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ABSTRACT

The basic intention of this thesis is to understand the Jarrow March in terms of the context from which it sprang. That context is the system of meaning which prevailed in the entity known as Jarrow. This system of meaning - or more precisely systems of meaning - are held to inform the thoughts, attitudes and actions of the actors who operate within them. In total such systems are known as the cultural system. The cultural system which is being considered here is the one which relates to Jarrow in the inter-war period.

The basic data-gathering techniques used to assemble information for the reconstruction of this system were the personal interviews with informants living during the period. Supplementary material used to illuminate the system was garnered from contemporary documents, such as newspapers, and from secondary works.

The thesis is divided into two sections. In the first, the cultural system of Jarrow is described. This involves firstly an exploration into the history of modern Jarrow from its founding in 1852 by Charles Mark Palmer. The economic, social and political effects of his impact on the town are examined. Specific attention is paid here to the importance of the shipbuilding industry on which Jarrow's livelihood depended. The effects of the large-scale immigration to the town are considered with special reference to the Irish Catholic group which established itself in the town. Finally, the changing modes of political consciousness in the town's history are studied with particular regard to the rise of the Jarrow Labour Party. Here the significance of the winning of the Catholic vote is considered.

The second section considers the Jarrow March itself. As

an introduction, the causes of the Jarrow March are examined. A narrative account of the march's history is then provided as a background to the succeeding discussion of the cultural themes prevalent in the march. Finally, the relationship between attitudes derived from the cultural system and opinions about the march is shown.

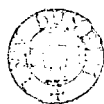
THE JARROW MARCH OF 1936:
THE SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION OF PROTEST

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Abbreviations commonly used in this thesis

D.R.O.:	Durham Records Office
J.M.R.:	Jarrow March Reminiscences
M.T.N.G.:	Mid-Tyne News and Gossip
S.S.G.:	South Shields Gazette
T.W.R.O.:	Tyne and Wear Records Office

Introduction

1. A Personal Anthropology

In this section I want to describe the relationship between myself and the subject of my study - Jarrow. I consider this of primary importance since Jarrow was my birthplace and was for many years my home. It is the relationship alone that I will elucidate. The account provided here will not describe the totality of my beliefs and attitudes, just that part of it - an understanding of which is significant to this thesis.

The first twelve years of my life were spent entirely within the community of Jarrow. I was the eldest of three children. I have two sisters, five and ten years younger. Our home was a council house on an estate built in the immediate post-war years. For the next seven years, I continued my education at a direct grant school in Newcastle, travelling daily out of the town. Thus the process of separation from my early life began. It was continued when I took a course in history at Manchester University. After acquiring my degree, I returned home to Jarrow with every intention of finding employment and settling down there. A year of unemployment, a dissatisfaction with my social relationships and a realization that I could not simply return to an environment I had left ten years previously, led me to a summer job outside the town in 1971. This departure, which I had viewed as a breathing-space, was the beginning of a long separation from Jarrow and the North. This 'temporary' separation lasted until 1979, when I returned to the North to live, though now my home is in Durham.



This outline represents the form of my biography. It is the content which is most significant in appreciating the distance between myself and Jarrow. The daily journey to my Newcastle school which involved a twenty-mile round trip was the basis of my exclusion from the world of adolescent relations in Jarrow. This spatial movement was reinforced by the fact that I attended a direct grant school where the attitudes and values were predominantly middle-class. I was now in an environment where my class characteristics made me distinct. Here I am talking about a simple association on the basis of employment. My father was a shipyard worker - a plater. Many of my school contemporaries were the children of parents who belonged to the clerical or professional classes. My working-class status in an environment of middle-class children often involved me in conflict during my teenage years. The source of conflict was my own insecurity as much as the insensitivity I felt was shown to me sometimes. There were other working-class children at the school, but somehow they never seemed to experience or arouse the antagonisms that I did.

Nevertheless, my seven-year sojourn at this establishment was, on the whole, enjoyable. It was a school devoted to academic principles and I am an academically-minded person, so between the staff and myself there was little discord. It is this academic-mindedness, which receives its highest exemplification in my past and present attendance at university, that caused problems for me when I returned to Jarrow at the end of my degree course. Further education in that community is seen as something to be pursued for its instrumental benefits in the field of employment. Knowledge is not to be acquired for its own sake, but in order to obtain a qualification likely to lead to a better job. My inability, or unwillingness

to find work when I had a degree qualification compounded the difficulties of my re-socialization. These difficulties led me to the London road.

The social environment in which I participated in London differed sharply from that of the idealized or normative experience of Jarrow. Group membership within the social field was purely voluntary. Few of my friends were born in the area or spent their childhood and early adolescent years there. Most were expatriates from non-London backgrounds. Many of the group members were linked by the fact that they had attended the same teachers' training college in the area. While this provided a cause of solidarity - i.e. that members followed the same profession - this factor can only be partially likened to the situation in Jarrow. While members (male and female) may have been teachers as men in Jarrow were platers, caulkers, riveters - the possibility of work-place association was limited. Unlike the skilled men of Jarrow, few members of the London group shared a work-place.

A further contrast with the Jarrow environment was the almost total lack of preceding or succeeding generations. Few members of the group had children. Grandparents were absent from the group altogether. Parents appeared as 'visitors' occasionally. The group was essentially one-generational - since the absence of those kinship links meant that few people of other generations played a major part in its activities.

More importantly, however, the absence of kinship links meant social relationships were determined in a significantly different fashion. Whereas, in Jarrow, relationships between parents and children, between siblings, between collateral relatives were ascribed by the cultural system and provided the core of desirable modes of behaviour within it, in my

London environment, the main prescription for relationships was on a person-to-person basis. Relationships within the group were achieved rather than ascribed. Thus group members were not fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. to other members - they were essentially individuals. Hence relationships were ideally supposed to develop on a one-to-one basis. While this observation applies generally to the collective nature of the group, certain ascribed attitudes played an important role in determining behaviour, e.g. gender relationships. Here, ideology determined which gender drank what drinks and who paid for them - though this was much more loosely applied than in Jarrow. Male and female relationships between individuals followed a standard ideology - though there were notable exceptions to this pattern.

To sum up, it can be seen that the environment where I spent some eight years of my life differed markedly from that of Jarrow. Kinship obligations, important in Jarrow, were external to the group and had little significance in informing individual behaviour. Similarly work-place associations and, less so, associations by occupation were more marginal in determining modes of behaviour than in Jarrow. Association by choice was a significant feature of such groups. One group was constituted of people who had been contemporaries at the same teachers' training college. Others, who had also attended that college, though they drank in the same public house, did not consider themselves a part of it. One interesting feature of this group of teachers was that they were trained in a Catholic college. Religious affiliation did not, however, create a group identity which was exclusive as it does in Jarrow.

What is being stressed here is that to a large extent the characteristics of group identity which were imperative in Jarrow were not so in my London environment. Thus kinship obligation, work-place association, religious affiliation, lacked the ascribed value they had in Jarrow. Only occupation and uniquely the teaching profession, had some prescriptive quality in determining the behaviour of individuals.

This abbreviated account of my social experience outside Jarrow is intended to draw attention to the cultural clash which seems relevant here. Like Hoggart, I would place myself at 'the friction point of two cultures' (1957; p.292). In the early years, a working-class boy in a middle-class school; at university a student from a working-class home - processed in a middle-class school,' finding himself for the first time in an an extra-mural set of social relations for which he had no experience'. London, of course, provided the environment in which that experience was refined and honed in order to cope with the new world I find myself in.

To a large extent this thesis will be an exposition of the culture in which I was born. More precisely, it is the culture which shaped and conditioned the attitudes of my parents' generation. A substantial part of that cultural system of fifty years ago holds true in Jarrow today. It is a culture of which I might have been a part. I no longer consider myself a part of it though my roots are there. I am, to a greater or lesser degree, socially adept in the alternative culture to which the process of separation has led me.

I have stressed the cultural difference between the world which I inhabit now and the world which I once inhabited to make a valid point for this thesis. Normally, a social anthropologist (as I am by training), is aware of a cultural difference simply because he or she leaves their own society

to do fieldwork in another country. This spatial movement of itself implies an exit from one culture and the entry into another. One's own culture is assumed homogeneous in relation to the alien culture. As my own experience demonstrates, there is considerable variation in the domestic culture. It would seem appropriate to explain that disparity by class membership as determined by the labour process alone. That, as the thesis will show, is an inadequate explanation. The working-class of Jarrow are by no means an homogeneous group. What is important to note here is that I am an outsider, a member of a different culture, though I am studying a town whose environment had a formative influence in my life.¹

The distance between myself and the community of Jarrow probably explains my interest in the history of the town. As one of my sisters commented to me - she had lived all her life in the town but had never felt motivated to engage in research into its past, whereas I, who had left it some twenty years ago was so motivated. The act of separation was not itself sufficient reason to account for my behaviour. Had I returned

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1. No more accurate expression of the distance between myself and my natal environment can be found than in a conversation I had with a man I met in a club in Jarrow two years ago. After we had talked for a few minutes he asked me where I came from. I told him that I came from Jarrow. He thought a while and then said "Aye, you've got the accent but the patter's different".

'Patter' is a term used to refer to a way of talking - more anthropologically - a mode of discourse. The implications of this comment were that I talked in a manner which was alien to the norm in Jarrow. Thus it is not directly a reference to subject matter, but more often a reference to the manner of expression.

and lived in Jarrow, I might have become a local historian in my spare time. Every local community has its own historian. Leaving the environment of Jarrow is an inadequate explanation for my wish to study the town. What the two cultures perspective does explain is the manner in which I have undertaken such study. As a local historian, enmeshed in the fabric of the town, pursuing my interest as a hobby, the product would have been markedly different from what is presented here. It is the culture to which I belong which determines the overall framework of my approach. My desire is to understand how people operate, interact, and construct meaning for themselves. What were the springs of human action in Jarrow? This thesis is an attempt to answer that question in relation to a specific event in the history of the town - the Jarrow Crusade.

2. Research Objectives

The personal anthropology outlined in the previous section is intended to describe the framework in which I operate as observer and interpreter in relation to Jarrow. In this section I want to consider specific reasons for the choice of the Jarrow March as a subject of study and suggest ways in which such study may be useful in increasing understanding of the nature of protest.

At the most immediate level, the Jarrow March is to be studied because it is remembered as being 'the most emotive symbol of the 1930s' (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.184). As a symbol, the Jarrow March evokes images of a decade considered by critics to be 'a period of missed opportunities and wasted time' as early as the outbreak of the Second World War (op. cit; p.3). 'The Slump' - a term frequently used to describe the

period, epitomizes a notion of the falling away of economic and moral pride. In the folk history view of the 1930s, the era is characterized by mass unemployment, overcrowded housing, bad sanitation, malnutrition, poverty and the Means Test. The institution of a means test, which 'involved an intrusion into the houses of the unemployed', became the ultimate symbol of administrative meanness (op. cit; p.68).

The seal of shame is set upon the image of the 'hungry thirties' by the fact that these difficulties and problems were confined to particular areas of the country - the Distressed Areas. For most of the 1930s, the majority of the population outside them were unaware of these conditions. Indeed, the Jarrow March was instrumental in disseminating information about the areas of heavy unemployment. It is this concept of the 1930s as a time when two nations co-existed within one society - one privileged, the other not - from which later impressions of the period are derived.

The images evoked by the Jarrow March define the under-privileged nation, the source of national shame: harassed mothers surviving in impossible circumstances trying to raise families of children who could not be properly clothed, properly fed, or given shoes to wear; and men idling the years away on street corners, socially redundant for want of work. Sovereign over this nation was an unkind, uncaring government which seemed more concerned to balance the books of the national economy than to respond in a humanitarian fashion and improve the conditions in which millions of people lived.

While the Jarrow March was the event which brought home to many contemporaries the existence of an under-privileged nation, the 1930s as a whole was characterized by the realization that the pre-war imperial idyll could never be restored. The national crisis of the 1920s, which was fostered by the doubt

and disillusion following the Great War, by the failure of the staple industries of shipbuilding, steel, and coal-mining to recover their pre-eminent position, was swamped by the world crisis of the 1930s. The fact that the Wall Street crash of 1929 could have such devastating effects on the British economy was a clear indication of how ineffective an economic power the country had become. The splendid isolation, the facility to be immune to the vicissitudes of the world economy was finally shown to be false in the 1930s. The underlying premise of government policy in the 1920s had been that the pre-war situation could be restored and the imperial eminence regained. Attempts to restore wage rates to the pre-war levels, particularly in the coal-mining industry, and the restoration of the Gold Standard typified this attitude in the business sphere. When the crisis of the 1930s came, it brought with it the realization that the 'Golden Age' could never return. Thus the shame of the thirties began with the comprehension that the war had swept away the imperial grandeur of the past. This was 'the Slump', whose economic effects were reinforced by the shameful discovery that only one section of society - the Distressed Areas - bore the brunt of the decline. (For a detailed account of the 1920s from this perspective see Branson: 1975).

In this context, the power of the Jarrow March is more easily understood. The marchers began with the intention of stating Jarrow's case - the plight of Jarrow - and ended up creating an artefact which has come to be representative of a whole decade - an archetype of misery and depression. Their contribution was to the perception of the 1930s ^{as} - a decade of waste and lost opportunity - by becoming an example of conditions in the Distressed Areas. In turn, the situation of the Distressed Areas has become representative of the 1930s. Other more positive perspectives can be presented. The 1930s

can be seen as the decade which laid the foundations for the welfare state, whose new industries provided the backbone of the industrial prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s.¹ Whatever the validity of such assertions, the experience of people who lived in the Distressed Areas can not be denied and the fact remains that the 1930s were a blot on the social and industrial landscape.

What will be considered in this assessment of the Jarrow March is how and why it became representative of that period of our history. A useful way of measuring the success of the Jarrow March is by comparison with the marches of the unemployed organized by the National Unemployed Workers Movement (N.U.W.M.). These achieved very little and are largely unremembered in the popular consciousness. While mention of the Jarrow March is the key to a storehouse of images which exemplify the 1930s, all that remains of the N.U.W.M. marches is the epithet 'hunger march' - a term frequently used to describe the Jarrow March.²

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1. This is, in fact, the *raison d'être* behind Stevenson and Cook's work from which this observation was taken. I myself would question the extent to which unemployment can be held accountable for the conditions of misery which are often used to exemplify the 1930s. I do not take this position with the intention of countering the arguments of the Jarrow March and others. My point is that, with or without the economic collapse of the 1930s, the same conditions of sanitation, housing, and poverty would still have prevailed. In this sense, my criticism would be directed against the system as a whole - not simply its malfunction which the 1930s is so often held to characterize. My arguments for this view (i.e. that unemployment was not the sole cause of poverty) derive from wide reading but are adequately summarised in Branson (1975) Ch. iv, and Stevenson and Cook (1977) Ch. v.
 2. It is not only in the folk memory that the term 'hunger march' is applied to the Jarrow March. Academic historians, who should know better, use the term in this way. (e.g. Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p. 184 and Beynon and Hutchinson: 1980; p.42).

I do not feel that the achievement of the Jarrow Marchers in securing for themselves this place in popular folklore is simply a consequence of the fact that they followed the rules and 'conducted their march in cooperation with the authorities and did not seek to challenge them' (Stevenson and Cook, 1977; p.188). Nor is it enough to link this assertion with their comment that Ellen Wilkinson had 'a great flair for publicity'.³

While these observations of Stevenson and Cook are indicative of important elements in the Jarrow March, they are superficial and not conclusive. The rules to which the Jarrow Marchers adhered were not merely directions for marching troops through the towns and villages of this country. Their cooperative attitude was not simply a question of not offending the civil and police authorities. The ability to capitalize on the publicity value of the march was not confined to Wilkinson alone. This compliment could be paid to all of the march organizers. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated in this thesis that while the marchers did not attempt to overthrow or overturn the authorities, their demonstration was a significant challenge to the validity of government policy. In doing so, the marchers were able to secure for themselves a place in the folklore of our society comparable with that occupied by the General Strike, Dunkirk, and the wartime Blitz of London.

3. This is the view taken by Stevenson and Cook. To be fair, the authors are as concerned with Wilkinson's book in relation to the long-term remembrance of the Jarrow March. Nevertheless they do emphasize her flair for publicity in connection with the success of the march (i.e. in terms of the response it aroused in people at the time).

The limited nature of Stevenson and Cook's comments is perhaps best understood by appreciating the atmosphere in which the march began. Local newspapers were generally critical of the venture. The editorial column of the Newcastle Journal on the day the march began typified these attitudes:

'We have no liking for this effort. At the present season it involves a risk to those taking part that might have been avoided. Depression has⁴ hit Jarrow harder than most places but this is not the answer'.

Criticism also came from the Church. Though the march began with an inter-denominational service in Christ Church, Jarrow led by the Suffragan Bishop Gordon of Jarrow, his superior Henley Henson, Bishop of Durham, was critical. He admonished Bishop Gordon and in a letter to the Times wrote:

'The policy of marches is revolutionary policy. It involves substituting for the provisions of the Constitution the method of organized mob pressure. If generally adopted, it may bring us before the winter is out into grave public confusion and danger ' (quoted in Wilkinson: 1939; pp.200-201).

No support was forthcoming from either the Trades Union Council or the Labour Party, despite an outstanding speech from Ellen Wilkinson to the Edinburgh Labour Party Conference of 1936, held during the first week of the march (Vernon: 1980; pp.142-3). The leaders of the Labour movement preferred to align themselves with the National Government who warned the marchers that they (the Government) had:

'.....decided that encouragement cannot be given to ... marchers whatever their particular purpose, and ministers cannot consent to receive any deputation of marchers ...' (Quoted in Stevenson and Cook: 1977; pp.142-143).

4. October 5th, 1930: 'The present season' is presumably a reference to the fact that the march was being undertaken in October, i.e. autumn.

The editorial, while not supporting the march, recognized the validity of the cause by continuing: '...it can only be hoped that the appeal they bear will receive the consideration it undoubtedly deserves.'

From many viewpoints, the Jarrow Marchers were seen as moving into an area of ambiguous and potentially dangerous action. Much opinion with regard to the march was determined at its outset by prevailing attitudes towards the Hunger Marches of the N.U.W.M. - seen by many observers and much public opinion as dangerous and threatening to the established order. The leader of the N.U.W.M., Wal Hannington, was himself a member of the Communist Party and under great pressure from that organization to create a revolutionary mass movement over the issue of unemployment.⁵

Ellen Wilkinson herself was already located in this potentially dangerous area. She was identified as a member of the extreme left wing of the Labour Party. Winston Churchill, who included her in the wartime coalition government told Harold MacMillan 'that he had formed the widest based government ever based in Britain' - stretching from Lord Lloyd of Dolobran on the right to Ellen Wilkinson on the left. (quoted in Vernon: 1982; p.184). Contrary to official Labour Party policy she supported the N.U.W.M. demonstrations, being a member of the London reception committee for the hunger march of October - November 1936 (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.186). Earlier she had consulted Hannington with regard to the organization of the Jarrow March. She conveyed his proposal that the Jarrow Marchers join the 1936 hunger march to the Town Council and backed it with her own recommendation. The Council preferred an independent line, fearing that association with the N.U.W.M. would be harmful to their cause (Vernon: 1982; p.142).

5. No full length study of the N.U.W.M. has so far appeared. Hannington's own books provide the only accounts of the whole movement. The comments in this book are taken from Stevenson and Cook (1977) Chs. ix-x.

The extent to which the march was (and is) an event which can be located in the area of subversion is summarized in the opinion of an informant, Nick Farrington.⁶ Though generally critical of the march, he admired the marchers for their courage. 'After all,' he said, 'it was the only town to take on the government.'

What is clear from this is that, at the outset, the success of the Jarrow March - in the sense that it would find a place in the folk history of the country - was not assumed. That it would be remembered at all was not certain. Dave Hankey, recalling the beginning of the march stressed that when it began it was only one of a series of events that had been going on to find work e.g. deputations to ministers, questions in Parliament, petitions - none seemingly more significant than any other.

The view of the Jarrow Marchers as rule-keepers, rather than rule-breakers only hints at the success of the march. While it will be shown that much of the presentation of the march was reflective of the standards and values present in the society at the time, merely staging the march was tantamount to alignment with the N.U.W.M. and was thus considered as a threat to the established order. Of course, by the time the march reached London, much of the negative characterization of the marchers had been shed. Its impact

6. Names of informants whom I interviewed have been changed following the anthropological convention of maintaining confidentiality. The surnames used were selected from the Durham and District telephone directory. Christian names were selected from my own memory.

These comments apply only to interviewees I contacted during my research. March leaders and organizers are referred to by their real names.

was not enough, however, to persuade the government to provide work for Jarrow and hence enable the march to fulfill its main objective.

On the journey from Jarrow to London, the march was able to affect a change in its own status which removed it from the area of association with the N.U.W.M. marches. To do that, it created its own audience which gave wide-ranging support and in the words of Paddy Scullion, a march leader, 'it made marches respectable'.

What provided the clues to the understanding of this transformation was the testimony of informants. All, even critics, comment on the disciplined and organized nature of this march. Comparisons were often made with present-day marches which are characterized as disorganized, disordered carnivals accompanied by unnecessary noise - the latter a regular criticism of many manifestations of life in the last quarter of the twentieth-century.

To organize, to discipline, implies the rejection of negative modes of behaviour which would prejudice the opinions of observers and to emphasize positive modes of behaviour likely to further the aims of the venture. Thus the Jarrow March emphasized its non-political character in order to stress its claims to represent the whole town. This decision was taken initially to avoid criticism that the Jarrow Marchers represented only one section of the townspeople, or that the march was organized to further the political ends of one group - i.e. the Labour Party of that the Jarrow March could be likened to the modes of extremist groups such as the N.U.W.M. and the British Union of Fascists (B.U.F.).

While this non-political stance was important to the success of the Jarrow March (and the implications of it will be analysed more fully later), it was only one of a number

of factors significant in the organization of the march. The march was a vehicle created and used to project Jarrow's case. This thesis will examine the construction of this vehicle - the materials and the design - i.e. the manner in which the materials were assembled to create the finished product.

It is the source of the raw materials which is of great significance. That, of course, was the town of Jarrow itself - the cultural context from which the march sprang. The concept of culture adhered to in this analysis is that used by Geertz which:

'.....denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.' (1975; p.89).

The cultural system defined by Geertz can be considered as a treasure-house of ideological constructs. For a particular society, certain highly-valued constructs are chosen and emphasized. Thus, it is possible to find correct modes of behaviour for men, women and children within every cultural system. It is possible to find definitions of human nature; an explanation for the origins of society and justifications for the present structure of society. As will be shown presently, the cultural system is not homogeneous in all its parts. While such artefacts as family may be prized by all members within it, religious affiliations or political viewpoints may often create dissension and division. While all the members of a cultural system attempt to reproduce and refine the elements of the system which they value, the system is by no means constant over time. Events such as the Industrial Revolution make major contributions to the contents of a cultural system which entails a re-alignment of the relationships which constitute it. On the other hand, the system itself can

generate change. Bertaux-Wiaume's observation that social investigation is not the prerogative of social scientists alone is worth remembering. Her assertion that:

'Everyone is investigating all the time. But the results of these 'investigations' are not construed into ideas, concepts or discussions: they materialize, as acts' (1981: p.32).

provides an awareness that the multitudinous small acts of individuals are a source of social change. One clear-cut example of this, cited by informants, was in relation to the position of women. A working mother was held to be detrimental to the moral welfare of the family. Her absence from the home was the key element in criticism. It led, according to critics, to a breakdown of correct rules of behaviour for children, since an absent mother could not socialize her children properly. The issue of parental control is, of course, a much-debated one and this is not the place to enter into it. What is significant is that for a large number of women, womanhood is no longer equated solely with motherhood i.e. the relationship between a woman and her children does not have the paramount importance it did (or it was said to have done) fifty years ago. A woman might work for material gain or for job satisfaction, or simply to 'get out of the house'. Whether it is one or all of these reasons, what is important is that the concept of womanhood is different - a new emphasis on self-realization as a contributor to the household budget, or as a career mother is now, in some quarters at least, on a par with self-realization for women as mothers.

What this illustrates is that a cultural system is not fixed and unchanging. While external events such as the Industrial Revolution may provide new materials for it, and hence change its contents, there is scope for change derived from within the system. Individuals are constantly raiding this ideological treasure chest in order to structure the

world which they inhabit. This raiding may produce a structure which is highly personalized and idiosyncratic so that the limit of its effectiveness is one individual or those close by. Frequently such structures generally reflect the ideological structure prevalent within the system. More rarely the structures are developed in opposition to the dominant ideology. What is important to realize is that all structures and anti-structures are derived from ideological material which constitutes the cultural system. The development of the Palmer shipbuilding enterprise in Jarrow originated largely from a source external to the town, but the ideological images it created about work, its format, its organization, were incorporated in the cultural system. The presence of a large Irish minority in the town from its early days, combined with the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy which effectively prevented the dissolution of a group identity, were significant contributions to the ideological storehouse. On the other hand, the immiseration of Jarrow's working-classes in the inter-war period did not generate a revolutionary proletariat along the lines desired by the Communist Party. This is not to say, that Marxist political philosophy was entirely absent from the cultural system. As will be shown, the notion of dialectical class conflict is significant in understanding the Jarrow March. What was not achieved, was the building of such elements to develop a Marxist class consciousness. This comment is not intended to be critical of either marchers or organizers, since for many involved in the Jarrow March, their act represented a direct challenge to the government. Certainly in the early days of planning for the march, there were plans to create a working-class movement to further Jarrow's case.

It is the cultural system of Jarrow which provides the basis for an understanding of the march and its success. The first task of this thesis will be therefore to explore and examine the historical and social dimensions of that system. The march itself will then be examined in order to elucidate its use of the ideological symbols derived from the Jarrow cultural system. Finally, post-march opinion in Jarrow will be considered within the context of this cultural symbolism.

This study of the Jarrow March as a unique event in the history of the town is undertaken primarily to understand that cultural system. As a controversial event in the town's history, opinions and attitudes cluster more sharply than could otherwise be expected. The Jarrow March provides a key to comprehending the cultural system. Since the march as an event was a product of that system, it should also provide a means of understanding why this demonstration was more successful than others of the day. That is, if the success of the march is determined by its achievement in securing for itself a place in the popular consciousness. Though this thesis is not the place to attempt a comprehensive evaluation, it may be possible then to understand more clearly how protest demonstrations are mounted to achieve maximum effectiveness.

3. Research Methods and Problems

The research for this thesis was conducted over a twelve-month period. Of this, approximately four months were spent in Jarrow itself collecting data. While the core of this thesis is oral data, part of the time was spent consulting materials held in the Local History Unit of the South Tyneside Library Service in South Shields. Use was also made of materials held in Tyne-Wear Records Office, Newcastle Central Library and

Durham Records Office. In addition, secondary sources located in Durham University Library were also utilized.

(i) Historians and the 1930s

One of the difficulties of researching events in the 1930s, is the general lack of interpretive material for the inter-war period as a whole. The works by Mowatt (1955) and Taylor (1965) remain the most significant accounts of the period. One reason for this may be because of the events such as the Jarrow March which have come to stamp their character on interpretations of the period. Another reason may be because many university courses up to the 1960s asserted that history ended in 1914 (H.W.J. p.7). Such premises were inhibiting in relation to the future study of the period. On the other hand, the development of oral history techniques, the growth of facilities such as film, radio, etc., have concentrated emphasis on the experiential. Consequently, the tendency of research has been to construct a fragmented picture of the recent past.

The lack of works devoted to the presentation of an overall picture is matched by specific omissions in the historiography of the period. While much attention has been paid to the Labour Party and particularly to the 'betrayal' of Ramsay MacDonald in 1931, no studies of the decline of the Liberal Party or of the history of the Conservative Party have been produced. (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.7). The latter is most remarkable since the Conservatives were in office for all but three years in the inter-war period - either in their own right or as majority partners in a coalition. Nor is there a satisfactory account of the shipbuilding industry. Pollard (1951) provides a detailed economic history of the industry for the period 1870 to 1914. Dougan's study (1968) of North-East shipbuilding is an

unsatisfactory account which concentrates on an institutional history of the industry by firms. What is lacking here is a detailed study of the social relations which occur and operate under the aegis of the shipbuilding industry - especially in company towns such as Jarrow. In addition the period as a whole requires a study of the prevailing cultural system in British society. The inter-war period saw the growth of a new consciousness, the most significant manifestation of which was the rise of the Labour Party. For the most part, historians have been prepared to document this from the perspective of the Labour Party and its affiliated organizations. No detailed consideration has been given of the dominant ideology, its roots, its manifestations etc. from an interior perspective. Then it would be possible to understand the nature of the changes which occurred in the inter-war period and to appreciate the substantive content of Labour Party ideology.

The scope of local history is also limited. To begin with, most local history tends to be of a descriptive nature. It rarely adopts an analytical character that transcends popular folklore. Often it is a retelling of old tales - told to bolster civic pride. While such data can be useful to the academic historian, it is often incomplete since it is frequently the history of institutions such as municipal corporations, churches, eminent local firms or prominent individuals. It is rarely social history. Furthermore, few of the Tyneside towns and cities have had historical works of even a descriptive character produced on their behalf.

The major historical source book for Jarrow is Wilkinson's The Town That Was Murdered. It has remained so in the forty years since its initial publication. As Wilkinson herself admits, it is not a complete history of the town (1939; p.8). It has, however, been extensively used to provide factual data

about the history of Jarrow, particularly in relation to the growth of the town. This will be its main use in this thesis also.

The limited historiography for the period as a whole and the town in particular has meant that a considerable emphasis has been placed on the qualification and evaluation of oral data. The next section will explain some of the problems associated with that.

(ii) Oral Data: Some Comments

One of the more marked features of works on the Jarrow March is that the tendency has been to focus on aggregate problems - e.g. rates of unemployment, housing conditions, health statistics. This is in keeping with the concept of the 1930s as outlined in Section 2 above. Thus the cultural product which the Jarrow March helped to manufacture becomes an instrument through which the town's history is studied.

When data relating to individuals is presented it is submitted as an illustration to the main tenets. Thus Dougan recounts the situation of Edward Fitzpatrick, a Jarrow Marcher:

'He was 26 and a general labourer. He had had numerous jobs and some periods of unemployment, but never for more than a few months.His wife was dead and he had two young daughters to bring up as best he could on unemployment benefit, or, when he was in work, on wages which were little better than benefit.' (1976; p.28).

Testimony such as this, thus merely adds supportive comment to a pre-determined set of ideas about the Jarrow March. Oral witnesses to the event are often the march leaders, whose testimony sustains the accepted tenets of the march so that they too come to be viewed through that instrument which they helped to create.

A more subtle use of oral testimony is suggested by Francis. By using oral testimony, the listener gains access to secret, unchronicled worlds which a purely documentary history would neglect. Oral testimony when used thus becomes a corrective - allowing the historian to have a more complete picture:

'To understand coalfield society we must not only scrutinise Hunger Marching Tonypandy miners but also Mardy girls in service in Croydon in the 1920s' (Francis: 1980; p.169).

This use of oral data is indicative of a determination to present a more accurate history of particular events. The intention is to reveal hidden areas of experience and knowledge which a history derived from documentary sources will not show. What oral historians are concerned to show are the facts - the facts of class experience, of class consciousness, of nationality, of domestic service. Oral data is used therefore to elucidate a previously hidden area of social facts. The use of oral data in this thesis will take a different form. It will be a major contribution to the construction of the cultural system of Jarrow in the inter-war period. Oral testimony here will be treated as data which illuminates particular locations within the cultural system. Using life-history, experiential data, the intention will be to determine the factors which helped to generate the opinions, attitudes and values of a particular informant. Such factors as social class, religion or position in the labour process will be seen to be highly significant factors here. The 'facts' that informants present are considered, therefore, as reflective of their location within the cultural system. It is a fact, for example, that the Jarrow March failed to achieve its major objective of forcing the government to intervene in the steelworks controversy and hence provide work for Jarrow. Opinions about the character of the marchers -

whether they were honest, decent hardworking men (as the march described them) or 'scroungers', people with no commitment who 'joined on a bandwagon' - represent a different kind of 'fact'. It is 'fact' determined by locations within the cultural system - i.e. cultural fact.

The cultural facts collected during the course of this research provide the brickwork of the system. To achieve order and coherence, the cultural facts have to be assembled within a structural form. The statements of informants - the cultural facts - point to a pattern of meaning which for the informant assembles and arranges the facts. As noted earlier, informants do not express this pattern in terms of concepts and theories but rather through the agency of their acts. For example, almost all of the informants were or had been married and raised families. They often related their opinions about the 1930s to the situation of their family, thus indicating - though rarely explicitly - the value they set upon the family ideal.

The cultural system will be constructed by sifting through the oral data to establish the constituent elements which are significant to informants. The product will not be a monolithic structure - determined solely, say, by the structure of the labour process or by religious affiliation. There were, in fact, several intersecting structures which informed individual behaviour in Jarrow. Some were more indicative of the dominant ideology. Others, such as that of the Labour Party, began as subordinate ideologies, but were able to assume a dominant role eventually. Likewise, Catholicism in 1919 was associated with the dominant ideology of the Moderate/Liberal council but by 1939, it had become identified with the Labour Party. Furthermore, it will become clear that in many ways, the relationship implied by the dominant-subordinate dichotomy

does not entail a definite distinction of ideological attitudes. Thus the Labour Party in 1935 captured a company town. This did not mean that Jarrow ceased to be a 'Palmerstown'. In fact, the company town ideology continued to inform the actions of the Labour Party as it developed the vehicle of the Jarrow March.

(iii) Oral Data: Sources

In all, nineteen people were interviewed formally. Most of these interviews were conducted in the informant's own home using a tape recorder. The basic format of the interviews was to ask informants to describe their life history and to question them further on what seemed relevant points. As the amount of interview data began to accumulate, certain issues became significant and were examined in more detail. Where possible, informants were visited a second time to permit a fuller explication of points.

Since the intention of this research is to uncover patterns of meaning within the cultural system of Jarrow, the emphasis of the interviews was on discerning attitude and opinion - whether it be work, politics, family or the march itself. The age range of informants was sufficient to encompass those who were parents with families at the beginning of the period, and those for whom the period was a time of transition into adulthood. In addition, one informant born in the post-war era, was interviewed to establish the nature of post-march opinion from the perspective of a junior generation. The majority of informants were male (10 out of 19) and included two marchers. Female informants included a councillor and a further tape was made of two women who were wives of marchers.

In addition to the tape recordings which I made, I have

had access to a number of recordings made in 1972 and 1973. These recordings - the 'Jarrow March Reminiscences' - were interviews made with the leaders and organizers of the march and with others involved in staging it - in all five informants. The perspective of the interviewers was simply to find out what happened on the march, i.e. to examine the immediate causes rather than attempt to determine the cultural system from which it came.

The number of informants may seem limited, but their qualitative value is refined by two other factors. Firstly, the time spent in Jarrow conducting research amounted to over four months. Additional data was gathered from conversations in pubs and clubs - much of which served to reinforce and clarify the opinions of informants. Secondly, since I was born in Jarrow and have had a long association with the town, I consider myself as an informant. As an exemplar of the cultural system, it is apparent that I must retain a considerable amount of information about the past and present system of cultural relations in the town. One of the problems I encounter when handling the data that I have at my disposal is that a great deal of it was known to me in advance e.g. Catholic-Protestant hostility, criticisms directed towards the march leaders. The perspective I adopted to cope with this is that outlined in the personal anthropology above - that of the experience of cultural divergence which I have used to isolate data peculiar to Jarrow alone.

In this way, the research I have undertaken has been concerned with delving into my own history. As Douglass points out (in relation to mining communities):

'We have a kind of collective memory in which the historical event or process once absorbed is passed through generations.' Samuels: 1981: p.65).

Tales of the depression, of the Means Test, of shipyards,

of family squabbles, of religious hostility, of 'bad times' were part of my legacy from the past through parents, grandparents and family friends. The process of data collection attuned me yet again to the collective memory of Jarrow.

Of course, Jarrow is not a mining community and has not been since 1850. Nor do I come from a politically active family where the 1930s could be set in the same terms as Douglass describes for the General Strike. This, in fact, locates my childhood experience within the cultural system: My maternal grandparents were critics of the march - believing it to be a shameful display of poverty. My maternal grandfather was qualified by virtue of long unemployment to volunteer for the march. His wife, a life-long Conservative supporter, had the say in the matter and he did not go. My paternal grandfather also had the opportunity to volunteer but did not. Thus it seems to me that the representations of the past that I received as a child would not be supportive of the march. Thus the system of transmitted meanings in which I was enmeshed would be significantly different from those who supported it.

From this viewpoint I am an observer/informant who shares certain features of the collective memory but not all. The manner in which information was transmitted to me during interviews is itself reflective of certain values and beliefs which govern the system which govern the system of cultural relations in Jarrow. To begin with, I am treated as a child to be informed - a member of a junior generation. This is compounded by the fact that I look younger than I actually am (the normal guess is 23 - some ten years less than my real age). The status of student - not engaged in 'real work' - is a further reason for me to be considered child-like. Furthermore, I lack two of the features which define adult status in Jarrow - I lack a wife and children. Thus I am termed as 'irresponsible'

and 'unaware'.

I mention these points to indicate some of the difficulties under which I worked during the course of my fieldwork. While all my informants were helpful to a great extent, my lack of status - or rather my status as child-like - was certainly a factor in a number of interviews - though it was rarely directly expressed. All this had a disheartening effect on me caused by a transition from an academic environment where some status obtains, to one in which most of my attributes lack value. On the other hand, the advantages for my research were great. I became someone who had to be informed as to the nature of reality - an initiate who had to be brought to understand the significance of the past. It seemed to me that as long as I accepted that status I could operate successfully. This thesis will demonstrate the validity of that hypothesis.

(iv) Documentary Sources

While a great emphasis has been placed on on the collection of oral data throughout this research, the value of documentary evidence can not be denied. Documentary evidence can be used to affirm or clarify oral statements. For example, informants' statements that Father Mackin, parish priest of St. Bede's Catholic Church, was a town councillor, were shown to be incorrect by examination of newspaper files. He was, in fact, a County Councillor until his defeat in 1934. Thus validation of informants' statements is extended in another direction by the use of documentary material. Through extensive use of such material, an idea of what the overreaching conceptual framework of society was can be acquired. One particular instance relates to the frequent newspaper use of terms such as 'the working class', 'the poor' - terms which are rarely

used in relation to groups in our society today. What informed such use was the hierarchical cultural system of the day in which each class had its place and station. Such terminology is only used in the present day by publications such as The Morning Star which attempt to sustain the notions of a hierarchical system. Other newspapers tend to a non-homogenous character of the working-class by identifying groups within it - e.g. 'manual workers', 'office workers', 'miners', 'firemen'. In the 1930s, the working-class was identified as a homogenous group, part of a well-defined hierarchical system. Although informants made references within their own experience to the existence of this system, only use of newspaper material was able to elucidate it in its entirety.

Documentary or written sources fall into five main categories: autobiographical works, novels, newspapers, official reports etc., and secondary historical works. All such sources can be used in two distinct ways. Firstly as repositories of information which illuminate conditions in the period and secondly as demonstrating factors significant in the cultural system. For example, an employment statistic derived from Medical Officer of Health reports can be used to detail unemployment rates in Jarrow. In this case, the official report provides statistical information. On the other hand, a comparison between the numbers of adult males and adult females unemployed can be used to demonstrate an important aspect of the sexual division of labour - i.e. that paid employment was the preserve of the male. In considering documentary evidence in this manner, I do not simply follow the advice of Thompson (1978: Ch. 4) with regard to the treatment of written sources, but also uphold a notion of anthropology that all products of a system are defined by the system,

While these observations are strictly true for all the

categories listed above, the emphasis in use will vary throughout this thesis. To that end, I wish to make some qualifying comments on them.

(a) Autobiography and Novels

For the purposes of this thesis, autobiography and novels are to be treated as cultural products representing specific locations within the cultural system. Although they will not be used extensively in this work, they can be used in an illustrative manner. Novels are highly-personalized, individualistic forms of expression which tend to be autobiographical, though the works of Catherine Cookson stress the significance of particular relationships in fictional form. Cookson is thus often at pains to stress the difficulties in relationships between mothers and daughters, mothers and sons, fathers and sons, etc.

Problems of bias in autobiography are widely understood:

'The printed autobiography is a one-way communication, with its content definitely selected with the taste of the reading public in mind.' (Thompson: 1978; p.94).

While this truth may create difficulties for historians in their search for facts, for my purposes I only have to be aware of the bias - its content and its source. Consequently, autobiographical material is used here as a surrogate form of oral testimony which can elucidate the cultural system.

(b) Newspapers

Unlike novels and autobiographical material, where the emphasis of use is to be on their role as cultural artefacts, the dual character of documentary sources will be more significant in respect of newspapers. As a source of information

about the activities of the marchers en route, the South Shields Gazette was the prime source. Other useful data garnered from here included details of local elections and newsworthy information about Jarrow generally. On the other hand, newspapers in general are to be seen as representatives of the dominant ideology. Thus they are a source of cultural facts - either directly when criticizing the 'overspending' of local authorities, or indirectly when revealing the size of donations in the Poppy Appeal in Jarrow and thus demonstrating the significance of the military ethos in the town. The manner of use will depend upon context in this thesis.

(c) Official Reports etc.

The primary use of official reports and documents will be as sources of statistical information and data. Considerable scope exists for examination of documents such as Medical Officer of Health reports, housing surveys etc. as cultural artefacts. Lack of time has prevented me from studying these in sufficient detail to articulate their location within the prevailing cultural system. Similarly semi-official reports such as Mess' Industrial Tyneside and Goodefellow's Tyneside - the Social Facts are worthy of extensive examination to illuminate the expectation and nature of the dominant notions of social reform. They represented a humanitarian reform impulse associated with consensual politics and the liberal-radical tradition. This superficially provides a sharp contrast with the class conflict stance of the Labour Party. Whether there is a substantive difference in the reforming programmes of the two traditions is open to question. This extensive topic cannot be fully entered into here and hence the major use of such documents will be as sources of statistical

information.

(d) Secondary Historical Works

Secondary works will be extensively used throughout this thesis to provide information relevant to topics at hand. Frequently, their use will be to elucidate and inform. On other occasions, the cultural perspective adopted by such works will be commented upon.

PART 1: THE CULTURAL SYSTEM OF JARROW

In this first part I wish to describe major factors in the cultural system of Jarrow. The system I am outlining is as it was in the mid-1930s. To comprehend the most significant features of this, the description covers the period from the founding of the Palmer Bros. Company in 1852 until the Labour ascension to power in 1935. The approach, though it is concerned with historical material, will be thematic. This is because the first step in understanding this system has been to analyse informant data to determine the major themes in their perspectives of their life experience. The basis of this account is, therefore, experiential. The sum total of data collected is used as the starting point and the themes within it are considered and developed. Consequently, the detailing of historical events does not necessarily follow a chronological pattern. This in itself is reflective of the nature of experiential data. For any individual the past and present exist simultaneously. In a cultural system the same may be said. The past and present coalesce into an immediacy which is tangible to those who experience it. Chronological sequencing of the kind normally associated with academic historical works is not a feature of the cultural system.

Of course, informants' data is insufficient to expand and elucidate the concepts which prevailed in the system. Expansion has been the main aim of my handling of the data. This is to clarify the themes as they emerge. The direction is always outwards. At the centre of this section is the testimony of informants.

Chapter 1.

Jarrow: The Making of the Labour Force

Charles Mark Palmer, founder of the Jarrow shipyard, stands as the most significant influence in the town. His company was responsible for its rapid growth in the second half of the nineteenth century. He maintained an influence in the economic activities of the community until he resigned as chairman in 1893 (Wilkinson: 1939; p.11). He was elected first mayor of the borough at its incorporation in 1875. He held the position for a few weeks only since he had recently been elected Liberal MP for North Durham. In 1884, on creation of the Jarrow Parliamentary Division he became its member. He held the seat until his death in 1907. His economic and political dominance was noted by Wilkinson. The town was Palmer's memorial:

'The Town Hall with its Palmer commemoration tablet, the Palmer portrait in the Council Chamber, and the Palmer works photographs on the corridor walls, appeared to be an adjunct of the company offices, as in fact it was. The hospital is the Palmer Memorial Hospital, with a bronze statue of the man in the gardens. The only libraries were in Palmer's Mechanics' Institute. The streets of Jarrow are named after the early managers and directors of the companies' (1939; p.114-115).

Palmer has been dead for seventy-five years but his influence remains. Tim Newell, a marcher, regretted that the march was the most frequent subject of study. Palmer's, he said, was:

'....The finest shipyard in the country. We made our steel. We could make a ship on time. Make it the whole lotwhen anybody asks about Jarrow they should be asking about the lovely ships and what not

It is the purpose of this chapter to delineate the contribution that this man, Charles Mark Palmer, made to the cultural system of Jarrow. Palmer did not merely establish

an industry, he created a town - 'Palmerstown' (Wilkinson: 1939; Ch. viii) - to house and sustain his labour force. How and why he did this and the subsequent effects will be the primary concern here.

(i) The Industrial System

As the historian of Catholic Jarrow has pointed out, the launch of the S.S. John Bowes in 1852, 'brought to an end Jarrow's village era' (Young: 1940; p.14). This should not be taken to imply that the Jarrow which disappeared was some rural idyll. The Jarrow of 1850 was an industrial village, composed of some 300 scattered dwellings. Within the area of Jarrow, there were several small-scale industrial activities - coke-making, salt-production, a paper-mill, a chemical works and coal mining. The raising of coal had been responsible for the doubling of Jarrow's population between 1811 and 1821 to 3,350 (Wilkinson: 1939; p.15). In 1851, following a series of underground explosions the colliery was closed and pit-life in Jarrow came to an end.

In 1852, the Palmer brothers, George and Charles Mark, acquired the lease of the Jarrow shipyard. A few months later the John Bowes was launched. A new era was to begin for Jarrow. This era, which was to reach its zenith in the latter part of the nineteenth century, had a character determined by the attitudes and ambitions of Charles Mark Palmer.

Firstly, the development of Palmer's must be set in the context of the economic success of British industry in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Great Exhibition of 1851 heralded an age of unparalleled economic progress for the British nation which meant a 'growing material prosperity

and a level of industrial production and foreign trade which set England ahead of all other countries' (Thompson: 1950; p.100). It was the maintenance of 'the largest and costliest fleet in the world' (ibid; p.98) which provided the framework for Palmer's success.

The John Bowes brought success to the new found company. An iron, screw-driven steam collier, the ship represented a major innovation. Its development saved the London market for the Northern coal-owners. Their prosperity had been threatened by the development of railways which allowed greater access to coal mined in the Midlands and South Wales. The wooden sailing colliers were no match for this. The value of the John Bowes and its successors was emphasized by Palmer in an address to the British Association in 1863:

'on her first voyage the John Bowes was laden with 650 tons of coal in four hours. In forty-eight hours she arrived in London. In twenty-four hours she discharged her cargo, and in forty-eight hours she was again in the Tyne. So that in five days she had performed successfully an amount of work which would have taken two average sized sailing colliers upwards of one month to accomplish' (Wilkinson: 1939; p. 62).

This success, accomplished despite initial doubt and hindrance in some quarters,¹ established one area of specialization for the Palmer company. Specialization by builders was , and is, one of the causes of relative cheapness and efficiency in the industry (Pollard: 1951; p.75). Having

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1. Palmer himself claimed that there had been considerable opposition to the John Bowes venture: '.....wooden shipbuildersshipowners..... seamen.....pilots.....' The ship was crewed by sea captains, not sailors (see Dougan: 1975; p.8).

laid the foundations for the iron shipbuilding industry in the Tyneside area, Palmer developed his reputation further (and hence created another specialized market) by the completion of an Admiralty contract. During the Crimean War, an order was placed with Palmer's to build an iron-clad floating battery for use against the Russian forts at Kronstadt. The construction of this vessel involved technical innovation:

'The H.M.S. Terror, the first ship to be armed by rolled plate, was finished in very little over the three months for which Palmer had contracted. The men worked day and night shifts for weeks to get it finished and the job was done in scheduled time. By then the Crimean War was finished, too, so the Terror never went into action against Kronstadt. But it created a great impression in Admiralty quarters, and established the reputation of Palmer's, Jarrow, which was to build many warships in its time' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.64).

In fact, the last ship to be launched at the Jarrow yard was the H.M.S. Duchess. The launching was a quiet affair with none of the pomp and celebration which characterized the yard in its heyday (S.S.G.: 20/7/32).

There are several important factors here. Firstly, the growth of Palmer's shipyard is associated with the period of mid-Victorian prosperity. For the north-eastern region, that success was connected with the coal-export trade - 'the only large bulk export of any European maritime power which furnished the ideal cargo return for tramps (i.e. general cargo ships)' (Pollard: 1951; p.353). Tramp steamers, whose construction was a speciality of Tyneside shipyards, constituted more than 60% of British tonnage in 1913. Among British steamers trading between foreign ports only, 78% were tramp tonnage (Pollard: 1951; p.354, footnote). Consequently, yards such as Palmer's were heavily dependent on the coal export trade for their prosperity. During the period, the north-eastern coalfields were mined extensively to fulfill the requirements of this trade and Palmer's shipyard along with other Tyneside

shipbuilding firms fabricated its carriers.

As a consequence, the Jarrow shipyard and its workers are characterized as making a positive contribution towards this commercial success by fulfilling the demands for ships to carry overseas trade. Thus the link between the town and the imperial splendour of Britain was created. The connection with industrial greatness is reinforced by the appreciation of the town's shipyard as a source of technical excellence. The construction of the John Bowes and the Terror are only the first in a long list of innovatory credits which are associated with the yard and the town. Palmer's claimed to have built the first vessel in the country intended for use in carrying bulk oil - the Vaterland launched in 1872 (Champness: 1975; p.36). While this claim has been disputed, the same author notes that between 1918 and 1930, the company built over 60 oil tankers (ibid; p.38), including the first Isherwood bracketless tanker, the Beaconsfield, in 1927 (ibid; p.36). This iteration of the pioneering, adventurous quality of the company continued until its end. Wilkinson acclaims the company for developing the technique of ship's surgery. This operation involved the replacement of the centre section of an oil tanker, the S.S. Saronac. It was carried out in 1930 and is seen by Wilkinson as a testimony to the ability of Palmer's workers as shipbuilders (1939; p.159). All of this leads to the frequent assertions that the men were highly skilled and proud craftsmen able to deliver a ship on time.

The ultimate manifestation of the success story of Jarrow was the man himself. Palmer's success with the John Bowes and the Terror demonstrated his qualities as a daring entrepreneur, a risk-taker, a man of enterprise. Now his company, which had been started with family capital, grew to build 'a hundred

ships where one was built before' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.65). Self-help and the willingness to take risks, are the characteristics of Victorian capitalism - highly-valued both then and now.

Palmer's vision was not confined to the construction of ships. His ambition was to create an enterprise which controlled the whole process of shipbuilding 'from ore to finished ship' (ibid; p.64). The effectiveness of Palmer's ability as an organizer is demonstrated by the fact that in 1865, when Palmer Bros. and Co. became a limited liability company 'it already possessed 2 shipyards, a dry dock, blast furnaces and rolling mills, ironstone, coal mines and ore' (Champness: 1975; p.36). A more detailed description, giving a clearer indication of the manner of operation, is supplied by Pollard:

'... it possessed its own iron mines at Saltburn and Whitby and an artificial harbour at Port Mulgrave, built by C. M. Palmer to load the ironstone on his colliers on their empty return run from London. The ore was turned into plates and angles by its own blast furnaces and rolling mills at Jarrow, which supplied its own shipbuilding yard, while the foundries for iron and brass castings supplied his engineering works, and all the accessories such as rigging and carpentry work were also made on the spot. The steam colliers built at Jarrow were then employed in carrying Palmer's coal to London. The firm also owned its own gasworks and a bridge-building works at Howden, controlled a number of shipping lines, and after the introduction of the Siemens-Martin process sent its ships as far as Spain and North Africa to bring the hermatite ore directly to its company's wharf' (Pollard: 1951; p.80).

As well as supplying all the material necessary for the construction of ships, the company found itself with surplus accrued at every stage of the process at the Jarrow works. These were sold in their semi-finished state to outside firms who were shipbuilders or involved in iron-consuming trades (ibid; p.81). The integrated plant which Palmer created was the most outstanding example of a 'comprehensive and self-sufficient combine' - on a scale exceptional in the period up to 1890 (ibid; pp.80-81). The effectiveness of the combine

can be measured by its output. In the period up to 1865, when it became a joint-stock company, the Jarrow yard produced 176 vessels of 136,500 tons and 19,800 h.p. of engines (Dougan; 1975; p.16). By 1907, when Palmer died, the yard had produced over 800 vessels - including 65 warships and 10 battleships. These long-term figures conceal serious fluctuations in output (Wilkinson: 1939; pp.102-3).

The presence of a shipbuilding combine in Jarrow, which was the town's sole employer of labour, meant that it had an impact which extended beyond the yard. The shipbuilding cycle which covers peaks of activity and troughs of inactivity came to dominate the expectations of the workforce. The cycle lasted for approximately seven years and when it was moving upwards was characterized by prosperity and employment for the workforce. Downward movements were characterized by the progressive laying-off of groups of workers as work was finished. British shipbuilding in particular was susceptible to such transformations since it was, unlike the American industry, labour-intensive. The central feature of the labour process in British shipyards was its reliance on skilled labour to produce a vessel. Jarrow provides an extreme case of the regionally concentrated nature of the industry. The domination of the labour market by Palmer's meant that opportunities for alternative employment were limited. Output and costs for shipbuilders were counteracted during slump periods by the simple expedient of laying men off. This relatively simple process was reinforced by the qualifications for entry to the labour process which will be discussed in the next section.

(ii) The Labour Force and the Labour Market

While the fundamental feature of the shipbuilding industry is that it is an assembly process engaged in the construction of ships, it is not accurate to suggest that this was a mass-production (McGoldrick: no date; p.14). Much of the erection and outfitting concerned with ship construction was carried out at the launching berth of the ship. The workforce responsible for construction can be divided into two principal groups, the metal trades and the outfitting trades:

'The metal trades were responsible for the hull construction, and included those involved in preparatory work (draughtsmen, shipwrights, and patternmakers) and those involved in the actual assembly process (blacksmiths, boilermakers, shipwrights, drillers and riveters). The preparatory workers were responsible for drawing the ship's plans and then constructing from these drawings which served as aids to the metal workers. The templates and moulds would be carried to the river and there used as the basis for fashioning various beams, angles, and plates. These items were then carried to the berth and there constructed into the hull by gangs of riveters, caulkers, platers, and shipwrights.

The outfitting trades included plumbers, joiners, electricians, painters, and various more specialized groups such as upholsterers and french polishers. These trades would finish the interior and exterior of the completed hull after it had been launched and towed to a fitting-out quay' (Lorenz: 1978; p.4).

While this description relates to the state of the labour process at the turn of the century, the most critical feature of it is the extent to which the industry was dominated by skilled tradesmen - almost two-thirds of the workforce (ibid; p.1 footnote). The skills involved in shipbuilding 'relied crucially on human handling, strength and ingenuity' (ibid; p.5). The craft-based system which was characteristic of the British industry, with its emphasis on 'traditional' handling methods, e.g. the preference for the block and tackle over the crane, still made it the most successful in the world up to the First World War. German and American investment in heavy capital equipment such as hydraulic, pneumatic, and electrically

powered equipment was not sufficient in that period to reduce British dominance of the industry (McGoldrick: no date; p.17).

The introduction of a craft ethos into the shipbuilding industry was partly the consequence of the development of iron shipbuilding. The older craftskills of shipwrights were displaced by the new crafts of marine engineering and boiler-making. However these 'new' skills were developed out of older skills associated with the steam engine mechanics and boilermakers. It was the trade names - angle-ironsmith, caulker, riveter, plater, etc. - which were new rather than the skills (ibid; p.15). Such a multiplicity of trades imported from other industrial spheres with a craft-based ideology led to the many demarcation disputes which have characterized the industry. Craft jealousy led to conflict over allocation of jobs in the construction process. The most prominent disputes which occurred were those centring around shipwrights' claims to retain a place in the industry. They were faced with the problem of being made technically redundant when iron rather than wood became the basic material of the industry. Thus they entered into conflict with joiners to claim rights to any wood-working on a ship and with steelworking unions who challenged their claim to be responsible for the overall construction of a ship (ibid; p.16).

The multiplicity of trades, the emphasis on craft-based production and lack of heavy investment in machinery made British shipbuilding a labour-intensive industry. This was not merely because the industry had been longer established than any of its competitors, but also because of its undoubted success using the craft method of production. On the eve of the First World War the industry was producing 60% of the world's shipping tonnage despite competition from the U.S.A. and Germany.

One reason for this was that a labour intensive industry has cost advantages over a capital intensive one. The cyclical nature of shipbuilding meant that a heavy investment in machinery could prove to be a heavy overhead to carry in a slump, whatever the productivity advantages to be gained in a boom time. Since the labour force itself represented the major overhead for shipbuilding companies, the simple expedient of laying men off during the downward swing of the cycle meant that cost savings could be made more easily. Furthermore, this process did not entail any loss of the labour force since

'.....the majority of shipbuilding was conducted in regionally concentrated centres where the shipyard dominated the local labour market and there were only limited opportunities for alternative employment' (ibid; p.15).

Thus in Jarrow, where the Palmer concern was the sole employer of labour, a natural order was established based on the shipbuilding cycle. Shipyard workers accepted that there would be periodic unemployment, but this did not cause them -- until the final closure of the yard - to leave Jarrow.

While at the aggregate level, the prosperity of the town and its inhabitants was dependent on the shipbuilding cycle, local factors intervened with regard to the allocation of work i.e. who was actually employed. A complete system of formal rules governed the selection of men for employment in shipyards and dockyards. This system was known as the 'market'. In order to secure work, a man, tradesman or labourer, had to present himself in the market.²

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2. The account of the 'market' presented here was given by Steven Kemp. His data relates to the operation of the labour market for the Mercantile Dry Dock Co. Ltd. - a small shiprepair yard in East Jarrow. The principle which governed the operation of the market for the Mercantile can be applied to any other shipbuilding and shiprepair yard.

The market took place every morning. Men seeking work gathered outside the dockyard gates. Yard foremen would appear and select men for employment in the yard. Once taken on, a man would be employed for the duration of the job - whether that be days, weeks or months. While the most obvious factor in impelling men to present themselves in the market was the possibility of work, it would appear that under Means Test conditions in the 1930s, it became necessary for men to attend the market frequently. This was because claimants for public relief had to satisfy the Court of Referees that they were 'genuinely seeking work'. Subsequently claimants were questioned by the Referees about where they had applied for work and how many people were offered work.

The key figure in the process of recruitment was the foreman. Each trade has a foreman and every foreman was a time-served tradesman who had risen from the shop floor (Clarke: 1975; p.20). Foremen had become important in the late nineteenth-century with the growth of company size which made it impossible for employers to retain as intimate knowledge of their workforce. This was a key part of the role of the foreman (ibid; p.21). As well as organizing the implementation of the production process, a foreman was responsible for hiring labour. As will be shown it was the foreman's shop floor origins which enabled the informal rules of the 'market' to operate.

While at first sight it might appear that a necessary factor for securing employment in a Jarrow shipyard was residency in Jarrow, this was a consequence of other factors which made this a pre-condition. The first significant factor was family connection. To have a relative who worked in the yard or was a foreman in the yard, was a significant qualification to secure work. All foremen would select family members (or

members of another foreman's family) in preference to non-family members. Steven Kemp, recalling a time when he attended the market at the Mercantile Dry Dock Co. gives a clear instance of this:

'After I'd finished my time, I went to the market every day. One day I was there and this lad spoke up to the foreman. "Me Incle Billy says you've got to take me on." His Uncle Billy was the foreman plater. And he was taken on.'

Such an explicit demonstration of the power of patronage through family connections was rare, though everyone was aware of it.

Tim Newell, unemployed from 1929 until the outbreak of World War Two, said that he was able to secure occasional work in Jarrow Palmer's through the agency of his wife's uncle.

Friendship could often be another significant factor. In a community such as Jarrow where friendships are often life-long they could be a potent factor in securing employment. Though I possess no data which relates directly to the market, John Oxberry said that he found work in Armstrong-Vickers works in Newcastle with the help of a friend. Associations developed by having worked in a yard previously - which might be considered work place friendship - could be useful. Serving one's time in a yard did not of itself guarantee re-admittance. In such instances, a reputation as a good workmen was important.

Though religious affiliation was considered to be an important factor in being able to secure work, I have no specific data to illustrate this. I was told, however, that Palmer's Hebburn (now part of British Shipbuilders) was a Catholic yard. Its Catholicism was demonstrated by the fact that all its buildings were painted green i.e. an Irish colour.

Docility was a final important factor. Workmen were required to be deferential towards their overseers. Anyone

with a reputation for insubordination was likely to be ignored in the market. A reputation for good craftsmanship offered some leeway in this matter.

These were the terms of reference of the labour market for the shipyards of Jarrow. They were known to all who participated in it, thus the market was conducted in silence with skilled men waiting in groups while the foremen made their choice. Rarely were attempts made to influence the foremen. Since the rules were so widely understood such behaviour would undoubtedly have amounted to insubordination. Such action would have disqualified the workmen as it contravened the requirement to be docile. Labourers waited on the sidelines - grouped apart from the skilled men. Experience at labouring associated with a particular trade enhanced their chances. Presumably, though, the same factors of family, friendship, religion and docility qualified their selection.

One trade was exempt from the market requirements - plating. This was the era when platers dominated the industry (Brown: no date; p.18). Platers accomplished in their craft could ensure the profitability of a job. A plater still had to appear in the market but it was his skill alone which entitled him to work. On the other hand, platers of moderate or poor skill would be subject to normal market conditions.

The importance of the social origins and connections of the foremen now become clear. Owners, directors and higher management could not have the same intimate knowledge of the work-force as the foremen. This was obviously so for the shareholders of Palmer's - few of whom lived in the North-East (Wilkinson: 1939; p.69). Higher management who were members of another social class lacked the opportunity to acquire the knowledge that a foreman was required to have. From the

perspective of the higher levels of the company, the foreman was supposed to exercise his knowledge of a tradesman's ability in his trade. What the foreman actually used in determining who to hire was not knowledge of the skill of any particular craftsman but his knowledge of the man's social standing - i.e. whether he was a family member, a friend, a co-religionist and docile.

It is now possible to understand why residency in Jarrow was a necessary factor in securing employment in a Jarrow shipyard. Jarrow foremen were only likely to hire those about whom they had social knowledge. This knowledge could only relate to people who moved within the foreman's social milieu. This point is confirmed by the example of the foreman painter in the Mercantile Dry Dock at this period. He came from South Shields and only selected South Shields men to work for him. No doubt he operated his selection procedures using the same criteria as the Jarrow Foremen.

(iii) Migration

The labour force required for Palmer's concerns far exceeded the population of Jarrow. Migration became the major source of supply for the work-force. As the census figures show (see Appendix 1), the forty years from 1851 to 1891 are the time of substantial population growth for Jarrow. The population of 3,834 in 1851, became 33,675 by

1891 - an increase of almost 1000%.³ Figures after that indicate a decline in the rate of growth (1901) and ultimately a decline in the size of the population. The 1921 figures reflect a population increase caused by the compulsory influx of labour caused by the exigencies of the First World War. Temporary settlers returned to their own locations after the collapse of the post-war boom in 1921.

The labour force in Jarrow was created by migration. The sources of the migrant flow were nationwide. Mrs. Liddell, wife of the rector of St. Paul's Church, observed that they were:

'..... the hardy Tynesider; pale folk, half-fed from Norfolk; sturdy Scotchmen and Irishmen by the hundred. There were whole streets inhabited by the Irish' (1876; p.35).

Wilkinson's comments were more specific with regard to the role that particular groups of migrants were to play in the labour process. Skilled men from Sheffield and the Midlands (1939; p.101) found employment in the iron and steel works. Migrants from other parts of Tyneside and the Scots were probably shipyard craftsmen. The Irish, on the other hand, solved the problem of unskilled labour:

'.....strong men, yet willing to work for a low wage in the iron works for the arduous job of carrying 'pigs' of iron, weighing about one hundredweight each, from the moulds to the wagons waiting to carry them to the next process ... Irishmen excelled in this work' (ibid; p.101).

3. This population growth exceeds that of any of the towns and cities in the Tyneside area for that period (Mess: 1928; p.30). As Mess points out, a major factor in the increase of the population of Durham up to 1881, was a net inflow of migrants. After 1881, more people left the county than entered it. While the growth of Jarrow was part of that general movement for the area, the 28% increase for the period 1881 to 1891 (from 25,469 to 33,675) suggests that a balance of incoming migration to Jarrow alone continued after the trend for the county as a whole had ceased.

This 'division of labour' amongst migrants can be correlated with the points of origin of each group. The skilled men coming from industrial centres, such as Sheffield and Aberdeen, found work as craftsmen in the steelworks and the shipyard. The agricultural skills of migrants from Norfolk and Ireland had no place in the industrial environment of Jarrow. Thus these groups found a place in the labour process as unskilled labourers.

The waves of migration in the nineteenth-century were a reflection of the establishment of a successful industry there. The prosperity which ensued from this only manifested itself for the community as a whole. Conditions in the 'boom' town of Jarrow were far from idyllic. Wilkinson states that the number of tenemented houses increased from 1005 in 1862 to 2062 in 1869 (1939; p.73). It was only in 1864-1865, that the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company extended their water main to Jarrow. Even then, the taps in the streets were 'so farand so remote' (ibid; p.74) that their benefits were limited. Overcrowding, bad sanitation, poor housing, and a high incidence of disease were the effects of the industrialization of Jarrow (see Wilkinson: 1939; pp.77-80 for a more detailed account).

To such conditions the migrants came. By 1900, however, the migrant flow had ceased. Jarrow was becoming a more settled community. By the 1930s, most of the inhabitants in the town had been or were being born and bred in Jarrow. This change is reflected in my oral data. All my informants were born after 1893. Only two were born outside Jarrow. One born in Felling moved to Jarrow in the 1930s. Another born in Wallsend, married a man from Jarrow. In addition most of the informants married people who were themselves natives of Jarrow.

(iv) Conclusion

By 1900, the waves of migration had ceased. Charles Mark Palmer, though still Liberal MP for the town, no longer directed the fortunes of the company around which Jarrow had been built, having resigned in 1893. Jarrow was now becoming a settled community, and this is reflected in my oral data, as noted above.

The community was an integral part of the nineteenth-century imperialist system. The company specialized in the construction of general cargo steamers which were an essential part of Britain's maritime power. The original purpose of such steamers was to carry the coal export trade from the Northern coalfields. Furthermore, the town constructed the naval vessels - the warships and destroyers - which protected the imperial sea lanes. The prosperity of the town was intimately linked to the well-being of the nation as an imperial maritime power.

At the time of the outbreak of the First World War, the future of the shipbuilding industry was uncertain. Between 1903 and 1913, only two-thirds of the construction capacity of the leading 20 firms (including Palmer's) was utilized. Thus overcapacity was a major problem in the industry in the immediate pre-war years (Pollard: 1951; p.189). For Palmer's, the situation was serious. In 1908, the company launched only three ships. Trading losses were returned frequently, mortgages were raised to finance the debts which ensued, but the signs of decline were showing (Wilkinson: 1939; pp.115-116).

Remembering how the shipbuilding industry was so closely tied with the fortunes of the British Empire, Pollard's comment accurately describes the difficulties for the industry and Jarrow:

'In 1913, there were neither new colonies or new sea lanes to be supplied. The shipbuilding capacity of this and other countries was geared to the output of the past few years which would have to be, perhaps, halved in order to keep freights at a level high enough to keep existing vessels afloat. As the heavily capitalized shipbuilding industry staggered into an inevitable depression in the summer of 1914, it was saved only by the insatiable demands of the war' (Pollard: 1951; p.498).

It was 'the insatiable demands of war' which provided the swan song for shipbuilding in Jarrow. Ann Ingram recalls the workmen coming out of the yard 'like a blanket. You couldn't pass them no matter how hard you pushed'. Over forty naval vessels were built by the yard in the period. The winning of the war seemed to promise a new future:

'Trade seemed safe because Britain had won, and because ships would be needed to replace the war losses' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.119).

For Jarrow, this was not to be.

The Jarrow of the 1930s came about because the foundations of its prosperity were removed. From 1921 onwards, there was a decrease in the demand for merchant ships. Warship requirements were down to one-third of the pre-war requirements. Connections with foreign owners were lost because of wartime restrictions. This led to the development of shipbuilding industries abroad and a decline in orders for British shipyards. Prior to 1914, 20% of merchant shipping had been built for foreign shipowners. The percentage of world tonnage owned by British shipowners also declined.

The dependency of the Tyne on shipbuilding - which resulted in 70% unemployment in the local industry in June 1931 as compared to a national average of 56% - was related to the size of the coal export trade. Diminished exports meant a depression in the shipping industry. Thus new orders were rarely placed with shipbuilders. Added to the difficult trade conditions which shipbuilders faced, there was a problem of over-capacity in the industry. As noted above, the industry

suffered from surplus capacity in the pre-war era. The extension of shipbuilding facilities during the war had exacerbated this problem. This over-capacity was the main justification for the activities of National Shipbuilders Security (N.S.S.) Ltd.

Chapter 2.

The Allocation of Work and the Family

In the previous chapter, the main concern was to outline the development of the economic system which circumscribed behaviour and expectations. In this chapter, I will study the organization of work within the family. This perspective has been adopted because the Jarrow March was a 'crusade for work'. Thus it seems appropriate to take this fundamental feature of the march in order to understand the cultural system. As will be shown, the 'work' to which the crusade referred was the sphere of paid male employment. To understand this, it is necessary to be aware of the organization of work roles by gender within the system.

(i) The Sexual Division of Labour

During the inter-war period, the roles allocated for men and women followed a typical division: the female role was concerned with housework, the rearing of children and the maintenance of the family home; the male role's primary concern was to secure paid employment in order to ensure the supply of sufficient resources such that the family would never be in want. The locus of the male was normally in an area outside the family home which necessitated a daily departure from the domestic environment, while the woman was located within the family home and left only in furtherance of her role requirements e.g. shopping or visiting doctors, dentists etc.

The mechanism through which these roles were ideally fulfilled was through the union of two people in marriage. It was possible to fulfill the requirements of gender role

expectations without entering into such a union. Liz Kemp, left her paid employment to become a surrogate mother to her father, brothers and sisters when her mother died at the age of 44. This was only a temporary role, terminated not by her own marriage but by the remarriage of her father. Her wifely role was then subordinated to her obligations as the eldest daughter.

In other instances, men remained at home with their mother after the departure of their siblings and their father's death. The son thus acted as a provider, the mother as the keeper of the home. Where this occurred, the unit was only terminated by the death of the mother. Individuals in such cases are praised for their conduct and their behaviour is understood by their peers in terms of fulfilling the obligations of children towards their parents. Sometimes there are implications that the parent did not give the child this opportunity. Such individuals, whether male or female, are not considered as having realized their full potential, since they have not attempted the realization of themselves as individuals through marriage and family. On the other hand, Martin Ennew, who looked after his mother until she died, did not think that he had 'missed out' by remaining a bachelor.

It can be assumed that, in general, the life expectations of most individuals in Jarrow during this period, indicated that they would marry and have children. In the 1920s, this assumption was borne out by the fact that Durham 'might be described as one of the most married counties in England and Wales: a larger proportion of its women are married than in any other county, and this is true of almost every age' (Mess: 1928; p.35). Women in Jarrow, as will be shown, did not have a major source of employment in the town and this was the reason that generally they did not continue to work after

marriage. In Lancashire, where women worked in the textile mills, the tradition of married women working was long established.

Attitudes to paid employment for male and female may be best understood by considering the decisions taken by school-leavers with regard to employment in the period up to marriage. It was normal in inter-war Jarrow for children to terminate their education at 14 (i.e. the age at which compulsory education finished). While financial pressures undoubtedly played a part in some cases, this was not the primary reason. For example, I was told of one family in which three of the four children (including two daughters) were educated to college level, despite the fact that the father experienced unemployment for most of the 1930s.

In this case, the belief of the parents in the efficacy of education was the motivation. Similarly, circumscription of a child's education was primarily determined by gender role expectations. Thus girls were not to be educated since they were destined for marriage and domesticity for which academic achievement was unfitted. For boys, it was important to secure paid employment. Steven Kemp, who had the opportunity of continuing his education until he was sixteen, left at 14½, using an argument with a teacher as an excuse, because:

'The thing to do was serve your time. And the possibility was, if you went to school at 16, you'd be too late to start and serve your time.'

Here, the labour-intensive shipbuilding industry, with its craft ethos, imprinted itself on the expectations of work. To have a trade - 'to serve your time' - was the best one could do. Apprenticeships began at 16. A boy had to find work in the period between leaving school and securing an apprenticeship for himself. Steven Kemp worked cleaning bricks on the site of a demolished factory. Nick Farrington, who

worked in an ironmonger's shop after leaving school observed that it was not 'real' work. What was wanted was 'a proper job, to serve your time to a real job' and 'that was really hard'.

Even in times of prosperity, it was not possible for all to achieve the goal of an indentured apprenticeship. In fact, one in eight workers in Jarrow working or seeking work described themselves in the 1921 Census as 'Labourer or General Labourer or Unskilled Worker, with no indication of special occupation'. This did not include those who described themselves as plumbers' labourers, fitters' labourers and so on. The proportion of persons who so described themselves England and Wales was one in thirty-two (Mess: 1928; p.45). While it is not possible to make an estimate of how many workers in the shipyard and the steelworks were labourers at this time, the Medical Officer of Health stated that 60% of 2,770 unemployed in 1927 were labourers.¹ This in the year in which unemployment figures were at their lowest for the inter-war period apart from 1939.

Not all school-leavers seeking apprenticeships would be successful even in prosperous times. The decline of Palmer's and its closure reduced these opportunities considerably. To understand this, it is important to appreciate how apprenticeships were secured. As will become apparent, this is the wrong way of stating the problem. It would be more correct to say that what has to be understood are the circumstances under which an opportunity to serve one's time

1. Borough of Jarrow: Annual Report of the Health Department (1927); p.5 (TWRO: T28/54)

are created for an individual. These circumstances are that firstly a relative will speak, on behalf of an individual, to a foreman to secure an opening. Secondly, the relative must be a craftsman- i.e. a time-served tradesman. It was highly unlikely, even in times of general prosperity, that a labourer could secure an apprenticeship for his son.²

Ideally the arrangement of an apprenticeship should be part of a father's legacy to his son. If it was not possible to secure an apprenticeship, then a father would attempt to find a job of any kind for his son. John Oxberry's father found him work in a rivetting squad in Palmer's. The job was short-lived - part of the post-World War One shipbuilding boom. A period of nine months' unemployment made Oxberry consider a career as a merchant seaman. His uncle, on hearing this, expressed his opposition to the idea, (He had been a seaman himself and thought it the worst of occupations). As an inducement, he arranged work for Oxberry in the engine shop in Jarrow Palmer's. Oxberry received semi-skilled training and worked there until 1931.

Steven Kemp was apprenticed as a caulker in a Wallsend shipyard through the intercession of his uncle. Not satisfied with the trade, he wished to leave. Again his uncle secured an apprenticeship (this time as a shipwright) in the Mercantile Dry Dock. Vicky Lathan informed that her father found work for her own sons in the Mercantile during the 1930s. Nick Farrington left the 'not real work' of the ironmonger's shop

2. Wartime conditions led to the suspension of the normal operation of this system. Thus, my own father, though the son of a plater's helper - i.e. a semi-skilled worker - was able to serve an apprenticeship for himself as a plater.

to be apprenticed to his father in the latter's own business.

Two critical points emerge here. Firstly, the way in which apprenticeships are secured is governed by the same factors which control the processes of the labour market (see pp.43-47 above). Extra-work place relationships, particularly familial relationships, are as important in establishing the individual in a trade as they are in providing employment. The agent, whether father, uncle or some more distant relation, would need to be qualified by the criteria which govern the labour market - i.e. family, friendship, religion and docility. Secondly, for these factors to operate a workplace had to exist - a social field in which these factors could be implemented. The closure of Palmer's in 1934 meant that a prerequisite for such action had gone. Without Palmer's the adolescent expectations of male school leavers could not even be begun to be realized.

Unemployment figures for the year 1933, provide a useful starting point for understanding attitudes towards paid employment for females in Jarrow. 1933 was the year in which unemployment reached its height of 7,179 people registered as such. Of this number 6,469 were men and only 192 women. The remainder consisted of 380 boys and 137 girls.³ Though the Anomalies Act of 1931 removed a number of married women from the unemployment statistics, the disproportion between registered males and registered females indicates that most adult women who were married did not consider themselves as likely to fill the wage-earning role. Only Vicky Lathan of

3. Borough of Jarrow: Annual Report of the Health Department (1933); p.20 (TWRO: T28/55)

my married female informants worked during this period. She was the wage-earner for the household. Her husband had been badly injured in a gas attack during the First World War. With such physical disabilities he was unable to sustain regular work. Furthermore, he left the Army without claiming a pension. The public relief money he received was insufficient to support a family of twelve children. Vicky Lathan, therefore, was family breadwinner, not as of right but rather by default, since her husband was unable to act the role of provider.

Attitudes towards women seeking paid employment are revealed in a lengthy and bitter correspondence between the local branch of the A.U.E.W. and the Deputy Acting Returning Officer for Jarrow over the issue of recruitment of casual labour for the 1923 General Election. In this year, Jarrow was reported to have more people receiving relief payments than for any other town of similar size in England. Out of a population of 36,000, 6,000 were receiving dole and 23,000 Poor Law relief.⁴

The A.U.E.W. protested against the employment of unmarried women to staff polling stations on election day. While not all the acrimony of the correspondence was concerned with this point, the mention of it is significant. The A.U.E.W. demanded that preference for the unemployed should prevail in the matter of selection. When criticizing the Returning Officer for employing unmarried women, the implication was that unmarried women could not be 'unemployed' in any real sense of the term. Similarly, the Returning Officer, in

4. Borough of Jarrow: Annual Report of the Health Department (1923); p.5 (TWRO: T28/53)

defending his actions did not suggest that this was the situation of the unmarried women he had employed. He asserted that 70% of those hired for the day were unemployed and that the rest were skilled staff necessary to supervise the operation of the polling stations. He did not claim that the unmarried women were skilled staff. What this correspondence reveals is that for the A.U.E.W., unmarried women, even if skilled, even if unemployed, had no right to claim casual work of this nature in preference to an unemployed man.⁵

This 'no-right-to-work' categorization of young, unmarried women is defined by their ascribed position within the cultural system. Education for girls beyond the age of 14 was not circumscribed by the necessity to secure an apprenticeship as it was for male school-leavers. It was limited by the notion that such education would not be put to good use. Since education was (and is) widely held in Jarrow to only have a functional benefit in terms of securing a higher-paid or 'better' job, an extension of it would be of no value for females whose ascribed role was to be housewife and mother. Nevertheless, Amanda Jardine, who married in 1930 and whose children were all born in that decade was at pains to point out to me that her daughters (four) had all been educated until they were sixteen. This was probably a consequence of her involvement with the Labour movement (she was a member of the Women's Section from 1938 and later a councillor), rather than her belief in a woman's right. Lisa Wear, on the other hand, educated her three children, including her two daughters, to university level. Her belief was that her children had a

5. Borough of Jarrow: 1923 General Election Papers (TWRO: T113/6)

right to such education - if they wanted it - regardless of gender. She was highly critical of parents who remove their children from school at the earliest opportunity in order for them to become wage-earners.

For unmarried women, there was an obligation to find work in order to make a financial contribution to the household. When employed, girls would be able to pay for their own 'keep' as part of the natal family. Martin Ennew asserted that two of his sisters (from a family of 10) had to enter domestic service, so as not to drain the limited family finances. Leaving home to enter domestic service did not mean that a daughter's obligations to her family were forgotten. Amanda Jardine found employment at Haggerston Castle in Northumberland. Her entire wages and the 'perks' such as rabbits and butter she received were sent home regularly. Though in other establishments she found the fringe benefits not so frequent, she continued to send her wages to the natal home until the week before she was married. At that point, she gave up work to become a housewife and so never benefitted financially in any direct sense from her employment.

This one example demonstrates the main characteristics of female employment in this period. A girl left school in order to make a contribution towards the family purse. Her work would continue until terminated by marriage. Thus such employment was to be temporary. In Liz Kemp's case, as has already been noted above, it was terminated by the death of her mother and the need for her to become a surrogate maternal figure. The force of this ascribed role expectation for defining the woman in Jarrow is clearly demonstrated here. She was the main wage-earner in the family at that time. She worked as a shop assistant and earned £2 a week whereas, on public relief scales, her father only received only 9s. a week

for her as housekeeper. Material considerations were here overridden by a family obligation defined by the fact that she was the eldest daughter.

Domestic service, shop work and clerical work provided the main outlets for female employment in the period. There was no equivalent here of the labour market which male workers entered. This is partly because female work was involved with service and administrative industries and hence was not bound in the short term to the vicissitudes of a trade cycle. Family connections and friendships were significant sometimes however. Julie Farrington found employment as a shop assistant through her father's connections in the town. As noted earlier, her brother, Nick, had been found work in a shop by the same means. A second factor was that marriage for a woman invariably terminated her employment. Then she left the transient world of employment to enter the permanent state of homemaker.

The period between leaving school and marriage for all people in Jarrow was, therefore, indicative of the gender role expectations within the cultural system. For males, this time was when they might serve an apprenticeship and prepare themselves for the later requirement of being breadwinner for a family. Thus the working life chances of males were largely determined before marriage. Once established in a trade, a man would be so defined until retirement or death. If he did not serve an apprenticeship, he would be defined as 'labourer' for the rest of his life.

For a girl, paid employment never became the dominant factor in her identity. It was a transient thing, which once marriage was entered she never came back to. Eileen Baker gave up work in 1914 when she married and never took up paid employment again. She did say that if she had had the

opportunity to work in the 1930s, she would have done so. This was only because her husband Eddie was unemployed. Had she worked, it would have been as breadwinner for the family, instead of her husband, rather than in her own right.

(ii) The Family and Jarrow in the 1930s

The ideal operation of the sexual division of labour required that the wife/mother remained at home in the domestic sphere, maintaining the household and rearing children while the man left the home to work for money to support the family. In the previous section, it has been demonstrated that attitudes towards paid employment in the stage between leaving school and marriage, are reflective of that division. A woman sought short-term employment in order to make a contribution to her natal household. A man sought security in a trade in order to fulfill his role as provider. The economic maintenance of the family was his sole responsibility. Oakley has suggested that this was a recent development in English society. In the seventeenth-century, when married

'.....women as well as men were expected to carry on with productive work - whether in agriculture, in textiles, or in some particular trade.it was not the duty of the husband to support the wife, nor was it the duty of the husband to support the children' (1976; p.21).

This she argues was representative of pre-industrial society. The industrial revolution was important in changing this.

'In the new order, work was separate from family life: an activity performed away from the home for its monetary return and not for itself' (ibid; p.33).

The establishment of the Palmer company in Jarrow emphasized this separation of work within the family. The shipbuilding industry, requiring heavy industrial labour which was seen as appropriate for males, had no demand for

female labour. Since it was the major source of employment in Jarrow, the family unit became heavily dependent on the success of the male in securing paid employment for its survival.

This dependence led to much public debate in the 1930s about the viability of 'love on the dole'. Most criticism centred around the irresponsibility of men who entered marriage without a guarantee of employment. Calling for 'those in authority' to stop 'marriage on the dole', a correspondent wrote to a local newspaper asserting that:

'There are scores of young girls and lads in their teens, parading the streets of Shields with children, all at public expense, and having a better time than those who have to find money for them and their families' (S.S.G.: 11/3/32).

Such behaviour, it was claimed, would lead to poor physique and poor intellect. Young women were encouraged to enter domestic service and young men not to marry.

A lengthy correspondence in the letter columns of the South Shields Gazette followed. One writer defended young people who, he claimed, were 'the butt of older people' (S.S.G.: 14/3/32). Another argued that the government could not legislate against rights derived from nature (i.e. to marry, to reproduce) but wanted the state to advise and educate about the difficulties involved. It was a female writer who addressed the question of male responsibility most directly:

'To all young men, I would say avoid marriage until you can keep a wife.

'You have no right to bring babies into the world when you have no means of supporting them' (S.S.G.: 26/3/32).

The male responsibility for supporting the family unit is clearly delineated here. If the male lacked the wherewithal to support, provide for and maintain a family, then he should not enter marriage. It is unclear, however, what the effects of the depression were on the incidence of marriage in Jarrow. Only Steven Kemp stated that he deferred marriage because of

unemployment - 'a question of standards', he asserted. He had seen a whole generation of his contemporaries 'deteriorate - deteriorating physically and mentally in every way'. The responsibilities of marriage in circumstances where he could not be the provider, would have led to his personal deterioration.

Nor is it clear whether or not the depression led to a decline in the birth rate in Jarrow. Over the inter-war period as a whole, the annual birth rate declined, though it remained higher than that of England and Wales as a whole (see Appendix 1).

Whatever the effects of unemployment on the incidence of marriage and the birth rate in Jarrow, it is apparent that the male capacity to enact the role of provider was circumscribed throughout the whole inter-war period. The closure of Palmer's shipyard meant that for the foreseeable future, the male role would be redundant within the family context. Periods of slack in industrial activity had always been a part of the natural order. In such times, when the male earning capacity had been restricted, the family coped and survived until the upswing in trade brought prosperity to the unit. As the 1930s demonstrated for Jarrow, the natural order of the town was never to return.

As a starting point for understanding the operation of the family unit in the unemployment of the 1930s, I begin with an observation from Priestley's English Journey:

'Wherever we went, there were men hanging about, not scores of them, but hundreds and thousands of them' (1934; p.34).

Priestley was describing Jarrow in 1933, the year of peak unemployment in the town. What he described was the perceived idleness of unemployed men. This image of streets full of men, wasting day after day of their time, their labour unwanted, their workplaces closed, is the hallmark of the 1930s. Many

informants recall those days in similar terms. The unemployed at the street corners. Every street had their corner with perhaps twenty men standing there. 'All you could see was groups of men'. They might be waiting outside the newspaper office for the racing results to claim the winnings of their 2d. or 3d. bets. The corner groups:

'walked the town. (They might) see one corner end coming this way. Another coming the other way. (The unemployed) walked for miles and miles around the town, to South Shields, to Boldon Colliery'.

Tim Newell recalls that there was nothing for the men to do but

'stand at the top of Ormonde street - crowd of us. Talk about our woes and troubles. There was different crowds at different parts..... Some at bottom of Ferry street. Stand talking until dinnertime then go back and get fed'.

This comment provides the key to understanding the behaviour of unemployed men in this period. At dinnertime and teatime, the men returned home for a meal. While their days were spent in idleness, they left the house as if they were employed. This is not to say that the men rigidly followed a pattern of timekeeping which corresponded with their normal working day. In principle they observed two of characteristics of male behaviour relating to gender role expectations. Firstly, the 'activity' of unemployment was an extra-domestic event (as paid employment was) and secondly, they returned home at mealtimes (as they did when working). This accepted image of unemployment in the 1930s was a consequence of the sexual division of labour.

It was reinforced by the confinement of women's work to the domestic sphere. Though the fulfillment of the male role was constricted by external circumstances, the obligations and responsibilities of the female role continued. There was still housework to be done, meals to prepare, clothes to be washed and repaired, children to rear. Most of this activity

took place within the home. The domestic architecture of the period meant that 'home' was often a 'house' in a building divided into tenements. While modern-day use of the word 'house' refers to a building with its own separate entrances and facilities (toilets, water supply, etc.), in the 1930s it referred to what would now be called a flat or a bedsitter. Such a 'house' would share common facilities with others in the same building - such as toilets, water supply (in the back yard), a back yard entrance and a street entrance. According to the 1921 Census, 43.7% of families in Jarrow lived in one- and two-roomed houses (Mess: 1928; p.77). This meant that

'The lot of the housewife was extremely arduous. Cramped accomodation required constant tidying and cleaning, all laundry had to be washed by hand, water had to be heated and food cooked over a coal stove and there were no nursery facilities for children' (McIntyre: 1980; p.138).

All these activities were considered appropriate for women alone. Eileen Baker's husband, Eddie, scrubbed floors, baked bread, looked after the children. This was on a 'helping hand' basis. The wife/mother was supreme in the domestic environment. Eddie's assistance was not mandatory. Friday night was Eileen's 'night out' when she went to the cinema with her sister while Eddie remained at home with the children. What cannot be implied from this is that some alteration of the male and female roles was effected. It is probably more representative of aspiration towards the fulfillment of the relationship of gender roles as 'equal but different'. In this instance there are two life-partners cooperating in attempting to maintain the family unit. While affection may have motivated Eddie's act of 'minding the children' on a Friday night to enable Eileen to have a 'night off', and it implies that she was entitled to an evening of recreation, it was not a predetermined part of male-female relations in

marriage. Eileen made a contribution to the family income by scrubbing floors (6d. a time) and taking in washing (2s. a week). She would have taken paid employment on a regular basis if it had been available. This was not an aspiration to be the wage-earner of the family, but merely because Eddie's capacity was constrained by the lack of work in Jarrow.

Significantly, Eddie Baker gave assistance to Eileen in the performance of her work as a woman within the confines of the domestic territory. To have become wholly responsible for the children, for example, in order to relieve the burden on his wife would have been unacceptable because

'..... (a) fellow would have been ridiculed if he had of went out with a pram in those days'.

And the 'pram' may be taken as symbolic. To arrive at the corner-ehd, with the children of the family entrusted to one's care would have invited ridicule which would have reinforced the failure associated with unemployment. Thus, the cramped conditions of the domestic architecture of the period and the rigid segregation of gender role expectations within the family meant that when unemployment came to Jarrow, the man was pushed onto the streets. Within the home there was no functional or meaningful role for him to fulfill. Even if he kept pigeons or had an allotment, or a cabin in which to do woodwork, these would be located outside the domestic environment. The male role becomes a parody of the normal pattern of duties and expectations: in the morning men go to the market, looking for work; they play marbles on corner-ends; they go to the staithes to collect coal spilt from the wagons on their way to load the colliers; they make small bets and spend the winnings - either on a drink or bring it home to their wife; some cobble shoes for extra money. Each day the world they entered was not the male world, but

merely a shadow of it.

What those who were children remembered most about the 1930s is the struggles of their mother. As the central pivot of family life, they recall their mother's 'hard times'. She was the one responsible for family welfare, the management of the household economy, emotional support. What they see is the multitude of small decisions she had to make on their behalf. By contrast, the father is a more distant figure. Even when unemployed, the degree of interaction between himself and the children is not so intense as that between the mother and her children.

Informants remembered most often, how well-fed they were. Though Martin Ennew wryly observed:

'..... you were full - but it was an ill-balanced diet. I was never hungry..... That's all I wasn't - I was raggy and all that like'.

John Oxberry disagreed pointing to the long life that he and all his siblings had enjoyed as evidence of the quality of his diet as a child. Informants generally thought they were better-fed in the 1930s than in the present. Part of this assessment was a reflection on their mother's capacity to provide good and nourishing meals. On the other hand, there may be some substance to the claim since most food in that period was only obtainable as fresh food. The lack of refrigerating facilities meant that most butchers, for example, slaughtered on their own premises. Consequently at certain times it was possible to buy very good cuts of meat cheaply. Rather than lose money entirely by allowing meat to deteriorate, butchers preferred to cut their losses. Thus Eileen Baker:

'..... used to go to the butcher's to get a sixpenny parcel. A bit sausage. A chop. Bit steak. Not the same every week. Sometimes a bit liver. Whole lot put together

with potatoes and onions on top made a good meal. We never wanted'.

The mother of the 1930s was the status-bearer of the 'respectability' of the family. This 'respectability' was measured by how well she cared for her home and her children. Opinions of Eileen Baker as a mother are high amongst other informants. Her house was well-kept. Her children were well-fed and clean. This point she makes herself:

'..... (The) kids were never untidy. Always went to school tidy. Father used to cobble their shoes'.

To achieve this, Eileen put the children to bed at six o' clock every evening. Then she heated water and hand-washed their only clothes. They were left to dry overnight. In the morning she rose at six to iron them.

Lisa Wear said that there were three sins a husband could inflict upon his wife: 'unfaithfulness, drunkenness and, worst of all, meanness'. Meanness was the major sin because a mean husband would limit the amount of money a wife had for her household budget and thus directly affect her capacity to operate efficiently in her role as a mother. The implications of this are that of the two parts of a woman's role, the maternal took precedence over the wifely.

Unfaithfulness would not imply a criticism of a woman as a sexual partner. What it illustrated was the limitless sexual appetite of her husband. Drunkenness was seen by informants as a male fault exacerbated by the heavy industrial labour in which they were engaged. For workmen employed in such trades, a propinquity for drink was seen as a natural consequence. Amanda Jardine said that her husband was 'never well off' because

'.....he was in the black squad where they made the money but drank. Never mind I didn't get the money I should have'.

Nevertheless, she prided herself on the fact that though

she struggled to bring up her family she had succeeded, whereas 'other families..... don't want to know and just let themselves go'.

The restrictive effect of a husband's drinking points to the resentment against meanness in husbands. Meanness in a husband constricts a woman's ability to fulfill her gender role as a wife and mother. The key part of this gender role was concerned with reproduction - the reproduction of social relations through the rearing of children. Within the family, the male role was concerned with providing for the maintenance of the reproductive unit. This the male did by receiving wage payment through his involvement in the productive process. What the husband/father brought home from his extra-domestic activity was not a personal wage for himself alone but a family wage to be used in support of the reproductive unit. Women in Jarrow, such as Eileen Baker considered that part of this was her own wage, rightful payment to enable her to fulfill her role as overseer of the process of reproduction.

It is the Means Test which provides statutory validation of this concept of the family wage. All persons living within the same household were, for Means Test purposes, considered as belonging to the same 'family'. Thus parents' pensions, childrens' income were defrayed from the family assessment. From informants' point of view, one effect of the application of Means Test rules was the break-up of the family. Nigel Marwood claimed that the break-up came because single men in order to claim unemployment benefit had to leave home and live in lodgings. The Means Test had in his opinion, a negative effect on the family:

'..... it broke all homes up - not only in Jarrow but in Tyneside'.

Martin Ennew asserted one effect of the poverty was that people migrated from the town. In his family, it was his

sisters who left:

'Your sister had to go down to London. Work (as) a domestic servant twelve and fourteen hours a day for ten shillings a week. You had to. You lived in two rooms. there were ten of you. Your mother couldn't afford to keep you'.

This last comment, the reference to a mother maintaining responsibility for the domestic budget, exemplifies the day-to-day juggling of the family finances she was involved in.

Responsibility for the material well-being of the family was only one aspect of a mother's role. She was also the chief agent of socialization within the family. In contemporary society - according to many informants - it is a mother's presence which is lacking. Liz Kemp's observation that she 'just thought it's nice if your mother's there', implies that only a mother who remains within the domestic environment can sustain the moral authority of her role. This was a common attitude amongst female informants. Even Vicky Lathan, who was the breadwinner in her family, felt that after work, she should be at home 'with the bairns'. Ann Ingram was more explicit, criticising working-mothers as materialistic and hence inconsiderate in the upbringing of their children.

From such comments the significance of the woman in the home in the 1930s is appreciated. The mother is seen as a figure who binds the family together - particularly the children to herself. 'Family feeling has changed', Joan Goodson asserted. What this meant was that the happy days of home life when 'we all sat round the table together' (as Liz Kemp observed) or when 'you were all in the house doing things' in preference to each individual satisfying his own desires, has gone. The indiscipline amongst children, the lack of respect for elders were all seen as a consequence of the mother's absence from the home. On the other hand male informants such as John Oxberry regretted that men no longer

wielded strong discipline in the home. Nick Farrington likewise saw himself as a dispenser of discipline within the household, a role which a younger generation of fathers no longer exercised in his view.

The system of gender role allocation in Jarrow was formed in the prosperous days of the town towards the end of the nineteenth-century. The end of the migrant flow after 1890 gave it a continuity through time which was considered by its informants to be a testimony to its moral rectitude. It survived the periodic slumps in trade which followed a boom and which temporarily inhibited the male capacity to be a provider for the family. In the 1930s in Jarrow, the temporary lull in shipbuilding activity at Palmer's turned into a permanent cessation when the company was bought up by National Shipbuilders Security (N.S.S.) Ltd. in 1934. By that time, however, the male role as wage-earner had been largely undermined within the system. Throughout the inter-war period, the unemployment rate in Jarrow was never less than 50%. The family unit with its rigid separation of male and female work roles could no longer operate effectively.

The 'generous system of unemployment insurance' of the 1920s (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.66) while it revealed the difficulties a man had in being able to secure a place in the productive process, obscured the significance of the male role as family wage-earner. Unemployment benefit and 'transitional payments' still provided a man with money for his family. The implementation of the 1931 Anomalies Act restricted the period of statutory right to unemployment benefit to 26 weeks and those requiring relief thereafter were to apply for transitional payments and undergo a means test under the auspices of the local Public Assistance Committee (P.A.C.).

It is the form of payment by the P.A.C. in Jarrow which was important. Public relief was paid in the form of vouchers which could be exchanged for household goods at specified shops and stores. This meant that control of the family finances - limited though they were - was in the hands of the woman of the family. Money payments would have left such control in the hands of the man and hence allowed some semblance of the situation where the male was a provider. Voucher payment inverted the accepted relation of dependency between male and female within the family.⁶

This intervention by the state to maintain the family unit emphasized that while reproductive activity (the female preserve) was considered essential, the productive activity of the male was not. Thus men in Jarrow were faced by a double redundancy: firstly as members of the productive process and secondly as underwriters of the reproductive one. What the depression did in Jarrow was emphasize that superfluity of the male and make clearer the importance of the female - as manager of the reproductive cycle.

The instrumental stress of this analysis disregards the expressive quality of family life in Jarrow at this time. I have already noted in this section that by the 1930s, the

6. The popular name for this system of relief in Jarrow was 'the pineapple'. Allegedly, women who had bought all the necessary goods for the family purchased a tin of pineapple chunks or slices for themselves as a 'treat'. A frequent criticism of the voucher system was that the list of specified goods which could be 'bought' from the store did not include cigarettes. At that time, cigarettes were considered a male luxury. Thus, their exclusion from the list reinforced the superfluous position of the male.

family as a unit had acquired a continuity through time which thirty or forty years earlier it would have lacked. At that time, many families in Jarrow would have as their founding figures men and women who were expatriate from other parts of the country. They had left their natal families behind and had come to Jarrow and founded their own. Consequently few families in Jarrow would have encompassed more than two generations. By 1930, three generation families with a history of sixty years were an integral part of the system.

The family, with its many branches of kin - consanguineal and affinal - were a potential source of comfort and support to its members. I have already shown in the last chapter how family relationships played an important role in allocation of work in the productive process. A similar process operated in the woman's world; Eileen Baker's mother-in-law allowed her to live rent-free in her house during the First World War when Eddie was in the army. Vicky Lathan's parents helped her with gifts of food. Gillian Newell's parents were similarly supportive. At births it was women of the family who assisted the midwife. They also participated at funerals and supported others when sickness threatened.

Most significantly, the family was considered a private area within civil society. A place which the wife/mother maintained and in which tranquility and peace were ideally supposed to reign in contrast to the noisy disorder of the public world. The establishment of the Means Test brought the intrusion of the state into that private area. People were subject to 'the indignity of a prying enquiry into their domestic circumstances' (Branson and Heinemann: 1971; p.24). While the depression of the 1930s brought in large numbers of skilled workers who had never faced a quasi-Poor Law examination before (ibid; p.23), it was the principle of such

intrusion which was resented. In addition, the fact that right of entry that Relieving Officers possessed was coupled with the authority to order the sale of 'unnecessary' items of household furniture meant that the Means Test gave these intruders the right to interfere with a household's mode of expression.

Chapter 3

Palmer, Religion and Politics

The political system of Jarrow is the concern of this chapter. The approach will be thematic, assessing the impact of factors such as Catholicism, the Labour movement and Charles Mark Palmer on the political consciousness of the town.

(i) The Palmer Legacy

While the town of Jarrow had been in existence as a settlement since Anglo-saxon times, since 1852 the town had borne the stamp of Palmer. Though the town would have probably have grown and developed without the establishment of the shipbuilding industry, the dominance of the company had a major influence in determining its character. This domination was not limited to the economic sphere. Palmer and the company were important influences in the political sphere as well.

Palmer became the first mayor of Jarrow in 1875, the year in which the borough was incorporated. He only held office for a few weeks as he had recently been elected Liberal MP for North Durham (which included Jarrow). In 1884, when the Jarrow division was created, he became the member and held the seat until his death in 1907.

He did not hold the seat without opposition. The seat of 1892 when he was faced with a Labour candidate - E. Dillon Lewis - a London solicitor, demonstrates his influence on the town. His candidature was promoted by the Hebburn and Felling miners. He found little support in Jarrow (Wilkinson: 1939; pp. 112-113). The Palmer influence was considerable in the town and he received an endorsement from Robert Knight,

secretary of the Boilermakers' Society (Pollard: 1951; p.162). This represented an alignment of the leadership of a craft union (i.e. the Boilermakers) with an employer (Palmer) and reflected the adoption of the economic and political outlook of the middle classes by the skilled trade unions (ibid; p.162).

The town council was also dominated by Palmer concerns. Malcolm Dixon, the general manager of the company, claimed (in 1905) that

'We pay one-sixth of the rates of Jarrow. Every time the Council, or Education Authority, or the Board of Guardians spends £1 we pay three-sevenths of it. I mention this to show how largely interested we are in local expenditure, and how necessary it is that we should have greater control over it' (quoted in Wilkinson: 1939; p.107).

This control was sustained by the fact that the company's general manager, the secretary and the chief cashier were all on the Town Council (ibid).

Apart from his personal charisma as a successful mid-Victorian entrepreneur, Palmer had great influence in the town. Firstly, through his position as the town's MP; secondly, through the town council - members of which were his own employees and on which he served as alderman after 1875; and thirdly through the company, of which he remained chairman and managing director until 1893. Craft unions such as the Boilermakers' Society supported him as did the Catholic Church and consequently the Irish nationalists in the town.

Furthermore, Palmer early in his career, established mechanisms for the reproduction of his own ideals in Jarrow. The Jarrow Building Association, formed by works officials in 1860 built 200 non-tenement houses for foremen and skilled workers (ibid: 1939; p.73). The purpose of the association was to encourage home ownership. This was so successful that in the 1870s and 1880s, Jarrow had more property owners than any other town of comparable size in the country (Dougan:

1975; p.27). Payment for the houses was deducted from employees' wages by the company. The Mechanics' Institute opened in 1864 by Palmer was another attempt to forward the notion of self-help through education.

Unfortunately, it is only possible to outline the extent of Palmer influence in the day-to-day organization of Jarrow. That Jarrow was a company town cannot be doubted. However Palmer company records are not available for examination. This is because Palmer's never went into liquidation. While many of its papers were destroyed in the 1930s, others are in the hands of private companies. Thus while it is outwardly apparent that Palmer represented the archetypal Victorian paternalistic entrepreneur - detailed evidence is not available to illustrate this claim.

The effects of these efforts may be best understood by considering Nick Farrington's testimony. His father Brian was a time-served joiner who had been an apprentice at Palmer's. In the 1920s, Brian Farrington started his own business as a jobbing builder (i.e. repairing houses). The family rented a Palmer house in Potter Street. Much of Brian's business was the repair of houses owned by the Palmer company (until the closure of Palmer's). He was never unemployed during the inter-war period. As observed previously, he was able to use his own connections as a small businessman to find shop work for Nick and his sister Julie. Later Nick was apprenticed in his father's business.

The family political tradition, which Nick Farrington followed was Tory. Thus the Farrington family never supported the Jarrow March which was seen as a Labour device. Nick Farrington's attitude to life he summarized as:

'Own your own home. Do your own thing. Don't rely on the fellow next door or the fellow across the road. Self-reliant and all that sort of thing'.

Such notions of self-help and independence form a large part of the cultural fabric of this society. They are representative of the dominant ideology which stresses the value of individual self-help. While it is clear that there is a conflict between the paternalism promoted by the Palmer dominance of Jarrow and such individualism, it is also apparent that for the cultural system within the town Charles Mark Palmer was the agency for the transmission of such ideas. To begin with his industrial success made his person a manifestation of the correctness of such notions. Then his artefacts such as the Mechanics' Institute and the Jarrow building Association played an important part in their cultural reproduction.

In the next three sections, consideration will be given to two factors which are significant in understanding the cultural system. Their presence is directly attributable to the establishment of Palmer's shipyard.

(ii) The Social Geography of Jarrow

The social geography of Jarrow was determined largely by the activities of the Palmer company. To what extent this was a result of housebuilding by the company, it is difficult to say. Certainly, the company built houses for skilled workers and foremen. Given, however, the pre-eminence of the craft ethos in the shipbuilding industry, only a minority of the skilled workers could have been housed by this means.

The exact details of this activity, the process of selection and the criteria of self-selection cannot be entirely known for the reasons given in the previous section. Data used to describe the social geography of the town comes, therefore, from informants.

The framework for this description was provided by Steven Kemp. He described the characteristics of each of the six political wards within the municipal boundary. Such an analysis stemmed from Kemp's lifetime interest in politics and from his experience as a town councillor in the late 1930s and during the Second World War. His framework is retained because of the important connections which can be made between social characteristics and political behaviour which will form part of the analysis of the rise of the Labour Party later in this chapter.

Steven Kemp provided the most comprehensive account of the town's social geography. He related much of his description to the occupational characteristics of the ward residents. Others, during the course of interviews, supplied information which will be used to supplement this.

A map of Jarrow as delineated by Steven Kemp can be found in Appendix 2. Each of the six political wards has been superimposed over the map. The characteristics of each ward as described by Kemp are as follows:

- (a) North Ward: this was the area closest to Palmer's shipbuilding yard. In this area lived many of the skilled craftsmen who worked in the shipyard. The proximity of the Mercantile Dry Dock Co. meant that within this area there were men who normally worked there. This ward had a population of 4,799 in 1929. This was a population density of 111.6 persons per acre with 0.47 rooms per person.¹ As one of the oldest districts in the town, housing conditions were exceedingly bad.

1. Housing statistics are taken from Borough of Jarrow: Annual Report of the Health Department (1929); p.20 (TWRO: T28/54).

- (b) East Ward: this ward was populated by Irish labourers and men who regularly found work in the Mercantile. Adjacent to the North ward, its population density was considerably less - only 37.6 persons per acre. This, however, reflected the fact that the eastern end of the ward had no dwellings built on it. This is confirmed by noting that the ratio of rooms per person was 0.47, an identical figure to the North ward. The population of the ward was 5,109.
- (c) Central Ward: this ward contained the bulk of the Irish Catholic population in the town. The high density of population reflects the fact that it was an area composed entirely of houses and shops. 156.3 persons lived in each acre of the ward with a rooms per person ratio of 0.54. Altogether 5,626 people lived in the ward.
- (d) South Ward: of the 5,296 people who lived in this ward, many were shipyard workers. Some tradesmen lived in this ward. They were resident in the southerly part of the ward, across the railway line. This ward also encompassed agricultural land, so the figure of 20.3 persons per acre made it the least densely populated ward in the town. The rooms per person ratio is more indicative of the true state of housing here. The figure of 0.73 rooms per person makes it an overcrowded area - though better than all other wards except the Grange ward. The insanitary nature of conditions in the ward is demonstrated by the tuberculosis rate for 1929 which was 14.6 per thousand, representing 121 cases. The absolute number of cases was higher than for any other ward in Jarrow, though the rate was third to that of the Central (16.5) and North (15.6) wards.

- (e) West Ward: the population of 6,308 in this ward was composed mainly of skilled workers and blast furnace men. Here the elite craftsmen and foremen were housed in Palmer-built houses. Some of the streets were named after yard foremen - McIntyre, Bladen et al. Population density was 50.5 persons per acre and the rooms per person ratio was 0.61.
- (f) Grange Ward: this area was adjacent to the West ward, separated from it by the L.N.E.R. line. It was the residential area of Jarrow, where the tradespeople, the professionals and the company's higher management lived. The residential character of this area is reflected not in the persons per acre figure (42.5), but in the rooms per person ratio - 1.08, the highest in the town.

These brief descriptions of each ward illustrate the differing conditions which prevailed in each. More significant for the present purpose is an understanding of the cultural perceptions which the differences entailed.

The most frequent division in the town to which informants referred was the divide marked by the L.N.E.R. railway line. South of that line, in the Grange ward, is the area known as the 'posh end'. Quintessential of the posh end was Bede Burn Road. Here the residents - the lower middle class - formed a distinct group whose characteristics separated them from the rest of the town. As Marwrod recalled:

'Likes of us walking along Bede Burn Road, (they) used to turn their nose up at us the sedate part of town. Round our way the Central ward we were common. But there (i.e. the Central ward), they were great people, beautiful people'.

That such a geographical separation represented a difference in cultural perception, is demonstrated by the attitudes of two informants. For Martin Ennew, the poverty

of the North ward where he lived until 1938 was natural:

'Really I didn't know what poverty was until I was about sixteen. I thought it was a way of life I was fetched up with. Because everybody was the same'.

He discovered the meaning of poverty by travelling out of the area in which he lived and by making comparisons.

'I noticed things like people wearing a clean shirt twice a week. Other people worked'.

A comment from Sam Rowan, finance department clerk at the Town Hall, march treasurer, convert to the town's cause, reveals the social and conceptual distance from Martin Ennew. During the march, he was responsible for the purchase of new clothes for the men:

'..... at the Leicester Cooperative I bought 200 pairs of underpants and vests, 200 pairs of grey flannels and 200 pairs of boots and shoes I had Jock Hanlon (a Labour councillor and march leader) with me that day. Mainly because they (i.e. the march committee) said I had to go up and buy 200 pairs of Sunday working-men's boots and shoes and I didn't know what they were talking about. And I had to take him to make sure I got the right thing' (J.M.R.)

Such examples illustrate the variation in cultural experience which was partly a consequence of the social geography of the town. Despite the fact that Jarrow is popularly viewed as a one-class town (i.e. working-class), Sam Rowan could grow up in ignorance of working-class customs and mores. Similarly, despite the proximity of a lower middle-class enclave - 'over the station stairs' - it was only at the time of his late adolescence that Martin Ennew realized that the 'abject poverty' in which he lived was not the only possible way of life.

(iii) The Irish Catholics in Jarrow

The Irish Catholics 'constituted a separate group in Jarrow's social, political and religious life' according to

Wilkinson (1939; pp.101-102). Uniquely of all the migrant groups which entered the town in the nineteenth-century, the Irish Catholics have retained their identity. The size of the group - approximately 10,000 out of just over 32,000 in 1932 - made them an important force in the political life of the town. This section is concerned to understand firstly how the group managed to retain its identity, secondly how the Irish Catholics behaved as a group and finally the nature of non-Catholic evaluation of them.

The motivation for migration was as part of the general tide of Irish emigration in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. The movement had world-wide ramifications including a massive migration to the United States of America. Irish migrants to this country settled in the industrial centres of Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and the North-East. However while Mess records that the Irish in the area were not so noticeable in terms of numbers in the population as the Scottish migrants (1928; p.35), the Roman Catholic religion was the strongest religious denomination on Tyneside. In all, he estimated that Roman Catholics constituted one-eighth of the population of Tyneside and in Jarrow the proportion was higher (ibid; p.135).

In Jarrow, as in many other areas of Tyneside, the terms 'Irish' and 'Catholic' are held to be interchangeable. This probably reflects the fact that most Catholic migrants to Jarrow were of Irish origin - either directly by migrating straight from Ireland or indirectly by having migrated via Scotland.

What is significant is that on their first arrival in Jarrow, it was the Irish qualities which made the migrants more distinctive. According to the historian of Catholic Jarrow, many of the Irish migrants arrived more fluent in

Gaelic than English. They were not well-received by English, Welsh, or Scottish settlers. It was the Catholic Church which gave them a warm welcome. Nevertheless, they made their 'Irishness' felt from the beginning:

'Irish gatherings were frequent; every concert programme was made up of songs and recitations distinctly Irish, while the Irish Jig was never omitted. National games were also introduced. It is from this intense national spirit so closely linked with devotion to the Church, that Jarrow came to be referred to as 'Little Ireland' (Young: 1940; p.21).

Accusations that the 'drunken Irish' were the cause of so much disturbance and fighting in the town were refuted by Young, who claimed that the Irish only responded in self-defence, necessary because of:

'The fact that Ireland, so vigorously defended the Pope, and the additional one, that the Irish, traditionally showed opposition to English rule, combined to create a strong suspicion, and dislike for, the Irish' (ibid; p.22).

Irish support of the Papacy was in marked contrast to English support of Garibaldi and the Italian liberationists in the 1860s and no doubt was a cause of tension.

While few of my Catholic informants of Irish origin felt any allegiance towards Ireland, the Irish connection manifested itself for a long time after the settlements of the nineteenth-century. Political activity by this group was largely conducted under the auspices of the Catholic Church, rarely under the Irish label. J. O'Hanlon, a shipyard worker in Jarrow, stood as an Irish National candidate in the 1907 parliamentary by-election caused by Palmer's death. His 2,122 votes, while not the full total, did help to split the Palmer vote and secure the election of Pete Curran, the Labour candidate. Pelling has claimed that the candidacy of O'Hanlon was a sign of protest at the inaction of the Liberal government in dealing with the question of Irish home rule (1979; pp.134-135).

Steven Kemp said that following the Easter Rising of 1916,

there were some acts of minor protest in the town such as burning of hay-ricks. He also claimed that there was some support in the town for the activities of the Irish Republican Army. For non-Catholic - or more precisely non-Irish informants - the most vivid memory of racial chauvinism relates to St. Patrick's Day (March 17th). Then Catholic (= Irish) schoolchildren would halt other schoolchildren and demand to know of them whether they were 'E,I or S' (i.e. English, Irish or Scottish). If they did not reply they were set upon with 'dreadful bombaiters' (Barton: 1967; p.38). Non-Catholics recall these attacks with bitterness asserting that the rolled-up newspapers contained stones, which was denied by Peter Marwood. To non-Catholics, such behaviour was representative of the 'bigotry' of the Irish. Though John Oxberry accepted the existence of some prejudice, he claimed that the Catholic religion taught its members not to be bigoted.

It was not, in my opinion, the Irish character of these migrants which allowed them to sustain their group identity over such a long period, but the Catholic component. Even that would probably have not been sufficient to establish this Catholic identity, had it not been for the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy to England in 1850 (Young: 1940; p.12). It is likely that the migration of Irish Catholics in the 1840s to England impelled the Catholic Church to make provision for the incomers. Thus the Church was there, as Young noted, to welcome the migrants on their arrival in Jarrow (ibid; p.21). So effective was the organization that the beginnings of a Catholic educational system were made in 1858 with the opening of the Chapel Road school (ibid; p.26). In 1860, the first Catholic Church, St. Bede's was consecrated in Jarrow. The church had been built with money raised from public subscription (ibid; p.14).

This was only the beginning for the renascent Church. In the period up to the First World War, the Church secured its right to representation on numerous local government bodies such as the Board of Guardians and the Jarrow School Board. Catholic concern over education was shown in the early years of the twentieth-century. From 1904 onwards, with the end of the elected School Board system, Catholic representation in the educational affairs of the town was reduced to nil (Hunter: 1978; p.158). As a consequence of this and a later proposal in 1906 to halt the establishment of sectarian educational systems, the first outdoor demonstration by Catholics was mounted (Young: 1940; pp.40-41). In 1908, concern that Catholic children were forced to go to non-Roman Catholic schools - an issue related to the exclusion of the Catholic population from educational administration - led to the election of Ambrose Caligan, a labourer, to the Town Council. His campaign was based solely on this issue but he did not gain appointment to the Education Committee (Hunter: 1978; p.159).

During the tenure of Father Henry Mackin, parish priest of St. Bede's from 1907 to 1931, the Catholic education system was extended to seven schools (Young: 1940; p.50). Mackin was also elected to serve on Durham County Council - a position he held for sixteen years until 1934. He was a member of Durham County Education Committee, a coopted member of Jarrow Education Committee and a member of the Joint Board for the Administration of Science and Education in the University of Durham (Young: 1940; p.48). He was also responsible for the establishment of a Catholic Child Welfare Clinic. At first the clinic was run on a voluntary basis utilizing the services of the Medical Officer of Health and the Health Service Nurses. A grant from Durham County Council helped establish the clinic independently. When the Town Council later established a clinic,

its activities were absorbed and a Catholic representative was co-opted onto the Council's Committee (ibid; p.47).

The Catholic Church also played a prominent rôle in local politics. Though always standing as 'Independent', Catholic candidates 'with progressive programmes were put forward in wards where Catholics had good voting strength'. The Central ward and the North ward were those most likely to return a Catholic candidate. Furthermore, 'Non-Catholics who were likely to be more broad-minded than those in office, were given the support of the Catholic vote' (ibid; p.38). Effectively this meant alignment with the dominant Liberal and Conservative elements within the town. The rise of independent working-class representation in the early years of this century which seized the reforming initiative from the Liberal Party (Hunter: 1978; p.168) led to a change in the adoption of Catholic candidates. During Mackin's priesthood, Catholic trade-unionists were put up as candidates. This it was claimed, gained widespread working-class support in the town (Young: 1940; p.44). Whatever the value of this claim, it can be seen as a response to the growth of the Labour Party. Its main benefit for the Church was to secure the election of councillors who would raise Catholic issues in the Council Chamber.

What becomes clear from this description is the importance of the Catholic Church in maintaining group solidarity amongst the Irish community in Jarrow. The re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England provides the starting-point for this. The energetic pursuit of Catholic interests on local authority bodies was a claim to representation within the 'consensual' system of politics. A strong priest such as Father Mackin helped to sustain the self-identity of Catholics. The establishment of a Catholic educational system permitted

the reproduction of the Catholic ideology. In addition a strict application of the marriage rule forbidding Catholics to marry non-Catholics was applied. At this period, a religious ceremony was only possible if both partners had been baptized in the Catholic Church. This meant that the non-Catholic partner was required to 'turn' - i.e. agree to receive instruction and to accept the Catholic faith prior to marriage.

According to Lisa Wear, a non-Catholic, pressure to accept conversion was more likely to be applied to a woman than a man. The woman's responsibility to oversee the process of reproduction is the most important factor here. Since a woman's primary function was to socialize children and since, in this case, those children were potential members of the Catholic Church, her acceptance had to be more than nominal. For Steven Kemp, 'a militant atheist', conversion was only undertaken so that he might accede to his wife's desire to be married in church. Since he would not be responsible for inculcating the children of the marriage with the tenets of Catholicism, his lapse was less important than for a woman.

One effect of this marriage rule was to create a closely-knit community of adherents to the Catholic faith within the town. Some streets in Jarrow which contained a high proportion of Catholics, also contained a high proportion of interrelated groups. According to Peter Marwood, Stanley Street and Albion Street consisted of 90% Catholic families who were heavily interrelated. The endogamous nature of this preference related not as is more traditionally understood in anthropology to kinship links but to religious affiliation.

Thus, the activities of the Church, particularly the development of the alternative Catholic education and the imposition of a strict marriage rule, helped to sustain an idea of group identity amongst the Irish migrants: Such an

introspective group within the community attracted the attention of other members. I have already noted above that this group had two distinct, interconnected components in its character: the Irish and the Catholic. Both of these characteristics are used interchangeably by non-Catholic and non-Irish observers in their assessment of the group. English Catholics, such as Nick Farrington and Vicky Lathan established a social distance between themselves and the Catholics of Irish origin. In Vicky Lathan's case she said the difference was in 'the way you were fetched up'. One obvious manifestation of this was made over the matter of marriage. Mandatory conversion to Catholicism by a non-Catholic partner did not govern her marriage choice (her husband was a Protestant) and was not imposed upon her children - some of whom married non-Catholics.

While for Nick and Janet Farrington religious conformity was significant, affiliation was a matter of agreement between the two. Prior to their marriage, they attended each other's religious services for six months. Janet was a member of a Methodist Church. At the end of the year she 'turned' on the basis that Methodism was more barren in ritual and service than Catholicism. What this implies is that for these English Catholics, religion is much more voluntaristic in its nature than it was for the Irish migrants. Again, the Irish component may have had a reinforcing effect over the issue of marriage.

What this implies is that for Nick Farrington and Vicky Lathan, the two informants, their perception of what was important and significant in the cultural system was sufficient to distinguish them in a crucial way from the Irish Catholics. For non-Catholic observers, the Irish and Catholic components of the group also implied a different 'way of life'. Sectarian divisions such as Catholic versus Protestant are not sufficient

to explain the hostility and unease which surrounds non-Catholic assessment of the Irish Catholic group. This is demonstrated particularly by the instance of Nick Farrington (see p.79 above) who aligns himself with non-Catholics such as Dave Hankey who said that he preferred socializing in the Jarrow Conservative Club because

'In most Conservative Clubs you get to meet a better type of fellow. Better type. Conduct themselves better. Sort of fellows who buy their own house'.

This from a man who had been a miner, a critic of the miners' strike of 1928 - though he thought that the miners has been forced into it because 'the bosses wanted to reduce wages'. At that time he identified himself as a socialist. It was his experiences as a member of Jarrow Labour Party in the late '30s which changed his opinions.

Nor is it true to say that because the Irish provided the unskilled labour force for the Palmer works (Young: 1940; p.20), the non-Catholic assessment is based on a skilled workman's opinion of his labourers. In other words, the labour process and its divisions was not sufficient to explain the contradictions non-Catholics felt implicit in the behaviour and attitudes of the Irish Catholic group.

Steven Kemp recalled his father's impressions of the Irish labourers in Jarrow steelworks. His father was a skilled worker while the prime task of the Irish labourers was to remove steel from the pig-beds, a task requiring a great expenditure of physical energy. One consequence of this hard, demanding work was the premature death of many of them. Kemp's father made an association of 'brute labour' with 'brute labourer' and hence implied that the Irish were performing work for which their 'racial' character was best suited.

Such assertions leave hidden a whole range of perceptions which the English entertained about the Irish. As Chapman has

pointed out, perceptions of the Irish as wild and brutish can be traced back over a period of almost 2,000 years (1982; p.6). Thus when Irish migrants settled in Jarrow, dominant perceptions of them which were already a part of the cultural system were re-awakened by their intrusion into the urban, industrial world. It was not simply the Irish location within the labour process i.e. as unskilled labourers which suggested that they represented a different cultural ethos, it was rather the pre-existent cultural perceptions.

These perceptions of the Irish identify them as bringers of chaos. They are considered as feckless, work-shy, aggressive and drunken. Furthermore they are characterized as an archetypal example of intolerance and bigotry which is associated with their nationalism and their Catholicism.

While non-Catholic perceptions of the Irish and the Catholic religion share common ground when they are described as intolerant and bigoted, there are considerable differences in other qualities attributed to them. For example, where the Irish are seen as reckless and uncertain, their religion is seen as purposeful and determined; while the Irish are uncontrolled and disordered in their existence, the Church is seen as ordered and determined, and where Irish nationalism is exclusive and enclosing, Catholicism is seen as expansive and encroaching. Consequently, while the Irish could be dismissed as worthless or idiosyncratic, the Church is viewed with suspicion. Its most sinister aspects are emphasized and the faith of its adherents doubted.

As has been shown, the establishment of the Catholic Church in Jarrow and its behaviour in the areas of education and politics, provide some justification for opinions regarding the expansive quality of the religion. The strong Catholic element in the Jarrow Labour Party, which has sustained a

majority in the town since 1935, have contributed to a belief in the pervasive ability of the Catholic Church. The concept the Labour Party was a Catholic party is exemplified by the evidence of Sam Rowan:

'Of course, there wasn't a proper Labour Party in Jarrow at that time. The council was made up of Catholics and a few Independent Labour Party members. It was only later that a real Labour Party developed' (J.M.R.).

Many of the attitudes and opinions which can be considered typical of non-Catholic informants are demonstrated by an encounter which occurred during my research. I met Joe Aberdeen in the Jarrow Conservative Club for the purpose of receiving more information from him about the Jarrow March. The Conservative Club is seen by its members and clientele as antithetical to the Labour Club. Both are social clubs. The Labour Club follows the standard pattern for working-men's clubs in the North-East. It has a public bar (men only), a concert room and a lounge bar. Only the lounge bar is carpeted. Noise, drunkenness and general alcoholic disorder are seen as its characteristics. This is linked to the nature of its clientele - 'rough and ready' as Lisa Wear put it. Orderly, mannered behaviour is the dominant feature of Conservative Club life. All the bars are carpeted. There is a men-only bar but women can buy drinks by using the waitress service which is offered in the adjacent room. The ethos of behaviour in this club is restraint and good manners. Members, as Dave Hankey and Nick Farrington observed, were held to be self-reliant and independent.

One obvious characteristic which has predominated in the club in the past has been a marked absence of Irish Catholic members. Their appropriate drinking establishment has been the Labour Club. However, in the Conservative Club at the present-time, Aberdeen pointed that the steward and the barmaids

were Catholic, as was the club chairman. This he considered as dangerous to the integrity of the club.

In the conversation which ensued I observed that divisions existed between Catholics along political lines (i.e. Conservative and Labour). This was rejected by Aberdeen. His assertion was that affiliation to the Catholic religion would override any political alignments. To support this he gave two anecdotal tales describing Catholic behaviour. The first concerns his brother who was conscripted into the army during the Second World War. He shared a room with a Catholic. When he (the brother) vacated the room the Catholic sprinkled it with holy water as an act of purification. The second story concerns a long-term friendship Joe Aberdeen has had with a Catholic who calls him his best friend. Nevertheless, the Catholic will not enter his house despite repeated invitations from Aberdeen:

'He's been round to my house forty or fifty times. He won't come in, though. We talk at the door. It's as if I'm unclean or something'.

Several salient points emerge here. Firstly, with Aberdeen's remarks regarding the staffing and administration of the Conservative Club, there is a demonstration of the expansive nature of Catholicism. Secondly, the assertion that one's Catholic identity is deterministic in social relations to the ultimate degree is demonstrated to him by the behaviour of the Catholics in the stories. In the first, Catholic attitudes intrude into relations between two men classified as soldiers. As such they are held to be part of a larger unit (platoon, brigade and ultimately army). Hence to Joe Aberdeen, the Catholic's action in sprinkling holy water over a room he shared with a non-Catholic is a contradiction of that solidarity. In the second, the man's Catholicism intrudes on the relations of friendship and hospitality. In both cases, the implication

is that the non-Catholic is inferior to the Catholic.

Not all of these views are merely projections. Peter Marwood, a Catholic informant, said that his instructions for voting were given from the pulpit of St. Bede's Church. This, together with Young's assertion of the 'unity in the Catholic body' (1940; p.38) by which he meant to demonstrate that the Catholics were a political force in the Council elections, confirms Aberdeen's belief in the deterministic qualities of the faith. The implications for the non-Catholic observer are that to be a Catholic implies a loss of freedom of the individual to make up his own mind. Thus the faith becomes the ultimate determinant of individual loyalty and obligation rather than individual preference. Catholics who become members of such institutions as the Conservative Club are not seen as individuals but merely as instruments of the Church - the advance guard of an encroaching enemy. Of course, the ultimate restriction on personal liberty is seen in the policy of the Church with regard to contraception. Adherence to a faith which denies the individual a right to control their own fertility is often quoted to show how Catholics are restricted in the matter of personal choice by their Church.

Similarly in the two stories, the question of association with the 'unclean' is corroborated by evidence from Peter Marwood. He said that Catholics were discouraged from associating with those of a different denomination. This was particularly so in the case of the unmarried. What was being discouraged was the possibility of a 'mixed' marriage. It is in the case of such marriages that problems are seen to occur. The newly converted spouse is encompassed by the new religion to the extent of severance with the natal family. The natal family thus become outsiders by virtue of their own religious preference when associating with their in-laws.

Within this relationship, the notions of uncleanness and inferiority mingle with demonstrations of the exclusive, enclosing nature of the religion.

A major part of the criticism directed against the religion is meant to suggest that those who operate it do so flippantly and without due regard for its tenets. Much of this revolves around presumed attitudes of Catholics towards confession. From their point of view, human beings are in a constant state of sin and this burden can only be removed through the intercession of a priest. The priest acts as the only channel through which a sinful person may communicate with God. Since from this perspective, sin is so prevalent a Catholic is required to attend confession regularly, preferably once a week. After a recounting of sins, a supplicant is made to do penance and the priest gives absolution.

To non-Catholic observers, confession is seen as a perfunctory act - a weekly cleaning of the slate, achieved at no great effort. Catholics are seen as possessing an instrument which they can manipulate to relieve them of their guilt. Since the outcome of ritual is always guaranteed in advance, it is seen as possessing no moral value. Non-Catholics see themselves as being individually responsible for their own sins. For those, who adhere to a religious faith, this implies a personal relationship with their Deity - i.e. without the intercession of a priest. This notion of individual responsibility implies that it is incumbent on sinners to change their ways. Catholic confession is seen to contain nothing significant in relation to notions of retribution and punishment, nor any effective injunction to a penitent to reform. As one informant commented:

'They go to confession. Ask forgiveness. Get absolution and recite ten Hail Marys. Then they go on in the same old way'.

The sum total of these observations is a belief that Catholicism represents a different world view from that of the non-Catholic. Human behaviour when underwritten by this allegiance is held to be significantly different from what they consider to be the norm. All the assumed characteristics of the Irish - i.e. shiftlessness, laziness, drunkenness, willingness to fight, insincerity - are all negations of highly-valued beliefs of the non-Catholics. A man who drinks, or is workshy causes problems for his life-partner - his wife. He fails to fulfill his role as a husband and father. The 'failings' of the Irish Catholics are applicable firstly in terms of the poor education they receive, which is tailored to religious needs and their connection with a religion which denies them free will - in particular control over their own fertility.

What must be recognized is that for non-Catholics, members of this group are seen as agents of disorder. The disorder they bring is made manifest by the organized, purposeful determination of the Church. The Catholic creed is seen as wishing to supplant the beliefs and attitudes associated with the dominant ideology. The concept of disorder is reinforced by assertions that the Church members are in a state of personal moral disorder. While most of the characteristics of this are derived from a standard set of conceptions about the Irish, the Catholic Church is held at fault for failing to rehabilitate such behaviour.

To summarise, it should be noted that of all of the migrant groups which came to Jarrow in the late nineteenth-century, only the Irish Catholic group has retained an identity through time. While the important parts of this group identity have been transformed over time, it is still recognizable as a group. Undoubtedly current emphasis is on the Catholic

component of the identity rather than the Irish - although to outside observers the terms 'Irish' and 'Catholic' remain interchangeable. It is the presence of the Catholic Church which was important in maintaining the group. The Irish component alone would have been insufficient as the complete assimilation of the Scottish and Norfolk groups into the main culture demonstrates. Assimilation of the Irish migrants was inhibited by the establishment of the Catholic Church in Jarrow and the development of a Catholic education system which communicated the ideological constructs essential to the meaning of the group identity. The imposition of strict marriage rules with the preference expressed for a partner of the same faith, and failing that, mandatory conversion for a non-believer, secured group integrity. Such a group offered a direct challenge to the members of the main culture who saw it as threatening.

(iv) Political Consciousness and the Labour Party

The most significant transformation in the political arena during the inter-war period was the decline of the Liberals and the rise of the Labour Party. The outward expression of this is the fact that by 1939, the Labour Party had become the government-in-waiting to the Conservative government. This was not all. The change in political allegiance, as expressed in the polling booths, also involved a major change in political consciousness. It is the appreciation of this change which will be the main consideration of this section.

It is an observation of Steven Kemp which provides the beginning for an understanding of this transformation. 'In the present-day', he said,

'..... people expect to be warm, to be clothed, to

enjoy themselves, to have a happy life. Fifty years ago they didn't. Considered themselves lucky to have a happy life'.

For Amanda Jardine, who came from a Labour household, domestic service was a practical education in understanding the different expectations of rich and poor :

'..... because I realized even though I was so young how the rich people lived and how the poor struggled along to live'.

The society to which both these comments relate had been carried over from the nineteenth-century. The dominant ideology which informed it was the one which held that

'..... the classes in society and the workings of the capitalist economy were both natural in the same sense as the laws of natural sciences. Each person was assigned by God to their station in life and according to that station had certain rights and obligations' (Hunter: 1978; p.2).

Homogeneity was not the main characteristic of that system. The classes in society had different characteristics and expectations which were predetermined. The dominant view was that members of each class had to accept their predetermined lot. A person had 'to know their place' in life. Only by subordinating oneself to the 'naturally' determined criteria for one's station could harmony be achieved which would bring benefit to society as a whole. The success of this 'natural' order was witnessed by the industrial and imperial greatness of Britain in the late nineteenth-century.

Since society was composed of heterogenous groups, it was felt right and proper that all such groups should be represented in governing authorities. Local government was seen as an area in which it 'was considered just and right for any person with a 'legitimate' (i.e. vested) interest in the locality to be represented (ibid; p.276). The premise for this attitude was that the interaction of different interests in council chamber debates would 'naturally' produce a decision which represented a consensus of opinion.

Consequently when the opportunity for working-class representation on municipal authorities was made possible by the removal of property qualifications by the Municipal Corporations Act (1882), it was welcomed by Liberal and Conservative councillors. This act and the Local Government Act (1894) which did similar service for Board of Guardian elections, were seen as allowing the 'labour interest' to secure its rightful place in the conduct of local affairs (ibid; p.276).

A good account of the history of working-class representation in Jarrow until until 1921 has been provided in Hunter (1978). It is not my intention to cover this ground. It is sufficient to note that though by 1913, working-class representatives were still a minority on the council (8 out of 24), they were able to secure the election of Tyneside's first working-class mayor, joiner John Hall (ibid; p.169). There are several features of working-class activity as described by Hunter which are worthy of attention for present purposes.

To begin with, Jarrow working-class councillors in the period worked mainly within the confines of the consensual system. The programme of reform which they put forward was mainly of a pragmatic character. Hence they asked for the implementation of contract controls on council work - i.e. that trade union rates of pay and conditions of employment be applied. This measure was accepted early in Jarrow (1895) by the Liberal majority. Their concern was to distinguish between 'honest' and 'unscrupulous' businessmen. The establishment of direct works departments, the lowering of school fees and the implementation of winter relief work were all labour demands (ibid; pp.286-287). In Jarrow, the council provided relief work as a matter of course in the years prior to the First World War. The council also responded

sympathetically to requests for assistance by labourers laid off during a boilermakers' lock-out (ibid; p.168). In the immediate post-war period, though the party did not offer any candidates in the local elections of 1919 and 1920, Labour councillors were active in civic affairs. Great effort, including the enlistment of the support and advice of women's organizations, was put into the design of houses and estates to be constructed under the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1918. The Labour group took a leading role in ensuring the continuing provision of school meals and in initiating the provision of child welfare services symbolized by the opening of a Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic in September 1919 (ibid; p.175).

While the immediate intention of this activity was to expand the scope of municipal activity in response to fulfilling working-class and trade union interests within the community, its effect was more profound. By 1921, if not earlier, the representatives of the working-class in the council chambers in Jarrow (and elsewhere) had taken over the reforming initiative from the Liberals.

'Although the Liberals were still the majority party in Jarrow, they were increasingly forced into a negative position in opposing L.R.C. initiatives, and were increasingly unable to present themselves as a dynamic, reforming alternative' (ibid; p.168).

What this success represented was the ability of the Jarrow Trades Council (formed in 1871) and the Labour Representation Committee (L.R.C.)(1904) to establish independent labour representation on the town council. This independence was often qualified, however. Not all working-class councillors subscribed completely to the demands of the Labour ethos. Religion was one factor which caused disunity amongst working-class councillors. As Hunter observes:

'The working-class population of Jarrow.....contained

a considerable proportion of Irish Catholics, and the vote on the council soon revealed that even amongst those committed to independent labour representation religion thus raised was still a matter of importance in educational matters' (ibid; p.158).

Nor is it true that all working-class members of the council were L.R.C. sponsored candidates and hence committed to independent labour representation. Ambrose Caligan, a labourer, was elected to the council in 1908 on a specifically Catholic issue (ibid; p.158). S.K. Campbell, a plater, was an anti-socialist liberal who was elected to the council in 1912 definitely opposed to any increase in rate expenditure (ibid; p.167).

What established the Labour party as an independent political entity was the adoption of the constitution of 1918. The socialist basis of this constitution established the principle for the party that working-class interests were at variance with those of other classes in society. This political act undoubtedly had a galvanizing effect on the organization of the Labour party. It had, 'a certain comprehensive reality for those who accepted it. To its working-class adherents it gave a sense of purpose and pride in class consciousness; to others it afforded the consolation that they were working within the tendencies of social change' (Pelling: 1965; p.216).

The formation of a government in 1924 was an important factor in the progress of the Labour party. While the practical achievements of this government were minor in comparison to its aspirations, its very existence legitimated the viewpoint that the working-class had interests which demanded a party of its own making to be its representative.

Furthermore, the party could now claim that those interests were not merely sectional, but a part of the destined plan which would lead to a working-class triumph.

National success for the Labour movement had ramifications for local groups. For most of the 1920s, political activity in Jarrow by the Labour party was limited to contesting the occasional seat in local elections. In the years 1921 to 1928, candidates were offered in only 15 contests out of a possible 48. 1929 was the year that a major assault was launched in the local elections for control of the council. In five contested seats that year, three Labour members were returned (S.S.G.: 2/11/29). Undoubtedly their success was part of the national trend for Labour which resulted in the formation of the second Labour government. It was also the year in which the local party produced an election address 'Public Ownership of Local Services - A Paying Proposition for the People', which aimed to set the operation of local government in definite socialist context (S.S.G.: 25/10/29).

In that year, the Labour party announced that it wished to challenge the 'old moderate spirit' which had 'conducted the affairs of the borough in past years and is neither conducive to its prosperity nor the well-being of its inhabitants' (S.S.G.: 18/10/29). The 'moderate spirit' to which they referred was the ruling group on Jarrow council. With the politicization of local government which was a consequence of Labour participation, those opposed to Labour aligned themselves as such in the council chambers. This anti-Labour stance was the sum total of their party organization. They were termed 'moderates' - suggestive of the widely-held view that socialism (i.e. the Labour party) was immoderate and would be improvident in the management of municipal affairs. Frequently they were labelled 'Independent' candidates in elections. Again this was suggestive of the non-independence of Labour councillors. After the 1925 election, the M.T.N.G. writer applauded the election of W.M.

Cameron, a working-class candidate for the North ward who had stood under the Trade Union banner, in opposition to the retiring moderate councillor and a Labour candidate:

'It is all to the good that Mr. Cameron should have got to the Council in defiance of the Labour Party rather than with its support, as he goes there free to exercise his own opinion in the public interest, and not to respond to the whip of the clique which meets in the Labour rooms.....' (S.S.G.: 6/11/25).

The problem for the Labour party in Jarrow was that despite the much looser organization of the moderates, much of the town was not accessible to their influence in the 1920s. Two of the wards, the South and the Grange, were never potential Labour territory. Candidates were only offered here infrequently. Only four contests were fought in the South ward between 1921 and 1929. None resulted in a victory for Labour. Though J.R. Drummond was elected in 1932 to the seat vacated by W.G. Pearson, then National Government MP for Jarrow, he lost it again in 1935.² In the 1933 and 1934 contests, Labour candidates were unsuccessful. What made the South ward such a moderate stronghold is unclear. Certainly housing and health conditions in the ward were significantly worse than in other areas. Part of the ward did however encompass the more respectable parts of the town such as Clervaux Terrace and Croft Terrace. The presence of skilled craftsmen may also have been a significant factor in forming the ward's anti-Labour political character.

2. W.G. Pearson was the only Conservative member ever returned by the Jarrow Division (1931-1935). Charles Palmer had held the seat as a Liberal until his death in 1907. Pete Curran was the first Labour member, 1907-1910. The seat returned to the Liberals until 1918 when R.J. Wilson captured it for Labour. He was defeated in the 1931 election by Pearson who stood as a National Government candidate. Since Ellen Wilkinson's victory in 1935, a Labour member has always been returned for the seat.

In the Grange ward, the Labour party faced the Conservatism of the clerical, professional and managerial classes. Only one election was contested by the Labour party in the period up to 1935. It was this ward, more than any other which was heir to the legacy of Palmer's ideology - the cultural hierarchy which located every person with a place and station in life. 'In this district', M.T.N.G. observed, 'the Labour machine cannot gather force' (S.S.G.: 19/10/28).

While these two wards represented the mainstay of moderate power, by providing them six councillors out of a total of 18, their position was further secured by the support of the Catholic Church. The Church's control in the 1920s was secure in the Central ward where three Catholic councillors were returned regularly. This is the area of the town which was almost completely Catholic. One seat in the North ward and one in the East ward was occupied by a Catholic councillor in this period. The East ward in the 1920s returned two moderate councillors - supported by the Catholic vote. One moderate was returned regularly from the North ward. The other seat was held by a Labour representative. Thus the moderate majority on the council consisted of six councillors from moderate wards, five Catholic councillors and three moderates elected with Catholic support. This meant that of the eighteen councillors, fourteen were moderate and only four Labour.

The first real foothold for the Labour party was established in the West ward. This ward, where many of the elite skilled craftsmen of the town were housed, a Liberal tradition, another offshoot of the Palmer legacy, prevailed. It was here that the Labour party first demonstrated that it had truly taken the reforming initiative from the Liberals.

Between 1921 and 1924, Mrs. M. Thompson stood for the ward four times. During the 1922 election, the local paper had commented that

'..... there was not much behind the campaign beyond the idea which seems to obtain in the Labour Party, that the people in that part of the town are Labour' (S.S.G.: 27/10/22).

The closest Thompson came to winning was in her 1923 campaign when she was defeated by only 48 votes. A.A. Rennie's victory in 1925 was undoubtedly due in large measure to her early work. A by-election victory followed which gave a seat to S. Crooks, the Labour candidate. In the 1928 election the changing character of the ward was noted:

'In this ward the unemployed workers have had successes with Coun. Crooks and Coun. Rennie, and if they repeat this the West ward, once a stronghold of Liberalism and the steady type of people whom that description covered a score of years ago, will have gone over entirely to a new class of representation' (S.S.G.: M.T.N.G.; 22/10/26).

There was no victory for Labour that year. R. Edwards, the Labour candidate, came third, twenty votes behind Joe Symonds then standing on behalf of the Unemployed Workers Committee. The victor, W. Brown, a Jarrow Ratepayers Association candidate had an overall majority over the other two candidates. It was eight years before the ward became secure for Labour. While J.W. Thompson won a seat in the 1929 election, Crooks lost the following year. Only in 1933 was the Labour dominance finally sustained with the success of G.A. Rose over W.M. Stalker the retiring moderate councillor.

As an area of the town which had a strong liberal tradition, support for the Labour party was not unexpected. As observed above by the beginning of the 1920s, the Labour Party had already ousted the Liberals from their position as the champions of reform. The transition from Liberal to Labour simply followed a nationwide trend.

The road to success for Labour began in 1929. Joe Symonds

defeated the Catholic councillor, M.S. Corr in the North ward. E.A. Trainor, defeated R. Andison, former moderate mayor, in the East Ward. She was the first woman councillor for Jarrow and in the following year her husband took a seat in the ward to join her. Significantly all three victors were Catholics. Both Symonds and E.A. Trainor have been described as 'devout' in the pursuit of their religion. It was not until 1931 that the Catholic stronghold in the Central ward was challenged. J.R. Pinder defeated J. McGrath, a long-serving Catholic councillor. Progress was halted in 1932 when P. Callaghan managed to stave off the Labour challenge. In 1934, D.F. Riley retained the seat won in 1931 following an even more significant victory earlier that year. In the County Council elections, Riley had defeated Canon Mackin by 21 votes. This marked the end of overt Catholic participation in local politics.

This account of Labour's journey to its 1935 victory demonstrates how significant cultural factors were. Up to 1935, the working-class of the South ward remained largely unmoved by its allure. This may have been because of the strong Catholic involvement in the movement. This ward was largely Protestant. This opposition between a Catholic leadership of a working-class movement and a Protestant working-class may have reinforced the legacies of Palmer which engendered the latter's conservatism. For Peter Marwood, however, the 'divided society' meant divisions between Catholics. Mackin, 'a powerful man, a politically motivated priest' who created a Catholic Party and forged the alliance with 'the die-hard Protestant Tories'. He and his assistant priests dictated voting from the pulpit. Mackin represented the 'Bede Burn Road type'.

It was, according to Marwood, Symonds and Scullion who effected the conversion of the Catholics to socialism. Both

Catholics, they worked in the slum areas of the town - helping people who were faced with evictions. They argued the case for those making claims on public relief. They were always accessible, available to help and support.

Marwood also recalled the problems that Labour party canvassers had in the Catholic section. His father, who was active in the party,

'..... had buckets of water thrown over him. People spat in his face..... People said to him "You're a Catholic, you shouldn't be canvassing against a Catholic party"'.

In the end, the Labour Party swept the town.

'In the slum area, all loyal Labour supporters - all had photographs of candidates in windows'.

The success of the Labour Party in winning the Catholics to their cause, poses some interesting questions. While the most significant factor in the success is that it was carried out largely by Catholic leaders (principally Scullion, Symonds and Riley), how a conversion was achieved from support for a hierarchical system (i.e. Catholicism) to support for a (theoretically) egalitarian system is unclear. Amanda Jardine in trying to explain this said:

'For me they came together. Christ didn't have riches and we didn't have a lot'.

For Amanda Jardine and Joe Symonds allegiance to the Labour Party did not represent a diminution of their faith but a strengthening of it. Of course, the next obvious question is to what extent has Catholicism shaped attitudes within the Labour Party itself. The presence of so many Catholics in one party must have had a considerable effect on its form and content. Unfortunately these questions cannot be answered here, only posed.

Crucial to the success of the Labour Party was the closure of Palmer's shipyard:

'It was the end of Jarrow. It was beyond thinking. One

of the main things for the strengthening of the Labour Party was N.S.S. (National Shipbuilders Security Ltd.). The closure had a deep political effect on the town'.

The end of Palmer's shipyard was an object lesson in the workings of capitalism. More specifically it showed the variance of interests between workers and profit-makers:

'N.S.S. only wanted to keep open viable, productive yards. They didn't think of the people that would be out of a job.... Capital never thinks of the harm it does to people..... The capitalist system world over, has no sympathy for the unemployed man..... it makes its money at the expense of the ordinary working-man..... They've kept the ordinary working man at the lowest possible level'. (J.M.R.: J. Symonds).

The silence of the Palmer works, the uncaring government, the exigencies and petty humiliations of the Means Test were testimony to the failure of the old system. The Labour Party in Jarrow called for a new order based on the triumph of the working-class. The sterilization of the shipbuilding site in Jarrow could only be reversed by a class struggle. What exemplifies this in the evidence of informants is the praise they give to their representatives for being fighters:

'Scullion and Symonds, Riley were great people. They fought for years and years. They done a great thing. They were fighters, fighters. We followed them all over. They used to have meetings on the pit-heap, meetings on the station speps. Fought, fought all the time. You couldn't get better fighters. There should be a few of them now. They were great - Crooks, Scullion, Symonds, Hanlon - fought for the town'.

Nigel Marwood also recalls his personal involvement in the fight:

'If you were down in the thirties, you were down Had to fight for what you wanted - had to fight for your rights..... Now you get it - had to fight for it then... You had to fight for everything. Nowt, nowt came easy. If y'had no fight in ye, then that was it'.

As a Jarrow Marcher, the personal struggle of Marwood was raised to the wider context of the fight for class rights as envisaged by Symonds:

'I am prepared to march 7,000 men to the Bar of the House and demand justice. The working-class people in this town must rise in their strength and demand justice. The working-class people in this town must rise in their strength

and demand that something should be done in their interests' (S.S.G.: 9/7/36).

Symonds delivered this speech at the council meeting of July 1936 called to discuss the possibility of staging a march on London.

This section has shown how the Labour Party was able to change the political consciousness of the working-class in Jarrow. Whereas the hierarchical system based on a God given natural order had found a place for the 'labour interest', the new consciousness saw a clash of interests between the working-classes and others in society. From this it was argued that the resolution of that conflict of classes be resolved by the victory of the working-classes. An essential part of this success was to secure the commitment of the working-class to a ceaseless struggle for their rights.

The extent of that commitment is demonstrated in Jarrow during the 1930s by the support the Labour Party was able to develop. It was a mass party according to Steven Kemp. 'You could get 2,000 or 3,000 people at a meeting by the station stairs or on the pit-heap by chalking the streets'. At council meetings the public gallery was frequently filled to overflowing. Overflowing to such an extent that standing orders were suspended to allow observers to sit in the area between benches for aldermen and councillors. The most striking demonstration of the mass basis of support is the voting turnout in local elections. In 1933, 50% of the electorate voted. In 1935, the year of Labour's accession to power, the figure was 68.8%.

PART IIJarrow Marches

The fundamental themes of the cultural system having been outlined, the purpose of this section is to place the march in this context. The overall perspective adopted is that the march is a quintessence of the town - a symbolic representation of its main features. The 200 men and councillors marched as exemplars of that cultural system.

As a preliminary to understanding the march and how it was able to evoke a strong, sympathetic response along the route, an explanation of the causes of the march, what motivated the Labour Party to mount this demonstration will be given. A brief history of the march, whose emphasis will be chronological is then to be presented. Finally the cultural themes relevant to an understanding of the event will be considered.

Chapter 1

The Causes of the Jarrow March

The Jarrow March began in October 1936. It was a protest against unemployment in the town and its effects on the community. Yet, by this time, the number of unemployed had fallen from the 1933 peak of 7,178 to a total of just over 4,000 (see Appendix 3). The adoption of a rearmament programme by the government promised employment for the unemployed steelworkers and shipbuilders in Jarrow. In successive years, the promise of a brighter future for the Jarrow unemployed was indeed realized (ibid). With this promise of a brighter future, the staging of a protest or demonstration against unemployment would have seemed unnecessary. Unique features in Jarrow's cultural system intervened to impel the staging of such a demonstration.

Fundamentally, the cause of the Jarrow March was the closure of Palmer's shipyard. It was closed because of the activities of National Shipbuilders Security (N.S.S.) Ltd. This company, formed in 1930, sought to reduce the overcapacity in the industry. The existence of surplus capacity was not in doubt. During the shipbuilding boom of 1929, only one half of the industry's capacity was in use (Wilkinson: 1939; p.143). The intention of N.S.S. Ltd. was declared in its first public statement:

'Its purpose was defined as being to assist the shipbuilding industry by the purchase of redundant or obsolete yards. To ensure that the productive capacity of the industry was definitely reduced the shipbuilding equipment was to be scrapped and the site of the yard was to be restricted against further use for shipbuilding' (ibid; p.149).

N.S.S. Ltd. was an organization of forty-four shipbuilding companies whose intention was to rationalize the British

shipbuilding industry by reducing surplus capacity (ibid; p.150). The business of the company was 'obviously not an ordinary commercial proposition. Money for purchase of shipbuilding firms was raised by a levy on shipbuilders' (ibid; p.151). The aim of the company was to ensure the profitability of the industry as a whole. Its justification was that it would increase the efficiency of British shipbuilding by removing 'obsolete or redundant yards' - i.e. technically inefficient. Somewhat prophetically an industrial survey of the North-East observed that this might not be the case:

'It does not follow..... that the least efficiently equipped yards will be the ones to go. As a general rule, no doubt, such will be the case. But it may well happen that a firm with a relatively well equipped yard may get into financial difficulties; whilst a less efficiently equipped yard may weather the storm' (Armstrong College: 1932; pp. 266-267).

Palmer's Yard was bought by N.S.S. Ltd from the receiver in 1934. A covenant was placed on the site barring shipbuilding for forty years. Wilkinson argued that the yard's closure was not a consequence of technical inefficiency on its part:

'It was certainly not an obsolete yard. One of the biggest firms in the industry and one which had invariably secured a fair share of competitive tenders cannot be classed as obsolete. It had one of the finest sites in the country. And what factors were taken into consideration? Was it in the national interest that a first-class shipyard should be scrapped?' (ibid; p.162).

The factors which made the yards susceptible to takeover and sterilization by N.S.S. Ltd. did not include technical inefficiency:

'National Shipbuilding (sic) Security Ltd., were able, by the financial weakness of a company which had chained a derelict steelworks to an efficient shipyard, to buy one of the six largest firms in the industry at scrap prices, and thus close down one of their strongest competitive firms' (ibid).

Financial weakness, the jealousy of competitors - these were the factors which, according to Wilkinson, motivated the

closure of Palmer's. The impact on the community was deeply felt. The depression which had settled on the town in the early 1930s was seen as transient, another fluctuation of the shipbuilding cycle. Now that condition became permanent.

In fact, the 1930s were a prolongation of the depression which had set in during the previous decade in Jarrow (see Appendix 3). Long-term unemployment attacked ultimately the viability of the family unit (see pp.63-76 above). The male role as a member of the productive process was made completely redundant by the action of N.S.S. Ltd. The intervention of the government to provide relief money made the male role within the reproductive unit of the family (i.e. as provider and supporter) equally redundant. While this instrumental perspective is suggestive of the idea that the Jarrow March was undertaken simply to protest against the superfluous position of men in the town, it must be remembered that the family as an integral part of the community was under threat. Without work for men, the unit as it had come to be accepted within the cultural system of the town faced extinction.

The yard closure meant also that the natural order of life as manifested in the shipbuilding trade cycle was no longer a dominant factor in conditioning the inhabitants' expectations. What was lost also was the opportunity for the men to work in their 'own' yard, as the Jarrow Petition for Work described it. Considered in the light of the factors which were important in the operation of the shipyard labour market (see pp.44-47 above), the closure effectively meant no prospect of work for the Jarrow unemployed. Shipyard employment was almost entirely determined by factors which derived from the social relations of the local community. This tradition of 'localism' meant that for Jarrow men to find suitable employment they had to have their 'own' yard.

Wilkinson stated that the interests of capitalism and labour were at variance. The working-class of Jarrow had not been consulted about their own fate:

'..... in 1933..... (a) group of capitalists decided the fate of Jarrow without reference to the workers. A society in which the decisive decisions are invariably taken by one group, and in which those decisions are only reached by consideration of their own welfare, is not a just society' (ibid; p.171).

A further example of the non-alignment of the interests of capital and labour was provided by the controversy surrounding the Jarrow steelworks plan.¹ As early as October 1934, T. Vosper Salt, an American steel industrialist had considered the possibility of opening a steelworks in Jarrow. A report from steel consultants Brassert and Co. was favourable to this. The steel industry, like the shipbuilding industry, has suffered from the decline in world markets. The British Iron and Steel Federation (B.I.S.F.) had been established to strengthen the industry in its struggle against continental competitors. Imposition of a 50% tariff in March 1935 had enabled the B.I.S.F. to reach agreement with the International Steel Cartel to limit steel imports. The industry, shielded by the tariff barrier was obsolete and inefficient, resisting attempts at modernization. The report on a steelworks in Jarrow indicated that the site 'was ideal for a really up-to-date steel plant'. Finance was also available in the City.

The debate over the steelworks continued throughout 1935 and 1936. The obstructionism of the B.I.S.F. was victorious in the end. Though the Federation did not expressly prohibit the establishment of the steelworks, their control of orders and materials meant that without its backing, the scheme would certainly fail.

1. This account of the steelworks plan is condensed from Wilkinson: 1939; Ch. 11.

The steelworks scheme and the closure of Palmer's provided the newly-elected Labour Council with clear-cut examples of the divergence of interests between capitalists and the working-class. In both instances, it was the interference of outside bodies concerned with maintaining the profitability of their industries to the detriment of the community of Jarrow which hindered the prospects of work in the town.

What is important to realize is that these events on their own are not adequate to account for the Jarrow March. The prevailing ideology relating to such matters was that the business of private firms was their own and that the government had no writ to interfere. This perception stemmed from the belief that the economic system was a manifestation of a natural order whose unimpeded working out would produce the best possible outcome.

The basis of the challenge to this perspective came as a consequence of the National Insurance Act of 1911. The Act was intended to assist workers in industries affected by the operation of the trade cycle. Shipbuilding was one such industry. Though the Act was seen as protective in a way comparable to the provision of old age pensions in 1908, and though it did not explicitly admit a right to work, the organization of an insurance scheme was tantamount to this. An early critic of this legislation, Dicey, commented:

'The state in effect becomes responsible for making sure that every wage-earner within the United Kingdom shall, with certain exceptions, be insured against sickness, and in some special cases, against unemployment' (1920; p.xxxvii).

He foresaw that the Act might bring a heavier burden on the taxpayer than had been anticipated. Dicey was particularly critical of part II of the Act which related to unemployment benefit. The experiment of unemployment benefit he saw as

'hazardous' and the risks involved he thought hard to calculate since 'many men may prefer unemployment money to wages for hard work'. The significance of the Act was in fact 'the admission by the state of its duty to insure a man against the evil ensuing from his having no work'. Furthermore, this obligation would not be confined to a workman employed in 'some seven kinds of work' since the Act contained provision to extend its benefits without further legislation (ibid; p.xxxviii).

These fears found their realization during the inter-war period. As a consequence of the war, a vast extension of insurance rights had been effected with over 11 million people covered by 1919. The problems for the fund were caused by the mass unemployment of the period. Much of the attention of contemporary observers and later commentators has focussed on the explicitly admitted rights to benefit (see Davison: 1938). What is more significant for present purposes is to appreciate that the introduction of unemployment benefit implied that lack of work was not the consequence of an individual's unwillingness to work.

Undoubtedly, the creation of the unemployment insurance scheme provided a background for the campaigns of the N.U.W.M. Much of their successful work was concerned with upholding claimants' rights to benefit as 'the N.U.W.M. was increasingly drawn during the 1920s into the tactical struggle to obtain better relief scales for the unemployed on both national and local level' (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.147).

It is the argument here that the presence of a right to unemployment benefit (however qualified) was a necessary criterion for the N.U.W.M. campaign. Furthermore, the 'right to work' which was implied by these insurance rights was an important factor in establishing the framework for the Jarrow

March. The Jarrow Marchers certainly felt that they had a right to demand that the government take action to bring work to Jarrow. Without the establishment of the principle (however unclearly) in the National Insurance Act, the Jarrow March would have had no base from which to propound its case. If such a situation had existed, the actions of National Shipbuilders' Security Ltd. and the British Iron and Steel Federation would merely have represented the more unpleasant aspects of the 'natural' capitalist order.

The right to work, the closure of Palmer's and the failed steelworks scheme were bound together by the development of the new working-class consciousness in Jarrow created by the Labour Party. The mass movement behind this group, reflected in the 68.8% electoral turnout which brought it to power in November 1935, impelled the Labour council to undertake some form of action to remedy the situation in Jarrow. The actions of N.S.S. Ltd. and the I.S.F. had clearly demonstrated the divergence of interests between owners and workers. This divergence was developed into an awareness that the fundamental reality was class conflict. The tenuous admission of a right to work indicated the direction of council activity. Its existence may in fact have been responsible for the modification of the struggle as one best fought out on the basis of class consciousness to one in which civic consciousness played a part. Whether this is valid, the important point was that the consciousness-raising activities of the Labour Party had created within the working-class of Jarrow an awareness of itself as an instigator of change rather than its dumb recipient. Consequently when the council deputation of July 14th, which went to plead the case of Jarrow's steelworks before Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, was met by his rebuff that 'Jarrow must work out her own salvation',

the response was to implement the scheme for a march. This march is a demonstration of the new-found consciousness of Jarrow's working-class.

Chapter 2

History of the Jarrow March

This chapter is intended to provide a brief account of the march from inception to conclusion. This will provide a narrative background to the analysis which will follow in later chapters.

The plan for a march had been first proposed to the council at its meeting of 6th July 1936. The march plan was contingent upon the success of the council deputation sent to the Board of Trade on the 13th July which was to urge the government to action on Jarrow's behalf (S.S.G.: 7/7/36). After the failure of that deputation a meeting was held in the West Park, Jarrow. Over 6,000 people attended the meeting according to the South Shields Gazette (17/7/36). At the meeting, the council announced that the steelworks scheme had failed and its intention to march on London. The meeting called for unity of action and purpose by the townspeople to solve Jarrow's problems. Councillor Hanlon declared:

'We have been together for 15 years, let us stick together to the end' (Ennis: 1967; p.58).

At the council meeting of the 20th July, the council demonstrated its own response to this call when all 27 members¹ present, spoke in favour of the march. Even moderate

1. Following a Durham County Council revision of boundaries, the borough was extended to include Monkton Village and the Primrose and Hedworth areas to the south. The new ward, provisionally termed the Monkton Ward, returned three councillors and an alderman.

Hence after 1935, the council had provision for 28 members (21 councillors and 7 aldermen) - four more than in the 1935 election - to represent seven wards.

members, 'swinging over completely from their attitudes of a fortnight ago, declared themselves completely in favour of a march on the capital' (S.S.G.: 21/7/36). This unanimous vote by the council meant that the 'non political' status of the march was impressed upon it from the moment of its inception. The idea of a march had been developed within Jarrow Labour Party (S.S.G.: 25/6/36), but it was Alderman Thompson, the Labour mayor, who had insisted that 'if there were to be a march it must be a town's march, with the backing of the whole of the citizens..... from Bishop to businessman' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.198).

That the search for work was the primary aim of the march is made clear in the resolution which adopted the march plan. In this it was urged that

'..... the council seek Parliamentary powers to promote and carry on suitable industries for the town with power to raise the appropriate amount of money on the security of the rates; further that there be conceived in this connection the establishment of the following industries or works: iron and steel-making; hydrogenation of coal; processes in connection with the treatment of coal; plastics; shipbuilding and shipbreaking and any other industry for which the district is suitable and further that a town's petition be prepared praying H.M. Government actively to assist the resuscitation of industry in Jarrow and that a march be organized to present the petition to H.M. Government.²

The petition itself (see Appendix 4), further expressed the community's concern at the effects of the lack of work in

2. Borough of Jarrow: Corporation Minutes (1936); Minute No.1538 South Tyneside Reference Library, Local History Unit.

the town. The town had, for 15 years, 'passed through a period of industrial depression without parallel in the town's history'. As a consequence of this, the town had been reduced to a 'desperate condition' with impoverished homes facing acute distress. It pointed out that for skilled tradesmen 'who formerly obtained employment at a shipbuilding and iron works', work was no longer available due to the sterilization of the site for shipbuilding by N.S.S. Ltd. Reminding the government that the people of Jarrow had 'taken a pride in their work', the petition expressed the town's anxiety that 'the traditions of the past' would not be carried to the future. Concern was expressed firstly over the effects of 'a prolonged stoppage on the technical capabilities' of skilled tradesmen, secondly over 'the physical and mental strain on the strongest of men' who faced 'as heads of families' a future which was 'prospectless of work and black with unlimited care and want', and thirdly over 'the disastrous effect upon the youth of the town' who were 'tending to grow up with no trade to their calling owing to the lack of facilities for their being apprenticed'. Finally, the petition called upon the government to 'realize the urgent need that work be provided for the town now without further devastating delay' and that it 'actively assist the resuscitation of industry'.

The petition can be considered as the blueprint of Jarrow's case. It emphasized the instrumental effects of worklessness on the community i.e. the loss of skill, the impoverishment of homes and families, the inability of men to fulfill their roles in either the relations of production or the relations of reproduction. The expressive quality is stressed by the 'prospectless' future, black with unlimited care and want. This concern for the future of the town is reiterated by the 'disastrous effect' of unemployment on the youth of the town.

Without a trade to their calling, they could neither enter into the relations of production or reproduction. Thus the workless state of Jarrow, which had extended over 15 years threatened the continuity of the community. This idea that the people of Jarrow were living in a community in its death-throes is neatly encapsulated in the title of Ellen Wilkinson's book - viz. The Town That Was Murdered. This book, she asserted, was 'not a guide-book..... or a complete history of the town' but a 'biography' (1939; p.8). This use of the metaphors of life and death was not an exercise in rhetoric but as has been shown, symptomatic of a deep concern amongst the people of Jarrow.

The plan for a march was approved at the council meeting of July 20th. The march was to be more than a means of transporting the petition from Jarrow to London. It was also to be a vehicle for propounding Jarrow's case. It was equally concerned with

'..... the rousing of public opinion in England to the plight of Jarrow, and the forgotten areas like it. To do this effectively, it was decided that a public meeting should be held each night.....' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.199).

In order to do this effectively, the organizers decided that the march would be conducted over a period of four weeks so that maximum publicity could be obtained. It was to begin on October 5th 1936 and end on October 31st - just prior to the opening of the new Parliamentaty session.

To cope with the administrative problems of such an undertaking, five committees were established by the council to be responsible for the organization of different aspects. The committees were: Petition; Finance; Health; Publicity; and Road and Food. In all, 21 council members sat on the committees. All 15 Labour members were present, plus six moderates. All these committees were supported in their work

by council staff and had the use of council facilities.

Councillor David Riley was appointed Marshall of the March with overall responsibility for its organization. As such his membership of the committees was automatic. The motivating figure behind this large-scale organization was Alderman Thompson. Initially he had opposed the march since he felt that the unemployed would be exploited. He felt that there were 'too many hunger marches at that time - groups of ill-clad people exhibiting their poverty'. He would only support the plan if it had the backing of all groups and if it was properly organized (Dougan: 1976; p.26).

Provision for the care of the men was made by securing overnight accommodation of some kind in the towns and cities on the route. Drill halls, schools, church halls and in the last resort, the workhouse, were the places where the men stayed overnight. The march organization had the capability of providing the men with hot meals. Field equipment was borrowed from the Boy Scouts. An ex-Army cook volunteered to accompany the marchers (Dougan: 1976; p.46). The men were required to bring towels, brushes, polish, overcoat, blankets and eating utensils (S.S.G.: 2/10/36). They were supplied with calico from which a kit-bag could be made - generally by a woman in their family (Mrs. Clark: 1972; J.M.R.). They were also given leather and nails to repair their own boots and a waterproof groundsheet which could also be used as cape. A second-hand bus was purchased to carry the men's kit and blankets (ibid). Medical aid was provided by the Inter-Hospital Socialist Society. They supplied relays of two students a week, with a car and medical equipment (Wilkinson: 1939; p.203). Advance arrangements in towns where an overnight stay was to be made were handled by the two political agents for the Jarrow division - Councillor Bob Suddick (Conservative) and

Harry Stoddart (Labour).

The march, of course, required finance. Though the council had supported the march and had utilized its administrative staff to help in its organization, direct financial help it did not give. This was to be raised by a public appeal. A letter stating Jarrow's case (see Appendix 5) and asking for financial assistance was sent from the Mayor's Parlour in August 1936 to local authorities throughout the county, trade unions, Cooperative Societies and newspapers (Dougan: 1976; p.26). Thompson announced the results of the appeal at the council meeting of September 29th. He was disappointed. Only £751 had been raised and he had expected £1,000. As a result the March Fund remained open for further donations (S.S.G.: 30/9/36).

It was the strength of the fund which determined the number of marchers. The March Committee had estimated that the cost per marcher for the four-week journey was £4 - a figure which included food, clothing and return rail fare (Dougan: 1976; p.20). The expectation that more money would be raised on the way settled the number at 200 - a much smaller figure than the 7,000 that Symonds had originally proposed (S.S.G.: 9/7/36).

In keeping with the need to produce a disciplined march which would retain the integrity of its numbers, the council asked for 'fit and capable' townspeople to volunteer. Women were not included in this definition of townspeople. While their exclusion was not definitely stated during the period of organization up to the start of the march, the council minute calling for volunteers clearly shows that their presence was felt unnecessary. At the meeting of the 28th July it was resolved:

'..... that all physically fit townspeople be permitted to take part, but that women should not be encouraged'³

Amanda Jardine had no doubt that there was no place for women on the march:

'They didn't come into it. Women didn't work as they do now. It was only in the war that women entered the factories the way it was done was the proper way. The men were just marching to get work to look after their wives and children'.

Support from other Tyneside authorities was limited. While the majority supported Jarrow's case, few were willing to back the march. An All-Tyneside conference held in the town on the 16th September demonstrated this. Tom Magnay, MP for Gateshead, did not support the march which he saw as one composed of 'hungry men'. Tynemouth Council felt similar reservations though it favoured a march of town councillors. Martin Connoly, the Newcastle member of the Boilermakers' Society executive committee was fulsome in his support of the march:

'It was Jarrow's task to prove to the country and the Government that there existed in Jarrow an emergency which was not merely local, but national, and which merited the shipyard being reopened' (S.S.G.: 17/9/36).

The conference agreed to support the Jarrow Petition for Work and the all-Tyneside petition. This latter was also carried by the marchers and attracted over 68,000 signatures (Wilkinson: 1939; p.209).

Such variations in support meant that some councils, such as Tynemouth, which offered moral support would not permit street collections to be made in their district to aid Jarrow's appeal for funds. Consequently, financial support from the Tyneside area was more limited than had earlier been anticipated.

The march began on the morning of October 5th 1936. All 200 volunteers registered as unemployed at the Labour Exchange

3. Borough of Jarrow: Corporation Minutes (1936) Minute No. 1730 South Tyneside Reference Library, Local History Unit.

prior to departure. Then they and their families and friends attended a service in Christ Church led by the Bishop of Jarrow, Dr. D.J. Gordon who gave his blessing to the affair. Then the marchers set off on their trek:

'Homes in Jarrow were empty this morning when men, women and children turned out in thousands to watch the departure of the marchers who set out shortly after 10.30 to make the three hundred mile journey to London.

'It was an impressive scene as the long column marched between closely packed crowds which lined the causeway along the route through the town and beyond the boundary.

'The marchers were headed by Palmer's Band, followed by the Mayor, Alderman J.W. Thompson and the Town Clerk, Mr. C.S. Perkins who wore their robes of office.

'Miss Ellen Wilkinson MP who had been travelling overnight from London was also at the head of the march and Councillor A.E. Gompertz, Secretary of the South Shields Labour Party was present to give the marchers a hearty send off and farewell from his organization' (S.S.G.: 5/10/36).

A fuller account of the day-to-day events of the march can be found in Dougan (1976) and Ennis (1967). It is not the intention here to reproduce this material. What these accounts demonstrate is that the avowed intention of 'rousing public opinion' to Jarrow's cause was successful. The most obvious demonstration of this is shown by the state of the March Fund. The figure of £751 with which the march began was swollen to over £1,500 by the time of its conclusion (see Appendix 6). Donations en route were considerable - amounting to over £300.

This was, however, only the outward symbol of the march's success. It was the reception given to the marchers on their journey which was demonstrative of their achievement. True enough, in some towns the reception was cold. In Northallerton, there was no official reception from the town council (S.S.G.: 9/10/36). The townspeople, however, reportedly greeted the marchers warmly as they entered the town (Ennis: 1967; p.79). At Mansfield, the men were accommodated in the school most distant from the town. The 'Chief of Police' asked Riley to

march the men to and from the town in formation, rather than allow them to travel as individuals (S.S.G.: 20/10/36). In Luton, the marchers arrived while the municipal elections were under way. The mayor asked the men to cancel their meeting as a children's fireworks display was taking place in the evening. He also made an error by greeting the marchers as men from 'Yarrow' - the consequence of a newspaper misprint (Ennis: 1967; p.100).

Such examples of a limited response to the Jarrow March throughout its progress were few and far between. They were swamped by the favourable response to the march which began with their arrival in Chester-le-Street.

'The welcome was tumultuous with cheering crowds lining the streets as the men entered the town. That night the men had tea in the Church Institute - a meal provided by public subscription. In the public meeting held in the town that night there was much sympathy from the Mayor and the Council who appreciated that the march was not only for Jarrow, but for all the distressed areas' (Ennis: 1967; pp.76-77).

The mayor of Chester-le-Street also met the marchers at the civic boundary (S.S.G.: 6/10/36). Thus establishing a pattern of great significance for the march. The civic heads of local authorities (or their representatives) frequently met the march and accompanied it to the place where the men were to be accommodated for the night. They and other civic and religious dignitaries were frequently present at the nightly march meetings. What was more expressive of the feeling the men aroused was the hospitality shown to the marchers at the end of their day's journey. Frequently they were provided with a meal, with entertainment and with money for the March Fund.

The reception for the marchers at Leeds was one of the warmest on the whole journey. For miles through the suburbs of Leeds, the approach was heralded with cheers, bursts of handclapping etc. The unemployed of the town joined the

march for a while. Special police had to be used to control the large crowds which gathered in the town centre (Ennis: 1967; pp.85-86). A five course dinner was provided for the men. Nigel Marwood recalled that the marchers were given cigarettes, beer, and were served by waiters. The dinner was a gift of Sir William Nicholson, a newspaper proprietor and President of the Leeds Conservative Party (Dougan: 1976; p.38). The marchers were later entertained by the local branch of Toc-H. Free beer, cigarettes and later supper were given here as well. The next morning, they were given breakfast at Burton's clothing factory. Donations of clothes and boots came from the townspeople. Minor repairs to clothing were made by Leeds women at the Labour Institute where the men had stayed overnight. A local woman hairdresser offered her services to the men (Ennis: 1967; pp.86-87). Support for the march had also come from Mr. A. Burrill, president of the Leeds Trade and Labour Council (Dougan: 1976; p.38). Donations of money from the townspeople ensured that there would be no more financial troubles for the march.

While the reception at Leeds was exceptionally lavish, the spirit of ^{other} / towns through which the march passed was equal to it. In Barnsley, the marchers were given a meal and free tickets for the cinema. At Leicester, the Cooperative Society workers repaired the marchers' boots for the cost of the leather alone. They worked overnight without pay to achieve this (Ennis: 1967; p.96). In fact, 'almost everywhere, they..... received a warm welcome and free food, accomodation and entertainment' (Dougan: 1976; p.52).

Thus, when the marchers arrived in the capital on October 31st, they had succeeded in the winning of public opinion to their cause. The demand for action on Jarrow's behalf had the backing of most of the country. When they left London on

November 5th, they had not secured their basic objective of securing work for Jarrow. There was still optimism that the government would intervene to bring work to Jarrow (S.S.G.: 6/11/36), but in the event, this was never realized. It was, as everyone interviewed who was alive at the time stated, the approach and outbreak of war which solved the problem of Jarrow's unemployment.

The dogged refusal of the government to waver in its policy of non-interference was undoubtedly a factor. Stanley Baldwin, was seen as a 'hard-faced stony man' by Dave Hankey. This description of Baldwin was taken by him to typify the unyielding quality of the government, so unresponsive to the case of the marchers. Another factor, of immediate importance in understanding why the march was unsuccessful, was the action of Sir John Jarvis, MP for Guildford. Lord Lieutenant of Surrey and a highly successful businessman, he had carried out philanthropic activity in the town since 1933. He had established the Surrey Fund. This fund, supported by the financial donations of the people of Surrey, provided paint and materials which permitted 2,943 houses of the unemployed to be decorated by themselves. The fund had also financed the development of a new park at Monkton Dene. In the process of this, it had given work to over 1,000 of the unemployed - each of them having a month's work for a wage. A sports stadium was also built in Jarrow with the help of the fund. The unemployed in this instance worked for nothing but were provided with daily meals, boots and clothing. Jarvis also started two new industries in the town - shipbreaking and furniture making - both on the Palmer's Yard site - which gave employment to 300 men (Dougan: 1976; p.80).

Jarvis was a supporter of the steelworks scheme for Jarrow. On July 10th 1936, prior to the meeting between the

town's deputation and Walter Runciman, he had urged the government to support Jarrow and had been critical of the steelowners who obstructed the plan. Opinions within the town have been coloured by his influence on the results of the Jarrow March.

At the last public meeting of the march, held in the Memorial Hall, Farrington Street, Jarvis announced that he was going to start a tube industry in the town (ibid; p.80). While this announcement was well-received by the national press, Wilkinson argued that it gave 'the Government the excuse they were looking for to get out of the awkward situation in which events like the Jarrow March and its nationwide publicity had placed them' (1939; pp.211-212). The proposal made by Jarvis only gave work to a few hundred of Jarrow's unemployed and by no means did it measure up to the marchers' demands. The Labour Party in Jarrow were resentful at his action. It was not political feeling which coloured their reaction: Jarrow members of the Conservative Party were similarly without enthusiasm (ibid; pp.210-211). His announcement provided the government with an easy escape route from taking responsibility for the situation in Jarrow which the marchers demanded.

Mayor Thompson, while admitting that Jarvis had done good work for Jarrow said that Jarvis did not 'strike me as genuine somehow or other'. Joe Symonds was more detailed in his criticism of Jarvis. Firstly, he resented the Surrey Fund because it was a charity. He objected to the 'work' provided by it in building Monkton Dene because the rates of pay were less than the trade union rate. Symonds was critical of Jarvis because he (Jarvis) was a capitalist. Even the shipbreaking industry started by Jarvis was seen by Symonds as an investment - since Jarvis made profits out of the resale of ship scrap. It was Jarvis' badly timed announcement over

the tube works which Symonds saw as responsible for the failure of the Jarrow March.

Thus when the Jarrow petition was presented by Ellen Wilkinson to Parliament on November 4th much of the impact of the march had been dispelled. Though this petition was presented along with the all-Tyneside petition presented by Sir Nicholas Gratton-Doyle, senior member for Newcastle, the effects of the campaign were negligible in terms of producing work for Jarrow. Not even an emotionally charged meeting of MPs of all parties addressed by the Town Clerk, C.S. Perkins, the ex-mayor, moderate R.I. Dodds and Mayor Thompson had much influence. Thompson concluded his speech by removing his chain of office and saying

'This chain was given to the town by Sir Charles Mark Palmer. Its links form a cable, its badge is an anchor..... symbols in gold of the cables and anchors of the thousand ships to be built at Jarrow. Now, owing to National Shipbuilders Security Ltd., the Jarrow shipyard is closed. Ships for Britain's food and for her defence will be made in that famous yard no more. God grant the time may not come when you members of Parliament will have need to regret that you allowed the scrapping of this great national asset in the interests of the private profit of a bank's shareholders' (Quoted in Dougan: 1976; p.86).

Not even this appeal was sufficient to move the government and its supporters to action.

On November 5th, the marchers returned to Jarrow. According to Wilkinson, the march 'had stuck in the imagination of the people' They gave the marchers

'..... a great welcome when we returned by train..... Railwaymen had put fog signals on the rails. There were bonfires on the streets near the line. There was great feeling in the town that night..... a feeling that at least some move had been made, that at least the marchers had told the world' (1939; p.212).

Chapter 3

Cultural Themes in the Jarrow March

The previous chapter detailed the progress of the Jarrow March as an event from its conception until the return to Jarrow. In this chapter I wish to concentrate on certain cultural themes which were prevalent within the organization and presentation of the march. This is done firstly to continue the exploration of the cultural system of Jarrow begun in the first section of this thesis. This will involve the affirmation of the significance of some themes already considered e.g. family, sexual division of labour; and the introduction of new themes e.g. the military ethos in Jarrow. Furthermore, this chapter will also provide a further understanding of why and how the march was able to enter into the folk ethos.

In order to appreciate the achievement of the Jarrow March in rousing public opinion to its cause, an examination of the context in which it began will be undertaken. Though the existence of a hostile environment for the demonstration has already been hinted at in the introduction, the analysis here will be more exhaustive.

(i) The Pre-March Context

The most obvious concern for the Jarrow March was that it would be likened to the 'hunger' marches of the N.U.W.M. Indeed first reports referred to it as a 'hunger march' (S.S.G.: 4/7/36). Ellen Wilkinson, laying claim to go on the march, though a woman, said

'Do you think I will let my hunger marchers go without me?' (S.S.G.: 28/7/36).

Three factors linked with the N.U.W.M. 'hunger marches' threatened the reputation of the Jarrow March. Firstly, the association between the 'hunger marches' and the Communist Party (and Moscow etc.) via the mediation of the N.U.W.M. Wal Hannington, a prominent figure in the movement was a known Communist. The movement was also under considerable pressure from the Communist Party to organize the unemployed into a mass movement in order to instigate a workers' revolution. While Hannington himself was more concerned to organize discontent into opposition against the Means Test, the association with disruptive tendencies which hallmarked revolutionary socialism was inevitable (Stevenson and Cook: 1977; p.167).

The apprehension of the Jarrow Marchers concerned in this instance was concerned with the reception they might face once they left Jarrow. The N.U.W.M. marches were the only major instance of organized protest against unemployment up to 1936, apart from a T.U.C. demonstration of February 1933 (ibid; p.190). From the outset, the marchers were locating themselves in an area occupied by forces threatening the established order. Hostility from the press characterized the attitude towards the N.U.W.M. marches:

'They usually received little publicity at all in the period of their preparation and journey to London. Once they arrived in the capital, on the other hand, they met an almost blanket condemnation as a threat to public order, verging on hysterical in the case of some of the more conventional press' (ibid; p.222).

Indifference followed by hostility were not the only fears for the Jarrow Marchers. The 1932 N.U.W.M. march had faced baton charges, confiscation of their million-signature petition and the arrest of its leader, Wal Hannington (ibid; p.178).

A second consideration for the Jarrow March was that the

leaders feared that without proper organization, the march might arrive in London, having lost a considerable proportion of its members. Commenting on the proposed plan for a march, Councillor R.I. Dodds, former moderate mayor of Jarrow said:

'As far as hunger marches are concerned we have had them before but they have availed nothing. Not one quarter of the people would get to the capital and, when they got there, they would find they could do nothing' (S.S.G.: 4/7/36).

To make an effective demonstration, numbers on the march had to be maintained. Loss of numbers through sickness would further detract from the integrity of the march. In this case of the Jarrow March, such a loss would reflect badly on the Labour Party's claim to retain their power in Jarrow. In the immediate sense, the effectiveness of the demonstration would be impaired and probably negated if large numbers of marchers dropped out en route.

Finally, the Jarrow March, like the N.U.W.M. marches called upon the unemployed as volunteers. The N.U.W.M.'s intention was to emphasize the poverty and destitution caused by unemployment. Thus the 'hunger march' was intended to emphasize the material and physical degradation its members faced in their ordinary lives. The Jarrow March was a crusade for work. The leaders were concerned to emphasize the distinction of purpose between their march and those of the N.U.W.M.

The integrity of the march, which might make the demonstration ineffective, was also threatened, so the organizers believed, by government action. The mayor, the councillors and Ellen Wilkinson, the town's MP, reassured the marchers that overt attempts would not be made to disperse the march by the same methods as were used to disrupt the 1932 N.U.W.M. march. Their concern was with the more subtle methods the government might use. The most accessible of these was

the refusal of public relief to marchers' families while the men were away. This might prevent the march from beginning if the families of marchers were not to receive public relief. In the event, the North-East Area Guardians decided to allow the payment of public relief during the period of the march (S.S.G.: 11/9/36). Marchers receiving unemployment benefit were refused it on the grounds of their absence from Jarrow, a decision which brought an acrid rebuke from the South Shields Gazette:

'The logic of the official ruling is that so long as they stay in Jarrow where there is no work, they can have unemployment pay, but as soon as they go away to ask for work to be provided they cannot have assistance' (7/10/36).

A more serious threat was that the integrity of numbers would be weakened by the simple expedient of offering the marchers employment. Riley warned that the government might offer employment to marchers, a few at a time, perhaps 10 or 20, in order to reduce numbers. Thus the superficial requirement of the march - provision of jobs - would be met, while the substance - work for Jarrow in Jarrow - would not. Furthermore, the marchers' commitment to the cause of the town of Jarrow, would be called into doubt if this happened. When questioned at a pre-march meeting as to the attitude a marcher would take if offered a job en route, Riley replied:

'It is a matter entirely between the man and the Labour Exchange. We cannot interfere. We cannot encourage any man to refuse work. If we did, it would put us in a very invidious position. I don't suppose it will happen but if it does, it will be entirely between the Exchange and the man himself'.

To the question of what would happen if work was offered to everyone, Riley had no answer. When asked what would happen if a prospective job did not materialize for a marcher who remained in a town where the march had passed through, Riley was firm:

'We are trying to see that everyone sticks together. But if such a case does arise, it will be teated sympathetically, provided that it is proved genuine. If we accept such cases without question, there will be trouble' (S.S.G.: 2/10/36 all).

In using the word 'genuine', Riley was stressing that only those who had a commitment to the march in terms of a crusade for work and who were prepared to 'stick together' were ideal marchers. He understood that a man who was offered suitable work would be forced to take it. What he wished to say was that those who saw the Jarrow March as a useful means of transportation for finding work would not be re-admitted to the march without question.¹

A more immediate cause for concern on the eve of the march was the insecure financial base on which it began. As noted in the previous chapter, the public appeal had only raised £751. The credibility of the march as expressed in delivering all its members to the capital fit and healthy was threatened by this.

The purpose of presenting this information is to stress that the Jarrow March began in an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty. There were fears that the march would share the odium of the N.U.W.M. marches by being tainted by their Communist associations and by identification with their 'hunger march' protests against the Means Test. Threats to the integrity of the body of the march by the government were feared. The stoppage of public relief and offers of employment

1. According to the South Shields Gazette, every man on the march was offered a job en route. The men were unable to take up employment because their training had been in the shipbuilding and steel trades and the job offers required facility in other trades.

were seen as potentially subversive to the marchers' intent. The financial insolvency of the march at its outset emphasized the inauspicious beginnings for the undertaking. Uncertainty about the possible reception which awaited the marchers in the towns and cities along the route was another factor. This was because the key to the effectiveness of the march from the organizers' point of view lay in winning public support for their cause. Doubts about the town's ability to do this had been shown at the all-Tyneside conference held in Jarrow on September 16th. The conference agreed to support the all-Tyneside petition but support for the march was not forthcoming (Wilkinson: 1939; p.199).

No-one - marcher, organizer, Jarrovian, or observer - realized on the day the march left the town that it would turn out to be 'a bigger, finer thing than..... first anticipated' (J.M.R.: J.W. Thompson).

(ii) The Non-Political Concept and Civic Consciousness

In June 1936, it was reported in the local paper that Jarrow Labour Party intended to stage a demonstration 'to shock the country' in order to bring attention to and relief for the situation of the town (S.S.G.: 26/6/36). While these early plans did not highlight a march as the only means of effecting this, what is clear is that they originated within the Labour Party. Joe Symonds recalls that the idea for a march was developed by four councillors - himself, Paddy Scullion, David Riley and Jock Hanlon (J.M.R.). It was the Labour mayor, Alderman Billy Thompson who insisted that the plan for action in relation to the steelworks scheme and particularly the plan for a march, be put before the whole council to secure its support (J.M.R.). His intention was to

remove plans for the demonstration from the control of the Labour Party alone and place it under the aegis of the Town Council.

Thompson's aim was to produce a plan for a demonstration which was 'non-political' - i.e. a plan which was not identified by its association with a particular political party or faction. The Jarrow March was, of course, a political event. As Steven Kemp commented, a march against the government could not be considered in any other way. By removing the march from its Labour Party origins, the aim was to present to the wider society, the image of a town united in its determination to secure work to save the town. The disregard for party political differences was intended to emphasize the seriousness of this situation.

The effects of being successful in this transformation were both instrumental and expressive. To begin with, the marchers were able to secure the services of the Town Clerk and the council staff in preparing for the march. They were also able to send councillors on the march. Though all who went were Labour, they led the demonstration as representatives of the town - i.e. as councillors - rather than as Labour Party members. Ellen Wilkinson had no doubt as to the efficacy of this decision:

'It was the idea which more than anything else gave the march its kudos..... the fact that the Town Council sanctioned the march....., meant that appeals for support were sent out over the signature of the mayor. When the timetable had been worked out, the letters asking for the use of halls and services were sent to the towns on the way, not by a March Committee but on Official Borough notepaper over the signature of the Town Clerk' (1939; pp.198-199).

The expressive content of this decision is best understood by recalling the consensual concept which prevailed in civic affairs (see pp.100-101 above). Central to this concept was the belief that the interests of groups such as political

parties should be subordinated for the civic good. Of course, the most persistent offenders against this idea, in the eyes of contemporaries, were the Labour Party who put working-class interests above all others. It was ironic, therefore, that the proposal for the 'non-political' march should come from them.

A major factor was undoubtedly the personality of Mayor Billy Thompson. He was a carpenter - i.e. a skilled craftsman and a member of the trade which was highly respected among shipyard workers according to Steven Kemp. He was a devout Anglican and a church warden at St. Peter's Church.² As a councillor for the West Ward in the town, his political perspective was representative of the liberal tradition within the Labour Party. Of all the members of the Labour Party associated with the Jarrow March, he is the one whose integrity is most respected.³ His initial opposition to the march was based on the fear that the Labour Party would be seen as 'exploiting the unemployed'. Only the presentation of the issue to the council for its approval, won his support.

2. Support from religious bodies in the community is most clearly demonstrated at the inter-denominational service which inaugurated the march. The service was held in Christ Church and it was led by the Suffragan Bishop of Jarrow, Dr. G. Gordon. In addition

'. The Rev. S. Harvie Clarke, Rector of Jarrow said prayers..... The service was attended by the Rev. T.B. Weatherell, Rector of Christ Church and the Revs. J. Williams, P.R. Burgess, J.W. Morrow, R.N. Anderson, J.P. Ellis and F.J. Legge, with Captain H. Jenkins' (S.S.G.: 5/10/36). Absent from this list of religious leaders was Father Martin McDonnell, the Catholic Priest.
3. A clear example of the respect engendered by Thompson occurred during an interview with Dave Hankey. He disputed the fact that Ellen Wilkinson had marched any considerable distance along the road to London. When I informed him that Thompson had stated that she had marched all the way from Ripon, he was prepared to accept this. This was only because Thompson had said it was so.

Undoubtedly, the fact that for that year Thompson held the office of Mayor was a major factor in winning over the rest of the Labour group to this perspective. Furthermore he was the mayor of a company town, specifically created to serve the interests of Palmer's shipyard. Control of a company town was, as the first section of this thesis demonstrates, the legacy which the Labour Party claimed on its 1935 victory. It was not only the aftermath of Palmer's heyday which they inherited but also the ideology of the company town.

'Palmerstown', as Wilkinson called the Municipal Borough of Jarrow was manipulated to suit the ends of Charles Mark Palmer. The waves of migrants, the rhythm of life in the town, the prosperity of its inhabitants had all been determined at his behest. Central to the quality of life there was the central authority of the council. Thus, Mayor Billy Thompson's proposal to create a town march was met by a Jarrow Labour Party aware of the authority and power which control of the council gave to Palmer. The advantages of using the municipal machine to foster their cause was attractive. At the purely functional level, its benefits were enormous. The amount of work involved on the clerical side - compiling, addressing, posting letters for the financial appeal; securing accommodation for the marchers and for acquiring the use of halls for meetings - was estimated to be three times the amount of work involved in a general election (S.S.G.: 20/8/36). Staff from the Town Hall were seconded in the service of the march. The Town Clerk, C.S. Perkins, was responsible for the framing of the town's Petition. He advised on the legality of council actions with regard to the march. On his advice, a resolution of the meeting of July 20th in which the council, as a consequence of the failure of the steelworks plan detailed that it would

'..... not be responsible for any unlawful action which the people of this town may do in their fight against the continued slow, starvation which they are now experiencing'

was withdrawn on the grounds that it was tantamount to incitement to riot (Ennis: 1967; p.70).

C.S. Perkins, Town Clerk, spoke at the meeting in the House of Commons when the town lobbied MPs on its behalf. The most notable example of participation by municipal administration was the case of Sam Rowan, a clerk in the Treasurer's department who was appointed to be responsible for the march's finances en route. Rowan went on the march as a representative of the municipal administration but became committed to its cause. The extent to which he has become a spokesman for it is demonstrated by the opinion of an associate, Nick Farrington. When asked his opinion, he described Rowan as the 'backbone of the march'.

What all this represents is that ~~the~~ Labour Party coming to power in Jarrow, utilized the cultural heritage of a company town to stage the march. The Town Hall which once had been 'an adjunct of the company's (i.e. Palmer's) offices', now became an adjunct of Labour Party headquarters in North Road. There was, in the minds of the Labour councillors, no reason why the administrative machinery of the council could not be put to their use as it was to Palmer's.

Here, there may be clues which account for the unique occurrence of the Jarrow March. An account has already been given of the political consciousness which was a motivation behind the march - i.e. the development of a working-class consciousness, the injection of a 'class-struggle' concept to right the wrongs of Jarrow. The ideology of the company town which provided a mechanism for the fulfillment of Labour ambitions is an important factor in understanding both the occasion and the success of the Jarrow March. Because Palmer

and his heirs had endlessly demonstrated how such machinery might be operated to further the interests of a particular class, the Labour Party, learning from their predecessors, lacked no confidence when they used it to organize the Jarrow March.

Such an analysis suggests that the staff of Jarrow Town Hall were merely obedient to the wishes of their masters. This perspective neglects the integrity of public service to which many adhere. In an interview with Brian Goodson, a council employee during the inter-war period, he complained about another researcher (apart from myself) who had wanted him to criticize council housing policy. The ethos of the loyal public servant imbued with a civic consciousness which demanded loyalty to the administration, forbade him to divulge such information. Similarly Joan Goodson, his wife, also a council employee at that time, was receptive to the arguments of the Jarrow March at the time, even though she identified herself as a 'true-blue Conservative'.

This civic consciousness which underlay the responsiveness of the council staff to the demands of the Labour Party is a crucial factor in understanding how the Jarrow March was able to secure support from other communities on the way to London.

The marchers left Jarrow not as the protagonists of a factional 'political' viewpoint but as the representatives of a town under duress. They did not plead a 'political' cause but were able to create an identification between themselves and other towns en route. Of course, this meant that the direction of the appeal for support was changed. The earlier plan for a march proposed:

'That if a public march is made to London, workers and unemployed in the industry (i.e. shipbuilding) throughout the country should be asked to organize simultaneous demonstrations so that all parties would reach London together.

'That an appeal be made to all workers' organizations

throughout the country for support' (S.S.G.: 3/7/36).

The decision of the council to stage a town march meant that appeals to political parties, trade union organizations and religious groups were subordinated to it. The emphasis switched from calling upon the whole working-class to defend the interests of the Jarrow working-class to calling upon other communities to support the Jarrow community in its fight. The appeal changed from one based on class conflict to one mediated by a town-to-town dialogue.

The determination to observe the niceties of civic consciousness was demonstrated on the first day of the march. The marchers left in procession with the mayor, Billy Thompson and the Town Clerk, C.S. Perkins at its head, dressed in the full regalia of their offices. At the town boundary, they returned to the Town Hall. The mayor rejoined the march later, having disrobed. It was incorrect, according to the criteria of civic etiquette, for a mayor to enter a neighbouring authority dressed in the robes of his office (Dougan: 1976;p.10).

Symbolic establishment of the town-to-town dialogue was created by asking a responsible authority in the host town to safeguard Jarrow's petition overnight. It was Paddy Scullion's duty to ensure that this was effected. Sometimes, he remembers, this was the local police, at other times the municipal body (J.M.R.). What was important was that a civic organization took responsibility for the petition. The act of receiving in this instance can be interpreted as a gesture of support for Jarrow's case. Furthermore, if the petition can be seen to be symbolically representative of the Jarrow Crusade, then the promise to safeguard it made by the receiving authority can be seen as acceptance of the Jarrow Marchers as representative of the town.

The reception for the march in each town it intended to be accomodated for the night was important. A civic reception was important. At Ferryhill, the march was met by the chairman of the parish council, the parish clerk, councillors from Sedgefield District Council and County Councillor T. Banford (S.S.G.: 7/10/36). The Bishop of Ripon greeted the marchers when they arrived (S.S.G.: 9/10/36). At Wakefield, it was the mayor, deputy-mayor, mayor-elect, Town Clerk and the Provost of Wakefield Cathedral (S.S.G.: 14/10/36). In Market Harborough, the men were welcomed by the Bishop of Leicestershire (S.S.G.: 24/10/36). At Northhampton, the civic reception was composed of the mayor representatives of all the churches and the political parties (Labour, Liberal and Conservative) (S.S.G.: 26/10/36). Even at Bedford, the mayor greeted the marchers, though he asked them to cancel their meeting as a children's fireworks display was taking place the same evening (S.S.G.: 27/10/36).

These examples illustrate the power of the town-to-town dialogue established by the Jarrow March. Even when a council, such as the Chesterfield Authority, decided to follow the national Labour Party line and not receive the men, there was always scope for a reception from other bodies. Thus in Chesterfield, it was the Conservative Party which made a welcome for the march. Here also, the Mayor and Mayoress visited the marchers in defiance of the council decision (Ennis: 1967; p.91).

The civic presence was also important at the nightly meetings held in the town where the men stayed overnight. As the handbills show (see Appendix 7), the host community provided a civic background to the Jarrow speakers. Chairmanship by the mayor of a town set the seal of civic approval on the meeting and subsequently the march itself.

Such meetings were utilized by the Jarrow speakers to reinforce the town's case through the medium of civic consciousness. While the speakers for Jarrow included Ellen Wilkinson, other members of the march - councillors spoke. All the councillors were Labour councillors, but because they operated within the framework of the non-partisan identity, they became accredited representatives of the town. The rhetoric of their speeches concealed the class consciousness of their political perspective within a civic perspective, as Sam Rowan recalls of the meeting in Harrogate:

'Every night we had a hall and the four laddies, Jock Hanlon, Symonds, Scullion and Davey Riley, they spoke about conditions in the town.... Riley - I had to give him the abstract of accounts for Harrogate - he promptly looked up the back page and saw how the rate had been levied. And the first thing he did was say "The Poor Law Rate in Jarrow is 23s. in the pound. It's only 2½d. in the pound in Harrogate"He used to make the same speech every night, except for the adjustment of the figures to suit the town..... after they got weaving they got word perfect these four guys. And Paddy Scullion..... I had to give him the Medical Officer of Health's return and he used to quote it with ours.....' (J.M.R.).

Scullion's references were to the infantile mortality rate and tuberculosis. Interlaced with this he told anecdotes about life in Jarrow. In one he recounts the story of a midwife who came to deliver a baby at a house where she had to find a penny for the gas meter. He compares this situation with the treatment given to Princess Marina on the occasion of her pregnancy. This anecdote was included at the suggestion of Ellen Wilkinson (J.M.R.). Its main points are intended to stress the different ways in which society treated a family according to its social class. The civic context of its narration meant that it was a story about the treatment of a family in Jarrow.

It is the notion of a civic consciousness which explains much of the energy that the organizers put into the provision of welfare facilities for the men. The Jarrow March was a

town march organized by the council. Consequently the responsibilities and obligations incumbent upon councillors did not cease when the march crossed the municipal boundary. The relationship between councillors and citizens continued throughout the period of the march, emphasized by the councillors' appearances at nightly meetings. While the organizers were keen to avoid the association with the 'hunger marchers' which the presence of 'ill-clad, ill-fed' men would imply, their responsibilities as councillors reiterated the need to pay a great deal of attention towards the men. Criticisms of the organization of the march in this respect would have seriously weakened the council's claim to be acting for the benefit of the town.

Illustrations of the council's concern to be seen to be considering the welfare of the men abound. Men of 70 and over who volunteered for the march were rejected. Councillor W. Patterson, claimed that 'it would be cruelty to send them'. He asserted that, though he admired their courage in volunteering, they would be an encumbrance, rather than a help. Those who were wanted were 'men who are fit and capable - men probably between the ages of 18 and 50' (S.S.G.: 2/9/36).

All volunteers were given a medical examination by the Borough Medical Officer, Dr. P.A. Dormer. While this medical was not as rigorous as an army medical, according to Tim Newell, its presence was intended to demonstrate that the council were fulfilling their obligations in respect of the physical welfare of the men.

Similarly arrangements to provide medical support, the decision to provide meals by the march organizers, the hiring of a bus to transport the men's equipment, the activities of Stoddart and Suddick, the town's political agents who preceded the march and ensured that arrangements for meals and

accommodation were secure, were all exercises in demonstrating that the council as representatives and bearers of the civic tradition were fulfilling the responsibilities of their office.

En route, this sense of responsibility over the welfare of individual marchers is shown in specific examples of men who fell ill. After the second day's march to Ferryhill, two cases of sickness developed. An eighteen-year-old youth had a seizure, while an older man developed a septic heel. Medical opinion and Riley's was that they should return home. Both were allowed to continue at their own request, though they travelled on the march bus for a while (Dougan: 1976; p.16). In a more serious case which occurred at Ripon, marcher John McCourt developed enteritis. He was admitted to a hospital. He was later able to rejoin the march when he had recovered from his attack (Ennis: 1967; p.83). Also at Ripon, another marcher who became ill, Martin Queenan, was escorted back to Jarrow by Mayor Thompson (S.S.G.: 12/10/36). In all, four men left the march because of sickness. One, T. Dobson, who had travelled on the bus from Leicester because of a weak heart (S.S.G.: 23/10/36), died after being admitted to hospital.

The important point about such cases is that when they arose, Riley, the Marshal of the march, and hence the representative of both men and councillors, was decisive in his behaviour. The return of individual marchers to Jarrow, or their placement in a hospital, or the emphasis that a decision to allow them to rejoin the march would only be made if their fitness was guaranteed, were decisions taken in the light of this need to preserve the image of the council behaving in a responsible fashion towards the men.

Underlying the actions of the organizers was a very real fear that the years of destitution and malnutrition would take its toll on the marchers, despite all the care lavished on them.

The month's marching, however, had a positive effect on the welfare of the men:

'.....a whole month of such regular and devoted attention the..... doctors, medical care of a kind they could never get normally, with three meals a day and steady exercise in the open air, improved the men's physique noticeably' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.203).

And, of course, the sense of purpose which participation in the march gave them - 'The fine thing is knowing when we get up in the morning there's something worthwhile to do' (ibid) - contributed to this improvement in individual well-being.

Maintenance of the non-political stance was also crucial to the success of the march. During the period of preparation, the councillors declined an invitation from the N.U.W.M. to join their 1936 protest march, despite Wilkinsin's recommendation (Vernon: 1982;p.142). This rebuff, instrumental to the Jarrow March in defining its distance from the Communist-linked N.U.W.M., did not prejudice the attitude of the Communist Party. They supported a hastily arranged demonstration of the marchers in Hyde Park after their arrival in London:

'The Communist Party gathered a big demonstration on a general unemployment protest. They generously gave way for an hour and asked their great audience to swell our Crusade meeting.....' (Wilkinson: 1939; p.209).

Steps were taken to prevent infiltration of the march by outsiders - particularly Communist agitators. The marchers were split into five sections, under the control of a steward. Each man was to wear a blue badge inscribed with the legend 'JARROW PROTEST MARCH'.

Incidents occurred during the march which threatened the non-political status of the march. When the march arrived at Harrogate, the local Communists attempted to erect a banner as the men entered the Territorial Army Drill Hall (their overnight accomodation). The banner was removed on Riley's

orders. He emphasized the march's stance:

'I would have done the same thing if it had been a Conservative or Labour banner. We want no politics in this business' (Ennis: 1967; p.82).

Attempts to subsume the march to the authority of the Communist Party in Chesterfield were also resisted. At a meeting in the town square, the Communists attempted to convince listeners that they were working with the march. Riley warned the marchers not to attend the meeting and reiterated the march's political stance:

'I think it is a vile trick to attempt to exploit the Jarrow Marchers in this way. There never has been any political aspect in this march, and if it becomes tied to any particular political creed, it immediately loses its strength' (S.S.G.: 19/10/36).

The determination to erase any political taint was exemplified at Bedford when a marcher was sent home. That the political beliefs of the marcher were important is highlighted by the newspaper report:

'The leaders has another conference last night to consider disciplinary action against a man who belongs to the same political group as the one who was sent home, and who had been creating a disturbance and using bad language' (S.S.G.: 27/10/36).

The second marcher was cautioned. It is the mention of 'political group' which is significant here. As with the organizers' concern to demonstrate the credibility of their civic consciousness, the maintenance of the non-political status required firm and decisive action.

(iii) Men on the March for Jobs

Since the march was projected as a representation of the town, it followed that the marchers were required to be its worthy exemplars. Part of this concern was reflected in the attention given to the health and welfare of the men en route. This, as has been shown in the previous section, formed part

of the obligations of the council towards the townspeople on the march.

The organizers wished to present an image of the marchers as hard-working, honest men whose conduct even when they were making a protest of this nature was sober and dignified. The attributes required of them were individual qualities, facets of personality which were intended to demonstrate the exemplary character of the marchers. Sam Rowan, describing the arrival of the men in Hyde Park for their end of march meeting, summarizes the projections of them that the march wished to make:

'..... 200 men with their banner and their best Sunday blue, go-to-a-wedding, go-to-a-funeral suits on, and their shoes polished and their white shirts on marching into Hyde Park on that Sunday morning. Every man had his best suit out of pawn - in his kitbag with him. And they marched into Hyde Park..... they were good, honest, decent men who quite honestly had been deprived of a living by force of circumstances beyond their control.....' (J.M.R.).

In the process of selecting 'good, honest, decent' men attention was paid to the moral character of volunteers. Consequently, the volunteers for the march who came to the preliminary examination on the 23rd September were asked questions about their domestic affairs and their army service, as well as their health (S.S.G.: 29/9/36). Martin Ennew, whose father had been a marcher, said that anyone who had a reputation for drunkenness and/or violence was dropped from consideration. Rowan, on the other hand, asserts that there were 'some hard cases' on the march. One man, in particular, he described as having numerous convictions for fighting when drunk. Rowan's intention was to demonstrate how the town's cause subordinated one marcher's unruly instincts. The marcher, he claimed was responsible for maintaining peace when squabbles broke out amongst the men (ibid).

Consumption of alcohol was banned early in the days of preparation for the march. There had been suggestions that

the march would be rowdy and the leaders were 'determined that no opportunity shall be given for insobriety' (S.S.G.: 15/8/36). This measure was taken to ensure that the projection of the marchers as 'respectable' be maintained. Only in controlled circumstances were the marchers permitted alcohol - e.g. at the meal given by Sir William Nicholson when they arrived at Leeds.

Regular reports were given by the local newspaper of the personal habits of the men while on the march. They stressed the punctuality with which the men rose in the morning. Much attention was given to the manner in which the marchers departed from their overnight accomodation. Thus, this description of their departure from Ripon:

'In a remarkably short-time, kit-bags, ground sheets, newspapers, cooking utensils and small personal belongings were cleared away, and by 8.30 the building was spick and span, and gave no hint that it had been occupied by 200 men, eating and sleeping there for two days.

'So thorough was the organization that floors were swept and scrubbed and hose-pipes turned on the school-yard, to remove every trace of our occupation. At 8.30, the caretakers arrived and found they had little to do' (S.S.G.: 10/10/36).

'Appearance is going to have the most amazing effect on the people as we go down' Riley had declared at a pre-march meeting (S.S.G.: 1/10/36). The necessity for maintaining a sense of order in everything the marchers did prompted such acts as ensuring that when they left the Ripon schoolhouse, everything was 'spick and span'.

Appearance was important at other times as well. The march in transit adopted a semi-military formation. The men were divided into five sections each with a steward. They marched in step, in rows four abreast. The close order formation was only rigidly applied on entry to a town. At other times, the marchers were more relaxed and permitted to smoke, according to marcher Tim Newell.

March discipline was, however, held to be an internal

affair by the leaders. Thus David Riley refused to countenance the request of the Mansfield police to march the men in formation on journeys to and from the town (S.S.G.: 20/10/36). Such a stance also reinforced the concept of the marchers as civic representatives, entitled to walk freely in any town they entered.

This discipline which the march so freely manifested seemed to reinforce the projected image of the men as decent and honest. The marchers' behaviour seemed to reinforce Wilkinson's judgement on government policies in the 1930s which were

'..... a colossal waste.... waste of men, waste of intelligence, waste of physical strength, waste of invaluable national assets.....' (1939; p.225). The men were, until Palmer's closed - '..... efficient workmen some of them highly skilled. The ships they built were among the best that sailed the seas. And like all workmen, they are deeply conscious of the high traditions of good workmanship which they had established' (ibid; p.231).

Hard workers, skilled men who created a tradition destroyed by the actions of N.S.S. Ltd., 'chafed at their enforced leisure' (ibid; p.158). The organizers of the march were keen to stress that the marchers wanted what everyone else wanted '..... that feeling of security, independence and fulfillment which comes from having a job to do' (ibid; p.234). Hence, when a message from Jarrow Labour Exchange recalled a marcher for work, he returned home. Riley stated

'Anderson must go if the job is there. We must show everybody that the men on this march are genuinely available for work' (S.S.G.: 9/10/36).

During the course of the march, the image of the hard-working man was reinforced by the observations of Mr. F.A. Greaves, partner in a furniture factory recently established in Jarrow. He stated that his expectations of apathy amongst the townspeople had proved unfounded. Doubts

had arisen because there was no tradition of furniture making in Jarrow. However, he discovered that:

'The young men learn quickly, work well, and are excellent in every way' (S.S.G.: 28/10/36).

The organizers of the Jarrow March wished the men to be exemplary representatives of the town. They expected them to display the necessary attributes of personal character which would typify the desired projection of the march: willingness to work, good behaviour on the march, dedication to the cause of the march and above all the notion of themselves as providers for their families. Given the sexual division of labour prevalent in Jarrow at the time, it would seem obvious that this was part of the projected image. One of the difficulties in demonstrating this derives from the fact that this was such an implicit part of the presentation by the marchers. The obvious implication of the Paddy Scullion anecdote about the midwife who had to provide a penny for the gas meter before delivering a baby, is that if there was work in Jarrow, there would be money for the meter. The march was a crusade for work. Work in this context meant paid employment for men as providers or (in the case of adolescents) future providers for families. When the Jarrow marchers paraded through the towns of England, they presented themselves as heads of families - needing work to maintain those families. Because of the non-political stance adopted by the march and the civic consciousness which then informs perceptions, Jarrow becomes a town broken down into family units. Correspondence between the host town and Jarrow are reinforced. At an ideal level, the whole society was considered as being composed of towns encompassing families. Thus the family ideal which was nurtured by all political groups formed an integral part of the civic consciousness was an important part of the march's

presentation.

(iv) A Crusade for Work

'The South Wales people marched but it wasn't as we did it as a crusade. You had the crusaders from the time of King Richard, fought for something, went for something, done something. Well this was the way we took it. You put your armour on and you then went and done something with it' (J.M.R.: Joe Symonds).

While historians and later observers have called the demonstration, the 'Jarrow March'; to its participants, organizers and contemporaries it was the 'Jarrow Crusade'. One definition of a 'crusade', according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'an aggressive movement against a public evil'. There is no doubt that the marchers considered that Jarrow was a town attacked by a 'public evil' - the machinations of business in closing the yard, the insensitivity of government which had resulted in the destitute state of the town. Little doubt also that the demonstration was an aggressive movement designed to combat that evil. An editorial in the South Shields Gazette referred to the Jarrow Crusade as a 'march on London' (S.S.G.: 28/8/36) rather than a march to London. This was not the only such reference made by the newspaper. Such usage implies that the council were raising an army to press their claims for redress on the government.

To its audience, the march stressed that the town was involved in a 'fight for work'. Handbills distributed for public meetings emphasized this (see Appendix 7), often using the term 'crusade for work'. The actual organization of the march had military overtones. The council conferred the title 'Marshall' on David Riley - the man who was spokesman, and responsible for leadership of the march. The marchers were divided into sections of forty men, each under the

authority of a steward. Dougan describes the sections as 'platoons, Army style' (1976; p.46). Volunteers had to sign a declaration by which they promised to 'obey the stewards' (M.T.N.G.: S.S.G.; 11/9/36). This was tantamount to taking a military oath of allegiance. There are here signs of a semi-military hierarchy - marshal, steward, sections and men. During the march, at least when entering and leaving towns, the men walked four abreast in step beneath banners bearing the words 'JARROW CRUSADE'. From this perspective, the Jarrow March becomes a column of soldiers going into battle for the town.

This military association was not lost on contemporaries. As one observer noted of the day of the march:

'You would have thought they were young fellows going to war. The women made sure the men had their bait and good pullovers on, but you could see the despair and tears on the women's faces. Underneath it all you could see the mothers were heartbroken' (Jarrow March: S.S.G.; 5/10/36).

The adoption of the crusade ethos stems partly from the political consciousness aroused in the town by the political activity of the town. The new awareness stressed that it was the class struggle which mediated social relations. Classes involved in the struggle were the rich and the poor, capitalists and workers or Tories and Socialists or upper class and working class. Now that the Labour Party had gained control of 'Palmerstown', the inevitability of the victory of the working-class was not in doubt. The Jarrow March was but one part of the continuing conflict between classes which was defined as the major theme of social relations. Undoubtedly this affected the ideological structuring of the march. Of course, the fact that the originators of the march - Symonds, Scullion, Riley and Hanlon - and Ellen Wilkinson - were all identified as 'fighters', simply emphasized this notion of struggle.

This concept of the class struggle which provided the basic drive and energy for the march, was subsumed in two ways. The first, already described in detail above, was the introduction of the notion of civic consciousness which replaced class consciousness as the major reforming perspective of the march. This idea imposed at Thompson's insistence meant that the conflict between rich and poor, capitalists and workers, etc. became a conflict between the town of Jarrow and the national government. The town as an entity went to demand its rights from the ruling hierarchy.

The second feature of the march which subsumes the basic idea of the class struggle, stems from the military ethos in the town. The semi-military presentation of the march has already been noted. The easy acceptance of this by the marchers is accounted for by the homage paid to the military ethos within the town. As Wilkinson observed:

'Most of the men had been in the army, so we marched by army rules, perfected as they have been through long years of experience.... Fifty minutes to the hour and ten minutes rest' (1939; p.208).

More specific evidence of the significance of the military ethos in Jarrow is provided by the response to Armistice Day. In November 1932, when the depression was approaching its peak in the town, sale of poppies produced £130 in Jarrow - an increase of £6. 10s. over the previous year. Suggestions that Armistice Day was on the decline were confounded in Jarrow:

'Practically everybody in the town wore a poppy, and very few refused the quiet appeals of sellers who included ladies of all ages and ex-servicemen' (S.S.G.: 18/11/32).

Institutions which celebrated the military ideal in the town included an ex-servicemen's social club and the British Legion Club - which fostered the ideas of comradeship and support for crippled comrades and the families of those who had died.

The military presence on the march included an ex-army

cook, and supply of cooking equipment by the Territorial Army. Furthermore the daily reports in the South Shields Gazette, referred to the overnight accomodation of the men as 'billets'.

The prevalence of military associations⁴ on the march, together with the presentation of a civic consciousness which ousted the earlier class consciousness and the adoption of the crusade motif, meant that the notion of a 'class war' was subsumed by a general concept of the march as part of a war. This war was informed, not by the class struggle but by the civic consciousness and the conflict between little town and 'big' government.

This substitution of a 'class war' by a more wide-ranging definition of war, helps to explain the non-appearance of women on the march. There are several factors here of which an account must be given.

To begin with, the premises on which women could claim representation on the march were limited. The primary objective of the march was securing work for Jarrow. This work was to be paid employment for men. Partly this was because of the Palmer legacy to Jarrow i.e. there had been no major employer of female labour in the town up to 1936. More importantly, however, it was because of the sexual division of labour which defined work as a central part of the ascribed male role. It was to the ascribed role for women that councillors looked to justify their claims to participation on the march. Councillor Scott claimed her right because

4. It was not only service in the army which was significant, but also the long association of the shipyard with the navy through Admiralty contracts, which reinforced the ethos. Altogether, Palmer's constructed over 100 vessels for the Royal Navy. The last ships launched at the yard were the H.M.S. Diana and the H.M.S. Duchess, part of the 1931 naval programme.

'..... she herself had kept house on the dole and knew what it was to have an empty cupboard..... "It is the women who had the hardest job in facing the cruel facts of the depression"' (S.S.G.: 21/7/36).

Councillor Robinson endorsed this view:

'We hear a lot about the hardships for men but it is the women of the distressed areas that have the brunt to bear. Nothing is possible without the women and I ask that they be allowed to go with the marchers' (S.S.G.: 21/7/36).

Interestingly enough, Robinson did not ask that the women go as marchers, but only to accompany them. Riley had also stated that women would accompany the march:

'Their task will not be so much to demonstrate, as to 'mother' the men, to mend their clothes and tend them when they are sick' (S.S.G.: 22/7/36).

While Robinson and Scott clearly intended that the women would have some political voice and hence would demonstrate in some fashion, Riley intended to confine them to their ordinary domestic role. The women councillors' claim was based on the premise that the situation in the town had seriously impaired their ascribed role as keepers of the family home. There was precedent for this. In January 1934, Wilkinson and Thompson had led a march to Easington to confront Ramsay MacDonald about conditions in Jarrow. The marchers included 50 women out of a total of 300. They were however present to protest about the effects of unemployment upon their domestic world, not to intrude upon the male world of politics (Wilkinson: 1939; p.195).

The inclusion of women, in some fashion, would seem to be logical in view of the emphasis on a 'town' march. Women in Jarrow constituted slightly more than 50% of the population. It was the concept of a crusade with all the military motifs which negated the legitimacy of the women's claim to representation. War was a male preserve and there was no place for women warriors on the march. Ellen Wilkinson was the sole female on the march and she was included in her

capacity as Member of Parliament. Even she had not been enthusiastic about the presence of women, saying that it would cause 'complications' (S.S.G.: 28/7/36). What they were she never explained. Certainly she took no active part in promoting the cause of women's representation on the 'town' march.

(v) Summary

The account in this chapter has described the cultural themes which provided the framework for a system of ideas in which the march operated. The basic premise was that the march should be 'non-political' and operate within a concept of consensual civic consciousness, in which the welfare of the town would be placed above sectional interests. From this the Jarrow March, and hence Jarrow, was able to effectively communicate its case through the medium of a town-to-town dialogue with a host community. The council maintained its credibility as worthy representatives of the civic community by the organizational energy it devoted to the men during the progress of the march in terms of provision of medical services, food and accomodation. It retained its non-political status by acting decisively and directly to cope with any attempts to infiltrate this status by internal and external 'agitators'. By adopting the crusade motif, the organizers subsumed the ideology of the class war to the general consciousness of a war with the government. By doing so, it eliminated the possibility that women would participate in the march. This adoption of the military ethos provided an ideological argument which was more forceful than suggestions that women were simply not physically capable of making the journey.

All these ideas, which effectively constituted the outward

presentation of the march, were drawn from the cultural system of the town itself. Their effectiveness is properly demonstrated by the response of townspeople to the march. Though this was aided by the advance publicity of the march through the distribution of handbills and display of posters detailing the route and time of the march's entry into a particular town, the crowds who presented themselves to welcome, applaud and cheer the marchers were not there from mere curiosity. Donations of money, cigarettes and clothes by individuals were reflective of the march's ability to attract support from townspeople as well as civic organizations. The humanitarian response to the marchers was informed primarily by the notion of a town under duress. As the marchers moved south, away from the distressed areas, they performed an educative function in towns which had never experienced the depression which characterized Jarrow. Location within the area of the civil polity meant that the story they and their leaders told could not be dismissed as the propaganda of work-shy agitators and extremists.

Chapter 4

Post-March Opinion in Jarrow

According to march leader Joe Symonds, four new industries came to Jarrow because of the march including Sir John Jarvis' tube works, a 'bomb factory', a boilershop and a steelworks (J.M.R.). This latter was not on such a large scale as the schemes of 1935 and 1936 envisaged. Few others share this opinion. John Oxberry was of the opinion that the intervention of the war confused the effects of the Jarrow March. Most informants assert that it was re-armament and the war which solved the unemployment problems of the town.

Whatever the truth of these assertions (and the last makes the implication that the march failed in its primary objectives) opinion is divided over the utility and worthiness of the march. The image of the united town was successfully imprinted by the marchers on the perceptions of the extra-Jarrow world. Even at the time of the march there was, however, dissension. Councillor R.I. Dodds, former moderate mayor, characterized a common attitude:

'As far as hunger marches are concerned we have had them before but they have availed nothing. Not one quarter of the people would get to the capital and, when they got there, they would find they could do nothing..... we shall gain nothing by losing our heads. After all, we are asking a favour of them and we cannot expect them to help us if we try to bully them into it' (S.S.G.: 4/7/36).

When asked if what the town was asking of the government was a favour or a right, Dodds did not answer. This attitude contrasted sharply with that of Thompson, first Labour mayor and Dodds' successor to office, who was disappointed

'..... with the defeatist attitude of one or two members of the Council, especially with one who suggested that the only thing we can do is sit back, fold our arms and wait - we shall fight tooth and nail for our rights' (S.S.G.: 4/7/36).

These two statements exemplify the different attitudes towards the march within the town. Thompson and the marchers intended to secure from the government action on the town's behalf - a claim to this was based on their belief in a right to work. It would appear that this claim to a right to work was derived from a belief that the government should act to protect the interests of the working-class and secondly, though more tenuously, from the implicit admission of the National Insurance scheme that such a right existed. For the moderates, and their supporters, no such right existed. Any action taken by the government would be an act of clemency which stemmed from humanitarian instincts towards the town. The perspective of Thompson provides a blueprint for action i.e. if such a right exists it can be claimed. The perspective of the moderates, stemming as it does from the natural order concept of economic activity, is suggestive of a 'wait and see' attitude. The attitude of Joe Aberdeen, a march critic, to his two-and-a-half year period of unemployment typifies this:

'Just had to grin and bear it; had no luxuries - so if they knocked money off - just had to put up with what you could get. That's all there was to do. 'Something will turn up'. Pretty hopeless, but never really lost heart'.

Something did turn up for Joe. At the time of the march he was working at Vicker's Naval Yard, Wallsend. Even if he had been unemployed, he would not have volunteered for the march, however.

Despite the unanimous vote for the march at the council meeting of July 20th, the writer of Mid-Tyne News and Gossip, had detected uncertainty amongst councillors by the end of the month:

'From a moment of exaltation when they decided to march on London, Jarrow Town Council have gradually declined gracefully into a lethargy which is as typical as it is unaccountable' (S.S.G.: 31/7/36)..

Obstruction in committees, lukewarm support, councillors

speaking openly in favour of the march but placing obstacles in the way and even some Labour councillors doubting the virtue of the plan, were the signs of 'waning enthusiasm' he detected. Evidence for the lack of Labour support came from his contention - which proved to be a fact - that only four or five of the twelve Labour councillors bore the brunt of the work for the march. This was in addition to their normal activities of investigating relief cases, eviction complaints and other troubles. Furthermore they had 'to accept all the mud which is being directed against them' (S.S.G.: 28/8/36). In a later, more optimistic column, he was able to shed further light on the pressures that these councillors had to bear. He noted that some Moderate councillors had addressed open-air meetings - for the first time in their lives -

'..... and talked themselves hoarse in favour of what is regarded in some quarters as being a mad Labour scheme. Their action, more than anything else, has served to convince people that Jarrow's fight is truly non-political' (S.S.G.: 11/9/36).

While this action by Moderate councillors was sufficient to convince him, it had little effect on the views of townspeople. Here, the beliefs and values derived from an informant's location within the cultural system.

It is the claim of the march to be 'non-political' which is strenuously denied by critics. Clara Benn, born in 1958, whose information about the march stems from the opinions of elders, says that she had believed

'..... the march was entirely a Labour idea. I'd never heard anything at all about 'non-political'. It was just the Labour Party and nobody else who supported it'.

This was an accepted view in Nick Farrington's household at the time of the march. His father, a Conservative supporter, did not agree with the march - seeing it completely as a Labour scheme.

Underlying this attitude, which attempts to discount the

'non-political' status of the march, is the intention to deny its claim to be representative of the civic consciousness. Part of this criticism involves the notion that it is shameful to display one's poverty, that it is a virtue to suffer in silence - 'just grin and bear it' - as Joe Aberdeen put it. It was the march and the marchers who displayed the condition of the town and as such are not worthy representatives. More particularly, concern is expressed at the results of the march which - although it 'put Jarrow on the map' - did so in a way amenable to few.

The Jarrow March has created in the popular consciousness an image of the town perpetually frozen in the dismal days of the 1930s. The cluster of images which surround strangers' perceptions of Jarrow relate to unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, bad sanitation and overcrowded dilapidated housing. Jarrow is only known through the misery of its past. Reference has already been made to the tendency of the Jarrow Crusade to be known as a 'hunger march' - an epithet which has implications of beggary, open display of poverty and destitution. This has made the event even less attractive to its critics. It should also be noted that supporters are equally concerned that the march has become the medium by which the community is known. Tim Newell, a marcher, wanted the town to be known by its shipyard:

'One time there were thousands worked in Palmer's..... The steelworks and boilerworks, and made their metal and everything - made the whole ship..... It was more important than the march because it made employment for thousands of people'.

Critics of the march are faced with an overwhelming problem. The success of the Jarrow March in making its case for the town - a town that was murdered - forms such an integral part of the 1930s, that its statement cannot be answered directly. Even they have to admit that the situation

in the town was tragic. To display one's poverty in such circumstances might be acceptable - as it was to the many Conservatives who gave aid and comfort to the march en route. Their critique in this case is two-fold: firstly to stress the unworthiness of leaders and marchers as representatives of Jarrow; secondly to point to the futility of the march's endeavour.

Most attention covered by the first line of criticism is directed against the leaders. This is undoubtedly because before, during and after the event, their behaviour was exceedingly visible to the public eye. A common accusation is that some of the organizers - Symonds, Scullion and Riley made money out of the event. Evidence for this is provided for Symonds and Riley by the fact that both opened shops after the event. Such criticism often implies that the march was staged with the intention of making money. In the case of Joe Symonds, it is suggested that he was an opportunist, who founded his career as an MP on the event. Dave Hankey also provided anecdotal information about Scullion and Symonds which was intended to illustrate their greed for money.

In the case of the marchers themselves, specific accusations are rare. It is the invisibility of them which operates in this instance. Few critics could name marchers individually - and then only one or two. Joe Aberdeen's criticism was that for them, the march was simply a 'holiday'.

'..... as far as I was concerned the Jarrow March probably took place because the fellas were sick of walking about Jarrow. They thought "Well, here's a chance, let's go and have a holiday'. So they went on a long hike to London with three meals a day prepared and going round with a collecting tin every night in the pubs they were able to get a few pints at night as well'.

Aberdeen's view of the marchers as men with no commitment to the cause of their leaders, whom he saw as 'public-spirited', also suggests that they were scroungers. The money in the

collecting tin found its way into their own pockets. Dave Hankey told of one marcher who he said returned from the march with over £8 in his pocket, money diverted from collections in aid of the Jarrow Appeal Fund.

The notion that the march was a futile adventure was present from the moment of its conception. Symonds recalls

'There was some opposition to the march. You couldn't pin it down. Some members of the council were against the march. Some said it was a waste of time and effort' (J.M.R.).

It was a 'futile effort' according to Aberdeen - a view redolent of those councillors of forty years ago who waned in their support. This perception stems from the view that firstly the march was impractical - i.e. would achieve nothing (an opinion validated by its failure) and secondly that it was an inappropriate method of confronting the town's problems - a view reinforced by the kind of people it attracted.

What all these criticisms amount to is an alternative interpretation of the ideology of the march. Firstly, the non-political character of the march is discounted (a Labour Party scheme); secondly, the impropriety of opportunists and scroungers and the uncommitted being taken as exemplars of the town is attacked. What the struggle is here, is a struggle for possession of the symbols of the civic consciousness which the march claimed to uphold. Consequently, moderate support for the march is ignored, though exemplified by R.I. Dodds' later, enthusiastic support for the project. The emphasis on the failure to bring work to Jarrow becomes a practical demonstration of its futility.

Underlying all this is one of the major cleavages within the cultural system - the Catholic/non-Catholic divide. The 1935 triumph of the Labour Party has come to be viewed as a triumph for Catholicism. Tim Newell, life-long Labour supporter, Jarrow Marcher and non-Catholic, agrees with this perspective.

He thought this was because

'They must be the people who go in for it - politics. If you don't go in for politics, you don't go anywhere'.

The Catholic connection forms an important part of understanding some non-Catholic responses to the Labour Party. For Tim Newell, all Catholics in the Labour Party, who become councillors - act as councillors - and hence any benefits they wish to extend to Catholics become available to all. Joe Aberdeen, on the other hand, sees the religious affiliation of Catholics as a determining factor in decision making which overrides their political beliefs or their obligations as council members.

Perceptions of Catholicism alone do not exclusively inform non-Catholic attitudes. Joe Aberdeen's 'grin-and-bear-it' attitude to unemployment clashes directly with the basic premise of the march that 'something has to be done' for Jarrow. The 'nothing-was-done' judgement of the march effectively negates the aspiration of the march to be instrumental in eliminating the depression in Jarrow.

Criticism of individual leaders reflects the Catholic presence in the Labour Party. Thompson and Hanlon - both non-Catholic - are never criticized. It is Symonds, Scullion and Riley who bear the brunt - i.e. the Catholic leaders of the Labour Party. What is being attacked here is the idea that these men are fit to hold municipal office. Part of that unfitness stems from their presumed Catholic heritage. The distrust of the non-Catholics towards the Catholics expressed in the scepticism which surrounds non-Catholic conceptualization of the validity of the commitment which believers owe to their faith, underlies this criticism. Thus, if Catholics are remiss in the affirmation of their faith, then they are considered unworthy to hold municipal office. If the Labour Party

consists of many such Catholics, then it too is worthless. Consequently, the Labour Catholic councillors who organized the march are held to be lacking in public spirit. Ultimately the march itself is to be considered as a morally worthless act.

For Labour supporters, 'something had to be done' to find an answer to the town's problems. As has been shown (see pp.118-120 above) this need for positive action developed primarily from the political consciousness which emerged in Jarrow as a consequence of the rise of the Labour Party. Though the finished artefact of the march submerged class consciousness in a civic consciousness, the class war into a general notion of war - the march had its roots in the concept that class conflict was a fundamental organizing principle of the social order. Unlike the hierarchical concept of the natural order - with its 'place for everyone and everyone in its place' perspective, the class conflict scheme offered the possibility of a transformation of the old oppressive order into a new egalitarian order through the triumph of the working-class.

The effect of the growth of the Labour Party in the town was to inject a sense of class pride into the awareness of the working-class. This transformation also occurred nationally throughout the inter-war period. To many historians, its most complete expression was in the General Strike of 1926. A consideration of the implications of that event, most adequately describe the nature of that consciousness:

'The Labour movement, arguing and quarreling, always talking about the need for a better life but with no agreement on how to achieve it, had brought about a profound change in the outlook of working people; it had given them a new self-respect. The belief that you should be deferential to those in the class above you was being replaced by a belief that if you joined with others you could stand up and feel proud of your working-class status. For years such sentiments had been expressed at trade union conferences and meetings.

Now at last they were being put into practice. The call to a general strike came as a great release' (Branson: 1975; p.191).

For the working-class of Jarrow, the march may be considered as a 'great release'. The years of passive response to the problems of unemployment, the quiet acceptance of poverty were now replaced by a crusade which would, it was believed, move the government to action. The ideological device to effect this was based on the civic consciousness ideal to which working-class solidarity was a tributary. The effectiveness of this idea in organizing the energy and enthusiasm of the marchers probably owes a great deal to the company town ethos. This circumscribed all beliefs and attitudes in the town, providing idioms for the control, use and expression of political power. The march, being a reflection of the community was structured in a vertical direction - i.e. Member of Parliament, Mayor, Council, male citizens. Absent were female citizens, excluded from the political demonstration because of the nature of the protest - i.e. the emphasis on war and work, male preserves. Their existence was acknowledged by the 'head of family' component of the marchers' identity. Children were excluded on the grounds of their jural minority - and hence their non-involvement with the productive process.

This vertical expression of protest can be usefully compared with the horizontal expression found in the General Strike. Here the linkage between working-class groups and organizations provides the main emphasis. Class consciousness, when located within the class struggle concept, demands a polarization between working-class and upper classes, rich and poor, capital and labour, etc. The nine days of the General Strike represent the unfolding of that pattern. They also demonstrate that thus united the working-class is beholden to no authority but its own.

The four weeks of the Jarrow March are a representation of a complex hierarchical structure located in a civic consciousness. All the members of the march (excluding council officials such as Sam Rowan and the medical teams) were working-class. They sought to present themselves as accredited representatives of a hierarchical system. Class consciousness was present on the march, but it was subordinated. Links with working-class groups outside the town followed this pattern. The Jarrow March wanted working-class support but only within the civic ethos. The Jarrow Marchers, unlike the General Strikers, acknowledge another authority - the power of the hierarchical system present in their community.

It is to the credit of the marchers that they devised a highly effective means of publicizing their case. Given the suspicion and hostility of the authorities, the relative indifference of the working-class to the policies of the N.U.W.M., and divisions within the working-class itself - the ideological stance adopted may have represented the optimum for success. The instrumental cause of the march's failure was probably the intervention of Sir John Jarvis. Public opinion and many Members of Parliament had been roused to support Jarrow. Jarvis' action certainly released the pressure on the government to act. Rearmament and the war dispersed the unemployed and removed the basis of the march's case.

From the march leaders' point of view, Jarvis' intervention flawed the development of the process of pressure and propaganda undertaken by the crusade. Symonds called the announcement of Jarvis' tube works plan 'badly-timed' (J.M.R.). Thompson was critical. Jarvis was a man who, he said, '..... didn't strike me as genuine, somehow or other..... he always said something was going to happen and nothing did....' (J.M.R.). Wilkinson summed up the opinions of the Jarrow council when she observed

that his announcement came at a time

'..... When we had got the attention of London, and when it really contained little beyond what he had said already in the North..... and which, in any case were no substitute for what we were demanding from the Government' (1939; p.211).

This perception of the Jarrow March as a process of political protest which was made defective by the intervention of Jarvis is confined to the leaders of the march. For left-wing critics such as Colls, the entire protest was misconceived because of its foundation in the civic ethos:

'In some quarters the Jarrow Crusade is talked of as a 'victory'; a moral victory perhaps, but the sight of those gaunt faces looking even more pinched beneath wide-brimmed caps, tramping in step to mouth-organs to beg for work, should forever be a reminder of defeat. Where workers' banners, in a flap of crimsons, emeralds and golden tassels had once really proclaimed 'crusade', the Jarrow banner was a plain statement of appeasement' (1977; pp.182-183).

This critique is based on the belief that the Jarrow March should have projected a defiant class consciousness rather than its civic consciousness. It is inaccurate to suggest, as Colls does, that the march was considered by its participants as akin to appeasement. That it was to them a fight, a crusade - but more particularly a challenge to the system on its own terms - there is no doubt. It was a fight which did not produce a victory in terms of work - and this also informs Colls' criticism. The march is thus judged by such critics in the same terms as the anti-Labour critics mentioned above. While / ^{the latter} use the practical failure of the march to demonstrate the futility of the undertaking, Colls uses this to demonstrate the futility of its ideological premise.

Supporters of the march also see it as an event with no result. Yet their disappointment with the effects of the march must be seen in the wider context of expectations of the fulfillment of the Labour promise to provide a better world. The march to its supporters was a complete event which

ran its course and failed. (Here, it is necessary to ignore the intervention of Jarvis as having a detrimental effect). It had roused public opinion to the support of its cause, clearly demonstrated by the reception given to the marchers en route. The Jarrow Marchers, unlike the earlier N.U.W.M. marchers were able to present their petition to the House of Commons. When this is set in the context of the rising expectations of Labour Party supporters, their understanding is more clearly comprehended. Those expectations centred on the 'better life' to be acquired by the actions of working-class solidarity in pursuit of its own interests. Thus, the Jarrow March, instead of being one event expressing the growth of working-class consciousness and its ascent to power, remains a single, complete, closed happening - with its potential for working-class hopes unrealized. As a complete event, there can be no alternative, happier ending to the four week journey of the Jarrow March.

By contrast, the General Strike, whose ideological premise was founded in a revolutionary class consciousness remains an open event. It was the Trades Union Congress which ordered the return to work before the full impact of the General Strike was felt (Branson: 1975; p.201). Alternative interpretations, potential developments are available to posterity. By no means, can the General Strike be considered a defeat. It was the leaders, the T.U.C. who refused to follow the dictates of the working class consciousness which impelled the event. While the Jarrow March is a closed, complete event to many, whose lack of success demonstrates the invalidity of civic consciousness, the General Strike was one in which the full 'maturity' of class consciousness was never allowed to develop.

What this means for supporters today is that they are placed on the defensive. The event can only be justified in

terms of the situation in Jarrow during the 1930s. There is no ascending path to a workers' paradise of which the march could be considered as but a step. The momentum of the 1930s ended in the failure of the march and the subsequent disillusionment of the post-war world.

For some, in Jarrow, the disillusionment with the Labour Party came much sooner. Dave Hankey was involved with the activities of Jarrow Labour Party in the late '30s and early '40s. He began his working career as a miner. By 1926 and the General Strike he had acquired his deputy's 'ticket'. He was paid off during the Miners' Strike. While not agreeing with the strike, he realized that the miners had been forced into it by the owners' desire to reduce wages. At that time he identified himself as a socialist. His experiences in Jarrow Labour Party convinced him that 'there's very few socialists you can't buy'. This is a reference to alleged corruption within Jarrow Council derived from the Labour Party. Now he identifies himself as a Conservative. A member of the Conservative Club, he justifies his preference because there

'.... you get to meet a better class of fellow. Better type. Conduct themselves better. Sort of fellows who buy their own house'.

Steven Kemp's disillusionment with the Labour Party led him to move further to the left. He was very disappointed with the practice of the Labour council when elected in 1938. 'It was not up to my principles'. In fact, he states that the Labour group lacked a theoretical backing which informed their behaviour. Gradually he adopted a marxist perspective in his political thinking.

In both these informants' statements, the concept of the 'personal is political' is strong. Hankey's disillusionment stems from his observations of the behaviour of individual councillors, as does Kemp's. What they are demanding of the

Jarrow Labour Party is that they, in their personal conduct, exemplify the principles to which they aspire. Ironically, they are asking no more than the organizers of the Jarrow March asked of the volunteers - i.e. that they in their actions exemplify the consciousness which the march projected.

Such reactions represent the extremes of disillusionment with the Labour movement. While most Labour informants still agreed that the Jarrow March was 'a good thing' and undertaken because 'something had to be done', they are aware that nothing was done. By adopting this perspective, they reinforce the observation of critics that the march was a Labour event. For supporters, it was part of that seemingly endless unfolding of working-class power and capacity to change. Even as a 'failure', the event could have been more positively appreciated if the wider movement had been successful.

This is not to say that informants were entirely critical of Jarrow Labour Party. The housing policy, under the guidance of Joe Symonds, was often quoted as the best example of Labour government in Jarrow. The slums are gone. The council estates are ubiquitous. Nevertheless, disillusionment with the present is often stated. And this is the context in which the march is better understood from the supporters' perspective.

Conclusion

The intention of this thesis has been, as stated in the introduction, to determine why the Jarrow March has been remembered. In other words, to determine what the marchers did which enabled their crusade to be lodged into the popular consciousness of English society so that it became a byword for the misery and depression of the 1930s.

The basic premise of this thesis has been that the key to understanding this phenomenon is to be found by studying the context from which the march sprang. That context has been labelled here: the cultural system. The cultural system is viewed as a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form which its members use to communicate and develop their knowledge and attitudes towards the world around them.

For the purpose of this thesis, the focus has been on the cultural system within the town of Jarrow. The description of the system, as given in the first part of this thesis, has shown that it is not homogenous. While many fundamental symbols, e.g. the values placed on family life, are shared by many individuals, significant cleavages exist. Most significant here was the Catholic/non-Catholic divide which represented a major divergence of opinion as to the nature and structure of the world which people experienced. Another division, equally significant, was the political division between the consciousness which the Labour Party came to represent and the anti-Labour consciousness which opposed it.

This study of the cultural system has been by no means definitive. The cultural components explored have been largely determined by the oral data secured from informants. What they felt important to their lives in Jarrow has been the main determinant of what was explored. Another factor which

precluded detailed study of areas in the thesis, has been the limited time available for this research (one year). As a consequence, certain areas - such as the implications of domestic service (which many men and women entered) as a reinforcing factor in the hierarchical structure of the ruling ideology - have been given little attention. In other cases, problems of access to informants' data create problems. For example, my maleness was an inhibiting factor in trying to understand the women's perspective. Likewise, my non-Catholicism inhibited access to an interior perspective of the relationships between socialism and Catholicism.

Nevertheless, enough information was secured, even in the difficult areas to enable a description of the cultural system of Jarrow in the 1930s to be presented here. Consequently, it has been possible to provide an answer to the problem of why the Jarrow March is remembered when other, much larger demonstrations, have been forgotten. Essentially, the conclusion of this research is that the march has been remembered because its case was stated in symbols drawn from the dominant ideology of the society through which it progressed. The Jarrow Marchers used symbolic values which they shared with the members of the wider world into which they entered.

This conclusion makes a far more substantive act of the march than suggestions that the marchers simply 'followed the rules' or they had 'a flair for publicity'. What the march did was to present its members (and subsequently the whole town) as simultaneously worthy exemplars and undeserving victims of the society in which they lived. Their protest was a challenge to the system in its own terms. They undertook their demonstration not as the vanguard of a new order but as upstanding representatives of the old.

They succeeded by elaborating a civic consciousness

founded on the consensual, non-political premise of ideal behaviour in public affairs. This concept, which held that divisions and cleavages in public affairs were irrelevant when contrasted with the essential unity of a community, provided a potent ideological premise for the march's cause. The most immediate exemplification of the town's support was the unanimous vote of the town council for the venture. Whatever the practical value of that unity, the ideological representation of Jarrow was of a town which brought to the fore its basic unity in the face of the present emergency. Thus religious, political and class divisions within the town were presumed overridden by the adoption of the consensual image.

While both the Jarrow Crusade and the N.U.W.M. march stressed the deleterious effects of unemployment on men and their families, the waste of skill and talent, the poverty of homes, the poor rewards that loyalty to their employers had brought for the working-class, the Jarrow Marchers were able to secure a much wider range of support. Both sets of demonstrators used the same materials from the ideological storehouse of the cultural system. It was the context in which they were presented which accounted for the differing responses. The N.U.W.M. 'hunger' marchers, because of their association with the Communist Party, were tainted by the threat that this group was presumed to make to the established order. Consequently, hostility to the N.U.W.M.'s basic premise, which saw class struggle as a fundamental organizing principle in society, led to an indifferent response to their protest over the effects of the depression on the working-class.

On the other hand, the Jarrow Marchers aligned themselves with the society to which they made their appeal for support. Within the context of the civic ethos, they were able to communicate using symbols shared with their audience. They

were representatives of a town under duress, worthy protagonists of its cause. They symbolized the order and harmony of the community from which they came and the wider society which they entered. Their protest was limited in that it did not seek to overturn the system, but to secure deliverance from its malfunctioning.

Though the nature of the protest may have been limited, its efficacy in drawing support to itself has been amply demonstrated in this thesis. What this suggests for further study of protest movements and movements for change (such as the Labour party itself), is that those which have gained widest support are those which have incorporated much of the symbolic material of the society in which they are staged. The actors, i.e. those who mount and maintain such demonstrations, look to create sympathy with their audience by presenting a particular configuration of well-known and well-understood symbols.

Whatever the validity of this hypothesis, the problem for the Jarrow Crusade was that the Government remained unmoved by their effectiveness in securing the support of the society as a whole. They were unmoved also by the situation in the town itself. Consequently, the achievement of the Jarrow March was limited to its effectiveness in becoming a symbol of the 'hungry' thirties.

APPENDIX 1Birth Rates in Jarrow and England and Wales: 1911-1939
(live births per 1000 of Population)

	Jarrow	England/Wales
1911-1920	30.10	21.8
1921	34.25	22.8
1922	30.08	20.4
1923	27.80	19.7
1924	26.26	18.8
1925	25.75	18.3
1926	24.41	17.8
1927	21.53	16.7
1928	25.57	—
1929	21.16	16.3
1930	23.55	16.3
1931	22.53	15.8
1932	19.95	15.2
1933	17.76	14.4
1934	18.61	14.8
1935	17.83	14.7
1936	19.00	14.8
1937	17.05	14.9
1938	16.57	15.1
1939	17.10	15.0

Figures taken from Borough of Jarrow Annual Reports of Health Department (1921-1939); TWRO (T28/53; T28/54; T28/55; T28/56).

APPENDIX 2

Ward Map of Jarrow

Source: Ordnance Survey (1924 edition); Geography Department,
University of Durham.

APPENDIX 2

Ward Map of Jarrow

Source: Ordnance Survey (1924 edition); Geography Department,
University of Durham.

APPENDIX 3Unemployment in Jarrow: 1921-1939

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	Total
1921	3,715	318	96	51	4,180
1922	3,928	203	101	95	4,327
1923	3,864	187	81	137	4,269
1924	3,848	166	72	101	4,187
1925	4,264	101	187	63	4,615
1926	4,592	119	149	87	4,947
1927	2,770	56	85	76	2,987
1928	2,963	72	97	101	3,233
1929	2,798	231	123	93	3,245
1930	3,239	193	110	101	3,643
1931	5,877	255	330	141	6,603
1932	5,974	256	364	199	6,793
1933	6,469	192	380	137	7,178
1934	5,643	147	509	163	6,462
1935	5,153	141	499	260	6,053
1936	3,407	100	298	260	4,065
1937	3,094	115	283	292	3,784
1938	2,544	175	194	230	3,143
1939	1,744	265	102	231	2,342

From Borough of Jarrow: Annual Reports of Health Department (1921-1939); TWRO (T28/53; T28/54; T28/55; T28/56).

APPENDIX 4Petition of the people of Jarrow praying for assistance in the resuscitation of Industry in Jarrow

TO: The Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament Assembled.

The humble petition of inhabitants of the Borough of Jarrow sheweth as follows:-

During the last fifteen years Jarrow has passed through a period of industrial depression without parallel in the town's history. The persistence of unemployment has reduced us to a deplorable condition - homes are impoverished and acute distress is prevalent.

Included in your petitioners are highly skilled shipyard and engineering workers who formerly obtained employment at a shipbuilding and iron works which at one time employed some thousands of the town's work people, and from the shipyard of which there have been launched many fine ships for naval and mercantile purposes, and the site of which works now offers an unexcelled opportunity for industrial development.

In the year 1921 the iron and steel works closed, and, except for one brief period, have remained closed ever since and are now in the process of demolition.

In or about the month of October 1934 the shipyard known locally as the Palmer Yard was bought by a company named National Shipbuilders Security Limited, whose objects include the buying up of shipyards and subsequent disposal of the same subject to prohibition against shipbuilding therein for a period of forty years. The Palmer Yard was disposed of by the company subject to this prohibition.

Your petitioners through the Town Council objected to H.M. Government against the imposition of such a restriction which it was urged was contrary to public policy, and which in fact was and is a crushing blow to Jarrow which is a shipbuilding town. Your petitioners and their forebearers

have taken a pride in their work with an anxiety that the fine record of the yard and of the town should not be lost, but the traditions of the past carried to the future. By the imposition of the restriction, all chance of employment at their own work in their 'own' yard is denied them.

Your petitioners wish humbly to point out not only the effect of a prolonged stoppage on the technical capabilities of those who are skilled tradesmen and the physical and mental strain upon even the strongest of men in facing, as heads of families, a future prospectless of work and black with unlimited care and want but also the disastrous effect upon the youth of the town who, owing to the restriction of facilities for their being apprenticed, are tending to grow up with no trade to their calling.

Your petitioners have from time to time been buoyed with hope from statements concerning the re-starting of the Palmer Works. These various statements recede without realisation and your petitioners' anxiety for the future increases.

Jarrow is in the special area of Durham and Tyneside but the reports of the Commissioner appointed by H.M. Government to deal with the special areas of England and Wales make repeated reference towards the inadequacy of the powers imposed in him to deal with the areas.

Wherefore it is with the deepest concern not only in their own plight, but for the nation, that a town should be for so long a period stricken with unemployment and a valuable opportunity for industry left unavailing, that your petitioners humbly and anxiously pray that H.M. Government realise the urgent need that work be provided for the town without further devastating delay, actively assist resuscitation of industry and render such other actions as may be meet.

AND your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

SIGNED by the under-mentioned, being inhabitants of the town of Jarrow of the age of 18 years and over.

Name

Address

APPENDIX 5

The Mayor's Letter

Source: Papers relating to the Jarrow March; D.R.O. (D/X33/11).

Borough of Jarrow.



MAYOR'S PARLOUR,
TOWN HALL,
JARROW,
Co. DURHAM.

To the Secretary

Dear Sir,

UNEMPLOYMENT IN JARROW.

Jarrow, a Tyneside borough of 35,000 inhabitants, is fighting to extricate itself from industrial depression. Without parallel, for fifteen years the town has suffered from persistent unemployment which has impoverished homes and brought widespread distress. The Town Council has pledged itself to make the biggest non-political fight for work ever waged in history by a single town. The sympathy—more than that—the assistance of the whole country is needed in this fight, and as Mayor in this difficult period I appeal to your Society/Party for support.

Prior to 1921, the town's workers were employed at the Palmer Shipbuilding & Iron Works, which gave employment to over 8,000 people. These works are in process of demolition, and in place of the hum of industry all that is now heard are the reports of shattering explosions of blasting materials in connexion with the breaking up of the works. In these works, where formerly thousands of persons were employed, only 100 or so are employed on a makeshift scheme.

In recent years, thirteen industries have been forced to close down. The famous shipyard was bought by National Shipbuilders Security Limited, a company formed by certain shipbuilders, the objects of which included the buying up of shipyards the owners of which were willing to sell, and the subsequent disposal of the yards subject to a restriction against shipbuilding therein for a period of 40 years. The Palmer Yard was so disposed of by the Company. The Council objected to H.M. Government against the imposition of such a restriction which, it was urged, was contrary to public policy, but unfortunately the Government did not intervene, and the yard remains closed. Thus was destroyed the tradition created by the honest work of thousands of shipbuilders.

About eighteen months ago the town was heartened by the appearance of a scheme for the re-establishment of the steel works. From statements made, it appeared that the scheme had the support of H.M. Government and the Town Council lent to it all the support in its power. In a debate on the 30th June, 1936, in the House of Commons, it became clear that there was obstruction to the scheme by the British Iron & Steel Federation, a body composed of representatives of proprietors of steel-works, and as a result of sending a deputation to the President of the Board of Trade, it clearly appeared that the scheme would not proceed.

An appeal was made to the Government to remove the obstacle placed in the way of progress by the Federation, but no response was forthcoming.

To meet the grave situation which was so brought about, the Council—Conservatives, Socialists, and Liberals—is taking all available steps. The absence of any prospect of resuscitation of industry otherwise, impels the Council to call upon the Government to realise its responsibility to the town. Towards this end there is in course of preparation a town's petition to the House of Commons praying that the Government actively assist the resuscitation of industry in the town. The Council is prepared, itself, if the Government will give it power and assistance, to be the organiser of the resuscitation of industry.

Unanimously the Council decided to lead a protest march to London to convey their petition for work, firmly convinced that Government intervention can remove the obstacles which are preventing willing industrialists from establishing works which, without throwing men in other parts of the country out of work, could absorb practically all Jarrow's unemployed.

There are now 5,000 persons out of work in the town. Every year 300 boys leave school with practically no chance of a job, and no future before them. There are now over 400 youths between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age who have never done a day's work in their lives.

The results of this continued unemployment are seen not only in the breaking up of family life, and the semi-starvation of the people, but in the rate which has risen as the rateable value of the town has decreased, and also in the closing down of shops. Jarrow was once a prosperous shopping centre. Now there are rows of closed shops. The loss of industries has reduced the rateable value by £21,000.

An even more tragic tale is told by the vital statistics, issued by our Health Department, which is the hardest worked in the country, and in which we have spent large sums of money in a struggle to check disease which follows upon the heels of unemployment.

Although Jarrow is a well situated town near the sea we have one of the largest infantile mortality rates in the country, namely, 95.82 per thousand births against an average for similar towns of 53, and over the five years from 1930 to 1934 the average death rate from tuberculosis is 1.04 per thousand, and from pneumonia 1.38. Work for the town will check the evils of unemployment which these figures indicate. Fine and independent men with a fine industrial

record behind them are waiting for their share in the revival of national prosperity which so far has passed them by.

We are out to gain no political capital, only work for our people. I appeal to your Society/Party to support us. We need all the financial assistance for the march we can get, and I shall be glad to receive any donations it may care to send.

I hope that by the response to the appeals which are being sent out all over the country, including through the press, to local authorities, trade unions, and other organisations, it will be shown that Jarrow is not a forgotten town.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. Thompson.

Mayor of Jarrow.

APPENDIX 6The Jarrow March AppealRECEIPTS

Donations from General Public		
Jarrow	£183.15.2	
Tyneside Towns	£ 55. 1.9	
Rest of U.K.	£442. 0.0	£ 680.16.11
Donations from Conservative, Labour and Liberal Party Organizations		
		£ 61. 1.10
Donations from Trade Unions		
		£ 134. 6. 5
Donations from Co-Operative Societies		
		£ 323. 2. 7
Collections en route		
		£ 317.12. 8
Special Supper Donation		
		<u>£ 50.00.00</u>
		<u>£1,567. 0. 5</u>

PAYMENTS

Food		£ 187.18. 7
Allowance to Marchers		£ 280. 2. 2
Stores		£ 65. 7. 2
Baggage Bus		£ 32.15. 4
Hire of Halls		£ 44. 0. 9
Train Fares		£ 154. 1. 9
Stationery, Telephones		£ 53.10. 9
Postage		£ 46.11. 6
Wages		£ 121. 2. 0
Clothing		£ 405.17. 8
Advance Agents		£ 37. 3. 3
Miscellaneous		£ 58. 8. 2
Supper		<u>£ 53.12. 9</u>
Balance		<u>£ 26. 8. 8</u>

APPENDIX 7

March Handbills

Source: Papers relating to the Jarrow March; D.R.O. (D/X33/11).

CRUSADE FOR WORK.
JARROW APPEALS TO YOU.

PUBLIC MEETING

IN THE
COUNTY CINEMA,
(THE SQUARE),
Friday, Oct. 23rd, at 7.30 p.m.

SPEAKERS:

ELLEN WILKINSON, M.P.

AND

Members of JARROW TOWN COUNCIL.

Chairman: Canon E. B. REDLICH, B.D. (Rural Dean).

COLLECTION.

The "Crusade for Work" has been organised by the Jarrow Town Council on strictly NON-POLITICAL lines and has the support of the Political Organisations in the Town. This meeting is held for the express purpose of presenting "Jarrow's Case" to the citizens of Market Harborough.

The MARCHERS will be welcomed on arrival at the P.A.C. Institution at 5.0 p.m., by the Rt. Rev. BISHOP J. J. WILLIS, D.D. supported by prominent citizens of the Town.

GREEN & CO. PRINTERS - MARKET HARBOUROUGH

21/10/35

CRUSADE FOR WORK.

JARROW APPEALS TO YOU.

Public Meeting

IN THE

Music Saloon, Wood Street,

—ON—

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14th, 1936,

At 7-30 p.m.

SPEAKERS: **ELLEN**

WILKINSON, M.P.,

And Members of JARROW TOWN COUNCIL.

CHAIRMAN:

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR

(Alderman A. CHARLESWORTH, J.P.).

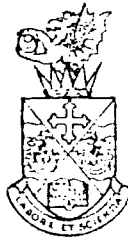
The "Crusade for Work" has been Organised by the Jarrow Town Council on strictly **NON-POLITICAL** lines, and has the support of the local Conservative Party and the Labour Party. This meeting is held for the express purpose of presenting "Jarrow's Case" to the Citizens of Wakefield.

COLLECTION. Questions Specially Invited.

Marchers will be welcomed at the Town Hall, on Wednesday, at 4 p.m., by His Worship the Mayor, supported by the Provost of Wakefield (Canon Noel Hopkins), Rev. A. E. C. Morgan, Rev. W. J. Kinchington, and a representative of the Roman Catholic Church, and others.

J. McILLES & Son, Printers, Thompson's Yard, Westgate, Wakefield.

D/833/11



JARROW'S MARCH is a TOWN'S MARCH

Come to hear

**The Story of the Jarrow Marchers
The Fight of a Town for Work**

**Its Shipyards
are banned**

**Its Steelworks
closed**

JARROW APPEALS to PARLIAMENT

**MEETING on EVE of
PRESENTATION of PETITION to PARLIAMENT**

**MEMORIAL HALL
FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4**

Tuesday, November 3, at 8 p.m.

Chairman :

THE MAYOR OF JARROW

Speakers :

The Marshal of the March - - Councillor Riley
The ex-Mayor of Jarrow - - - Councillor Dodds
The M.P. for Jarrow - - - Miss Ellen Wilkinson
Three Marchers ★ Canon Dick Sheppard

Sir John Jarvis, M.P., will speak if his engagements permit

Printed by the London Caledonian Press Ltd., 74 Swinton Street, W.C.1.—41327

D/x33/11

Bibliography

(a) Primary Material

The main source of primary material used in this thesis has been the interviews which I myself recorded. In addition, extensive use was made of tape-recordings made by Mr. Tom Kelly of Jarrow. These recordings, collectively known as the Jarrow March Reminiscences (J.M.R.), are interviews with march leaders and organizers. They are held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central Reference Library, Local History Unit. A full list of the recordings is as follows:

<u>Tape</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Informant</u>
1A	1972	Mrs. Clark
1B	1973	P. Scullion
2A	1973	J. Symonds
2B	1973	S. Rowan
3A	1975	J.W. Thompson
3B	1973	J. Kelly

Another source of primary material, this time documentary, is the records of Jarrow Corporation. Minute books of council meetings, Medical Officer of Health reports and other miscellaneous papers were consulted. This material is kept in the Tyne and Wear County Council Records Office (T.W.R.O.), Blandford House, West Blandford Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1 4JA.

The other major source of primary documentary material was the files of the South Shields Gazette, the local newspaper which covered Jarrow. These files are kept in the Local History Unit of the South Tyneside Reference Library, Catherine Street,

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- | | |
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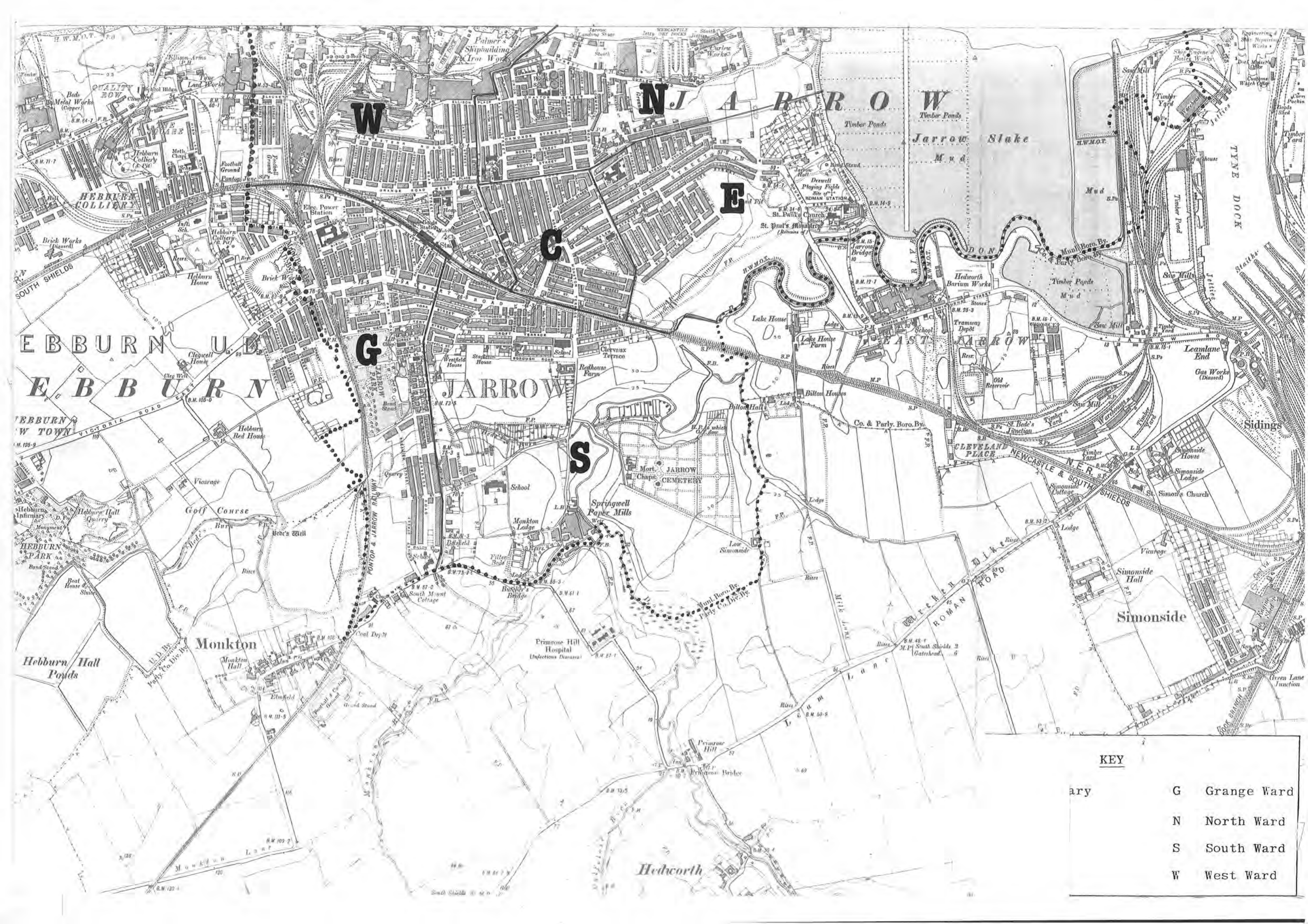
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KEY

ary	G	Grange Ward
	N	North Ward
	S	South Ward
	W	West Ward