and to circumscribe its non industrial powers. That the council had setbacks was not surprising. What is more surprising is the extent of its successes, even before 1914, in curbing the overwhelming power of the social and industrial giant it faced. The company, by its stubborness and intransigence was in no small measure responsible for creating opposition to its activities.

An illustration of this latter point is the company's response to the council's request to purchase three cottages at City Me to create an infectious diseases hospital (chosen because of its isolation). In November 1899 the company decided to "insist upon the council giving the full twelve months notcie of their intention". So the company was prepared to antagonise the council and to create the possibility of an epidemic which would have been economically disasterous to the company. All for the sake of three cottages when elsewhere in Ashington they were being erected at the rate of 25 per week. One can only assume that the company had determined at an early stage to resist all attempts to interfere with its areas of jurisdiction. But it seems likely (as with the subsidence issue) that the company was not prepared to weigh long term advantages caused by better health against the loss of short term economic or strategic advantage. With the coal company profit was all and they pursued it with a single-minded purpose. But the often blinkered pursuit of profit was to create resistance to its activities which with a slightly more flexible approach might have been greatly minimised. Where, however, there was an immediate threat to health which could cause severe economic loss (and where the scale of remedial wish was small) the company responded.So in 1900 it agreed to follow

the Medical Officer of Health's recommendations that the middens in houses where typhoid fever had occurred should be cement floored and repointed (only six to eight cottages in all).

Of all the struggles between company and council over environmental provision that over water supply was the most protracted. The company was the sole supplier of water in the area providing "slops" for sewage and "better" water for drinking. The drinking water was pumped from the mine, filtered and chlorinated. The local press is full of complaints about the poor quality of this water and the local authority was concerned to exercise control over that crucial aspect of public health. InI899 the company provided the town with over 50,000 gallons of water per day at an average cost of 2d per house per week. In March I900 the local authority proposed that it should be the water authority in Hirst, the company supplying the water and being paid by the council collecting the costs. The company declined the offer as "it leaves them almost in the same position as at present". Negotiations continued but the company held out.In March I906 the Blyth News was scathing about the continued resistance of the coal company to the local authority's offer. They dismissed the coal company's complaints of low profits on water supply with "Why then put a prohibitive price on it being supplied to the council?" The answer was again the company's obsession

with profit on all its activities. They sent their legal charges back to their solicitor asking him to reduce them, which he did. Offered £10 per annum for rabbit shooting rights on the company's farms they postponed a decision to see if they could obtain a better offer. The company was not prepared to accept that any part of its multifarious activities should not yield a profit. (This parsimonious attitude in relation to the "howkies" and their welfare contrasted starkly with the grand gestures of the company in relation to matters like donations to charities, free coal to churches and schools, donations to Armstrong college and a 1000 guinea painting presented to a senior official on his retirement. But the "grand gestures" of the company accorded with the expectations of directors who were part of the new wealthy commercial aristocracy of the north east, and they were invariably reported in the press). In total these sundry activities produced only a small profit £282 in 1900 compared with £215,000 for coal. That they should be so jealously guarded reveals best of all the mentality of greed which pervaded all the company's dealings. (By 1913 the company's water monopoly began to be challenged by the Tynemouth Corporation).

Gas and electricity were also provided to the locality by the coal company. In 1903 aware that the Northern Counties Electricity Supply Company was intending moving into the

Ashington area thus challenging the company's gas monopoly negotiations were opened with the N.C.E.S.C. After extensive enquiries the coal company decided that greater profit could be made if it supplied the N.C.E.S.C. with electricity by building its own power station. This it proceeded to do at a cost of £I2,840 using a Lancashire boiler "as it could burn the company's duff coal and was therefore more economical". So the company produced electricity for its own use as well as supplying the N.C.E.S.C.[54] Significantly the enterprise was beyond the scope of the local authority which became dependant on the coal company for another aspect of public utility. In consequence and because of exorbitant charges for electricity large area of Ashington and Hirst were badly lit or not provided with lighting at all. In the end in I9I3, the local authority was forced to consider providing utilities itself. But the relatively small size of council finance and the existing monopoly (and continuing one to the colliery houses) did not make this a realistic proposition.

The class conflict in the industrial field was directly linked to all aspects of a miner's life as the eight hours dispute in particular demonstrates.And the tensions already mentioned between respectable liberalism and socialism were revealed here too. The traditional influence of Burt and Fenwick was strained by a decreasing satisfaction with the

respectable moderation of their policies. As Keir Hardy had said of Fenwick when the latter had opposed the eight hours legislation in the 1901 debate[55] "If ever Angels are known to weep it must be when the representatives of working men, speaking for them in the house, draw forth the enthusiastic cheers of the employers of labour by opposing measures of this kind". The eight hours act which introduced a three shift for a two shift system into Northumberland and Durham was implemented locally in January 1910. In the same month the Blyth News spoke of an "amicable settlement" having been reached between the Ashington Coal Company and its employees. This was in marked contrast to other areas of Northumberland where 10,000 miners were in dispute[56] and to Durham where many rank and file miners refused, against their county executives advice to implement the act. The harmony at Ashington proved to be illusory however, as the implications of the act began to make themselves felt. The coal company had argued that three shifts was an economic necessity but the result was the dislocation of the miner's social relations. Trade unions complained of falling attendances at meetings and had to start to hold some meetings on Sundays, producing difficulties with a number of religious members. The churches and other societies also objected. But most of all it was the disruption of domestic life and the effects

on wives and children of the new system that raised opposition to the act, (consider the effect of the act on women with husband and several sons employed in the pit and there were many such families in Ashington). The unpopularity of the"foreshift" to this day , and for the same reasons, is eloquent tribute to the resistance of men to being treated only as wage earning units of production. The fight back began at an executive meeting of the Northumberland miners at Amble in February, to consider the re-introduction of the two shift system.

In March at the coal company annual diner the management reported on the "great difficulties" caused by the eight hours act with the owners talking of "over legislation" by amateurs disturbing the harmony between employers and employees. A week later Linton and Woodhorn along with the
57
majority of the constituent unions in the Northumberland Federation voted against the executive on the three shift system. Ashington only objected to Baff Saturday (the last Saturday in the fortnight) working hours. Throughout 1910 and 1911 the miners of Ashington and Northumberland pressed the coal owners for an end to the three shift system but to no avail though the issue would not die and surfaced in the 1912 strike.

In 1911 the Northumberland miners had had their motion

passed at the M.F.G.B. Annual Conference. The motion called for standardisation of the time needed to give notice of a labour withdrawal "so that in case of a decision to enter on a general strike, work would cease simultaneously throughout the "Federated" area. The two issues raised in the Cambrian Collieries strike that of "abnormal places" working rates and the principle of a minimum wage were elided into the miner's demands for a National Minimum Wage. Both owners and government were alarmed at the new found national unity and the owners in particular wanted to retain district negotiations (c.f. with the coal board's desire to introduce a local bonus system in 1978. Both were attempts to divide the men and weaken the union). In Ashington an issue not directly related to the minimum wage strike caused the only industrial anger. In the six week strike over the minimum wage bill the local press reported that initially matters were "uneventful and peaceful in Ashington". Miners meetings protested that the full demands should be met and objecting to the arrest of Tom Mann. Locally the four collieries all voted against acceptance of the government offer. (As in 1919 the government appeared to concede the principle demanded by the miners but renaged on the essentials once the miners had returned to work believing that they had won). But the real objection of the Ashington miners was the three

shift system. So dominant was this issue that it even pushed into the background the main issue of the miner's first national strike demonstrating that the miners had a cluster of needs and demands which were primarily social. It was important to them that their social network should be protected in order to make life meaningful. It was impossible to separate the community life in Ashington from the economic activities at the pit. (Indeed even at work,as Trist and Bamforth have shown, the need of social intercourse and support significantly affected the miners capacity to operate as an economic unit[58]). The Ashington miners, some consciously, some instinctively, were asserting that they were social beings whose capacities were constrained by their economic situation. They realised this better than the coal owners and better than their own county and national leaders.

The Minimum wage strike produced an act which left the question of rates still open to district negotiation and the miners had effectively lost their demands.Though it was not until 1919 that a major challenge to the coal owners and government was again posed. This, however disguised the real nature of coal mining, where battles, if not wars are fought daily. The miner was brought into constant conflict with his employers as rates for each job and each area were constantly being changed. Working places or "cavils" were

drawn by lot which in theory should have produced a fair share of good and bad workplaces. A bad "cavil" had a considerable effect on a miner's wage earning capacity, necessitating harder and more dangerous work for lower wages. It would seem likely that the number and type of cavils as well as who drew them, had some influence on militancy or otherwise. The "abnormal places" dispute was sympathetic of the miner's feeling that he was being expected to produce unrealistic amounts of coal in adverse conditions. In the mines there were no normal conditions and consequently the workers felt a sense of continuing grievance at their ever changing wages. In any event coal wage rates were reviewed every three months and went down as well as up. (In April 1911 for example the chairman of the conciliation board reduced Northumberland wages by 3½%). During the First World War prices doubled and the Ashington miners fought a continuing battle to have their wage rates uprated. They were also aware through the county secretary, William Straker, in his "Monthly Circular" that their wage increases were much lower than the owner's percentage increase in profits and capital during the war. So no news of conflict in coal mining disguised a situation of permanent conflict and daily confrontation.

During and before the minimum wage strike in Ashington the local labour councillors had been struggling for social

demands and for the creation of a support network for the strikers.Two councillors in particular, the radical liberal and maverick Craigs and Gilbertson, were powerful protagonists for their member's demands. They fought for greater Guardian representation for Hirst and even refused to accept the undemocratic procedures of the Morpeth Guardians. Attacks were made on overcrowding in Hirst and at least one landlord was called before the council to answer for his profiteering.

The Independent Labour Party councillors took their demands to the county council, Gilbertson spoke of the "starving children of the mining districts" and received support from the Blyth News for his campaign.Craigs investigated conditions in local schools and found "shoeless and mentally defective" children there. (In May 1910 63.17% of children in Northumberland schools were found to be defective in some respect and the Hirst district of Ashington was as bad as anywhere in Northumberland). The councillors pressed the coal company , through the Medical Officer of Health, to improve its sanitary provision notably by covering all ashpits (which were also toilets).

The activities of the local councillors were greatly increased during the 1912 strike as they realised that the health anf welfare of the children was the Achilles heel of the miners. As Harry McShane pointed out in the Dublin

Transport strike of 1913 socialists in Britain offered to care for the strikers children. But he did not seem to see the significance of this. Just as the miners social relations could be his salvation in a dispute so they could be his destruction, especially with regard to his own immediate family. To watch miner's children hunger was one of the owners greatest aids in forcing his workers to agonise over their industrial action. So Craigs and Gilbertson approached the County Education Committee and asked them to provide meals to the miner's children under the Children's Free Meals Act but after "considering" the matter the request was refused. It was fact that this might set an unhappy precedent nationally.

Other social and religious organisations of the miners came to their aid in the strike. Soup kitchens were organised by the clubs and the Salvation Army. But the Board of Guardians alarmed at the possible "overlapping" of relief provision, deputed its secretary Mr Thompson to investigate this matter. Nevertheless the miner's own organisations continued to provide relief and the Co-operative Wholesale Society supplied food to the kitchens. But most importantly the action was not left until the strike. The councillors had campaigned againstamendments to the Poor Law Act well before the strike. Certainly some of the local inhabitants

had been involved in a pre-figurative struggle against capitalism, while at the same time men like Craigs were helping it survive by effecting changes in its harsher manifestations.

The traditional folklore picture of the Ashington Coal Company and its relations with its employees was that of a benevolent employer whose concern was always for the welfare of its workers. The period from 1896-1914 reveals how much of this apparent harmony amounted to "ghetto gilding", and sometimes there was not even any gilding. That Ashington[60] was not a hot bed of revolutionary socialists and syndicaism is not contended; that some aspects of coal company policy, on some occasions, could be described as "paternalistic" is also not disputed. But opposition there was in plenty to the company activities by the miners through their union and through the local authority. And there is considerable evidence of increasingly vociferous, radical and informed opposition in the pre-war period especially from 1910-1914. This opposition was so successful because it was rooted in the local counter-hegemonic ideology of the creative and vigorous Independent Labour Party. A local councillor and union leader like George Warne who was a man of concensus and compromise in the 1920's was a much more radical and tenacious opponent of the company in the pre-war period. He was an active member of the I.L.P. which was involved,

through its debates and library, in disseminating and developing socialist ideas. There was evidence of the ideology shaping action and sustaining conflict. Thepost-war period saw a decline in this praxis as a result of a decline of the ideological element causing blurring of the class conflict. And in a company town there was no divide between the social and industrial aspects of class conflict. Indeed it is probably as a result of this viewing the class conflict purely in industrial terms that the real breadth and scale of local resistance to company policy has been missed. As Cleaver has argued the role of the working class is often active, forcing capitalist reaction to working class pressure. In the particular field of housing the change from a colliery house to rent allowance policy is much more explicable in terms of this working class pressure rather than the fixed/variable costs issue which applied elsewhere. It was a recognition of the power afforded them by "freehouses", and the increasing extraction of the social cost of reproduction of the labour force from the company by the local authority which were the prime determinants of this policy shift. The total change in coal company housing policy after the war is an indication of the success of the employees and their organisations in resisting and shaping company policy.

CHAPTER 3 1914 - 1926

The outbreak of war in 1914 led to the cessation of colliery house building in Ashington for the duration of the war, although there was pre-war evidence of a reduction in this area as well as a shift towards a policy of rent allowances. Nichol has stated that "The massive exodus of miners who left the mines to join the forces caused a glut of houses in the area". This is a considerable exaggeration.[61] What occurred was a reduction in conditions of overcrowding allied to a less lucrative private rental sector because of wartime rent controls. A further contributory factor was the increasing state involvement in the control of the coal industry culminating in the appointment of a Coal Controller at the Board of Trade in February 1917, although Page Arnot was correct to argue that "efforts to reorganise the industry, whatever the control over output or distribution, were rendered futile through the fact that the first charge on the industry was always the profits of the coal owners". State control and possible nationalisation made the Coal Company want to establish its future role before again considering house-building in the area.[62]

The pre-war Syndicalist activity in Britain, was but one source of alarm to the mine owners. Nationalisation of the mines had been first approved by the Miner's Federation of Great Britain in 1894 and regularly endorsed at annual conferences subsequently and a bill was presented to the Commons in 1913 on the issue. Fabian policy was to specifically

exclude compensation. The language and mood of the miners was threatening. "More and more are the forces of Capital and Labour being arrayed against eact other. The workers are claiming a greater share of the wealth they produce. In order to enforce their claims Trade Unions are being amalgamated.[63] The Triple Industrial Alliance was the enactment of these sentiments. Faced with a spirit of opposition the private ownership by the miners and increasing evidence of the power of miners to oppose the coal owners a dual response was elicited from mine owners locally and nationally in the immediate post-war period; they asserted the case for private ownership of the mines while developing a policy of "welfarism" to justify their continued ownership of the industry while hoping to wean the men away from radical ideas. And to publicise and reinforce its campaign the Ashington coal company adopted an extensive and effective propagandist campaign with housing being an important element in this.

At a national level the government had managed to dupe the miners by renaging on its promise to abide by the recommendations of the Sankey Commission. Nationally the miners continued to become better organised during the war. In 1915 on the instigation of the M.F.G.B. the Triple Industrial Alliance had been formed. In 1918 the Labour Party decided to leave the coalition and fight the election as an independent party. Locally this was reflected in Cairns'

election as a real Labour M.P. for Morpeth. The burning issue for the miners was nationalisation and the miner's claim of 1919 included this proposal as well as a thirty percent increase on wages, demobilization safeguards for redundant former miners and a reduction in hours from eight to six for underground workers. The decision to strike (by half a million majority) was deferred for a month to allow the Sankey Commission to discuss the issues. Three reports were produced; the majority, the Sankey report, and that of the coal owners. Concessions were made to the miners and they believed that the government was prepared to honour its commitment to nationalisation. On this basis, the union nationally and all the Ashington Coal Company Collieries with massive majorities, accepted the proposals and did not strike. But then as in 1912, with the worker's energy now dissipated, the government refused to honour its commitment to nationalisation. The issue left the miners with a sense of betrayal which was not followed by any action.

In Ashington the Coal Company Manager, Ridley Warham, had been a witness to the Sankey Commission and had spoken against the need for nationalisation. But it is significant that a coal company representative was chosen as a witness

to give an example of how ideal their coal winning operations were. It reveals that the coal company was regarded as a model employer in terms of efficiency and labour relations.

Locally, however, the miners carried out a lengthy, intelligent and successful industrial campaign against the company over the Baff Saturday dispute. From July 1919 to March 1920 all the company pits were idle every alternate Saturday over an hours/wages dispute. In all previous disputes which had involved miners failing to work the company had sued the miners for breach of contract in an attempt to make striking ruinously expensive, as in addition to loss of wages the miner had to pay damages to the company as well as a fine. Furthermore he had to pay for a twelve mile round trip to Morpeth to appear in court. He would then have to ask the company's "favour" to have the triple monetary penalty deducted from his wage weekly. The main reasons why the dispute continued so long was the miner's demand that the company should waive all claims to damages as a result of the dispute. The Ashington miners had even ignored the county executives' advice to accept an earlier offer, because it did not satisfy the question of damages.[64] The company eventually capitulated to this intelligent strike where the miners earned wages but reduced company profits by their action. And very importantly with the local miners as with their Eight Hours Act opposition they were asserting

the importance of their social needs against the company's economic demands.

The decision of the coal company to adopt social welfare policies antedated the Baff Saturday and I92I lockout episodes but it was made more extensive and more essential by these disputes. The superannuation scheme and the house purchase plan were the main planks of the coal company's policy to appear to have responsible welfare policies to defeat nationalisation. But all areas were used to develop this reputation. The 'Blyth News' reported that the company had "with its usual generosity" agreed to give the last £500 needed to complete the Wesleyan Methodist Central Hall in I923. Lynemouth Pithead Baths were opened (featured in Pevsner's "Northumberland" for their architectural merit). The company had four welfare grounds and employed ten groundsmen to cover them. Great stress was laid on the latter. In July I926 the Morpeth Herald reported the indignance of the coal company at suggestions that its leisure welfare activities were funded from the national scheme. They asserted that it was a local scheme with the Id or 2d subscriptions of the miners only amounting to a third of the cost, the rest being met by the company. And great detail was given to welfare provision. The motto of the company was clearly not "Do good by stealth".

The coal company's own magazine, was perhaps the most

effective propaganda weapon for the company. (The miner's had their own county propaganda weapon, the "Monthly Circular" which was used to disseminate counter-hegemonic ideas). The publication was used to sell the idea of a model employer to its employees, at a time when the company was desperately trying to retain control of its industry and the allegiance of the men. The post-war period saw the Coal Company totally change its housing policy building houses in Ashington and Hirst only for sale to its employees and looking to develop the new model village of Lynemouth. This shift was not caused by a housing glut as there was still a housing shortage in the district. The Company had found that its poor and dense housing in Hirst had produced strong political opposition to it and adverse press publicity. Rent free housing had been and could be used to make the worker better able to sustain industrial action against the Coal Company. The uncertain future of the private coal owners made them less willing to commit capital to further house building. Most significantly the Garden City ideology and the much higher standard of local authority house building in Ashington meant that significantly increased costs would be incurred by the coal company as it would be expected to build new houses to equivalent or similar standards. The activity of local authorities in housing construction allowed the mine owners to directly transfer the costs of labour reproduction on to the

urban district council or, in the case of houses built for sale to its employees, to the workers themselves. Redmayne had argued for improved colliery house conditions on economic grounds "Not only should such conditions be more widespread; but regarded apart from ethics it pays the employer to provide improved housing and bathing facilities, for such conditions draw to the colliery so provided the best class of workers, thus ensuring more regular attendance at work, an increased output per annum, and a decreased cost per ton". The Coal Company was particularly concerned to capture the support of the labour aristocracy as[65] from its ranks emerged its industrial and political opponents, and to fraction class opposition by status gradations.

The broad range of earnings and occupations within the coal industry was one method of trying to achieve class fractioning. The commencement in 1920 of a joint company/education authority continuation school with three year non-vocational courses was another, with the important aspect of ideological reproduction. In 1919 the partners introduced their superannuation scheme (just in time for Sankey). There were four classes of contribution and of benefit with the coal company matching the workers[66] contribution but having the benefit of the availability of half the funds on loan subject to 5% interest. At a time of threatened loss of their industry the coal company directors, who had ceased house building, were trying other methods of

welfare provision to weaken working class opposition to their operations and indeed existence. But it is important to stress that welfare reformism was so successful because it did produce working class gains of however contradictory a kind "The system has legitimacy because partially and never permanently or simply, it has produced some of the goods".[67]

In its housing provision the company aimed to extend and reinforce its attempts to influence the labour aristocracy in its favour, but it was still subject to attack for not providing more desperately needed houses in a company town. The attack did not come from the Labour group who dominated the council for all but a couple of years from 1920 to 1939, as this group was attempting to replace colliery by council housing as the dominant form of new house construction in the area. In November 1922 Councillor Craigs' Ratepayer's Association argued that it was the coal company's responsibility to provide housing. Wallace, Labour, opposed this view as he disagreed with the colliery house system.[68] J.J.Hall, councillor and viewer for the company, agreed with his Labour opponent stating that "The more they talked about the Ashington Coal Company building houses the less consideration they would get from the Ministry". The company was eager to have the problem of housing shortage and overcrowding left to the local authority to deal with while it concentrated its efforts on providing housing for the labour aristocracy.[69]

The"colliery scheme" was the vehicle for this.

From I924 the company's house purchase scheme commenced with 74 houses being built in Hirst, I60 in Ashington and I09 in the new "Model Village" of Lynemouth. The Director's Minutes of I923 record that the House purchase scheme has been drawn to their attention by the decision of the Lampton Coal Company to begin such a scheme but there were many other examples of such schemes from[70] earlier periods such as those listed in Bulman. The company took full advantage of the government subsidy[71] under the I923 Chamberlain Act. This had an effect on the site layout because to qualify for grant aid, local authority approval was necessary, this being given on site densities of less than fifteen houses to the acre, despite the Tudor Walters recommendation of no greater densities of I2 to the acre for new housing. (Indeed the housing shortage was still such a problem in I924 that Warne, Labour M.P. and councillor and the ratepayer's association united to defeat the Labour Co-Op. opposition to the Cock's brothers plans for private housing at a density of more than 20 units to the acre qualifying for government subsidy). Subsidy therefore affected design in terms of ensuring[72] larger garden sizes though the company still built as cheaply as possible by making the vast majority of the houses terraced with long front gardens

and the traditional back yards. All the Hirst houses were terraced and were in the less desirable[73] Hirst area whereas a number of miners had indicated their preference for living in Ashington. All the Ashington houses were either two or three bedroomed terraced apart from the semi-detached houses of Ashbourne Crescent. Ridsdale Square had three terraces which were specifically for company officials.Only these latter houses and the semi-detached ones had indoor toilets with all the Hirst units and the rest of the Ashington ones having outdoor toilets but with indoor bathrooms.

The estates and their houses had distinct grad ations[74] of status and this was in accordance with the coal company's class fractioning policy. The Ridsdale Square, "officials houses", were the most expensive at £455.I7.4d. with the semi-detached costing £4I6.I8.3. and the three-roomed £359.0.4d. (all prices after deducting the £I00 subsidy). Repayments of mortgage advance by the company plus interest were deducted from the men's wages over a period of up to fifteen years. Many mortgages were redeemed by I933 despite the slump in the coal trade which in any case affected the coal company less than others.

The colliery scheme in Ashington still enjoys a reputation as a desirable area in which to live, a fact reflected in the relatively high prices the properties are advertised at

by local estate agents. The proximity of the scheme to the town centre, cricket field, and park, and its situation in Ashington rather than in Hirst give a partial explanation for this as the reputation is not bssed on a Garden City design ideology or particularly good house design or dimensions. The explanation lies in the class nature of the estates and its occupation from the very outset by officials and labour aristocracy in relatively well paid and secure employment. The provision of such private housing to this influential segment of the working class was designed to create a new set of relationships between master and men. In particular it was likely to cause the occupants of the scheme, which included labour leaders like Jack Besford, to hesitate before engaging in industrial conflict which would lead to defaulting on the mortgages.The occupants of rent free colliery housing were better able to conduct industrial conflict than the owner occupiers who were more closely wedded to the coal company by its house purchase scheme. The labour aristocrats in the colliery scheme would, so the company hoped, cease to identify with the working class because of their owner occupier status. The house purchase scheme was of benefit to the coal company in a number of ways; it transferred an important cost of labour reproduction on to the worker themselves; a powerful propaganda weapon was provided for the company to pursue its aim of creating a reputation as a model employer; and it caused the occupants

of the scheme to be potentially less likely to oppose the company in the political and industrial fields because of confusion in their minds over their class position. The colliery housing scheme of 1924-1926/7 was therefore an important weapon of the employers in attempting to reduce class conflict between capital and labour. At the very least the labour aristocrats might be neutralised or more muted in their criticism of the company.

Before examining other types of housing provision it will be useful to examine the role of three prominant local politicians, each important in his own right, but also representative of a class power block; Joseph John Hall, George Henry Warne and John Craigs.

J.J. Hall was a prominent local and county councillor and as the second most senior colliery official, a direct propagandist for the coal company. Hall was elected in the more respectable Ashington Ward. He had flown under a number of banners including most commonly independent but politically he was a coal company man and anti-socialist. As already mentioned the coal company had from the inception of the Urban District Council allowed, indeed encouraged, its most senior officials to be represented on the local authority. Hall was the man who performed this job for the best part of thirty years. He was the senior councillor, chairman of

the council (supported by anti-socialist coalitions) on a number of occasions and a J.P.. Hall's function was to represent the Coal Company's interests and defeat opposition to it. After 1920 when Labour/Co-op took control of the council he adopted an ostensibly much more sympathetic attitude to the dominant labour group and his invective appeared to be reserved for the Ratepayers Association, whose broad policy of attacks included the coal company. But Hall's real attitude was revealed after the Ratepayer's Association successes in the 1922 April local elections. The nine Labour/Co-op councillors were then opposed by six Ratepayer's Association men and three independents, including two coal company men Eskdale and Hall. Seeing a chance to defeat the labour group Hall joined forces with other opponents in trying to defeat the socialists and take control of the council but by the chairman's casting vote he was defeated. Thereafter he returned to his former policy of culling favour with labour members and appearing to support them against Ratepayer's Association attacks. In particular Hall was skilled in spotting with whom he needed to curry favour in order to exercise influence and reduce opposition to the coal company. The target of his solicitations in the early 1920's was George Henry Warne.

Warne was one of a large family who originated from

Cramlington. On moving to Ashington he eventually became a hewer and active in the union and I.L.P. He was a local and county councillor pre-war, was chairman of the council and housing committee post-war, and from 1922 until his death in 1928, the local labour M.P. In 1905 he joined the I.L.P. and helped form the Wansbeck Divisional Labour Party of which he became secretary until 1918 when the constituency became part of the Morpeth division. He then became president of this division. He was a local labour councillor from 1905 and chairman of the council in 1919 and 1924. He was also a county councillor from 1919-1924. He owned his own house, a four bedroomed terraced in Woodhorn Road in an area where professional men had their premises and dwellings. On his death, his address was given as The Drive, Gosforth although he still owned Woodhorn Road.[75] Pre-war he was a radical and an opponent of the coal company but in the post-war period there is some evidence of a more conservative stance being adopted. Gray has outlined the dualistic role of many labour aristocrats with struggle also leading to adaptation. Warne was the most important and influential labour aristocrat in the immediate post-war period and his career locally was influential in and reflective of the labour-oriented reformist movement which developed.[76] This was a tendency

that Hall was eager to encourage to reduce class conflict and to encourage the socialists to direct their attacks at the petit-bourgeois buffer afforded by the Ratepayer's Association.

As Warne developed politically and socially he became less clear than formerly as to the nature of the class struggle and Hall was able to use flattery and apparent support to encourage Warne to use his power in the local authority to achieve greater harmony with the coal company. At the Annual General Meeting of the council in 1921, when there was no possibility of ousting the socialists, Hall praised Warne who was retiring after two years as council chairman stating that "he had looked to him continuing in that capacity". Warne, flattered, replied that he liked "a clash of opinions- it was the motive power behind progress- but there need be no further differences existing . (Applause)." And this occurred during the 1921 National lock-out. During[77] the same dispute Warne wanted the council to extend its milk food supplies as relief for necessitous casesIn this he was supported by Hall who gave his approval to the establishment of a relief committee.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance this apparent harmony between the leaders of both classes in the arena of the local council. Hall was working to

use this apparent harmony to narrow the focus of class conflict to the industrial arena and then to negate this conflict by using the model of co-operation in the council to affect industrial relations. In the pre-war situation the coal company had been attacked on a broad front and non-industrial conflict had been used to heighten class conflict. Hall was working to reverse this position and the gullibility and aspirations of Warne enabled him to achieve some success in this action.

John Craigs, like Hall, had been a councillor since the early years of the century. In his early days he was a radical liberal but an examination of his whole career revealed that he was primarily interested in self-publicity and aggrandisement. Nevertheless he had worked well on the Morpeth Guardians and on the county council to improve environmental conditions and he had been very active in the "Back streets of Hirst" campaign. He was a man of some local wealth having an insurance, property and emigration agency as well as extensive personal property ownership in the district from much of which he drew rental income. His interests were carried on by his son who was a solicitor and whose firm still operates in the town. In the post-war period Craigs was sufficiently wealthy to gift an eight roomed property for use as a T.B. clinic. Described by the

local press as the "stormy petrel" Craigs showed little real political understanding. His transition from pre-war radical liberalism to the Ratepayer's Association once socialism had finished local liberalism as a political force caused him no difficulty. Craigs real interest was to represent himself and his petit-bourgeois class with the reduction of the rate burden on business as the prime, indeed the only real, target. This led him and his group to oppose both the coal company and the socialists as both were increasing the rates; the former by transference of labour reproduction costs to the local authority; the latter by their house building and environmental improvement programmes. The activities of Craigs and the Ratepayer's Association were to reduce class conflict by causing the local labour group to address their attention to fighting the Ratepayer's Association.

Ashington first had a labour majority on the local authority in 1920. Thereafter it was only out of power from (1927-1929) to the coalition of non-socialists with Craigs leader of the council. There was sufficient opposition to the labour group for most of the 1920's to prevent a total dominance which would have allowed the confident and consistent implementation of socialist policies particularly in the housing field. (The over representation of Ashington Councillors c.f. Hirst in relation to population was a vital factor in preventing

total labourist dominance of the local authority). The lack of a strong ideological position by the socialists led to the Ratepayer's Association and Hall being able to divert the labour group away from consistenly positing an alternative view of society using housing policy as part of a coherent strategy, into gingerly defending municipal housing provision. This important shift from assertiveness to defensiveness had implications in terms of the type of houses built and how two of the council estates quickly became ghettoes as an examination of municipal housing provision will reveal.

Under the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act Ashington Urban District Council received Ministry of Health appoval for the erection of three estates; South Villas, Garden City Villas and East Villas. In total 206 houses were to be provided.

ACT	SITE	TYPE OF HOUSE	NO. OF EACH TYPE
1919	South Villas	B	76
	Garden City Villas	A	56
	" " "	B	30
	" " "	B	4
	East Villas	A	40

ACT	SITE	TYPE OF HOUSE	NO. OF EACH TYPE
1923	East Villas	A	102
	Park Villas	B	31
	Park Villas	A	27
	Garden City Extension	A	8

78

A request to the Ashington Coal Company to take up £20,000 worth of housing bonds at 6% interest rate over 5 years was declined by the coal company who said that they had plans of their own. (These plans took a number of years to be activated). Councillor Gillians, Labour wanted an emphatic protest against the company's attitude. He argued that the council's chances of raising money would be greatly prejudiced if they could not obtain financial backing from the town's employer in what was after all housing for the company's employees. The immediate problem was solved by the Ashington Industrial Co-operative Society advancing the £20,000 and subsequently the company, no doubt advised by Hall of the opposition being generated because of this refusal, took up the same amount of bonds. The company had an additional reason for adopting a more accommodating attitude to the loan request as it was trying to transfer street and road making charges on to the local authority as these had been very burdensome and were likely to become much more so as the local authority

tried to improve the mud back streets. The coal company were very successful in tranfering these additional environmenral improvement costs to the local authority. The latter position was of ever increasing costs associated with the extension of their powers and limited and fluctuating rate revenue, as part of the rates depended on the amount of coal raised at the pit heads.

The need for local authority housing was obvious. The census returns for Ashington give figures of 29,388 in I92I and 29,4I8 in I93I. These figures disguise a further rise in the population up to the mid I920's and a decline after the I926 dispute and the opening of Lynemouth Model Village. Even without population increase there was a serious housing[79] shortage. In I92I there were 5,506 inhabited houses with a density of nearly six to a house with a high percentage of the houses being three roomed and a very small percentage more than four roomed. Overcrowding was a very serious problem with reports of families sleeping[80] in back yards and many allotment dwellings who lived in huts and crees, which were rather euphemistically termed 'bungalows' under later slum clearance legislation. The situation was bad in other adjoining areas also with people living in bivouacs, upturned boats and caves in Newbiggin.

Even after the provision of early council housing the need

foe further building was obvious. In February I922 there were I0I8 applications for council houses. Of the applicants:-

84 had three or more children - in 53
I87 had two children - in I27
290 had I child - in 20I
I56 had 0 children - in I05

of which cases they were living in one room.

The first estate to be errected was South Villas. It[8I] comprised 76 better class B type semi-detatched houses built after the Garden City ideology. The houses were double fronted with living room, parlour and scullery downstairs with three bedrooms and a separate bathroom and toilet upstairs. The houses comprised elements of plans D and E in the Tudor Walters Report of I9I8. With their spacious gardens they represented a totally different conception of housing function than had so far been seen in Ashington. They were aimed at the respectable working class and had sufficient numbers of such houses been built they would have posed serious problems for the coal company by contrasting its housing policy with municipal standards. Even the Ashington colliery scheme which was built later was inferior to this standard of housing. The Hirst colliery scheme which abutted South Villas and post-dated it was of significantly lower standard.

Swenarton has argued, "In August I92I, wrote Elie Halevy,

'capitalism merged the victor from a crisis that had lasted for two years.' 'Homes fit for heroes' was one of the main weapons adopted by the state in order to secure that victory". While the effect of such housing provision was instrumental in achieving the survival of the status quo, it produced other difficulties. There was the problem of 'solvent' demand which became a serious problem in Ashington because of the relatively high rents (I3s8d per week at first for South Villas B type). The inability to achieve a sufficiently high number of municipal houses and the lowering in standards caused and was reflective of, cynicism and disappointment amongst some of the electorate. Though the 'Homes for Heroes' housing programme had support amongst all political parties it was the socialists who were most enthusiastic supporters of it. And they were then faced with the recurring problem of reformist labourism; improved conditions resulting from working class agitation often lead to less enthusiasm for further activism with reduced class conflict. The dependency of the local authority on ministry approval and financial support for the implementation of its housing programme meant that the local labour group did not have the resources or control to plan a housing programme to meet the needs of the district. And the particular local circumstances soon began to modify housing provision.

The South Villas was built at a time of shortage of building materials and the local authority were persuaded by the ministry to build the houses of 'Dorlonco' steel frame system, with A. Leith and Co. supplying the ironwork and Carse winning the tender to erect them.[82] There was considerable local reluctance to use any but a traditional building system. Warne, council chair man, had complained that the Housing Commissioner was "killing" brick traditional house and concrete/steel construction was agreed to"reluctantly". In August I92I, when South Villas was partially constructed Warne regretted that their proposal to finish the estate off in brick was not feasible because of the amount of compensation that would be payable because of the contracts already entered into. The houses in all the other estates which were built in this period were of traditional brick[83] construction. This non-standard construction was one of the contributory, but not crucial factors, in helping to make South Villas a ghetto area by the I930's an almost unique occurrence foe Addison B type housing, and it also revealed how influential national policy was in affecting local construction and design.

The decline of the model council estates South and East Villas into ghettoes, a process that had occurred by the I930's served a number of important anti-working class functions. It made the socialists less confident and polemical about the

benefits of council housing. It helped transform the consciousness of the working class towards municipal housing "Thus I would suggest that public housing ghettoes have to be understood in relation to their impact upon those who do not live in them as well as in terms of their impact upon the actual residents. They can be interpreted as can all social service provisions as 'educational institutions' of ideological state apparatuses in terms of their impact upon the consciousness of non-residents, and in housing situations where market power relationships have been extensively challenged by the large scale development; of public housing the role of the ghetto in the engenderment of false consciousness is of particular interest and importance". Confirming the respectable in their respectability has obvious value in itself for social control. The direction of consciousness downwards to despise rather than upwards to envy is likewise of value. This did occur in Ashington and totally against logic. The quality of housing even in the lower standard East Villas was measurably higher than that of the colliery houses.Even the majority of privately owned "colliery scheme" houses had outside toilets while the colliery houses did not even have flush outside toilets. But the occupiers of the colliery houses looked down upon the residents of South and East Villas. Just as they did

on the occupants of the lowest caste colliery street, "dirty Pont". The occupants of those estates were stigmatised, less likely to be employed, more likely to have lived in overcrowded conditions (one of the criteria for obtaining a house). They received the usual gibes of fecklessness. Those living in poor colliery housing were able to "despise downwards" thus loosening their identity with the residium. The coal company was happy to encourage this tendency to despise the dwellers of model coucil housing. An article in the Collieries Magazine by J.A.Bee entitled Slums and Slummy People reinforced these prejudices.

85

"A few years after this I was at Ashington, and Laburnum Terrace had just been built. The houses had probably seven or eight rooms and had neat gardens in front, surrounded by ornamental railings. They were the very opposite to slums. In a few years however, these houses were let in tenements or flats, with the result that as many as four families occupied one house. The iron railings were broken to pieces, children played in the barren and desolate gardens, broken windows were mended with sugar paper or newspaper, thus the houses became the veriest slums.

Who made them slummy?

I say the very people who today complain.

In a few years another change took place.

The houses were offered for sale, singly or in pairs. I don't remember exactly but I think that some were sold for £400 and some for less. A transformation took place. The railings were repaired and shrubs and flowers planted in the gardens. General repairs were executed all round and the place was a slum no longer".

Not bothering to examine how multi-occupancy by poor families contrasts starkly with the income and social position of those who in 1925 in Ashington could raise £400 to purchase a house the author continues by trotting out prejudice undiluted by reason or compassion. "It is not the slums that make slummy people, but the slummy people who make the slums". The author clearly had in mind the target for his[86] prejudice; he was expecting with some justification the nods of assent from the hewers and their wives whose regular income and pumiced doorsteps betokened their status as respectable "clean" members of the working class. The feared dropinto the disreputable lumpen-proletariat would not occur to them because they believed themselves to be "innately" better than their fellow members of the working class. It was not just the lower middle class, as Orwell pointed out who feared a loss of status. The ability of such propaganda to achieve

[87]

stigmatisation of good quality housing served the purpose of making the dwellers of poorer quality housing more content, even superior in their lot as well as being eloquent testimony of the power of dominant ideological ideas, when not challenged, to engender a gullible response in the working class.

The local authority were active in developing housing estates. By January I92I the construction of South and Garden City sites were progressing well and a tender was invited for I02 houses at East Villas. The experience of South Villas and later of East Villas was to have an effect on the subsequent local authority house-building programme.

In March I92I the first South Villas houses were tenanted. A council sub-committee was appointed to select the most urgent cases of overcrowding for rehousing. So the houses which had been designed for labour aristocrats with the hope of filtering upwards were being allocated unusually, and with a socialist emphasis on need, to those living in the most overcrowded conditions.

Within three months unofficial sub-lettings were occurring in South Villas for a number of reasons. The I92I lock-out had coincided with occupation of the estate houses. Overcrowding was still a serious problem in the town. The low standard of housing in the company town had conditioned people to expect low standards; sub-tenancies of South Villas still represented improved standards for many of the people who moved there. Most importantly, however there was the problem of solvent demand as the decision to house the lumpen-proletariat in the houses had not been matched by a consideration of their ability to pay the relatively high rents. In a recognition of the defacto situation the housing sub-committee decided to approve sub-tenancies in South and Garden City Villas estates. The council dilemma was well reflected in the following exchange between Labour

councillors. "I took it we were building houses to do away with sub-letting", remarked Mr. Harrison.

"When we get sufficient houses we will". replied Mr. Warne.

This ideological split amongst labour reformists reveals[89] the unpalatable choices they were faced with. The lack of sufficient numbers of houses, low standards and serious overcrowding and health hazardous conditions was the legacy of the coal company inadequate houcing policy. Apart from their 'future' 'colliery scheme' they hed ceased building in the district, leaving the local authority faced with a massive demand for housing from people living in very poor conditions. It was understandable that they should consider doubling their number of housing units by the simple expedient of allowing sub-tenancies, especially when this helped ease the problem of solvent demand and still led to better housing conditions for the sub-tenants than the accommodation they left. But it was a serious mistake rooted in a lack of understanding of the causes and nature of the problem. The pent-up demand was fuel for persuading the Ministry of the need for much more extensive municipal house building rather than Warne's response to the problem. There was a serious lack of ideological clarity and tenacity in Ashington in thie period; Warne's leadership of the council and housing committee had been influential in creating this situation as well as an illustration of this.

Within a year 45 out of 48 houses in South Villas had official sub-tenants and there was the further problem of

unofficial sub-tenants. Even with these sub-tenancies rent arreas became a problem. The initial very high building costs had dropped sharply (the costs of houses for the estate had varied from £I,I8I to £436 per unit) and this was reflected in but not related to a drop in house rental charges. The local authority made constant representations to the Ministry about the over-high rents they were forced to charge though these were no higher than in other North-Eastern areas. In August I923 for example it was agreed that the East Villas rents for A type houses be 7 shillings plus rates and water charges. By then the local authority, under pressure from the Ratepayer's Association had made the decision to take its tenants to court to sue for arrears and possession. In court in November I5th for example the following cases were heard.

HOUSE	ARREARS	
30, South Villas.	£I8.6.6.	Notice for possession in 3 months and arrears at I5s per week.
47, South Villas.	£4.I8.4.	
48, South Villas.	£3.0.0.	Application for possession.
58, South Villas.	£5.I3.6.	Tenant with wife and four children had been out of work for six months. Case adjourned. 24s dole received.

HOUSE	ARREARS	
24, South Villas.	£4.7.0.	Possession sought. 4 children and tenant had not worked for a year.
24, South Villas.	£2I2.9.	Tenant had three children. Rent 6s4½d.

Less of the tenants of the council estates were likely to receive the rent allowance and a higher than average percentage were likely to be unemployed regularly or at all as the coal company's housing policy was linked to their economic activity. Rent free colliery houses were for the employed.

The Ratepayer's Association periodically made significant electoral gains with their attacks on "Squandermania", producing a defensive reaction on housing policy by the socialists who were embarrassed by increasing rent arrears. Instead of arguing for the provision of good quality housing as a form of social wage and trying to analyse the role of housing as part of the whole capitalist economic system the councillors tried to respond to Ratepayer's Association attacks by using their logic and punishing defaulting tenants. The dilemma for councillors was clear; the socialist dream of model housing causing sweeping working class support for socialists was in danger of badly backfiring. But in allowing sub-tenancies they had helped create this situation (This policy was later changed especially

with regard to Garden City and Park Villas).

Craigs attacked Beatty, the local authority surveyor, who obtained extra earnings for his architectural work in association with the housing scheme, and there were innuendos regarding possible nepotism in respect of Beatty's son, an architectural assistant. He wrote to Sir Alfred Mond regarding this and asked for an enquiry in the conduct of I.L.P. councillors in Ashington, arguing that as the labour members occupied colliery houses they were profligate with rate revenue. Warne rejected this assertation arguing that the majority of the labour members "possessed their own houses" and "paid rates direct and indirect". (Beatty's salary was £673.17.6. in 1922). The rates publicity was successful[90] as two months later in April 1922 they won all two seats in Ashington (the other going to the Independent Eskdale, a coal company representative) and two out of the three seats in Hirst (where Warne topped the poll). The split council 9 labour/co-op, 9 non-socialists remained in labour hands through the chairman's casting vote but it had been a near run thing. Though the elections of the next two years gave labour a comfortable majority[91] the Ratepayer's Association still posed a threat as a minority and very vociferous and well publicised group on the council. Their popularist argument was that the coal company should accept the responsibility for housing its workers and so reduce the rate burden.

A housing debate in May 1923 well illustrates the conflicting class arguments of labour reformists, coal company and the petit-bourgeoise. Rickard (Ratepayer's Association) proposed that the Ashington Coal Company lessen overcrowding in Hirst under the 1875 Public Health Act citing the example of a house in Pont Street where twenty people were living.

Magin, council chairman and secretary of the Ashington Industrial Co-operative Society, attacked Rickard for his hypocrisy in not previously supporting the municipal housing schemes. Hall, apologist for the coal company, had told Magin that the company method of relieving overcrowding was to develop the rival new model town of Lynemouth (thereby leaving behind its near slum in Hirst). Magin asserted "The council were the housing authority not the Ashington Coal Company".

Hall attacked Rickard's assertion that houses were part of the miner's wages and claimed that he has launched a "deliberate personal attack on the Ashington Coal Company".

Rickard replied that housing need could not be met by the council "and an effort would have to be met by private enterprise. Seeing that the council could not supply the demand was there any harm in encouraging people who were in a position to do so?" He then added the rumour that the coal company were waiting for the council to build so that they could evict. So the Ratepayer's Association produced an unholy alliance

between coal company and socialists but only because the socialist view of the desirability of municipal housing accorded with the coal company's desire to transfer its labour reproduction costs. What the company was also aiming for was to be responsible for housing the better off and respectable employees with the local authority and private landlords dealing with the lumpen-proletariat. Two further developments resulted from this; an attempt at boundary widening by the local authority; and building council houses for sale.

The two "better class" estates Park Villas and Garden City Villas included houses built for sale to tenants. A partial explanation for this was the attitude of individual labour members and the co-operative representation on the council. A number of the co-operative leaders lived cheek by jowl amongst the petit bourgeoise. J.R.Tilley for example lived in Park Road East the home of the "shopkeeper class". Jack Besford was to occupy a "colliery scheme" house in Hirst. Warne's dwellings have already been mentioned. Magin too was an owner occupier. This owner occupation by labour aristocrats on the council obviously conditioned their attitude to the desirability of providing council houses for purchase. There may also have been some ideological notion of social mix, especially given the earlier unusual decision for a local authority, even a labour one, to house elements of the lumpen-proletariat

in best quality housing. If so this was a radical rather than a conservative move.

The problem of rent arrears may have had some effect on this shift of policy. Despite all attempts to reduce arrears, including possession orders and court cases the arrears continued to escalate. In January 1928 the arrears were

Garden City Villas £79.3.8.

South Villas £260.19.0½. (The highest rate per house).

East Villas £404.17.7. (The largest estate).

(Significantly the latter estates were both in Hirst).

This represented an average of six weeks rent arrears per house and this was made much worse as a result of the 1926 strike later in the year. So a policy of aiming housing at the labour aristocracy was likely to ease the arrears problem but it does not explain why the council offered houses for sale to this class fraction. The explanation for that is directly related to the coal company housing policy.

The cessation of building colliery housing in Ashington, the colliery scheme which was aimed to capture the labour aristocracy and the coal company's plans for a new model village at Lynemouth were a source of alarm to Ashington leaders. The coal company was increasingly looking towards the development of its economic activities to Lynemouth and Ellington, both in the Morpeth Rural District. Rate revenue was linked to coal

raised at the pit head . In March I924 four overseers, local councillors, refused to sign the valuation lists to authorise rate collection objecting to the decision of the Assessment Committee. They were objecting to Morpeth Rural District receiving the I½d per ton rates for coal raised at the shaft in their district when 2,765 yards of railway in the Ashington area were used for this coal transportation and for transporting miners to Ellington and Lynemouth along the company's own tank line service. The rate loss to Ashington was £4000.[93]

Now that the company hoped to build I500 houses in Lynemouth there was a danger of an Ashington type boom in Lynemouth leading to depopulation of Ashington, especially by the labour aristocrats who would be attracted to the much better model town housing conditions. The Morpeth Herald wrote of Ashington's "envious eyes" being cast on Lynemouth[94] where the "charm of countryside and sea", electric lighting in houses and streets, a welfare oval and the houses with bathrooms, spacious gardens and even four or five bedrooms offered a total contrast to smoky Hirst. The newspaper suggested that the village might eventually govern itself as it grew rather than remain in Morpeth R.D. or succumb to Ashington's take over bid. Lynemouth never developed into the scale to make this possible, nor did it even rival Ashington,

but that was not clear when labour councillors were quite rightly trying to win boundary extensions to extend their control over the company's activities. On occasions the Ratepayer's Association supported boundary extensions but this was largely a Labour policy. The Coal Company's policy was to vigorously oppose all attempts by Ashington Urban District Council at boundary extensions in 1926, just as they had opposed the attempts by the council to extend their boundaries[95] to include Lynemouth, Cresswell, Linton, Woodhorn and North Seaton in 1920. In this continued opposition to the expansion of Ashington Urban District the company revealed its fears of what its working class opponents were attempting. The Labour leaders were aiming to extend the urban district to encompass all five coal company mines and allow a single powerful council to challenge and control the company activities and particularly to oppose the class fractioning company housing policies. The great fear was that Ashington council would be left with poor quality housing in Hirst, occupied by the unemployed, and low or fluctuating wage earners while the company concentrated its energies on building upits propaganda campaign to convince its employees of what a model employer it was.

It was this fear of totally losing the labour aristocracy to the coal company's housing developments which prompted the A.U.D.C. to build council houses for sale.

I4 houses in Garden City were offered for sale and 32 in Park Villas. Prices ranged from £420 for A type three bedroomed houses to £565 for two exceptionally large houses in Garden City Villas. The local authority were unable to compete with the coal company's terms of 3% interest rate for their employees. They charged borrowers the 4¾% the government charged the local authority plus I% for costs in carrying out the scheme. They followed building society terms of repaying capital and interest over 25 years. After the borrower put down a deposit of £40 to £50 (in I926) he paid between I2s6d and I3s per week over 25 years for A type houses which had been built up to the extreme limit of the Act. The coal company had posited a new form of class collaboration by its house purchase scheme; the local authority responded in an attempt to prevent class fragmentation by itself building for sale.

The coal company's class fractioning attempts were themselves a reaction to working class pressure. Pre-war it had been increasingly challenged in the field of housing and environment by the local authority, as well as experiencing the I9I2 national dispute. The three shift system continued to be a source of friction and resentment amongst the men. The I9I9 Baff Saturday dispute, Sankey, the I92I lock out were all indications of increasing working class militancy in Ashington. The carrot of welfarism not the stick of fines

and sackings seemed to be the company's only hope of survival. But they were not dealing with a donkey but with active working class opponents. So the company needed not only to disseminate dominant ideological ideas but to give them practical substance. Transforming the consciousness of the labour aristocracy by propaganda was therefore reinforced by housing policy.

The co-operative party and councillors were able to play an important counter hegemonic role. Though Magin, Tilley, Miles etc. appeared to be respectable, responsible and successful members of the petit-bourgeoisie in terms of income, education, housing and training their political ideology marked them out as belonging to the working class. Some of the fiercest exchanges and bitterest animosity occurred between these two groups. (The co-operative society in Ashington was most unusual in that many members of the workforce were Roman Catholics, including two secretaries Magin and Reilly, although Catholics only represented about 10% of the population. And the masonic connections of the petit-bourgeoise were anathema to Catholics). What the co-operative society represented was a direct challenge to the traditional role of master and men; its growing wealth and influence was an indication of how working men could manage huge enterprises successfully. And it was enormously successful as the following figures reveal.

	SALES	CAPITAL	MEMBERSHIP
I9I4	£2I8,50I	£96,940	4,68I
I920	£69I,973	£240,952	8,244
Increase	£473,472	£I43,0I2	3,563
Increase	2I6%	I48%	76%

By I920 then almost every family was a co-operative member. The co-operative party played an important role in its educational activities, debates and cultural activities and was active in politicising women and putting forward female candidates for local elections. They loaned money for municipal house building and won one of the contracts for the East Villas development. During industrial disputes the co-op helped workers sustain their industrial action by their practical support. In the I92I lock out for example the co-operative society gave a grant of £200 to the relief committee and delivered milk free for it as well as providing food at cost prices. Its employers guaranteed the committee £I0 per week from their wages. While the co-operative members were not revolutionaries they did represent powerful and successful evidence of the success of socialist policies in action. Though clearly reformist in attitude the co-operative movement in Ashington was an important vehicle for the development of a counter-hegemonic view of

97

social relations.

Within the miner's unions there was evidence of communist and miner's minority movement influence. The communists as well as the I.L.P. met in the Ashington Miners Union Hut. Their influence within the miner's union helped to spread class conflict ideas though they suffered a serious decline in influence in the union after the 1926 defeat. The miner's unions not only conducted the industrial campaign against the coal company already mentioned but their leaders were represented on the local authority. Unemployment became a novel feature of the industrial scene in Ashington in the 1920's but it never reached the massive problem that it assumed in other mining areas. The 1926 strike and unemployment as well as the gaoling of three prominent miner's union officials for embezzlement of miner's funds (two of them had been labour councillors) in 1926 were serious blows to working class cohesiveness and union membership declined. But the power of labour was revealed in 1926 when during the strike between four and five hundred miners marched to Morpeth six miles away to petition the Guardians on outdoor relief (John Craigs was chairman of the Guardians). After being refused a hearing the miner's leaders addressed the attention of the Guardians to their supporters outside and they were promptly heard. Subsequently the Guardians increased their activity in attempting to secure loans for strike relief from the Ministry of Health.

98

The main effect of working class militancy, however, was to force shifts in coal company policy such as those already mentioned. There is ample evidence of their success in the makked shift of company policy towards welfarism and in regard to housing policy.

Private housebuilding for sale and for rental began to play an increasingly important part in housebuilding in the district. Building groups such as Welbeck Estates (which used to be Portland Estates and was still controlled by the Duke of Portland) and small speculative builders were still quite active in the area and they took advantage of government subsidies. Most of the developments were small and much of the construction comprised of ribbon development building along Milburn and Hawthorn Roads, and the construction of small and not very good quality terraces. Small local building societies helped provide the finance for these developments which were aimed at the petit-bourgeois class who were not catered for by local authority or colliery housing schemes.

A comparison of the I904 and I934 figure gives an indication of the growth of private housing.

99

	I904	I934
Houses owned by coal company.	I97I	3,567
Houses privately owned or rented.	I402	2,557
Council houses.	-	440
Total.	3373	6564

The development of this private housebuilding was encouraged by the local authority (whose housebuilding ideology has already been mentioned) who gave advances at a subsequent date under the Small Dwelling Aquisition Act, as well as by national policy.

But the key feature of the 1918 to 1926 period was the class struggle which focussed not only on industrial conflict but in particular on housing provision. The coal company was forced by working class and labour reformist pressure to alter its housing strategy and to seek accommodation with both workers and the local authority. The role of the Ratepayer's Association, and the cultivation of the support of labour leaders by J.J.Hall, were both helpful to the company by reducing the scale of class conflict. With regard to the company's attempts at class fragmentation and domination by its efforts to capture the labour aristocracy the response of local authority prevented a major disaster to working class unity by opposing this with some success. But the attempt reveals how seriously the company was now having to think about its formerly more harmonious social relations and was an indication of the important role of the labour aristocracy in enabling or opposing dominant class control.

The resistance to the coal company in the post-war period underwent a change. The industrial conflict continued

and even increased as the miners organised a war of position. Local opposition on the local authority was reduced as some of the labour leaders, courted by the company's representatives adopted a more accommodating position, producing the beginnings of an incorporatist situation. The local authority did however have considerable success in breaking into the company's control of "its town" though the paradox for the labour reformists was that this proved of financial benefit to the coal company. That Ashington was so totally a single industry town undoubtedly had an effect on the actions of the labour leaders. After the 1921 lock-out Ashington too was affected by the contraction in the coal industry and there was evidence in the local authority rent arrears position that the coal industry's decline threatened the very existence of the town. The 1926 defeat brought this situation to a head and moved the labour reformist leaders into a position of greatly reduced conflict with the coal company.

CHAPTER 4 1927 - 1939

1926 proved to be a considerable blow to the confidence of the local labour network of organisations. The mood changed from assertiveness to defensiveness, while the beleagured coal company regained some confidence in its future prospects and power in the class struggle. But the scenario after 1926 was markedly different to that before 1910. Working class gains such as municipal socialist control were clearly equivocal given the coal company's use of this arena to try to forge class collaboration. The company was now having to react to working class institutional control, however, whereas before 1910 the working class tended to react. But the working class position was weaker in 1927 than it had been in say 1922.

Just as it is necessary to stress the active, conscious political activity of the working class in the struggle against the coal barons so it is also necessary to debunk the theory of the move towards bourgeois democracy as independent of capitalist involvement; in Block's words "The ruling class not ruling". The development of corporatism in the inter-war period in Ashington, though far from fully developed, was much more than embryonic. The opening of the new Council Chambers in 1937 was evidence of the growth of municipal powers and of the number of its employees. "But the 'Corporatist State Form' which I see developing during this period of apparent labourist dominance is not a replacement of ultimate capitalist domination

by some variant of managerial revolution. I am referring to the replacement of direct instrumental control exercised through bourgeois politicians by a corporate, management system of administration operating in the interests of capitalism. It is this which gives the appearance of the ruling class not ruling". What applies to Gateshead applies even more to Ashington [100] where the coal company still had considerable practical power and wealth, forcing the local authority to negotiate with it. But to fully understand how the coal company was able to achieve the following example of apparent class harmony it is necessary to further explore Gramsci's notion of ideological hegemony.

"Reference was made to the protracted negotiations which had taken place between the Ashington Coal Company and Ashington Mineworker's Federation with regard to instal separate water services in the company's houses.

"As the matter was one in which the council as the Public Health Authority were particularly interested it was agreed that they offer their services as mediators and the clerk was instructed to write both parties on these lines". The coal company initially declined such mediation [101] but the offer was ample evidence of the changed class relations in the locality. With the local labour reformists offering to act as a buffer between capital and labour.

The very system of local democracy was one factor in bringing about this situation. Prior to World War I the local socialists had been able to generate a vigorous counter-hegemonic programme

The post 1926 period typified more the evolutionary approach. The bridge between the two stages was the coming to power of the labour co-op groupin the municipal elections in 1920. At a time of class conflict locally and nationally the dominant class had appeared to concede victory to the workers by the election of the first local labour council. The franchise appeared to legitimate the conception of power being to the workers under a'fair'system. The almost religious belief of all sections of society in the equality of the ballot box, and especially the successful culmination of local socialist attempts to gain control of the local authority, produced a situation where class conflict energies were dissipated and weakened. There is less evidence of intellectual concern with class struggle after this victory, and more emphasis upon "respectability", "responsibility" and "consolidation." For the coal owners, unhappy to see socialist control of the local authority, there was the more than adequate compensation of evidence of evolutionary policies being pursued by the councillors. Again the electoral system could be equivocal. "What has been less emphasised in the history of electoral institutions is that provisions for secrecy could cut the voter off from his peers as well as his superiors..... by ensuring the complete anonymity of the ballot box it became possible not only to reduce bribery of the economically dependent by their superiors but also to reduce the pressures towards conformity

and solidarity within the working class."

I02

The unfair distribution of seats between Ashington and working class Hirst was both a practical barrier to socialists being elected as well as an example of how difficult it was for working class propaganda to make headway against the dominant ideology and establishment control of the wider apparatus of electoral control.

WARD	POPULATION (ESTIMATED)	NO. OF HOUSES	NO. OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORS.
ASHINGTON EAST	6II8	I4I3	2639
ASHINGTON WEST	5668	I309	2689
	II786	2722	5328
HIRST CENTRAL	7302	I598	3II9
EAST	6339	I387	2763
SOUTH	7084	I550	3399
	20725	4535	9281

I03

The figures above reveal how spurious was the notion of equal voting when in effect almost two Hirst votes were needed compared with one in Ashington to elect a councillor. And this is but one example of how established power and organisation

was able to negate or delay the translation of working class support into proportionate power within the local state; appointment of the judiciary and representation on the Board of Guardians reveal a similar picture.

A powerful boost to the coal owners in their assertion of a dominant ideology came after the General Strike. The national decline in union membership and militancy was mirrored locally. Ashington too had its fair share of militants who were not re-employed by the coal company and were forced to emigrate to find work thus reducing the ideological opposition to the coal owners.[104] The post 1926 period saw the coal company able to reassert some of the power it had lost to the working class from 1910-1926. As well as the almost total control of employment in the area the owners were able to use both threats of closure/ transference of work to force a more accommodating attitude from its workforce. Because of the relative modernity of the mines unemployment figures throughout the 1930's were low compared with regional and national unemployment figures in the mining industry. This was,of course, an enormous practical and ideological boost to the coal owners in their attempts to reshape class relations by forging a paternalistic unity between master and men. Furthermore the unemployment figures were sufficiently high to engender employment insecurity amongst the remaining workforce, thereby weakening the ability of the left wingers to sustain an effective counter-hegemonic programme.

The coal company in its attempts to use local democracy to increase class harmony made extensive use of propaganda.

The most effective organ of which was its monthly magazine and it is hoped to reveal this in a detailed examination of its views both before and after I926.

"The Ashington Collieries Magazine" which covered the Federated Collieries owned by the coal company commenced in I92I and following a time of considerable militancy in the mining industry and continued until nationalisation. The March I927 contents give an indication of the type of article included. "Editorial, the Coal Position, Some of our Readers Babies, Daily Exercises (by physical training officer), The Kiddies
I05
'Korner', Coal Cuttings, The Welfare Club, Our Competitions, Football Notes, Stories From Our Readers, Letter Bag and Answers to our Correspondents" were some of the contents. Jokes in dialect and illustrations were included. The breadth of that layout indicates that the coal owners instinctively knew something of the importance of the "ensemble of relations." The magazine existed primarily as a vehicle for de-radicalising the workforce but it had a wider aim linked to "welfarism." It was meant to represent a new approach by the owners to the threat of nationalisation in the post-Sankey period. Though the industry remained in private hands the owners had been presented with clear evidence of the worker's desire to be their own masters. William Straker the secretary of the Northumberland Miners had used the county union's'Monthly Circular' to telling effect in expounding the case for nationalisation. Ridley Wareham, the manager of the

coal company, like Straker was one of the main witnesses to the Sankey Commission,and that experience must have convinced him of the need for a propaganda weapon to help avoid further crisis. Both aims are revealed in the issue of I925 with the company describing the progress of its Park Road and Hawthorn Road Housing Schemes. "The progress of the scheme is to some extent shewn by the accompanying photographs, which will undoubtedly be of interest not only to those directly concerned, but to many others as well, as proof of the company's efforts to accomplish something tangible in the way of alleviating the housing shortage in Ashington".

I06

The magazine was made available to the local press and many of its contents were regurgitated there in scarcely amended form. One example of this was the company's repeated assertion that its scheme was different to and not financed by the I920 Mining Industry Act,Section 20.

Their response was to ingeniously use the idea of collectively borrowed from their opponents but to try to reshape it. The unity aimed at was that between master and men with the union militants being excluded. In order to break and transcend class unity the family model was posed as an alternative to the class conflict model of the labour leaders in the immediate pre and post-war period. The magazine was a crucial vehicle for this attempted change in class relations.

The company's own explanation of welfare work indicates its real fear; that of workers acting as a class in opposition to them.

"The reader will readily arrive at a correct conclusion as to the real aim of welfare work if he glances at the chart printed on the following page. It is not, as has been suggested, a 'capitalistic dodge to get more out of the worker.' It is an endeavour to promote harmonious relations between directors, officials,and men, and only co-operation on the part of all three bodies can make it a success. Industrial welfare means the making of useful citizens, and it brings this about by education leading to knowledge and self-control-efficiency, resulting in good working conditions-health, leading to comfort and happiness- thrift producing prosperity - and the right use of leisure by healthy mental and physical recreation." 107

Hence co-operation and harmony, often presented in the "chummy" schoolboy language of "Magnet". Except in this case the "Bounders" were the "Bolsheviks" and union militants. But there was the same stress on games as being important. The unhealthy living and working conditions in Ashington made a stress on games essential for labour reproduction but the ideological importance was not missed by the directors. The youth section of the soccer leagues and the wider "family" flavour of the magazine were all designed to engender a feeling

of paternalistic concern and responsibility for the populace of the company town. The real purpose of games however is revealed in the following extract,

I08

"And what an amount of self-control is being aquired whilst that same boy is being subjected to the caustic comments of his captain, and probably of his schoolmates also, to say nothing of the deep impress of instantaneous obedience to rightful authority through the medium of the referee's whistle."

"There is a vast difference in the obedience brought about by the fear of punishment and that instilled gradually by constant training under wise guidance on the sports field."

"The first kind is evanescent, and disappears when the likelihood of punishment no longer exists. The latter kind is lasting and becomes a habit."

....."We have not yet met an out-and-out Bolshevist who belonged to a good football or cricket team as a boy. We don't believe such a person exists."

"Every normal boy develops an abundance of mental and physical energy far above the amount needed in his ordinary everyday life. This surplus of energy if not used up, may become directed into wrong channels, later to find an outlet in that extremely selfish complaint known as chronic discontent."

"Here as we have already inferred, might be found one of the causes of, and a prolific breeding ground for, that peculiar

individual known as an extremist."

The magazine was so effective because it struck a balance between "serious","balanced" considerations and "chatty" local interest matters with militants who disturbed the harmony between master and men acting as the villain of the piece. To-days most close equivalent to tone and the propaganda success of the magazine would be D.C.Thompson's "The Sunday Post." The following extract from the magazine could indeed have come from the "As we see it " page of the Sunday Post.

"Better than Trade Unionism; [109] This is the difference between trade unionism and co-partnership:-

Trade unionism costs you dues.

Co-partnership pays you profits.

Take, for instance, the I6,700 co-partners in Lever Bros. In the last I5 years they have received £I,723,000 in dividends about £I00 a piece.

Unionism would have cost them about £I00 a piece in I5 years - probably twice as much by reason of strikes.

So the difference is £200 in I5 years. A Lever Bros. co-partner is £I00 IN instead of £I00 OUT.

- Efficiency Magazine."

The message being the more telling by being quoted from another source. Two further extracts from the magazine will be used to further illustrate the skilled use of this supposedly

non-partisan publication to prevent class conflict.

The Industrial Problem:- IIO

It is not the province of this magazine to go into the question of the merits or demerits of either point of view with regard to the present lamentable condition of things in the collieries. No dispute could ever be said to be wholly one-sided, and no problem was ever solved after a lengthy period without it being discovered that it could have been settled amicably without resort to warfare. This, of course, is true both of industrial and national affairs."

"We have so many dear friends in both camps, however, that we are emboldened to ask whether we cannot be of some use in an endeavour to reach a solution."

"There are many big hearted men amongst our workers, and there are just as large-hearted individuals amongst the owners and management. Why do these people not get together and talk things out? Is it not about time that the old suspicions died out? Surely our directors have proved that they are out to do what they can for the welfare of the workers."

"It is conceded that no individual has the right to prevent another individual from working if he so desires; therefore a mob of individuals has no more right to stop a man from going to work than has a single person."

"It should, however, be understood as an economic fact that

all the strikes in the world will not allow an industry to pay more in wages if there is not in that industry the wherewithal to pay."....

....."We sincerely hope that work will be resumed soon even if only on account of the Kiddies' Christmas."

Even more effective was the inclusion in the April 1934 magazine of a joint federated union and coal company agreement on the Guarantee Fund which afforded the company the immense benefit from union ratification of an obviously coal-company-produced document. (Besford and Bowman were two of the leading labour aristocratic councillors and Besford lived in a colliery scheme house.)

The non-conformist background of the Priestman's was an additional factor in determining the Company's Magazine emphasis on the responsibilities of management. "We once knew army colonel who had risen from the ranks and who had never forgotten the fact. He invariably mixed with the men in their games etc. and made a point of visiting any who were sick. This again is welfare work, and exposes something of the meaning of the old French proverb "Noblesse Oblige" rank imposes obligations." The non-conformist Protestant Ethic stress upon sobriety and thrift is a central thread running through the magazine and it is not contended here that the coal company did not improve its approach to Welfarism in the 1920's and 1930's. But the reason the

changes occurred, and the use of the magazine, were largely the response of the coal owners to the increasing militant power of the workforce. "Welfarism" with its claims of benefit to the workforce, was primarily an attempt to subvert the working class unity which was so threatening to the coal company.

No area more than that of housing reveals the gulf between policies and labour confidence before and after I926.

In I92I there were 5,506 inhabited houses in Ashington, housing a population of 29,388. By I935 the population had only risen to 29,4I8 but the housing stock had increased to 6,973 [II3] and by I938 to 7,484. Additions to the housing stock occurred in two periods; between I92I and I927 and from I933 to I939. [II4] The insecurity in the coal industry caused by the I926 General Strike caused a virtual cessation of house building in Ashington, (The house completions in I927 were part of council and coal company housing schemes already instigated and financed) from the General Strike until I933. Both periods of housing boom had as a central feature of them, local authority housebuilding. The following housebuilding figures give an indication of the building pattern.

I92I to I939 No. of houses built I978.

of which 6I4 were built by the local authority.

234 were built by the coal company for sale to owner occupiers (Colliery scheme houses.)

II30 were privately built for rental and owner occupation.

No. of houses built I92I-I925	308 Council	Total 6I5
	307 Private	
No. of houses built I926 and I927	98 Council	Total 265
	I67 Private	
No. of houses built I933- I938	208 Council	Total 83I
	623 Private	

(Source: M.O.H.Reports I9I9-I938.)

No local authority houses were built between I928 and I932 inclusive. The figures for I930 are not available but in the other four years only five houses were constructed, indicating the effect of the I926 dispute as well as the uncertain prospects for coal mining in Ashington. And the houses which were constructed in I927 were the completions of housing schemes already begun prior to the I926 dispute. The clearest example of how difficult I927 to I933 proved to be in the coal industry locally and nationally was the cessation of the Coal Company's housing schemes. Not until coal production and employment locally had stabilised by the mid I930's (and municipal and private housebuilding had re-commenced) did the coal company consider building further homes for sale (which it did not carry out.) There is no evidence of 'risk' capital acting as a factor in housebuilding in the area. What does emerge is the central roles of the local authority as builder and encourager of private house building.

As previously mentioned the Ashington Coal Company modified its approach to public relations and 'welfarism' after 1918. Faced with the prospect of nationalisation of the mines and up to 1921 with industrial conflict and militancy welfare policies became an important method of attempting to prevent a labour-capital polarisation. In 1919 the company's superannuation scheme was introduced. A Welfare Department was set up under Commander Kemp to encourage and develop sporting and recreational facilities. Pit baths were constructed (using the 1d. per ton levy of the national scheme.) And consciously and very deliberately through the coal company's magazine, through its industrial prospectus and through the local press the company began to assert its role as a concerned, enlightened and benevolent employer. That the company chose to shift its energies behind 'welfarism' in contrast to its pre-war position can be accounted for in a number of ways. That it had not done so earlier was an aberration especially given the presence of the Priestman's (Quakers) on the Board of Directors. (It is more difficult to explain why in fact the company was not more paternalistic in the pre-war period.) If the company were to remain in business as a private concern then it had to gain more credibility in sealing the dominant hegemonic view to the workers. The continuation of their highly profit making enterprises depend upon expending some of their profits (plus the miner's contribution of 2d.

per week) to de-radicalise the bulk of its employees. And its housing policy was a direct attempt to fuse the attitudes of the labour aristocrats in its employment with those of the company. Between I925 and I927 the coal company built 234 houses for sale to its employees. (Almost all were completed before the end of the I926 strike. All houses attracted the Chamberlain subsidy (for some reason recorded as £I00 per dwelling not £I20 in the coal company minutes.) The 74 houses in Hirst were all of the three roomed terraced with long gardens type (to achieve a density sufficient to win local authority approval to qualify for subsidy.) At Ashington the cost to purchaser after subsidy of the houses was as follows

4 roomed	£39I-6-0
3 roomed	£359-0-4
5 roomed	£455-I7-4
Semi-detached	£4I6-I8-3

Interest rate was 3% over I5 years with deductions direct from wages (the company also built I09 houses for sale at Lynemouth.) The post I926 period saw even the coal company's efforts to provide solvent demand housing frustrated. Employment in the group fluctuated considerably.

I926	9,943
I927	8,737
I928	7,956
I929	8,889
I930	8,324
I93I	7,947
I932	8,534

but this was still a very stable employment pattern in the coal industry in these years. It was not unemployment but lower wages and short time working which caused a cessation of house building in these years and made even some of the better paid workers unable to maintain their mortgage payments to the coal company. In I930 the chairman of the council, J.R.Tilley maintained "It is common knowledge in the district that when unemployment was most rife many people had more money coming into the house than they do now. Many a man with a big family of young children had I0 to I5s more as unemployment pay than for a full week at work." The coal company no less than the local authority was consequently faced with considerable difficulties in managing its housing scheme but it was at least responsible for its own difficulties as the miners had experienced a dual wage reduction after I926. By March I929 78 "colliery scheme" houses were vacant (including Lynemouth) as uneven working made even some of the better paid employees unable to maintain their mortgage payments.

(That the company allowed 78 to become empty rather than modify its payments does not indicate a very deep commitment to the welfare of its employees.) A few weeks later with 8 more vacancies the company acceded to a request by two employees for a temporary reduction of mortgage payments. The company was anxious to avoid its showpiece scheme becoming an embarrassment, financial as well as to its prestige.

Even in the worst period however the "better class" Ashington houses had a far lower vacancy rate than the cheaper houses of Hirst and Lynemouth as the following figures show, indicating the differences in type of workmen living there.

April 29th 1932.	Hirst	Ashington	Lynemouth	Total
Occupied by purchasers.	56	149	25	230
Used as colliery houses.	0	2	49	51
Rented	17	9	14	40
Empty	1	0	21	22
Total	74	160	109	243

119

From the figures it seems clear that the Ashington occupiers were clearly of a different type to the Lynemouth and Hirst ones being salaried and clerical/foreman types on an "upstanding" wage. To maintain owner occupancy the coal company was prepared to sell housing with outstanding mortgages to non-coal company employees at a price which covered only the amount outstanding on the mortgage. But the above figures indicate that the company

(no doubt under pressure from its 'respectable' employees) was determined to maintain the class status of its Ashington development. (It seems probable that the higher vacancy rate for Lynemouth is related to the smaller differences between colliery houses and "colliery scheme" ones. At Ashington and Hirst the colliery scheme houses were significantly better than the colliery houses.) The coal company's protection of the status of the Ashington scheme is an indication of their awareness of the important role of the class fraction who occupied these houses. The provision of the lower status Hirst Estate was equaly important as it allowed different gradations of housing to reflect intra-class differences. And such fractioning of class in housing provision reinforced the occupational and earning differencial at work and was intended to act as a weakening force in class solidarity.

The importance of the coal company scheme in its attempt to weaken class solidarity can be revealed by the example of Jack Besford. He and J.R.Tilley were the two most influential local authority leaders in the 1930's, each being chairman of the council and of the housing committee, and both on more than one occasion. Besford was a checkweightman and active in the miner's union and local labour party. Though his job gave him more than usual independence of action as he was employed by the men , he occupied a coal company scheme house in the Hirst development.

So one of the major labour leaders who was influential in promoting the building of local authority houses was buying his house from the coal company. Though Besford was an active propagandist for local authority house building his position was typical of a trend within the working class. The respectable upper class fraction of the working class could be used by the bourgeoisie not just as a buffer between themselves and the lumpen-proletariat; much more important was their potential use as a force for actually opposing their fellow workers. Housing provision provides the clearest example of this. "Homes fit for Heroes" became the smaller and higher density dwellings of the 1930's. This owed much to the national propagandist arguments that Swenarton has outlined; but at a local level the class contradictions of labour aristocrats were instrumental in allowing lower standards of housing for the working class, and so shaping the type and size of houses built. The thirties housing represented an inferior type of housing provision compared with that of the housing standards of South, Garden City and Park Villas.

The 1926-1932 coal company difficulties with their housing development was followed by a period from 1935 onwards when many of the mortgages were redeemed. In January 1935 nineteen had been redeemed 213 were still being paid off, 35 were rented and 51 used as colliery houses. Better local trading conditions caused the company to re-examine the feasability of building for

sale. The expansion of private house building was in direct competition to coal company activities. More importantly the coal company's activities in Ashington and Hirst were becoming less important than in Lynemouth and Ellington.

Local Authority housing provision in Ashington took two forms; direct council house building for rental; and encouragement of private house building for rental. From the outset council building for rental was always inadequate to meet the needs of pent up housing demand due to overcrowding and the increase in households (but not population) after the war. As previously discussed this led to official and unofficial sub-tenants in the "B" Type houses built up to I927. The reasons which caused the problems for the coal company's housing management from I926 to I933 were reflected in the cessation of local authority house building and the build up of council house rent arrears. While arrears had been a feature of the council houses in Ashington from the outset they peaked in this period.

Oct. I929	Arrears	£7,I9I	(For 440 houses)
Nov. I930		£7,533	
Dec. I93I		£7,373	
Nov. I932		* £4,620	
May. I933		* £I,753	
Dec. I933		£2,537	
July. I934		£2,247	
July.I933		£I,853	

* A significant amount of the rent arrears reduction is written off.

e.g. In Oct. I932 under the I919 scheme £I580.I.5. was written off
under the I923 scheme £II28.I9.6 as irrecoverable.

2709.0.II

I2I

Nevertheless the general pattern does reflect fairly accurately the state of the local coal company and does reveal that rent arrears declined as particularly, employment became full in the sense of reduced short-time working rather than reduced unemployment.)

The I926 defeat had a marked effect on the politics of Ashington. For two years the Ratepayer's/Independents/Moderates took control of the council as apathy affected the electorate (as well as the unfair and effectively gerrymandering electoral system which gave 9 seats to Ashington with a population of 8,959 and 9 seats to Hirst with a population of 20,429.) Trade Union membership fell to 50% of coal company employees. After I929 the labour party majority was never again seriously challenged but it is difficult to over-exaggerate the shattering effect on the labour movement in Ashington of the I926 dispute. Before I926 the impetus for incorporation came from the dominant class but after it the labour leadership locally was much less resistent to being incorporated and the I930's saw the most harmonious relations ever between council and coal company.

House ownership was seen by some labour co-op members as an indicator of the worth of working men and a reflection of their

dignity and capacity to act responsibly. Council members themselves occupied private houses. J.R.Tilley (chairman twice) lived in ark Road East one of the 'best' streets in Ashington while John Besford, a checkweightman, occupied a colliery scheme house in Hirst. George Bowen, a miner and a council chairman asserted in reply to Craigs "That we are all gentlemen, and gentlemen before councillors." Faced with the responsibility of
I22
managing municipal affairs of going to London to meet Ministry officials, of dealing with council officers, and of needing to read a wide range of reports and minutes as well as newspapers, local miners representatives developed a sense of dignity and worth which caused them to seek approval of their "betters" as to the nature of their performance. The I930s saw council congratulations to the coal company reciprocated. 'Mond-Turnerism' was alive in the country at large and it would have been surprising if Ashington were any different. But there was an oppositional voice in Ashington in the activities of the Independent Labour Party.

In March I930 Maxton I.L.P. chairman, spoke to an audience of seven to eight hundred people in the Arcade Hall. He spoke of working class discontent throughout the world adding that "So far as I have any influence in the working class movement I intend to use it to make them (working class) more discontented still." In I933 the I.L.P. fielded three candidates at Hirst

In opposition to the 'Socialist' candidates, an unusual occurrence as the Labour candidates were normally unopposed in Hirst, the "Moderates" not deeming it worthwhile to contest the seats there. The impact of the I.L.P. was out of all proportion to its numbers. It prompted the Rev. Parker, a Wesleyan Methodist, to entitle a sermon "If Christ came to Ashington" and to advocate immediate provision of I,000 extra houses to relieve overcrowding. The church interest in social welfare was intended to wean the miners away from I.L.P.ism as Parker praised Labour council policies but attacked "people badly led and being made to believe that the way out of their present difficulties lay in tearing down the pillars of society in order that in the scramble the agitators might secure something." The I.L.P. conducted a lively but unsuccessful campaign the result being [123]

Elected.	Besford (socialist)	1993	Both very experienced candidates.
	Mordue "	1624	
	Rodgers "	1524	
Not Elected.	Lavina (Mod.)	433	
	Mrs. Henderson (I.L.P.)	383	
	Cozens (I.L.P.)	369	
	O'Donnell "	274	

The I.L.P. candidates however revealed that they were prepared to think more critically of the problem facing them. "The party demands housing schemes by direct labour and urges the government

to issue free loans for this purpose, thus keeping the municipalities out of the hands of money lending sharks, which means raising the rate to pay interest." (Note the effectiveness of the last comment arguing that capitalist policies caused rate increases, reversing the ratepayers argument.)[124] By 1935 the Hirst elections were again uncontested but the I.L.P. had an effect on labour council policy. Before I.L.P. opposition the labour group had faced only right wing challenges which could not seriously threaten their dominance, especially in Hirst. In April 1933 one of the I.L.P. candidates had obtained almost 400 votes. The threat from the left had pricked the labour group into re-starting municipal house building and in 1933 66 aged persons bungalows were erected at the west end of Ashington on land purchased from Mr Sample at Is per sq. yard (all charges being met by the council)[125] financial assistance being provided under Section 46 of the 1930 Housing Act. The Public Works Loan Board provided funding of £15,755 for the housing scheme of which £12,837 was for the houses and the remainder for the sites, sewers and streets. Initial rents were 3s.9d. plus Is.3d. rates totalling 5s. To be fair the labour group had never ceased discussing municipal housebuilding[126] but its actions were in part attributable to I.L.P. pressure.

The rent arrears in Ashington were not only a source of embarrassment to the ruling labour group (as well as being

political fodder for the 'moderates') but were a practical difficulty in obtaining Ministry of Health approval for further house building (and even more important obtaining Exchequer subsidy.) In February 1932 the council chairman J.R.Tilley reported back from a meeting with Ministry representatives in London that "The Ministry representatives had been particularly concerned with the position of outstanding arrears of income and had intimated that the minister's approval to the errection of the proposed 66 houses could only be given if the council gave an assurance that effective measures would be taken to deal with such arrears in future." The council agreed to take all necessary steps to collect rent[127] and rate arrears and to prevent them developing as well as resolving "That in letting the proposed houses for aged persons, regard will be given to the ability of the prospective tenants to pay rents."

The dilemma was clear[128] for the local authority representatives. Central government finance which was necessary if council houses were to be built was being used as an instrument for exercising central control of local housing matters. The labour reformist councillors in Ashington were unable to meet such challenges appropriately because of their lack of a coherent counter-hegemonic ideology. This absence of a core ideology resulted in central government and Ratepayer's Association attacks being met inappropriately. This was in marked contrast to the political climate in nearby Blyth where the N.U.M. and the seamen's union

were very active producing a much more radical and polemical approach to local government. Blyth was constantly producing resolutions for debate by other local authorities at their annual conferences. Ashington, which was geographically and industrially much more isolated, never in the 1930's adopted the municipal socialist ideas of its neighbour. In Blyth the workers were used to relating to a number of employers and could compare the different responses they met. In Ashington the miners, in the industrial and social field, had only to deal with a single industrial giant which could use the threat of cessation or transference of its activities to threaten the very existence of the town. The dependence of Ashington on a single source of employment from one employer gave the coal company the bargaining power of a monopolist. Instead of arguing that the solvent rent issue needed to be met by income increases the councillors adopted the non-socialist response of trimming housing standards and of gearing housing provision to those who could definately pay the lower rents. In addition, goaded by Ratepayer's Association gibes of inactivity on rent arrears, labour councillors had already pursued vigorous steps to curb the rent arrears problem by use of the bailiff and evictions. An exchange between Tilley and Craigs in 1930 illustrates the point. Tilley, "An attempt

129

is being made to say that the council is inactive in this matter (rent arrears.) We are one of the few authorities taking advantage of legal machinery by affecting ejectments. We had two as recently

as a fortnight ago."

Craigs "That's not many."

Tilley "I don't want the impression to get out that we are inactive. We are adopting methods that are repulsive to many councillors..."

So pressed by moderates and the ministry to reduce arrears and by the I.L.P.to provide municipal housing the labour group reacted to all these pressures by providing housing of a type and at a price that ensured that no further rent arrears would arise from the new housing scheme.That is not to suggest that the labour group did not have a housing policy but rather it indicates that their policy was modified by regarding rent arrears as in part being attributable to human weakness rather than as being an effect of not providing solvent demand housing in Ashington (which in effect would have related rents to the fluctuating earnings in the industry.) And the labour reformists did press the ministry to allow lower rents on a number of occasions. As with all aspects of social life in the industrial village human behaviour had to be related to the economic system that dominated the town and the country. And just as the miner's ability to pay rent depended upon the state of the coal industry so did the council's capacity to raise rate revenue. It was particularly difficult to plan funding of schemes when trade fluctuations meant rate reductions. This is revealed by the 1931 rates. Besford, council chairman revealed that in 1930-31 a 1d.

rate had produced £362 but in 1931-32 it would only produce £334. The problems this caused were exacerbated by the trade fluctuations which affected earnings and made rent arrears more likely.

The 1935 Housing Act enabled the local authority to press ahead with its slum clearance programme. Ever since 1919 there had been considerable concern regarding 'bungalow' and tent dwellings in the district. Licences had been granted or witheld prior to 1935 to reduce overcrowding in these dwellings and to encourage proper sanitary arrangements. There were over 100 'bungalows', which varied from wooden shacks to pigeon crees. Many were situated in allotments and were so bad that Tilley said in 1930 "We have places put up that were not fit for pigs to occupy." The sanitary inspector had taken action to have a number of these dwellings demolished but the council was divided on the matter with some labour councillors unwilling to pull down dwellings, however unsatisfactory until they had the prospect of rehousing those evicted.The 1935 Act allowed the council to solve this problem. 142 houses were provided altogether in 1938 twenty bungalows added to the 66 in Ashington, and housing and bungalows provided in Hirst (122.) The first contract was let to George Towers who had been building private houses for sale in the district. The Hirst land was provided by the Wilburn Estates(who owned most of the land in the East of the district. The Ashington site was provided by Welbeck Estates, the other

130

major land owner who owned most of the land to the west of the town.)Land aquisition was a major problem for the local authority.
I3I
Not only were the land barons reluctant to part with land till its scarcity value guaranteed them a good price but a number of sites which were considered by the council were deemed unsuitable because of adverse subsidence reports from the coal company.

Given the difficulties encountered by the local authority their housing policy between I927 and I939 represents a modest achievement especially of taken into account with their other enterprises. In the same period all the houses in the district were turned over to water closet systems (over 5,500 houses were provided with water closets in this period) and the council forced the coal company to correct its houses. All streets were made up and roads were turned from mud streets into highways and paths were paved. Ashington and Hirst parks were built, levelled, landscaped and provided with recreational facilities. Public toilets were provided through unemployment schemes and major roads were widened. The hospital was expanded and a new miner's welfare centre erected. The council chambers were reconstructed at a cost of £9000 (there was a genuine lack of office space with rooms being rented in the town for council staff.) But most tellingly the plan for a public library was postponed but a Greyhound racing track, at council instigation was begun at Portland Park Football Ground. And finally the local authority

were instrumental in encouraging the erection of private housing in the I930's to meet the demand for housing in the district.

The privy conversion scheme illustrates the scale of other problems facing the local authority as well as highlighting the apparently amicable relationship with the coal company in the recession years of the I930's. Almost all the houses in the colliery rows had only midden earth closets. Because of the density of housing in Hirst these privys were extemely health hazardous. The local authority drew up plans for converting all houses district by district, to water closets. The coal company which had been recently superseded as the water supplier by Tynemouth Corporation objected to a single water supply to each house, arguing for one pipe to each two dwellings. The local authority agreed to ask the miner's unions to support them in pressing Tynemouth Corporation to accept the coal company's proposals.

There were two main private speculative builders[I32] in the district in the I930's. George Towers who built Dene View and Jubilee Estates (total of over I50 houses) and who also was the contractor for the council's development in the Hirst area. R.Cooper the builder for one of the major landowners, Welbeck Estates, who erected a mixture of flats for rental, and houses for rental and sale. These two builders accounted for most of the privately erected housing built between I93I and I938 (a total of 627 units.) Building Society mortgages accounted for a number of the advances

on these properties (probably two thirds of the 627 were owner occupied, the rest being rented) but the local authority made available £40,000 under the small dwellings aquisition act so providing mortgage facilities for about one hundred houses.

The owner occupation characteristics of a number of labour reformists affected their view of providing mortgages for private house purchase as the housing committee minutes reveal.But just as important was the continuing housing shortage which meant the council was glad to have this relieved from any source by further housebuilding, and private owner occupation was likely to make unnecessary further coal company houses for sale to its employees. A letter was read from the Ministry of Health, in reply to the council's proposal to make advances to approved ersons who wished to purchase their own houses under the provisions of the above act. The letter suggested that instead of the applicants obtaining advances from the council, they obtain them from the building societies, the council if necessary exercising the power of guarantee conferred by section 92 of the Housing Act I925.

It was agreed to reply stating that the council consider that their proposal would be of greater advantage to the people of the district and again request the minister to approve the scheme.

The desire of the local authority was to provide housing to relieve overcrowding but its real aim was still to press the

government to give them the powers and finance to greatly expand municipal housebuilding for rental. The council supported a number of resolutions on this matter to the Urban District Councils Association of which the following is one example. (July 1934) "That in view of the overcowding which still exists in this council's area and the waiting list for houses, the Howarden Rural District Council notes with alarm that private enterprise is failing to build houses under the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1933, for the purpose of letting to the working classes at reasonable rents and urges the government to introduce financial assistance to local authorities to make it possible for houses to be built for letting at rents which the working classes can afford to pay." But the proposal was still ignoring the crux of the problem.[2] Housing was treated as a commodity and the likes of Welbeck Estates made money out of land sales and house erection and rental. Even with municipal building the state and local authority supported the I.L.P.'s "sharks" by needing to borrow on the money market. What was required was total control of all aspects of house building costs from land to interest charges. Although local authorities had to operate in the market in the 1930's municipal housebuilding provided safe profits for landowners and housebuilders. Councils like Blyth, and left wing groups, appreciated the widespread changes necessary in the fabric of society if municipal housing was to operate properly. In Ashington there appears to have been only a partial understanding of the

[2] 1933

problem reflected in the emphasis upon government subsidy for housebuilding.

The quality of private housebuilding in the I930's was in general of a low standard. An examination of George Tower's Cavendish Gardens housing site reveals a good example of this. The diminutive houses were densely packed together as Towers, operating on minimum byelaw standards adhered to the minimum I7 feet back streets behind North Seaton Road and Bolsover Streets. Attempts by the local authority to persuade Towers to reduce his cross streets from six to five houses to enable widening of the back lane were met by a refusal. R.Cooper, the other major builder also required regulation of his building standards.[I34] On one occasion planning permission was refused on two houses[I35] and he was asked to "amend his plans so that the building line be adhered to and that drainage to the front of the building be provided." Many of his houses did not have bathrooms or indoor toilets. Most were terraced boxes with offshoot back ends, some with small baths under the sink. With the exception of Jubilee Estate almost all were terraced houses with small forecourt gardens. So even though municipal housebuilding standards had declined from those of the I920's they were still in general significantly superior to those provided by the private sector.

Municipal socialist housing and environmental programmes

had a number of aspects in the I930's. Housing provision, from whatever source, was encouraged to relieve the overcrowding which still existed in the area. New building standards were regulated and monitored to ensure that the already low standards of private housebuilding at least met minimum standards. Remedial environmental provision was enacted and overseen by committees such as the Private Streetworks Sub-committee, Planning, Highways, General Purposes and Housing.

In this latter measure the local authority often found itself engaged in forcing North Seaton, Welbeck and Milburn Estates and the coal company to meet its share of these costs. This led to housing groups attempting "trade-offs" with the local authority. I36 Finally municipal housing standards were used as a model for the private sector to aim for.

In part the character, and lower quality of the I930's local authority Alexandra Road site, was determined by the fact that its primary aim was to house A) those cleared from the slum "bungalows" and B) to provide cheap cottage accommodation for the elderly. But only fleetingly did the labour reformists, stung by I.L.P. criticism attempt to fundamentally re-examine the whole issue of income and rents as for example when they obtained M,O.H. approval for rent reductions in council houses. The weakened state of the local miners I37 lodges because of reduced membership allied to the decline of the number of coal company employees producing a feeling of insecurity

which led to a more accommodative relationship between labour and capital, reflected in the more sympathetic hearing the coal company received with the local authority, Only the I.L.P. and the communists, numerically small but very influential in stimulating counter-hegemonic ideas[138], seemed to argue for housing to be regarded as a central issue in the labour capital struggle.

The local authority then played a central part in housing provision in the 1930's both directly and indirectly. Building was directly related to the state of the coal industry locally. Short time work and low wages were a much more important factor in causing building to cease than was the rate of unemployment (below 15%). The labour reformist dominant group on the council wanted to build council houses but were unable to do so without central government permission and exchequer subsidy and they were already heavily committed to improving the state of roads streets and sanitation. In the early 1930's a counter-hegemonic view of society and housing policy was being asserted by I.L.P. members whose influence was greater than their membership. Though challenging the labour reformists directly (and causing the church to spring to the support of the "less dangerous" socialists) the I.L.P. did have an influence on housing policy. In part the resumption of council housebuilding was an attempt to remove one electoral weapon of the I.L.P.

There is no evidence in Ashington of a massive pent up demand

for private owner occuried housing in this period. There was certainly no "risk" capital expended in Ashington. Private housebuilding only commenced when the coal trade had stabilised in Ashington. And the fight the coal company had experienced with its model scheme caused them to cease housebuilding altogether in Ashington after 1927. The reduction in rent arrears in the 1930's caused the local authority to approach house building in a more confident mood after 1945 and to greatly expand the scale of their building.

The period after 1927 saw a further move towards greater harmony between the coal company and its employees in all areas. This was matched by an expansion of local authority control of the town and an improvement in environmental conditions. In 1919 Ashington was still a company town; by 1939 it was a town where the coal company was still the major employer and an important householder but where the local authority was now a major power. The depression and the insecurity of the coal industry's future in the 1930's had modified the relationship between the labour leaders and the employers. Mutual accommodation became the norm rather than the exception. Those who asserted a counter-hegemonic view of class relations were now generally outside the mainstream of the labour party. The coal company's welfarism was one factor in this; the breakup of the labour party nationally another. But the most crucial single weakness which allowed the incorporation of the labour leaders was the absence of a vigorous counter-ideological

group with influence amongst the labour leaders. The exclusion of the I.L.P. from power sharing in Ashington, and the split in the labour movement, was of benefit only to the employers. Fellow socialists of a more radical bent were regarded by their comrades as enemies and the true nature of the class struggle was masked. The fractioning of the labour movement locally allowed the coal company to succeed because of the political isolation of its most vehement opponents thus making easier the incorporation of the labour aristocracy. Housing policy was a vital element in this struggle.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the period of study Ashington was indeed a company town. Coal mining was the only industry and the town was entirely dominated by the activities of the Ashington Coal Company. As the company expanded its complex of Ashington mines at the West end of the town to include Linton, Woodhorn, Ellington and Lynemouth mines its wealth and local power increased enormously. It exercised many of the powers of local authorities and was a defacto local state with practical hegemonic control of the district. It also enjoyed and cultivated considerable ideological hegemony and the local press was just one of the organs of communication which was assiduously used by the company in its attempts to exercise and retain this ideological dominance.

The two forms of dominance were inextricably linked with dominant ideological influence depending upon the company's ability to 'deliver the goods', providing a good example of Gramsci's concept of "Praxis." The practical power of the employers to pay wages, ensure employment, provide housing, water, coal and refuse disposal was an instrument for attempting to buttress bourgeoise dominance in class relations by indicating the totality of company control of its workers' environment while at the same time giving it influence in the reproduction of labour power.

A particular benefit to North Eastern Coal Capitalists was the notion of the "rent free" colliery house. Daunton has

clearly demonstrated that the rent free colliery house applied only to certain coal areas and it resulted in these areas with the "free" house/wage system being equivalent in value to the wages/rent system of other areas. But the notion of "free" houses enabled the employers to pose as paternalistic employers and develop further their campaign to influence the consciousness of their employees by disguising the commodity form of housing. However the rent free miners were able to use this status to confound the employers by being better able to sustain strike action, free of the penalty of rent arrears at the end of the dispute. This reinforces the crucial importance of working class consciousness in the labour/capital conflict.

Cleaver has made a number of important points about the nature of labour and capital. "In Marx's view capital was above all a social relation, more specifically a social relation of struggle between the classes of bourgeois society: capitalist and working classes." Capital is seen as the locus of class
140
struggle as the working class is part of capital as well as an entity with autonomous power. Most importantly it is wrong to generalise about the working class being subordinate to capitalists; the particular, temporal relations between capital and labour indicate the changing balance of power between classes. Labour power is active; its forces change in capitalism through class conflict. The approach of the coal company was therefore to

stress the need for the working class to realise how its welfare was bound up with the success of capitalism; to stress both the dependency of the miners on their employers and the link between employer and employee. The scale of the coal company's activities in affecting most aspects of its employees' life was I41 the substance to this argument. But this almost feudal power served to illustrate locally what was less clear elsewhere, the unity of social relation and therefore of working class struggle; what Gramsci called the ensemble of relations.

The consequences of coal company hegemony were that the I42 areas of class conflict were broader focussed. Sanitation, housing, water supply, street conditions were just some of the areas of class conflict. Indeed in Ashington the non-industrial areas of class conflict were on occasions more important in substance and in the development of a counter-hegemonic view than were the industrial disputes as Gramsci realised. "The Socialist state already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited labouring class To link these institutions, co-ordinating and ordering them in a hierarchy of competences and powers which is strongly centralised, while respecting the indespensible autonomy and articulation of each, means to create a genuine worker's democracy here and now, in effect and active opposition to the bourgeoise state."

I42 a

As Bill Williamson has outlined in an important study of the mining community of Throckley these institutions were consciously built by the working class as an expression of their views, needs and power. Williamson's description of Throckley as a constructed community is equally applicable to Ashington. While the mining camp was erected by a coal company for a specific purpose the miners created a community. "Through their unions and co-operative societies they built their own institutions distinct from those of the coal company. Through family and kinship they built defensive walls against chance and circumstance, constructing a way of life which was theirs and not simply a reflection of the coal company's plans." These institutions of non-company life were potential breeding grounds for divergent thinking and for the practical construction of counter-hegemonic "institutions." It is significant that in Ashington the coal company policy was to move the class battleground from spatial control to attempted ideological control of its workforce after I9I8. It was now company policy to attempt, to more subtly and insidiously maintain control of its workforce by use of welfare, educational, housing and press means.

One of the major reasons why Ashington did not experience much more class conflict was the crucial lack locally of a planned, sustained and co-ordinated awareness of the need for working class unity in all areas of social relations. In general there were three distinct phases of class consciousness and action. In the years immediately prior to World War I there was an expanding and vigorous socialist movement which was ideologically strong and increasingly effective. The post-war period up to I926 saw a weakening of the ideological component in the working class resulting, despite important local and national industrial clashes, in increasing accommodation of the working class to the wishes of the employers. The post I926 period saw the working class increasingly becoming incorporatist and reformist. Two major forces helped produce this change, the coal company worked to orchestrate this trend; some of the leading labour aristocrats allowed it to happen.

Foster has argued that the development of the labour aristocracy in nineteenth century Britain was an important element in the restabilization of British Society, to the benefit of the bourgeoisie. The process of restabilization he argues "was worked out in terms of industrial organisation." Ashington in the early twentieth century reveals the same crucial mediating function of labour aristocratic leaders but highlights the importance of the non-industrial arena in resolving class conflict. This

occurred both at constituency level where Burt and Fenwick were the two M.P's and at local authority level and accompanied increasing attempts by the coal company to reduce the scale of class conflict by attempting to achieve more collaboration with its employees. This new approach by the employees was a reaction to the increasing militancy of the miners nationally and locally. Ashington experienced paternalistic welfarism relatively late and its manifestation was more a reaction to working class gains rather than a liberal attempt to "steal the thunder of socialism" as elsewhere, though the latter motivation was evident amongst the petit-bourgeois liberal councillors. So the specific character of social relations in Ashington helped shape the nature of class conflict.

That the coal company should be so concerned to generate a reputation as a model employer in the post-war period is testimony to the reality and importance of "ideological hegemony." A coal town of the size of Ashington represented a potential source of considerable working class power, the more formidable as most of the workers were employed by a single coal company. Furthermore the scope and the scale of the company's activities brought it into contact with the non-industrial organisations of the working class. With regard to the local authority the coal company especially was bound to encounter class conflict over the social costs of labour reproduction. But it was not only with the working class that opposition was encountered.

In the same way that Foster, Gray etc. have identified the role of the labour aristoracy in mediating between conflicting classes, so too the petit-bourgeoisie had a similar potential for reducing class friction. That the petit-bourgeoisie, a small but important element made a significant impact on the class relations is one of the assertions made in this study. But the class collaboratist goal of the petit-bourgeoisie was achieved by appearing to attack the coal owners and the labour aristocrats, forcing socialist attacks to be concentrated upon the likes of Ratepayer's Association and Liberals. In other words there were two potential buffer/harmonising class fractions, one working class, one bourgeois. Class conflict energies, particularly with regard to the local authority, and especially after World War I were focussed upon electoral rivalry between Liberals/Ratepayers/ Petit-bourgeoisie and co-operative/Socialist labour councillors.

The role of the Co-operative movement was an important one in this class buffer zone. McCord has argued that Co-operative values and aspirations lead to progressive, increasingly harmonious class relations as their values were more in accordance with those of the petit-bourgeoisie than the lumpen-proletariat. This seems to me to offer an explanation at variance both with the important ideological differences between the two groups as well as ignoring the fierce hostility between the two elements. Indeed the reduction of class conflict that McCord correctly identifies

did occur in Ashington, but for the opposite reason to the one he has outlined. It was brought about in part by the intensity of the conflict between Co-operative/petit-bourgeoise elements by[I45] deflecting labour reformist attacks away from the coal owners. No other example better illustrates the crucial importance of Gramsci's stress upon commitment and ideology. Socially similar to the petit-bourgeoisie **in terms of income status and housing,** the leaders of the co-operative movement had a distinct, oppositional view of social relations (as well as being the chief trade rivals of the petit-bourgeoisie). Class harmony was therefore achieved by the paradox of intense opposition of two adjacent class fractions. Generally the role of the bourgeoisie has been ignored but it was an important element and David Byrne has written "however one answer in the 1930's was that the local representation[I46] of the bourgeois political position was through the local small bourgeoisie, by this time seldom a productive bourgeoisie because the control of manufacturing, the coal trade and shipping interests were predominantly delocalised, but a reproductive bourgeoisie and that part of the bourgeoisie concerned with the related and technically old fashioned business of housebuilding. In other words, the fraction of capital concerned with the process of private house provision generated a section of the bourgeoisie that had considerable political importance." In Ashington the local bourgeois played

a similar role to that in North Shields. But the Milburn family, coal company directors, were also involved in Milburn Estates an important local landowning and house-building company which owned the rows of colliery houses to the East of Hawthorn Road.

It was in the interests of the coal company to allow the more substantial thrust of working class opposition to be weakened by the clash with the petit-bourgeoisie. In turn the petit-bourgeoisie were able by apparently opposing and attacking the coal owners, to pose as an independent electoral force, gaining popularity by appearing to articulate working class grievances against the owners. Thus the apparent conflict between the local bourgeoisie was of functional benefit to both, as it created confusion amongst the working class as to the nature and target of their conflict. But this was allowed to happen because of the lack of a fully developed or unitary class consciousness. Gramsci has suggested three moments of class consciousness. Firstly there is a limited sectional consciousness between members of a particular craft, trade or profession. Secondly there is the moment when members of a social class become aware of a common interest but when the interest remains economic. Thus while political perspectives are advanced, they lie within the existing fundamental structure of society. This might be described as corporate consciousness. Thirdly there is the moment when a class becomes aware of its overall role in society and

begins to aquire a hegemonic interest in relation to other subordinate groups and society as a whole."[147]

All three "moments of class consciousness" would be expected to emerge in a study of Ashington and indeed they do. But the latter stage is insufficiently represented and in particular there is no evidence of a progressive development towards such class consciousness. Consequently the manifestations of conflict do not reveal a consistent pattern; rather what emerges are peaks and troughs of working class solidarity and power against a background of increasing incorporatist labour reformism which by the 1930's was the norm. To understand this development better it is necessary to examine the nature of the local state and the changing policies of the coal company in response to working class gains.

Cockburn's demonstration of how corporate management has undermined the responsiveness and power of labour leaders to respond to the needs of the electorate was prefigured in a much less developed but nonetheless important manner by the development of full-time paid professional local authority employees in Ashington in the 1920's and 1930's. Some councillors, notably those newly elected and especially miners rather than co-operative employees, appear to have been influenced in their attitudes and decisions by the supposedly 'neutral' permanent officers of

the council. Joint councillor/officer visits to conferences provides another source of officer reinforcement of their influence over councillors.

Cockburn's discussion of the local state has highlighted the importance of local institutions and Milliband has demonstrated how the local state can act to regulate class conflict forces. I48 But the potential is there within the local state in particular for the working class to gain control of the local state. The proroguing of the Guardians in Chester-le-Street, the history of Clay Cross, Poplar and Chopwell all indicate working class attempts to break the hegemony of the dominant class. Control of the Magistracy and Guardians were as important an element in this as was socialist control of the local authority. The power of the working class to effect counter-hegemonic changes in officials of the local state had to be resisted. Methods of achieving this were to isolate the police from the miners and not have a magistrates court in the town as well as the more obvious method of ensuring that few magistrates were selected who were not sympathetic to dominant class ideologies. There is evidence of all these methods applying in Ashington.

The role of the local state was to act as a local agency of the national state but there were other roles which were dependent upon the pressure of the particular local class forces. Ashington obviously had the potential to be as near a district bastion of socialism as anywhere else in Britain. The outcome

depended upon the theory and practice of local labour leaders as well as the policies of local capitalists. What does emerge is the important role of the local state, and in particular the local authority, as a locus of these class conflict forces. As the local authority began to take over the functions of a local authority which were formerly performed by the coal company the company had to adjust its social relations to encompass a growing and increasingly powerful working class force. The danger of being compressed by the twin pincers of a united labour movement was very evident in the years immediately prior to 1914. But this power loss had to be weighed against the possible gains of reduced class conflict because of reduced responsibilities as well as the transference of some of the costs of labour reproduction to the local authority. This in turn brought the coal company into conflict with the petit-bourgeoisie who objected to rates paying for labour reproductive costs, especially in the field of housing. But as has already been mentioned this proved to be of benefit to both bourgeois class fractions. It also raises a crucial dilemma for labour reformists. Working class successes in class conflict which produced tangible benefits to the working class often had the unintended consequence of producing better social relations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as a result of improved social conditions.

It was as if there was a correlation between reduced class

conflict and working class improved social conditions. The very successes which were gained by the proletariat produced a much less favourable climate for sustaining socialist electoral successes. In a coal company town the electoral viability of working class gains was greatly worsened by the issue of colliery houses. Socialists believed in non-industrial and often municipal housing. The coal company was happy to transfer part of its labour reproductive costs to the local authority. Petit-bourgeois Ratepayerists could make electoral gains by trying to make the coal company provide 'free' housing for its workers. The workers, seduced by the notion of 'free' houses, were often unwilling to live in council houses where they had to pay rent and so enough supported the Ratepayer's Association to allow them to remain an electoral oppositional force up to the 1930's. Possible resolutions of the dilemma (for example of making the coal company pay full rent costs for its employees in municipal houses) were not proposed by the local labour leaders. On this issue as with so many others working class interests were not advanced in Ashington by the lack of a sufficiently influential left wing element in the Unions and in the local authority. Labour aristocrats and reformists proved intellectually unable to develop, assert and carry distinctive socialist policies; in consequence diluted, confused and sometimes contradictory policies emerged. A group unclear as its philosophy and identity proved

unable to consistently generate policies which were ideologically distinct from other competing groups and to hold to these policies when under attack. Defensiveness thus became a feature of labour reformists in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

"A question for dominant class interests then becomes how to control, or reduce the implications of local democracy. 'Council calibre' seems only one small part of this problem. Translated, the problem might be put, "how to restrict the influence of working class councillors, strongly linked to local feelings and consciousness who take welfare goals seriously and spend money to achieve them." But it is contended here that councillor calibre is important;[149] indeed councillor consciousness is an important part of preventing the circumscription of local authority power. To deny otherwise seems to adopt the structural approach which Duncan and Goodwin attack in their article. Finnigan has given an example of the importance of Jenkinson's role in Leeds Housing Policy between the wars.[150]

Apart from this criticism Duncan and Goodwin's article highlights a number of important contentions about social relations and the local state....."....The problem of local government centres on its relative autonomy from both the concerns of the central state and the impact of dominant classes. Related to this, local government is especially vulnerable to working class demands, pressures and even control." An important function of the bourgeoisie is to separate the industrial and the political[151]

in local government to prevent working class unity of action. The equality of the ballot box and the supposed supremacy of parliament and local authorities leads to the notion of individual citizens regulating inequality through the democratic process." Labour controlled councils reinforce the belief of the working class in "justice" and fairness and allow capitalist domination to survive. But there is a danger for class domination inherent in local political democracy, where the state form is particularly vulnerable to replacement by class relations. Unfortunately for the dominant classes, such democracy is an integral part of compromises enacted to maintain capitalist relations in social democracy and cannot be simply withdrawn." While the coal company directors might have been happy to transfer labour reproductive costs to the local authority and were able to use the notion of local democracy to reduce the possibility of a united working class opposition, the local authority still represented a potential weapon of the working class. Its importance was indicated by the fact that the company did not leave its representation to the local bourgeoisie but had direct company approved representatives to structure social relations to the advantage of the company. That such measures were necessary is testimony to the latent and sometimes exercised threat posed by the power of labour. The nature of the single industry town, even when company hegemony was less in the I920's, left the coal owners

vulnerable to attack from all worker organisations. Hence infiltration of these, or the judicious use of the disbursement of coal or money, were necessary if a sufficiently acquiesent workforce were to be created.

Ashington never approached the almost total independence from the local state that Foster outlined in his study of Oldham. The potential was there but that it was never fully developed[153] was not just due to ideological inadequacies of the workers. Coal company policy was often forced to change because of the success of the workers. The three phases already mentioned of class relations and the changes that occurred represent different company responses to the militancy of labour power. Before 1914 outright opposition to welfare demands resulted in increasing opposition. Forced to change the company adopted a policy of cosmetic welfarism in the post-war period allied to shedding of many non-industrial costs of labour reproduction. This stage was marked by the assiduous cultivation of the leading labour reformists by the coal company. The final stage, post 1926, saw the weakened local labour movement posing a more limited threat to the coal company with the reduced scope of company activities contributing to this reduction of class conflict.

The difference between the bourgeoisie regarding housing as a commodity form and the socialists stress on use-value was

complicated by the issue of "colliery" housing. In reality a disguised part of the miner's wages, colliery housing nonetheless gave the coal owners a potentially powerful propaganda weapon. They were able to assert that free houses were part of their paternalistic approach to welfare, and it was less easy for the working class to perceive the relationship between working and "earning" these houses. Just as important was the potential use by the company of housing patronage as a means of controlling its workers, especially when rent allowances did not meet the full cost of renting property in a boom town. It thus was important for the unions to exercise some control over this housing allocation and not leave it to company patronage.

The socialist attempt to provide municipal rather than "tied cottage" housing was greatly hampered by their dependency on central government legislation and finance and by the fluctuating rate income caused by trade dislocations. From the 1920's onwards local housing policy has to be set against a background of a declining coal industry in a town totally dependent on a single industry.

In this debate the petit-bourgeoisie again played an important role. As rentiers they favoured non-municipal housing; as ratepayers too they were opposed to it. As businessmen they favoured colliery houses because of the higher disposable income available to the miners. As a political force they were opposed to socialist housing provision with its potential for radicalising the workforce because of the vastly superior standards of council

housing. The petit-bourgeois 'political' attacks on the coal company over housing represent a dual fear; of creeping municipal socialism which would dominate the workers and of this being allied to the philosophy of co-operation so successfully demonstrated by the local co operative societies. The attempts to ginger up the coal company regarding its cessation of colliery housebuilding in Ashington of I9I8, were rooted in a fear of housing being used as a weapon for politicising the workforce. Just as house ownership was seen as a method of turning people into Tories, so the danger in Ashington was that the coal company was allowing the socialists to win propaganda victories. The coal company was not in a position to accommodate petit-bourgeois wishes. Its welfarism and transference of responsibilities to the local authority after I9I8 had been policies forced on it by the strength of working class militancy prior to I9I4. This significant alteration of the coal company's approach to social relations is a further indication of the active nature of class conflict with shifting power balances between classes. The change in company relations from confrontation to subtlety over the period is a measure of the success of working class conflict.

FOOTNOTE REFERENCES

REFERENCES

I) Harry Cleaver, Reading Capital Politically. For a development.

2) J.A.C.Brown, The Social Psychology of Industry. Pg. 286.

3)John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution.

4) Robert Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh.

5) Keith Middlemass, Politics in Industrial Society. Pgs.20,2I.

n.b.I This institutional collaboration had a much longer history locally than that described nationally by Middlemass. In Northumberland from the nineteenth century the Northumberland Miner's Mutual Confident Association had met quarterly with coal owner representatives and'independent' chairman to resolve disputes by arbitration through the Conciliation Board.The meeting of the board on January I0th I896 indicates why employers so favoured such organisations. The owners applied to have wages reduced by $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ over the coming quarter though 'they were entitled to $3\frac{3}{4}\%$ reduction.' becaude of falling coal prices. The men replied that as production costs had greatly been reduced because of their use and acceptance of increased mechanisation there should be no wage reduction. A divided vote led to the umpires decision (a barrister-at-law) to award a reduction of I[illegible]%. The owners and mens claims are exactly split by arbitration which allowing the men to feel that they have gained a victory and so the decision, a wage reduction is accepted without industrial action. There can be little doubt as to who gains most by the Conciliation Board. From Northumberland Miner's Minutes. I896. Circular Pages 2-5.

6) Keith Middlemass, Op. Cit. Pg. I9. An interesting justification by a conservative writer of Gramsci's view of ideological hegemony.

7) Benwell Community Project, The Making of a Ruling Class.

8) M.J.Daunton, Miner's Houses: South Wales and the Great Northern Coalfield. I880-I9I4.

9) Ashington Coal Company, Pit News. December I946.

I0) a) Decennial Census.

b) A.Gordon, The Economic and Social Development of Ashington.

c) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Books. (N.C.R.O.)

II) Production figure given is that for I872.

I2) In I875 the Carl Shaft was sunk and in I885 the Duke. In I896 Linton Shaft was completed and the tank line connected it to Ashington. In I898 Woodhorn began drawing coal.
Ashington Coal Company, Pit News. December, I946.

I3) W.R.Garside, History of the Durham miners (see this for example.)

I4) Benwell C.D.P. Op. cit. See this for the links of these men with other wealthy Tyneside capitalist dynasties.

I5) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book No. 2.

I6) Benwell C.D.P., Op. cit., there is a discrepancy between the £600,000 share capital quoted in the C.D.P. report and the £750,000 quoted in the Coal Company records. I have assumed that the Coal Company figure is the correct one.

I7) Ashington Coal Company Ltd. , Memoranda Book. I889-I9I9. In I889 only four out of 778 hewers, the best paid miners earned over 9 shillings per day. And 674 of these earned less than 7 shillings per day.

I8) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Books.

I9) E.Hull, Our Coal Reserves.I897. I72 million tons at Ashington, Linton and Woodhorn in I897. (Coal Co. Records. op. cit.) The production for the company was I,OI2,374 in that year. At that rate of production the company had the prospect of I70 years existence. The coal reserves were greater than the entire coal production in England and Wales in I896.

20) Ashington Advertiser, "Let's Look Back" Col. Nov.9th, I946.

2I) Blyth News, April 9th, I903.

22) National Community Development Programme, Profits Against Houses.

23) Ashington Coal Company Ltd., Memoranda Book, op.cit.

24) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book 2, op.cit.

25) Ashington Coal Company, Memoranda Book.

26) Ashington Coal Company Records, Op.Cit. Sept. 2Ist I908.

27) Ashington Coal Company Ltd., Prospectus Sept. I9I2.

28) H.E.Bulman, Coal Mining and the Coal Miner. If the colliery house prices quoted in Bulman's book then pre-war prices:

4 rooms, Blackhall, co. Durham. £I60.

4 rooms Co. Durham £205 (freehold) no bath.

29) Ashington Coal Company, Memoranda Book, op.cit.

Rate in the £ figures. Hirst Ward.

I896 - Poor 6d+ 6d District. 6d and 9d (Ist and 2nd half year.)

I905 - Poor Is3d + Is5d District Is 0½d.

30) M.J.Daunton, Op.cit.

31) H.E.Bulman, op.cit. Land Inquiry Committee Report, I912 . Quoted in this.

32) M.J.Daunton, op.cit.

33) Local name for bailiffs.

34) Ashington Collieries Magazine, Aug. I928. Though when the Duke of York visited the company's premises in I928 it was not the Hirst Housing but that at the new village of Lynemouth that he was taken to.

35) Ashington Coal Company Ltd., Memoranda Book, op.cit.

36) Ashington was geographically and socially isolated from Tyneside and the miners lacked the crucial and social interaction with other occupations and groups, and the leavening of ideas from the urban areas or places like Blyth where there was important seamens' influence.

37.38.) A.W.Purdue, Parliamentary Elections in N.E.England, I900-I906.

39) An interesting rhyme which the local children used to chant was

Vote Vote Vote for Charlie Fenwick
He is sure to win the day.
Let's buy a penny gun
And we'll make the Tories run
And we won't see the Tories any more.

(The same tune and words were used for the election of Ebby Edwards.)

My thanks to Will Brown of North Seaton for this information.

39) cont In the 1979 General election local children used exactly the same tune and rhyme but the words were

Vote Vote Vote for Labour Party
Who's that knocking at the door.
If it's Jim let him in,
If it's Thatcher kick her in.
And she won't come back to England any more.

The rhyme and words were at least a regional feature as they were used on Tyneside both pre and post- 1945.

40) To-day Ashington is in the Morpeth constituency. Wansbeck was the name chosen for the new amalgamated district council centred on Ashington from 1974.

41) John Wilson, Memories of a Labour Leader.

42) Met. Borough of North Tyneside, "A Howky in Parliament."

43) Norman McCord,(Ratepayers and Social Policy, ed.) Pat Thane.

44) Robert Moore, Pit-men Preachers and Politics.

45) In the 1896 election there were 19 candidates of whom 9 were elected. The votes for those elected ranged from 424 to 210 with English 292, 5th, polling more than Charlton (272) and Southern 7th with 267 votes out of a poll of over 4,000 votes. So the "company" vote was about 12% of votes cast.

46) Ashington Coal Company Records, March 3rd, 1899.

47) Blyth News, May 19th, 1903.

48) Blyth News, op.cit.

49) Ashington Coal Company Records, December 11th 1908.

50) Blyth News, January IIth I9I0.

5I) Keith Middlemass, op.cit. Pg.66.

52) A number of these were only part-time appointments.

53) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book 2.

54) This provided opportunities for the coal company directors to become involved in the N.C.E.S.C., thereby protecting their monopoly while expanding into other areas of profit.

55) R.Page Arnot, The Miners.

56) Blyth News, January 4th I9I0.

57) Blyth News, March I9I0.

58) Trist and Bamforth,

59) Harry McShane, "No Mean Fighter."

60) N.C.D.P. To borrow the title "Gilding the Ghetto."

6I) R.B.Nichol, Colliery Housing in Ashington and South East Northumberland. I848-I926.

62) R.Page Arnot, The miners, Years of Struggle.

63) Northumberland Miner's Mutual Confident Association Pamphlet. March 22nd, I9I3.

64) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book 3 D54/9 Nov.I9I9.

65) R.A.B.Redmayne, The British Coal Mining Industry During The War. Pg.I80.

66) Ashington Coal Company Superannuation Society, Rules:

	Earnings	Contributions p.a.
Class A	Under £I60 p.a.	£3.5.0.
B	£I60-£240	£3.I8.0.
C	£240-£300	£5.I7.0.
D	Over £300	£7.I6.0.

66) cont. A superannuation scheme has been announced to the surprised miners of Pelton Fell in I9I0.

67) David Byrne, The Standard of Council Housing in Inter-War North Shields. In Housing, Social Policy and the State.

68) Blyth News, Nov.6th I922.

69) Blyth News, op.cit.

70) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book 7.

7I) H.F.Bulman, op.cit. Chap. XX.

72) Blyth News, Feb.IIth,I924.

73) R.B.Nichol, op.cit.
Plans of Ashington and Hirst Estates. Also plans of Ashington and Hirst houses, pgs.53-55.

74) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minute Book. Dec.3rd I925.
n.b. The building of South Villas in I9I9 had provided a model of housing provision which was to directly influence the coal company. The estate comprised 76 B-type semi-detached houses with indoor bathroom and toilet as well as separate living room and parlour. On the other estates at Park Villas, East Villas and Garden City Villas there was a mixture of semi-detached and blocks of houses. All of the houses had gardens back and front and none had the back yards of most of the 'colliery scheme' houses and none had outside toilets. It is significant that the average standard of the colliery scheme houses did not reach the level of local authority housebuilding in the I920's.

75) Blyth News, Dec. 26th, I925. and Dictionary of Parliament.

76) Robert Q.Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in the Victorian Class Structure. in The Social Analysis of Class Struggle, Ed. arkin.

77) Blyth News, A,ril 23rd I92I.

78) Compilation of house building figures from different figures réveals different figures at different times. The main reason for this was the number of houses in the schemes which were ,rivately owned. This varied according to how many people defaulted on their mortgages. Sources for figures. A.U.D.C. Schemes- Rents of Houses. May 30th I939.

79) Decennial Census Returns.

80) M.O.H.Reports, I92I,I922,I93I.

8I) Blyth News, Feb.I3th I922.

82) Blyth News, July I9th I920.

83) Blyth News, Aug.I5th I92I.

84) David Byrne, Problem Families: a housing lum.en-proletariat.

85) and86) Ashington Collieries Magazine, MayI925, vol.V.Pg. 609.

87) George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier.

88) I have used South Villas and East Villas throughout for the estates but at that time they were still known as the Hawthorn Road and Alexandra Road sites.

89) Blyth News, June 6th I92I.

90) Blyth News, Feb.I3th I922. This presumably includes co-op members of the labour group.

9I)Blyth News, May I4th I923.

92) "Dirty" Pont Street, like South and East Villas, became a "ghetto" area.

93) Blyth News, March I924.

94) Morpeth Herald, June 4th I926.

95) Ashington Coal Company Ltd., Director's Minutes, Dec.4th I925.

96) Blyth News, March I7th I92I. Advertisement for the Ashington Industrial Co-operative Society.

97) Jack Davidson, Northumberland Miner's History. An example of this is nearby Pegswood .(The book incidentally was printed by the co-operative press.)

98) Ashington Miner's Union,Balance Sheet. Jan-June I923.

99) M.O.H.Reports. Ashington,I934.

I00) David Byrne, Class and the Local State.

I0I) A.U.D.C.Minutes. Ordinary meeting 2nd Aug. I934.

I02) Ralph Milliband, op.cit. Quotes "Mass Suffrage,Secret Voting and Political Participation" by S.Rokkan.

I03) A.U.D.C. Electoral Divisions Sub-Committee 30thJuly I935.

I04) Significantly John Craigs the ex-liberal, now Ratepayer's Association maverick, was the principal local agent for this emigration.

I05) Ashington Collieries Magazine. Vol.VII. Pg.57.

I06) Ashington Collieries Magazine, Vol.V.Pg.62I.

I07) Ashington Collieries Magazine, Vol I.Pg.44.

I08) Ashington Collieries Magazine, Vol VII. Pgs.58-59.

I09) A.C.M. Vol.VI . Pg.76. March I926.

II0) A.C.M. Vol. VI Pg.352. Nov.I926.

III) A.C.M. Vol.XIV. Pg.I04.

II2) A.C.M. Vol.I. Pg.44.

II3) Decennial Census.

II4) M.O.H.Reports.

II5) And the houses which were constructed in I927 were the completions of housing schemes already begun prior to the I926 dispute.

II6) Ashington Coal Company Records, Minutes.

II7) A.Gordon, op.cit.

II8) Blyth News, I930.

II9) Ashington Coal Company Records. April 29th I932.

I20) A,Gordon, op.cit. I930-I939.

I2I) A.U.D.C. Minutes, Oct.I932.

I22) Blyth News, March I930.

I23) Blyth News, I933.

I24) Blyth News, op.cit.

I25) Agent for Welbeck Estates.

I26) A.U.D.C. Housing Committee Minutes.

I27) A.U.D.C.Minutes, Feb.I932.

I28) A.U.D.C.Minutes, Feb.I932.

I29) Blyth News, I930.

I30) Contrast this with the partial building of East Villas by the A.I.C.S. Ltd.

I3I) Welbeck Estates was the new name for Portland Estates.

I32) A.U.D.C.Minutes.

I33) A.U.D.C.Minutes I933.

I34) A.U.D.C. General Purposes Committee Minutes, 27th July,I933.

I35) A.U.D.C. General Purposes Committee Minutes,Dec.Ist I93I.

I36) A.U.D.C. Private Streetworks Sub-Committee Minutes, Sept. 28th 1933.

I37) A.U.D.C.Minutes

I38) The latter used to meet in the company's Miner's Welfare under the guise of a health and fitness group.

I39) M.J.Daunton, op.cit.

I40) Harry Cleaver, op.cit.Pg.7I.

I4I)Blyth News, Jan.I4th I9I3. See the report of the Annual Coal Company's Officials Dinner, where the members toasted the best Coal Company in the world and boasted of less friction with the men.

I42) A.Gramsci .

I43) Gwyn A Williams, Proletarian Order. From the article "Worker's Democracy" Pg.I03.

I44) A.Foster, op.cit.

I45) Norman McCord, N.E.England:An Economic and Social History.

I46) Joseph Melling, op.cit.Pg.30, "The Standard of Council Housing -Inter-War North Shields." by David Byrne.

I47) Shelley(Ed) The General Strike.Pg.375. Martin Jacques, "Consequences of the General Strike."

I48) R.Milliband, op.cit.

I49) S.Duncan and M.Goodwin, The Local State and Restructuring Social Relations: Theory and Practice.

I50) Robert Finnegan, Housing Policy in Leeds between the Wars, in R.Melling, op.cit.

151) Duncan and Goodwin, op.cit. Quote by Dearlove.

152) Duncan and Goodwin, op.cit. Pg. 35.

153) John Foster, op.cit.

154) Keith Middlemass, op.cit. Pg.462.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED WORKS

ARNOT, ROBERT PAGE

i) THE MINERS, I889-I9I0. Vol.I. London: Allen and Unwin,I948.

ii) THE MINERS, Years of Struggle. Vol.II. Allen and Unwin, I953.

iii) THE MINERS, In Crisis and War, Vol.III. Allen and Unwin, I96I.

ALLEN,E. et al. THE NORTH EAST ENGINEERS STRIKES OF I87I. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, I97I.

ATKINSON, FRANK THE GREAT NORTHERN COALFIELDS I700-I900. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, I966.

BAYLISS,EBENEZER AND CO. (PUB.) WHO'S WHO IN NORTHUMBERLAND. I936.

BELLAMY, JOYCE and SAVILLE, JOHN. (Editors.) DICTIONARY OF LABOUR BIOGRAPHY. 3 Volumes. MacMillan, I972.

BENWELL COMMUNITY PROJECT. THE MAKING OF A RULING CLASS. Final report No. 6. Benwell Community roject. Newcastle-upon-Tyne,I979.

BENWELL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. PRIVATE HOUSING AND THE WORKING CLASS. Final Report No. 3. Benwell community Project. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I978.

BENWELL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. SLUMS ON THE DRAWING BOARD. Final Report No.4. Benwell Community Project. Newxastle-upon-Tyne, I978.

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. FROM FAILURE TO FACELIFT. Final Report No. 6. Birmingham Community Development Programme. Birmingham, I980.

BOGGS, CARL GRAMSCI'S MARXISM. London: Pluto Press, I978. (First Published I976)

BOWLEY, M. HOUSING AND THE STATE. I9I9-I944. London: Allen and Unwin, I945.

BROOM, JOHN JOHN MACLEAN. Loanhead, Midlothian: Macdonald, I973.

BULMAN, H.F. COAL MINING AND THE COAL MINER. London: Methuen, I920.

BYRNE, D.S. PROBLEM FAMILIES: A HOUSING LUMPEN-PROLETARIAT. University of Durham, Dept. of Sociology and Social Administration. Working aper No.5, I974.

BYRNE, D.S. "SOME HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING ISSUES IN NORTH SHIELDS." North Shields: North Shields Community Development Programme

BEYNON, HUW and HUTCHINSON, COLIN REVOLT AGAINST AN "AGE OF PLENTY." Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Strongwords, I980.

CHAPLIN, SID — DURHAM MINING VILLAGES. University of Durham Working Papers in Sociology No.3.

CLEGG,S.J. — HOUSING PROBLEMS IN A NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN. In Vol.XXXV No.2 (1914) of the Journal of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

COATES, KEN (Ed.) — DEMOCRACY IN THE MINES. Nottingham: The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1974.

COCKBURN, CYNTHIA — THE LOCAL STATE. London: Pluto Press, 1978.

COLE, G.D.H. — SELF GOVERNMENT IN INDUSTRY. G. Bell and Sons, 1917. (1972 Edition, London, Hutchinson.)

COLE, G.D.H. and POSTGATE, RAYMOND — THE COMMON PEOPLE 1746-1938. London: Methuen, 1938.

COMMON, JACK — KIDDAR'S LUCK AND THE AMPERSAND. (1951 and 1954.) Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, 1975.

COWLEY, JOHN — HOUSING, FOR PEOPLE OR PROFIT? London: Stage I, 1979.

CULLINGWORTH, J.B. — HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. London: Allen and Unwin, 1966.

DAUNTON, M.J. — MINER'S HOUSES: SOUTH WALES and the GREAT NORTHERN COALFIELD, 1880-1914. Amsterdam: International Review of Social History.

DAVIDSON, JACK — NORTHUMBERLAND MINER'S HISTORY 1919-1939. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: National Union of Mineworkers, 1973.

DENNIS, N. HENRIQUES, F, and SLAUGHTER, C. — COAL IS OUR LIFE. Tavistock Publications, 1969.

DUNCAN, SIMON and GOODWIN, MARK — THE LOCAL STATE AND RESTRUCTURING SOCIAL RELATIONS: THEORY AND PRACTICE. University of Sussex Working Paper No. 24, 1980.

FEUER, LEWIS S. — MARX AND ENGELS. New York: Anchor Books, 1972.

FORMAN, CHARLES — INDUSTRIAL TOWN. Cameron and Tayleur, 1978. (St. Albans: Granada Publishing Edition, 1979.)

FOSTER, JOHN — CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. London: Methuen, 1977. (First Published London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974.)

FRANCIS, HYWEL and SMITH, DAVID — THE FED. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980.

GARSIDE, W.R. — THE DURHAM MINER'S 1919-1960. London: Allen and Unwin, 1971.

GIDDENS, ANTHONY — CAPITALISM AND MODERN SOCIAL THEORY. Cambridge University Press, 1979 edition.

GRAHAM, FRANK — NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM. A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MISCELLANY. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, 1979.

GRAY, ROBERT Q. THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY IN THE VICTORIAN CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF CLASS STRUCTURE. Ed. Frank Parkin. Published by Tavistock.

HALSEY, A.H. (Ed.) TRENDS IN BRITISH SOCIETY SINCE I900. London: Macmillan, I972.

HARVEY, GEORGE CAPITALISM IN THE NORTHERN COALFIELD. Pelaw-on-Tyne. (Zerox.)

HAY, J.R. THE ORIGINS OF THE LIBERAL WELFARE REFORMS, I906-I9I4. London; Macmillam, I975.

HOLTON, BOB. BRITISH SYNDICALISM I900-I9I4. London: Pluto Press, I976.

HOUSE,J.W. INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN: THE NORTH EAST. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, I969.

HULL, EDWARD OUR COAL RESOURCES AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. E. and I. Span Ltd. I897.

HULL, EDWARD THE COALFIELDS OF GREAT BRITAIN. London: Edward Stanford, I88I.

JEVONS, H. STANLEY THE BRITISH COAL TRADE, I9I5 Facsimile. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, I970.

JOLL,JAMES GRAMSCI. Glasgow: Collins, I977.

KELLY KELLY'S DIRECTORY OF NORTHUMBERLAND. Strand, London. Kelly's Directories Ltd.

LITTLE,J.H. and PARKER,W. ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF BOTHAL SCHOOL. I873-I973. (In Ashington Library.)

LLOYD GEORGE, DAVID — WAR MEMOIRS OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE. London: Odham's Press, 1938. Two Volumes.

MENDEL, ERNEST — MARXIST ECONOMIC THEORY. London: Merlin Press, 1977.

MCCORD, NORMAN — NORTH EASTERN ENGLAND: AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY.

McLELLAN, DAVID — KARL MARX. Frogmore, St. Albans: Paladin, 1977.

McSHANE, HARRY and SMITH, JOAN — NO MEAN FIGHTER. London: Pluto Press, 1978.

MELLING, JOSEPH (Ed.) — HOUSING, SOCIAL POLICY AND THE STATE. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

MERRETT, STEPHEN — STATE HOUSING IN BRITAIN. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF NORTH TYNESIDE — "A HOWKY IN PARLIAMENT." North Tyneside: Metropolitan Borough of North Tyneside.

MIDDLEMASS, KEITH — POLITICS IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY. London: Andre Deutsch, 1980.

MILIBAND, RALPH — THE STATE IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY. London: Quartet Books, 1979.

MILLER, EDWIN (Compiler) — EYEWITNESS: THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN THE NORTH EAST. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Harold Hill 1967.

MILNE, MAURICE — THE NEWSPAPERS OF NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham.

MOORE, ROBERT — PIT-MEN PREACHERS AND POLITICS. Cambridge University Press, I974.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME — THE POVERTY OF THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME. Community Development Programme Information and Intelligence Unit , London, I975.

N.C.D.P. — WHATEVER HAPPENED TO COUNCIL HOUSING? London: C.D.P. Information and Intelligence Unit,I976.

N.C.D.P. — PROFITS AGAINST HOUSES. London: C.D.P. Information and Intelligence Unit,I976.

NEF, J.U. — THE RISE OF THE BRITISH COAL INDUSTRY. Vol.2. London: George Routledge,I932. Reprint London: Cass,I969.

NORTH TYNESIDE C.D.P. — NORTH SHIELDS: WORKING CLASS POLITICS AND HOUSING I900-I977. Final Report. Vol.I. North Shields: North Tyneside C.D.P. I978.

ORWELL, GEORGE — THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER. Harmondsworth, England Penguin Books.

ORWELL, SONIA AND ANGUS, IAN (Ed.) — THE COLLECTED ESSAYS, JOURNALISM AND LETTERS OF GEORGE ORWELL. Vol. I.I920-I940 An Age Like This. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, I968.

PARKIN, FRANK — CLASS, INEQUALITY AND POLITICAL ORDER. MacGibbon and Kel, 1971. (St.Albans,England: Granada Publishing, 1979.)

PEVSNER,N. AND RICHMOND I.A. — THE BUILDINGS OF ENGLAND: NORTHUMBERLAND. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLANNING. — REPORT ON THE BRITISH COAL INDUSTRY 1936. P.E.P. 1936.

1936

PRICE,L.L. — CO-OPERATION AND CO-PARTNERSHIP. London: Collins.

REDMAYNE,R.A.S. — THE BRITISH COAL MINING INDUSTRY DURING THE WAR. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1923.

SAMUEL, RAPHAEL (Ed.) — MINERS, QUARRYMEN AND SALTWORKERS. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1977.

SKELLEY, JEFFREY (Ed.) — THE GENERAL STRIKE. 1926. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976.

STENTON, MICHAEL and LEE,S. — WHO'S WHO OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT 1886-1918. Vol II. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978.

STENTON, MICHAEL and LEES — AS ABOVE, VOLUME III. 1919-1943.

SWENARTON, MARK — HOMES FIT FOR HEROES . London: Heinemans Educational Books, 1981.

SYMONS, JULIAN — THE GENERAL STRIKE. London: Cressat Press, 1959.

THANE, PATRICIA (Ed.) ORIGINS OF SOCIAL POLICY, London: Croom Helm.

TURNBULL, LES. CHOPWELL'S STORY. Gateshead: Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council.

VICINUS, MARTHA. BROADSIDES OF THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, I975.

WANSBECK COUNCIL WANSBECK COMMUNITY PLAN. Published for Wansbeck District Council, I977.

WARN, C,R. RAILWAYS OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND COALFIELD. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, I976.

WHELLAN, WILLIAM and COMPANY NORTHUMBERLAND HISTORY, TOPOGRAPHY AND DIRECTORY. I855. London: Whittaker and Company.

WILLIAMS, GWYN A. PROLETARIAN ORDER. London; Pluto Press, I975.

WILSON, JOHN MEMORIES OF A LABOUR LEADER. (First Published I9I0) Celiban Books, I980.

ZWEIG, F. MEN IN THE HTS. London: Victor Gollancz, I949.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Blyth News and Wansbeck Telegraph.

Morpeth Herald.

The Ashington Collieries Magazine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED WORKS (cont)

WILLIAMSON, BILL — CLASS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY , London: Routledge and Kegan, I982.

COLLS, R. — "THE COLLIER'S RANT.SONG AND CULTURE IN THE INDUSTRIAL VILLAGE." London: Croom Helm, I977.

BULMER,M. — 'MINING AND SOCIAL CHANGE.' London: Croom Helm, I978.

PUGH, D.S. — ORGANIZATION THEORY, Harmondsworth,England: Penguin Book. I977.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Ashington Coal Company. Prospectus I912. (Newcastle Central Library.

Rules of the Ashington Coal Company Ltd. Superannuation Society. (Newcastle Central Library.)

Ashington Miner's Union: Minutes; Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts included in Minutes.

Ashington Urban District Council Minutes I927-I940.

Board of Guardians. Morpeth Union. Accounts Ledger I923-I930. (N.C.R.O. Ref.GMO/I,".)

Medical Officer of Health Reports.

Northumberland Miners Mutual Confident Association Minutes.

GORDON, A. (Thesis) The Economic and Social Development of Ashington: A Study of a Coal Mining Community., M.Com. thesis Durham University Kings College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I954. Ashington Library.

HALL, VALERIE A. (Thesis) The English Coal Mining Industry I890-I9I4. M.A. thesis University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I978.

NICHOL,R.B. (thesis) Colliery Housing in Ashington and South East Northumberland. I848-I926. B.A.dissertation in Architectural Studies, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I980.

PURDUE,A.W. (thesis) Parliamentary Elections in North East England I900-I906. M.Lit.thesis Newcastle-upon-Tyne University.

SEELEY, J.Y.E. Coalmining Villages of Northumberland and Durham: A Study of Sanitary and Social Conditions, I870-I880., M.A. thesis University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I973.