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AN EXAMINATION OF THE GENERAL UNION OF TEXTILE WORKERS: 1883-1922

A Thesis in Sociology

by

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Thesis Summary

The General Union of Textile Workers organised amongst men and women employed in the wool textile industry of West Yorkshire. It emerged as a weavers' union, becoming more general in scope in the years before the First World War. It eventually amalgamated with other unions in the industry in 1922. Women showed a slight majority within the industry and union, nevertheless, their representation within the union's structure remained slight. This was despite the commitment of leading members of the union to women's suffrage and improved working conditions. Collective bargaining developed slowly, but as it developed it was clear that both employers' and workers' mediators shared a common perception of means and goals.

These two areas, relations between men and women workers and relations between workers and employers, have been examined in terms of the notion of 'frontiers'. Taking a period of changed production conditions, the First World War, it is argued that the leadership of the General Union of Textile Workers showed a tendency to maintain boundaries. The boundary between women's civil rights and their rights in production was preserved as questions of equal pay and representation remained unresolved. The boundary between accepted areas of responsibility for workers and employers was preserved, as, despite government intervention in the industry, control and ownership remained unchallenged by the union.

The investigation has been conducted with the use of documentary evidence from a number of different sources and with oral evidence, yielded by interview with workers employed in the industry before 1920 in one area, Colne Valley.

An examination of the General Union of Textile Workers, 1883-1922

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Bibliography

Glossary

Worsted cloth - woven from long-fibre wool combed to produce long silky fibres which are then placed parallel - the result is a smooth yarn and a smooth surfaced cloth.

Woollen cloth - made from fibres which vary in length - these have been carded to separate them out - both yarn and cloth finally have a rougher and hairier look as the ends of the fibres stick out from the yarn.

Shoddy - the woollen material recovered from soft wool rags, for example knitted goods - this can be spun with pure woollen fibres to form a yarn.

Mungo - recovered from hard wool rags for example tailors' clippings. This again can be added to the yarn.

Linsey - a light cloth woven with woollen weft and cotton warp.

Pick - the passage of the bobbin of weft thread through the 'shed' of warp threads. Loom speeds are measured by the number of times (or picks) a minute the weft threads pass backwards and forwards.

Cut - Each warp length was marked into sections or 'cuts' for which the weaver was paid as each was completed.

Abbreviations:

ASD	Amalgamated Society of Dyers
ASE	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
BDA	Bradford Dyers' Association (Employers)
BSP	British Socialist Party
CIC	Chief Industrial Commissioner
CWAC	Central Wool Advisory Committee
GUTW	General Union of Textile Workers
HWD	Heavy Woollen District
ILP	Independent Labour Party
NAUTT	National Association of Unions in the Textile Trades
NFWW	National Federation of Women Workers
NSD & F	National Society of Dyers and Finishers
NUDBTW	National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers (successor to GUTW)
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
SDF	Social-Democratic Federation (members later formed BSP)
TUC	Trades Union Congress
WEA	Workers' Education Association
WTA	Wool Textile Association
WEWNC	War Emergency Workers National Committee
YFT	Yorkshire Factory Times

INTRODUCTION

In the pages which follow, an attempt will be made to write trade union history in a way which breaks down the strongly developmental and organisational approach which has been more usually adopted. Conventionally, trade unions histories tend to concentrate on issues of internal government and external control in a way which assumes homogeneity on the part of workforce and employers and which would seem to ignore the relational and interactive nature of trade unions.(1) Such limitations of scope and form derive as much from a narrow theoretical conception of trade unionism and production as from a methodological bias which concentrates almost exclusively on a union's own records and preserved history as the main source of evidence.

An explanation which is seen solely in developmental and organisational terms neglects a number of key areas of analysis which, it is argued here, have determined the scope and limitations of trade union action. Instead, an interpretation of trade unionism which considers sexual divisions in the workplace, the relationship between home and work, the influence of employers' institutions and the social meaning of trade union membership in a particular context will be considered. Such an approach nevertheless rests upon a general theoretical framework which articulates dimensions of class and dependency. By class is meant the relationships and joint experience amongst men and women which emerges from confrontations and interactions of labour and capital. By dependency is meant the unequal relationship between men and women maintained through social and economic means within the capitalist mode of production.(2)

An analysis in terms of prevailing social and economic relations between men and women and which considers production in relation to

the sexual division of labour between home and work leads to an interpretation of trade unionism as itself a party to such relationships. That is, trade unions are explained as being a product of the articulation of class and dependency at the same time as contributing to varying degrees to these relationships. Trade unions are not thus defined simply as organisations of workers set up to defend and improve working conditions and extend control over relations of production, but as themselves a complex of relationships interacting with employers, men and women workers, government officials and as interpreters of varying forms of labour and socialist ideology and political action.(3)

One crucial area in which divisions and inequalities relate directly to a trade union's operations is the labour market. The existence of a dual labour market(4) is assumed in this study. This suggests that the sale of men's and women's labour operates according to differing conditions and with consequently differing results. Thus men tend to occupy skilled and more permanent areas of the labour market, holding jobs which are characterised by higher pay and greater responsibility, while women hold less skilled jobs with lower pay, little or no responsibility and less certainty. It will be argued that this segregation occurs when women are assumed to be marginal to production outside the domestic sphere. While women's socio-economic role was and is defined in terms of domesticity, their designation in the industrial workplace was and is expressed as problematic, less eligible and consistently less equal. Such designations both imposed and internalised had obvious results for women's role in the workplace and, consequently, for their participation in the organisations of labour, the trade unions. For men, there were contrasting implications of power and the status of wage earner. Dependence for women carried with it the superior rights of men. The wage became a matter of family survival

but traced through the external and worldly representative of the family, the husband and father. For men then, unions were a matter of defence of their rights to work and improving their conditions of labour.(5) Unless this dual aspect of the labour market and the relationships sustaining it are fully incorporated into the analysis of a trade union's past, there is a danger that a union will be viewed solely, yet uncritically, in male terms. This had, in the past, characterised the conventional approach to the writing of trade union history.

To state that the majority of analyses and histories have been written by men is not a sufficient explanation on its own, though certainly a relevant one. In fact, Beatrice Webb and Barbara Drake(6) had made classical contributions to the writing of English trade union history before the more recent generation of feminists had begun to make their more radical analyses. Whether by men or women, for the majority, accounts of trade unions have concentrated almost entirely on the activities of men members and men workers. Even in the case of industries with a predominance of women in the work force, the account is made in strictly male-oriented terms. Women are treated to short passages of analysis or as special cases when their presence has been undeniably significant.(7) In terms of bargaining strength, skill acquisition, earnings, participation and access to union hierarchies, the workforce is treated as predominantly male and celibate. Women appear as a troublesome problem when accounting for variable levels of activity and militancy. Their permanence in the workforce is questioned and their involvement in the central areas of production is seen as marginal.

As with trade union history, so it has been with industrial

sociology. It has been argued that industrial sociologists have typically neglected women[8] as they have other groups designated minority by virtue of being neither white nor male.[9] What tends to persist, even amongst the more enlightened sociologists and historians,[10] is a disregard and devaluation of family and community relationships as having any explanatory value except insofar as they are seen as 'limitations' to 'universalistic class consciousness'.[11] What such interpretations neglect is the reality of workers' lives. By devaluing and disregarding the significance of family and other non-industrial productive relationships, explanations lose both historical and social validity. The classic symbolism of an army of fraternal industrial footsoldiers, free from domestic encumbrances, derives from the particular vision of the trade union movement[12] and persists in the writings of a majority of historians of the British labour movement. The exclusion of particularist ties has two implications. Firstly it has led to the neglect of women as a group having their own characteristics within and without industrial production. Secondly, it assumes a non-particularistic non-domestic role for men workers. This may be far from realistic. The role of the family in providing employment, controlling job selection and guaranteeing work at different stages in men's working lives may be seen as crucial. This integration challenges assumptions which seek to isolate home, domestic production from work and industrial production.[13]

Apart from simplistic notions of the labour market there is an additional area of analysis which has not yet been fully explored. These are the boundaries, points of demarcation, 'frontiers'[14] which emerge and are observed in relations between various groupings in society. Two such boundaries would seem to have particular relevance for an understanding of a trade union, these tend to share a common

basis for distinction. One such boundary divides women's political rights from their economic rights, the other divides workers' rights of citizenship from their rights in production. The acceptance of such boundaries and their operation by such influential groupings as the leaders of trade unions and employers' intermediaries tends towards the fixing of terms for conflict and definitions of areas of competence which are marginalising for those so demarcated. Such boundaries cannot be seen as dividing areas of responsibility in some democratic pluralist utopia. For both women and trade unionists, lack of control and ownership in the process of production has a significantly weakening and isolating effect.

Thus, despite the existence of a mass movement for women's political equality in the years before 1914, moves towards equality for men and women in the two areas of home and work were not so well advanced. Similarly, though labour had come to occupy a place in the political life of the country before 1914, its operations within the area of production were still largely restricted and confined mainly to strike action and an incipient, though weakly defined, participation in conciliation. Miliband's concept of 'Imperfect Competition' to a large extent accounts for the persistence of inequalities between unions and employers.(15) Nevertheless, there is an element of interpretation and compliance in the actions of some leading trade unionists which is suggestive of an accepting or unchallenging response to employer and government claims in relation to production and its direction.(16)

Methodological bias has typically entered the analysis of trade union history in such a way as to confirm an interpretation which is both male dominated and organisation dominated. Trade union and

business histories, have been typically dependent on wages books, balance sheets, minute books, newspapers, government publications and censuses of people and their production.(17) The nearest to direct personal evidence and testimony have been biographies and autobiographies of leading individuals, men in the main, who are depicted as creators of companies and organisations.(18) Such data tend towards providing explanations of the more general or large scale type or in terms of selected examples of decision making. Neither together nor separately do such dimensions suffice as bases for explanations. Both neglect that essential middle area of lived experience which is only touched at points by documentary evidence and the biographies of those with the means and influence to inform posterity.(19)

To take the example of the trade union itself, minute books and membership details and the formalistic rendering of discussions and debate into resolutions, can only really be understood in terms of day-to-day experience of life and work. This is because the trade union owes its existence as a set of social relationships to that experience and to changes in it. Thus, the union is not simply to be understood as an organisation of labour with explicit rules and procedures, fixed meetings in time and place and named officers. It must also, particularly in the early decades of this century, be understood as an almost exclusively male organisation. The context, practice and language of trade unionism requires reconstructing not only through surviving documents but also through workers' domestic and working experience. Evidence of such experience is only available from oral history.

Oral evidence broadens out existing concepts and language. Thus wage earners are defined not simply in terms of the wages earned and

jobs held, but also in terms of the network of social relationships which define and delimit situations and opportunities. In particular, the differences between men and women, married and single, can be seen as significant and meaningful in explaining and understanding wage earning. The concept of mobility between jobs and areas is again an empty one without the evidence of motivations, aspirations and regrets. Nor can it be properly understood without evidence of the political economy of mobility, that is the pressures to move between jobs, or to seek employment elsewhere and changes in the relationship between the mobile person, the environment and other individuals. Finally, the meaning of trade union membership can only be fully explored by attending to the experience of workers on a day-to-day basis in a particular industry.

The foregoing argument has been set out in order to provide the context for the hypothesis which is to be examined in the chapters which follow. The hypothesis is that the ability of a trade union to effect change is determined not only by the legal, political and technological conditions of struggle but also by the maintenance of boundaries of action and competence which are consistently compromised. Two significant limitations or boundaries are likely to be those which fix the marginality and dependency of women in the area of production outside the home and those which fix a proper sphere of competence for capital and labour, employers and unions.

In order to test such a hypothesis a union was chosen whose development, in comparison with unions in similar industries, came relatively late. This was to offer the potential of a 'combined development'[20] at a period of more open class conflict and greater acceptance for trade unions. In order that the main characteristics of this union should be considered in what were, arguably, conditions

of change and opportunity, the period from its inception, 1883, to amalgamation in 1922, was chosen. This, of course, includes the First World War. The union chosen, the General Union of Textile Workers, as it was known after 1912, in the years of its most rapid growth and greatest influence, organised wool textile workers in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Emerging first as a weavers' union, its membership was drawn almost entirely from workers in the wool textile industry's manufacturing processes. That is, men and women employed in the preparation, spinning and weaving of yarn and cloth. There were exceptions to this, but, in general, workers employed in dyeing, combing, finishing and in skilled and supervisory jobs in the industry, organised in separate unions.

Despite the fact that the wool textile industry of West Yorkshire employed a slight majority of women workers and despite the fact that women had played an important part in the struggles which founded the union, the years before 1914 saw leadership and control of the union almost entirely in the hands of men workers. The wool textile industry was to experience improved trading conditions in the years preceding the war and was to enter a period of boom production during and immediately after the war. Such a situation might be expected to present opportunity to workers' organisations to increase a share in the profits and extend control over the workplace. Indeed, war-time production had the interesting distinction, so far as wool textiles were concerned, that it was operated through a formally democratic Board of Control, representative of government, unions and employers.

The position of women in the industry and in the union, together with the GUTW's relationships with employers will be considered, particularly as these issues both appear to indicate aspects of the

demarcation of frontiers. The organisation of chapters will thus be partly thematic and partly chronological. Following two general introductory chapters which cover the industry's structure and the development of unions in the industry, the argument then turns to a consideration of the experience of workers employed in the industry and the ways in which home and work remain integrated areas of production. Chapter five examines the relationship between women workers and the GUTW in the pre-war years. The emergence of conciliation is considered in chapter six, the union's participation in government control of the industry is shown in chapter seven and the course of wage bargaining during the war years is traced in chapter eight. The following chapter contains a discussion of the part played by women in war time production and in the union. Chapter ten concludes the argument, showing the GUTW's development as an organisation of labour during the war years.

A wide variety of types of evidence have been used in this investigation. As has already been shown,(21) oral evidence is considered as having an essential contribution to make. Interviews were carried out in one area, Colne Valley, with particular emphasis on women and girls in manufacturing and spinning. Altogether, twenty six people were interviewed and the evidence provided by twenty of these provides the main basis for discussion in chapters three and four. The interviewees were approached as men and women whose life histories were structured predominantly in terms of working and family patterns rather than in terms of membership in any organisation. Thus it was intended to show how the meaning and significance of trade union membership emerged from the level of daily experience and interaction between home and work.

Colne Valley as an area recommends itself in other ways. It

is readily defined physically and industrially with wool cloth production in these years being almost exclusively fancy woollen, with some linseys and worsteds. Moreover, it had an unusually complete radical labour history.(22) Despite these definable features, it is not intended to make use of the ideas and concepts developed around the notion of an 'occupational community'. These have been exclusively devised in relation to work occupation as men's activity; even those studies which seek to understand the workplace in terms of 'outside' social relations restrict these to effects on men's lives.(23) Without a consideration of the sexual division of labour and the implications of the facts of dependency, such studies have little to recommend them. Particularly is this the case when both men and women are found in more or less equal distribution in the workplace and 'outside'. What is intended here is to show the relations between wage labour and capital together with the particular relations of men to women in this industry at this time. For both men and women, conflicts, solidarities, opportunities and mobility require interpretation in the light of class and sex role divisions. A notion such as 'occupational community' commands a perspective only when it is linked to the fortunes and balances of power between wage labour and capital, men and women in the industry. Thus, although Colne Valley people referred (and still refer) to those not born and brought up in the townships as 'comers in' and although employers liked to talk of traditions of skill and loyalty within the industry, differences and traditions evaporate to a great extent under the force of work discipline and the ebb and flow of an industry's rate of production.

The notion of 'occupational community' has in practice neglected variations in the work and domestic roles of different groups, men, women, old, young, married and single and the ways in which the family

life cycle places differing claims on members. Thus variations in degrees of independence from domestic roles for young men and women workers may affect their relative positions and opportunities occupationally, implying the need to consider hierarchies and divisions within a community. Similarly, inter-relations with a surrounding area of occupations and industry may require attention. Relationships between a community such as Ashton, described in Coal is Our Life[24] and nearby textile areas would perhaps have helped to broaden the analysis of women's lives. Colne Valley will be considered not for any special or unique characteristics, but as an historical and industrial focus. By thus concentrating attention, the more detailed aspects of working lives will be in evidence, framed within the broader structures of the industry, dependency and class.

The opportunity presented by oral evidence to provide substance and life to the essential documentary data is emphasised by the placing of the two chapters which draw most heavily on the results of the interviews early on as a foundation to succeeding chapters. In the chapters which follow, evidence from union minute books, newspapers, correspondence, government reports and memoranda, both published and unpublished and a broad selection of secondary sources is drawn upon.

It is not accident, however, that a relatively unsuccessful and institutionally weak union like the GUTW has left a set of documents which in themselves present considerable problems for the historian through neglect to ensure their systematic preservation. Possibly too, the effect of amalgamations in 1922 and 1936 with unions organising workers in dyeing and finishing have helped eclipse the early history of the manufacturing side of the union's activities, particularly since this was so closely linked with two individuals, Ben Turner and Allen Gee,

who had retired from active participation before 1936. The result is that the primary data which survives relates only to a section of districts and committees. Gaps have had to be filled in by reference to local newspapers of the labour press and in particular by the columns of what was to become the union's own paper, the Yorkshire Factory Times.

It is intended that by pointing out relationships which the GUTW was to develop with employers, government officials, members of craft unions and with men and women in the industry itself, an analysis which places the union in a context of socio-economic relationships will be achieved. By this means, the limitations of a simple chronological or organisation-based analysis will be avoided. The way in which the union was both a product of and participant in a range of relationships will be portrayed rather than the notion of the union as a functioning part of an industrial relations scene. Through the combinations of oral and documentary evidence, not only the conflicts generated between labour and capital over questions of earnings and the conditions of labour are in evidence, but also the social context of that labour will be in closer focus.

Notes

1. There is scarcely an exception to this tendency, beginning with Sidney and Beatrice Webb's History of Trade Unionism (1894) and Industrial Democracy (1897) most trade union histories have taken a narrow interpretation which is dominated by chronology and the dimensions of the organisation itself. Few studies have sought to examine the industrial and social context of trade union activity. One brief exception is the unpublished M.Sc. thesis of Ellis Thorpe (Salford University), "Industrial Relations and the Social Structure: A case study of the Bolton cotton-mule spinners, 1880-1910". Industrial sociologists such as Richard Brown, (see his "Patterns of Paradox: Shipbuilding workers' images of society", with Jim Cousins, in Martin Bulmer (ed.) Working Class Images of Society (1975), also David Lockwood's classic, The Blackcoated Worker (1958) and J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer and J. Platt's The Affluent Worker, 1 and 3, (1968) and (1969)) provide an analysis which redresses the developmental bias. However, as Richard Brown himself argues, these have paid little or no attention to women as workers or as members of the wider industrial community (see his "Women as Employees: Some comments on research in industrial sociology" in Diana Leonard Barker and Sheila Allen, Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage (1976a)).

2. This characterisation of class is dependent on the position developed by E.P. Thompson in the Preface to The Making of the English Working Class, (1965) pp.9-10. It enables notions of both conscious and unconscious solidarities and identities shown in actions and expressions which derive from the relationship between wage labour and capital. Such solidarities necessarily involve both men and women as members of a class. In articulation with this basic class divide are the unequal relationships between men and women maintained by the dependent position of women. The restriction of women's productive role through their designation as marginal in production outside the home has implications which are social and political as well as economic. These can cut across and affect solidarities within classes.

3. Trade union histories which deal with industries in which women were numerically important have typically neglected women in the membership. Thus for example, H.A. Turner's study of the cotton unions, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy: A comparative study of the cotton unions (1962), Alan Fox's History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, 1874-1957 (1958) and John Child's Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry: The quest for security (1967) tend to treat women as special problems rather than an integral part of the industry and union's potential membership. Women thus appear as objects to be contended with or as occasional untypical leaders - but with few apparent roots and with questioned levels of commitment.

4. See "Sexual Divisions and the Dual Labour Market" by R.D. Barron and G.M. Norris, in Leonard Barker and Allen (1976a) op.cit. Catherine Hakim's Occupational Segregation: A comparative study of the degree and pattern of differentiation between men

and women's work in Britain, the United States and other countries (Department of Employment Research Paper No 9, November 1979) finds that her data, covering labour force participation by women since 1901, is amply supported by this theory, see pp.46-53.

5. V.L. Allen contributes an alternative model with his concept of 'ideologically determined labour markets'. (See his "The Differentiation of the Working Class" in Alan Hunt (ed.) Class and Class Structure (1977) pp.67 ff). While this presents the useful idea that 'the institutionalised perception of work is the creation of socially determined labour markets between which there is limited mobility', p.68 and enables treatment in terms of both race and sex, the importance of power relations would seem not to be easily accounted for. A similar neglect of this dimension is evident in Eric Hobsbawm's 'Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography", History Workshop Journal, No 6, 1978. See n. 80, p.190 below.

6. Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1894) op.cit., Barbara Drake, Women in Trade Unions, (1921).

7. See n.3 above.

8. See Brown in Leonard Barker and Allen (1976a) op.cit.

9. This point is discussed in Work, Race and Immigration, Sheila Allen, Stuart Bentley and Joanna Bornat (1977) Chapter 1.

10. See J.H. Westergaard, "Radical Class Consciousness: A comment" in Bulmer (1975) op.cit. R. Hyman and R.H. Fryer, "Trade Unions: Sociology and political economy" in Tom Clarke and Laurie Clements (eds.) Trade Unions Under Capitalism, (1977) is also disappointing in this respect.

11. Westergaard (1975) op.cit., pp.254-55.

12. See Hobsbawm (1978) op.cit.

13. Sociologists have of course stressed the importance of the family and of home life in creating and sustaining consciousness, see, for example, John H. Goldthorpe, David Lockwood, Frank Bechhoffer, Jennifer Platt, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure (1969) Chapters 4 and 5. Nevertheless, in this, as in other studies, home life is portrayed more as a back-drop of activities rather than a set of lived relationships linking with work and wage-earning. Interpretations which stress a consumption-based definition of family roles help in the construction of a passive, retreatist model of family life rather than one which links directly to the productive process and which portrays the sex roles and power relationships of the domestic situation. (See Goldthorpe et al (1969) op.cit., pp.101-108.)

14. The idea of 'frontiers' is used in Carter L. Goodrich, The Frontier of Control, (new edition 1975, first published 1920). This is discussed below in Chapter 7.

15. Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society (1969), Chapter 6, "Imperfect Competition".

16. This point is discussed below, see Chapter 6, p.193+ff.

17. Eric Sigsworth accounts for this bias in the introductory paragraphs of his Black Dyke Mills (1958). This study of a family worsted mill, in Queensbury, Bradford, Messrs Fosters, draws almost entirely on business records and the details of company life. He argues that:

> '... although it was with the degree of ability for organisation and risk-bearing that the success or failure of a firm such as Messrs. Fosters rested, one must not forget that such firms could not have achieved what they did without a labour force to populate the busy mill which was at the heart of the business. In Messrs. Fosters' case too, it was more than a relationship between workers and employers, for the firm was at the core of an entire community. Black Dyke Mills provided employment for the bulk of the population of Queensbury ... Many of its houses were built and owned by the firm, many of its amenities were provided by the Foster family - library, institute, swimming baths, gas supply ... Most of the material which would have illustrated the development of these relationships - the narrower one within the mill, the wider one within a community - has been destroyed. What survives has been used ... If, therefore, the following pages appear to deal with a firm in which there were capital and enterprise but little labour, this is the product of an accident of destruction and not of deliberate design.'
>
> (pp.x-xi)

Admittedly Sigsworth's account ends in 1891, nevertheless his apparent acceptance of a purely documentary basis for a business history would seem to have led him away from labour and the social context of employment.

18. See also Eric Sigsworth's "History of the Local Trade at Morley", Journal of the Textile Institute, Vol 40, No 9, September 1949; F.J. Glover, "Dewsbury Mills - A history of Messrs. Wormalds and Walker Ltd, Blanket Manufacturers of Dewsbury", Ph.D., Leeds, (1959); George A. Greenwood, Taylor of Batley. A story of 102 years (1957).

19. Shortly after the turn of the century the wool textile's leading economic historian, J.H. Clapham, was regretting the neglect of oral history, "For recent years the best original authorities are the memories of businessmen. I could wish there were more trained interviewers to make use of those memories; for with them often die some of the most valuable records of nineteenth century economic history", "Industrial Organisation in the Woollen and Worsted Industries of Yorkshire", Economic Journal, Vol XVI, p.522 (1906).

20. This idea is developed in Leon Trotsky's, The Russian Revolution (1959 ed.), pp.3-4 where the notion of the 'privilege of historic backwardness' is also postulated, albeit in connection with more profoundly significant events.

21. See above.

22. See E.P. Thompson, (1965) op.cit.; Reg Groves, The Strange Case of Victor Grayson (1975); D.F.E. Sykes, The History of the Colne Valley (1906).

23. See D.H. Allcorn and C.M. Marsh, "Occupational Communities - Communities of what?" in Bulmer (1975) op.cit. There are some exceptions to this, for example, Mary Chamberlain, Fenwomen (1975); R. Frankenberg, "In the Production of Their Lives, Men (?) ... Sex and Gender in British Community Studies" in D. Leonard and S. Allen (eds.) Sexual Divisions and Society, Process and Change, (1976b).

24. See Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, Coal is our Life, (1956).

CHAPTER ONE

THE INDUSTRIAL SETTING

In this chapter, a brief description of the main features of the industrial structure of the wool textile industry of West Yorkshire will be attempted. The processes, sizes of undertakings, division of labour and changes taking place in the industry as a whole will be considered in relation to the situation of working people in the industry. Wool textile production in the two decades before the outbreak of war had developed characteristics of standardised production in some areas, for example worsted spinning, but still retained significant areas where allocation of types of work varied, decisions over materials and processes were crucial and the necessity for highly skilled interventions arose. Generalisations about the relationship between industrial structure and forms of collective organisation are not, therefore, easily arrived at.(1)

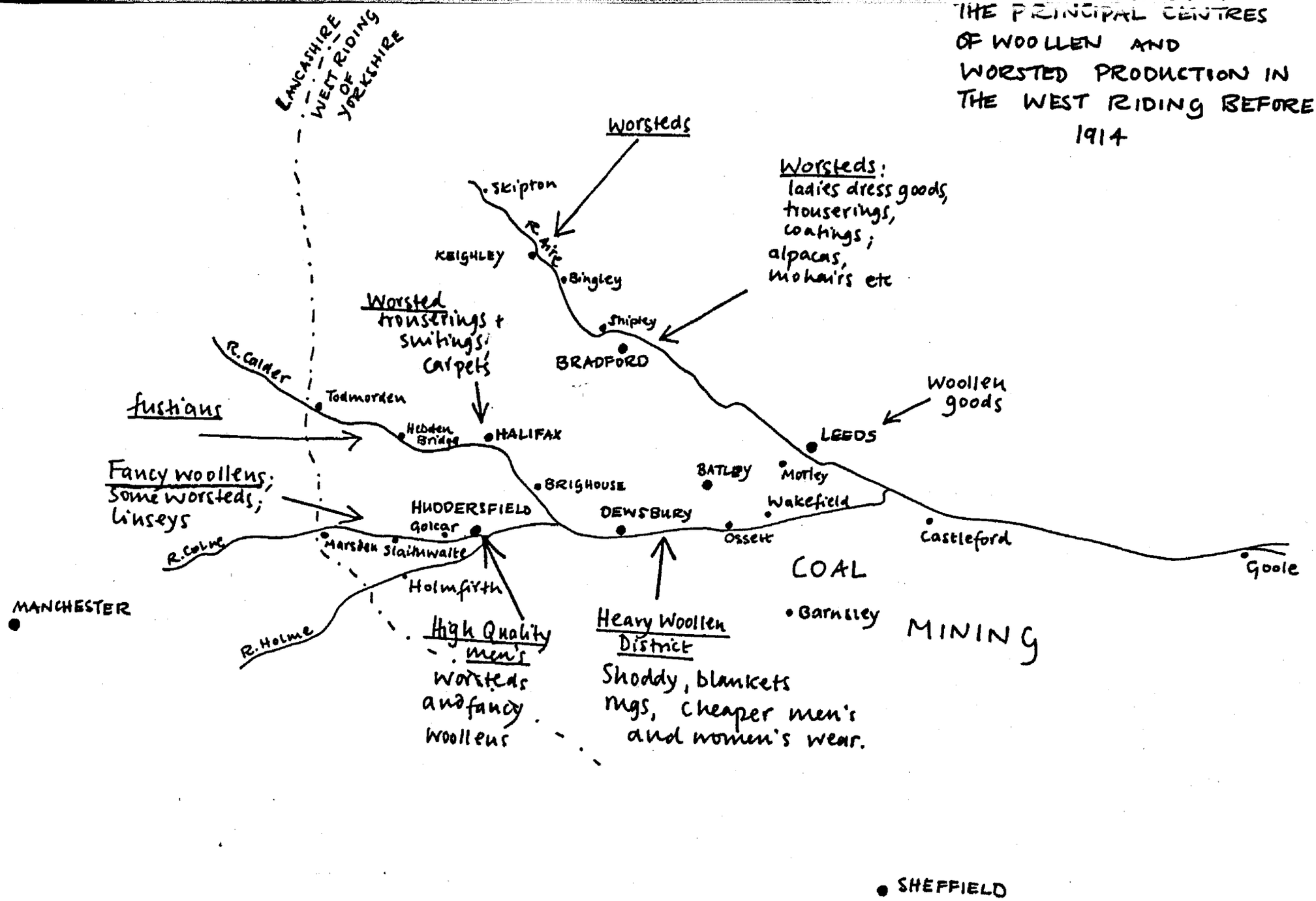
Apart from questions of variation in form there is the issue of the sexual division of labour. Explanations of collective organisation based in particular industrial settings tend to neglect this crucial divide.(2) A central theme to this work is that distinctions between men's and women's roles in production affected not only the distribution of men and women across occupations and skills within the industry but also carried wider implications of a political and ideological nature which helped shape forms of collective organisation. Thus limitations to and opportunities for collective action need to be seen not simply in terms of the industrial structure but also in terms of a sexual division of labour, the two being closely articulated.

Published sources dealing with the industry tend to be diffuse

in nature and varied in approach,[3] with few attempting more than a brief consideration of the role of labour. What follows here will be an attempt to correct this imbalance, by providing the essential characteristics of wool textile production as it had developed by the first decades of this century, both as an industrial process and as sets of relationships between labour and employers and between men and women workers.

As the map on page 19 shows, wool textile production fell into two distinct parts in the West Riding. The manufacture of woollen and worsted goods were separate industries both in terms of location and internal organisation.[4] Bradford, the commercial centre of the industry after Halifax lost its pre-eminence in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was also the centre for the production of worsted dress goods for women. Wool combing and yarn spinning were largely based in Bradford. Fine worsteds for men's suitings and fine quality woollens were produced in Huddersfield, while nearby Colne Valley saw the production of cheaper fancy woollen goods and tweeds. The Heavy Woollen District of Batley, Dewsbury, Ravensthorpe and Morley produced shoddy and mungo, weaving this into cheaper woollens, blankets and rugs. Leeds produced both woollen and worsted cloth as well as yarns. Halifax and Keighley products were similar to those of Bradford, namely worsted cloths and spun yarns, but with carpets an added speciality in the Halifax area.

The separation of woollen and worsted production derived not only from its spatial distribution, but also from differences in industrial organisation. This last factor is of great importance in considering the relationship between labour and employers. In general, whereas most of the processes relative to the making of woollen cloth,


SKETCH MAP TO SHOW THE PRINCIPAL CENTRES OF WOOLLEN AND WORSTED PRODUCTION IN THE WEST RIDING BEFORE 1914
LANCASHIRE
WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE
Worsteds
Skipton
R. Aire
KEIGHLEY
Bingley
Worsteds: ladies dress goods, trouserings, coatings; alpacas, mohairs etc
Worsted trouserings & suitings; carpets
Shipley
BRADFORD
R. Calder
Todmorden
fustians
Hebden Bridge
HALIFAX
Woollen goods
LEEDS
BATLEY
Morley
Fancy woollens; some worsteds; linseys
BRIGHOUSE
HUDDERSFIELD
Golcar
DEWSBURY
Wakefield
R. Colne
Marsden
Slaithwaite
Ossett
Castleford
Goole
COAL
Holmfirth
MANCHESTER
Barnsley
MINING
R. Holme
High Quality men's worsteds and fancy woollens
Heavy Woollen District
Shoddy, blankets rugs, cheaper men's and women's wear.
SHEFFIELD

carpets and blankets were carried out in vertically organised establishments, combining each stage in production from preparation of the raw wool to finishing the cloth, in contrast, worsted production tended to be horizontally divided. Separate undertakings produced combed wool, carried out dyeing, spun yarn and wove cloth.

The distinction between organisation in worsted and woollen production was further emphasised by differences in sizes of undertakings in the two branches of the trade. Most woollen mills were relatively small in size, those in worsted production being much larger.(5) Clapham, using 1904 machinery statistics found the average woollen weaving shed to contain 49 looms, while the average worsted shed held 125 looms. In spinning, the average number of woollen spindles working together in one place was 2,354, whereas a similar average for worsted spindles was 8,000. His general conclusion was that the combined woollen weaving and spinning mill employed roughly half as many workers as the worsted mill which only spun and two thirds as many workers as the worsted mill which only wove.(6)

Explanations for this variation in organisation tended to centre round the issues of differences in types of product at the worsted end of the trade and later mechanisation in the woollen industry.(7) Sigsworth and Blackman however place greater emphasis on changes which were taking place in the industry in pre-war decades and which favoured a growth in specialised worsted spinning and led to a decline in combined worsted spinning and weaving businesses.(8)

There was one further characteristic of industrial organisation in the industry but one which was broadly typical of both sectors. This was the predominance of private ownership. Although in the 1890s

there had been some development of limited companies, these were relatively few and tended even so to be dominated by individual families.(9) As far as the two sectors of the industry were concerned, limited liability was more prevalent amongst woollen manufacturing firms.(10) Combination amongst employers had hardly emerged and was only to be successfully adopted in Bradford's dyeing industry in the 1890s.(11)

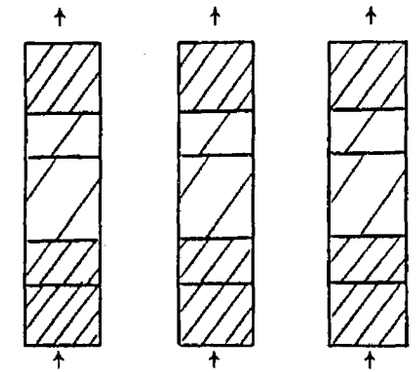
Taking all the above characteristics together, it appears that whereas the worker in the Huddersfield, Heavy Woollen and Colne Valley areas was more likely to be employed in a combined mill, either worsted or woollen, and in a relatively small sized enterprise, the worker in Bradford, Halifax and Keighley was more likely to be employed in larger, more specialised concerns.(12)

The work process in woollen and worsted mills was broadly similar, yet with so many different types of product and sizes of undertakings, straightforward generalisation is problematic. What follows is inevitably a simplification, but one which aims to bring out the chief features of occupations and their relative positions within the industry.

A mill producing woollen products would generally encompass almost the entire range of available occupations, (see Figure 1). Broadly speaking, occupations were distinguished in terms of skill required and sex of worker. The most highly skilled and all supervisory occupations were those of men, less skilled occupations and those which required little more than basic machine-minding went to women. There were, however, exceptions to this simple divide which were becoming more typical in the years approaching the outbreak

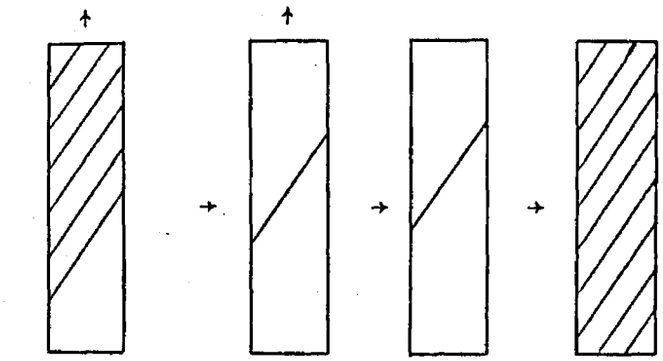
Figure 1: Sketch-Diagram to Show Organisation of Woollen and Worsted Production with Broad Differentiation by Sex of Workers

Woollen

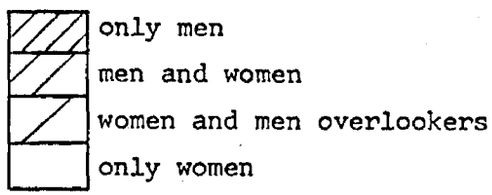


(no specialisation: some processes mainly women workers)

Worsted



(factories specialised to single processes: some factories mainly women workers)



of war. Women were being brought into 'new' areas of production, warping, woollen spinning and increasingly into woollen weaving. Raw materials for spinning in the woollen sector were prepared, according to their origin, in different ways. The trade in recovered rags was carried on mainly in Dewsbury and Batley, although larger mills might have separate buildings set aside for the purpose of sorting and carbonising. Women handled and sorted rags, but tended not to be in charge of rag-grinding machines, nor did they have any part to play in blending materials. Mixed cotton and woollen goods were passed through carbonisers, where the cotton fibres were destroyed. Pure wool goods had the seams removed by hand and were ground between rollers, producing shoddy.(13)

Raw wool was prepared for spinning by passing through a number of processes. Initial sorting into qualities was a skilled man's occupation.(14) This was followed by a number of preparatory stages during which the raw wool was cleared of grease, burrs and discolourations were removed. These processes, scouring and willeying, which involved beating and shaking the wool to remove the dirt and impurities were almost exclusively men's occupations. Wool thus prepared was carded to produce a flat layer of straightened fibres, 'condensed' into 'slivers', fine webs of material, and then worked into a long tube or thread of fibres, without any twist or strength to it.(15) Condenser minding was an occupation open to women, though with men supervising.

Woollen spinning was carried out on the heavier mules, with drawing preceding this as a means to giving the material a slight twist and reducing its thickness. Drawing was a woman's occupation, while mule spinning was managed entirely by men. Similar in organisation to the mule spinning of the cotton industry, the spinner was in charge

of several pairs of mules, which he supervised by means of sub-contracting. A team might vary from the mule-spinner and under-spinner and one or two piecers, but in general this was the pattern in woollen mills. In the pre-war years, there was the growing tendency in some areas, particularly Colne Valley, to employ women as piecers in place of young boys. The piecer joined the broken threads as the mule moved back and forwards from the frame, twisting the thread from the condenser and filling the bobbins.(16) Depending on whether its destination is for warp or for weft, the spun yarn passes through a variety of further processes. If for weft, it would be wound onto bobbins ready for the weaver's shuttle, a young girl or older woman's job. If for warp, then further twisting and doubling would be required, to give added strength and effect to the yarn. Doubling yarns, by twisting two or more threads together, would give extra strength to the yarn. Twisting various colours and types of yarn together could produce fancy effects. Doubling and Fancy Twisting were typically women's occupations, though with the usual supervision by men.

Warping was one recognisably skilled occupation which, increasingly, was becoming open to men and women.(17) The warp threads were set on a stand and drawn onto a cylinder, a section at a time, according to the pattern required, until sufficient threads had been laid to provide the width of the cloth. The beamer, a skilled man, then transferred this cylinder to a smaller 'beam' at the back of the loom, making sure that all the warp threads were at the same tension. Finally, the healder, with a young boy assistant, would draw each thread through the individual eyelets of the healds on the loom. This was a particularly intricate job, requiring much patience, since the healds could vary in number according to the pattern prescribed by the designer. The lifting or lowering of each heald determined the

combination of threads woven at each passage of the weft thread.

Woollen weaving tended to be carried out equally by men or by women in the Huddersfield District, possibly more often by women elsewhere. Generally speaking, where woollen looms were concerned, one weaver minded one loom. Weavers looked after their own looms, cleaning them and correcting small faults themselves wherever possible. Overlookers in weaving sheds, tuners and other supervisors were all men. The finishing stages, scouring to remove oil and grease which might have been applied at an earlier stage, tentering, milling, wet or dry finishing again were all men's occupations. However, there were final stages which were women's responsibility and which, in the case of mending, were among the most skilled jobs which a woman could hope to achieve in the mill. Mending the finished piece, that is correcting a fault by inserting missing yarn or repairing damage to the cloth, was again supervised by men, as was the spotting of faults, or 'perching'. Burling and knotting, the removal of lumps and knots from the cloth, was also a woman's occupation, though less skilled and consequently, less well paid. The entire range of occupations in a woollen mill, which also included dyers, who were exclusively men, could thus be quite varied, not only in terms of type of process, skill of incumbent and type of material but also in terms of age and sex of the worker.(18)

In the worsted sector, a similar range of occupations was evident, though the development of specialisation in this part of the industry led to a different distribution, spatially and in terms of skills and personnel, (see Figure 1). Combing occupies a special place in worsted manufacture, being carried out exclusively in Bradford for the industry. The combing process involved, and still involves, the preparation of

the longer 'tops' into finer smoother fibres for the worsted trade. The conditions under which combing took place were those of extreme heat and humidity. It was the only section of the trade, before the First World War, to demand nightwork. Such hours were however, subject to irregularity with the result that night combing was virtually casualised.(19) It was quite common for women to be employed on the day shift while men worked at night, minding the same machinery. The processes intermediary between combing and spinning were more elaborate in worsted than in woollen manufacture. The finer worsted yarns required more drawing and reducing than woollen yarns. The typical spinning mill would be a four or five storey building with each floor completing a separate stage in the conversion of raw wool to spun yarn. In some cases the finished yarn would be wound on a warp for direct delivery to the weaver. Such a mill would mainly employ women on the various stages of spinning, with men as supervisors or handling the material in the early stages.(20)

Worsted weaving was, apart from the men's fine cloth trade in Huddersfield, almost entirely a woman's occupation. The lighter materials were woven on narrower looms, one weaver minding two looms being the normal arrangement in Bradford. As in the woollen trade, dyeing and finishing pieces of cloth were, apart from burling and mending, entirely men's occupations.

Recruitment to the industry had shown some variations in pre-war decades, largely as a result of changes in the fortunes of different sections of the trade. As a rule, children entering the trade as thirteen year old school leavers, or twelve year old half-timers, began work helping adults in skilled jobs, twisting-in and reaching-in for healders after the initial starting points as winders or doffers,

or in some cases simply sweeping-up. Both boys and girls progressed through various jobs at more or less fixed intervals, determined by age and aptitude until at 17 or 18 they were considered for an adult occupation.(21)

Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the workforce in four main towns grouped by age and sex. Although the data does not distinguish woollen from worsted occupations, it can be broadly assumed that Huddersfield and Dewsbury are representative of woollen production, while Halifax and Bradford represent worsted production. The predominance of women in weaving and spinning in Bradford and Halifax is clearly in evidence, as are the large numbers of young persons in these mainly worsted towns. Overall, these two semi-skilled occupations absorbed a majority of younger aged workers, with the greatest majority being below thirty five years in age. For boys, particularly those in Bradford, the industry represented something of a dead-end.(22) Family connections or talent-spotting by overlookers tended to provide the surest path for promotion to the most skilled trades for boys and the few girls able to reach the most desired and high paid occupations. 'Blind alley' though wool textiles may have appeared to some commentators,(24) this was a term which required interpreting in relation to the opportunities open to young workers of both sexes. For boys, opportunities to enter the few craft trades and supervisory posts did exist, though in limited number, for girls there were no such openings.(25)

The basic pattern had developed over the forty years before the turn of the century, but was to show some changes as the industry encountered the need to adjust to competition and altered trading conditions during the 1890s and early years of this century. Changes in demand from overseas as well as in the domestic market had led to

Figure 2. Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted spinning in Huddersfield *

Men, n = 1485
Women, n = 1564

Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted weaving in Huddersfield

Men, n = 3637
Women, n = 5255

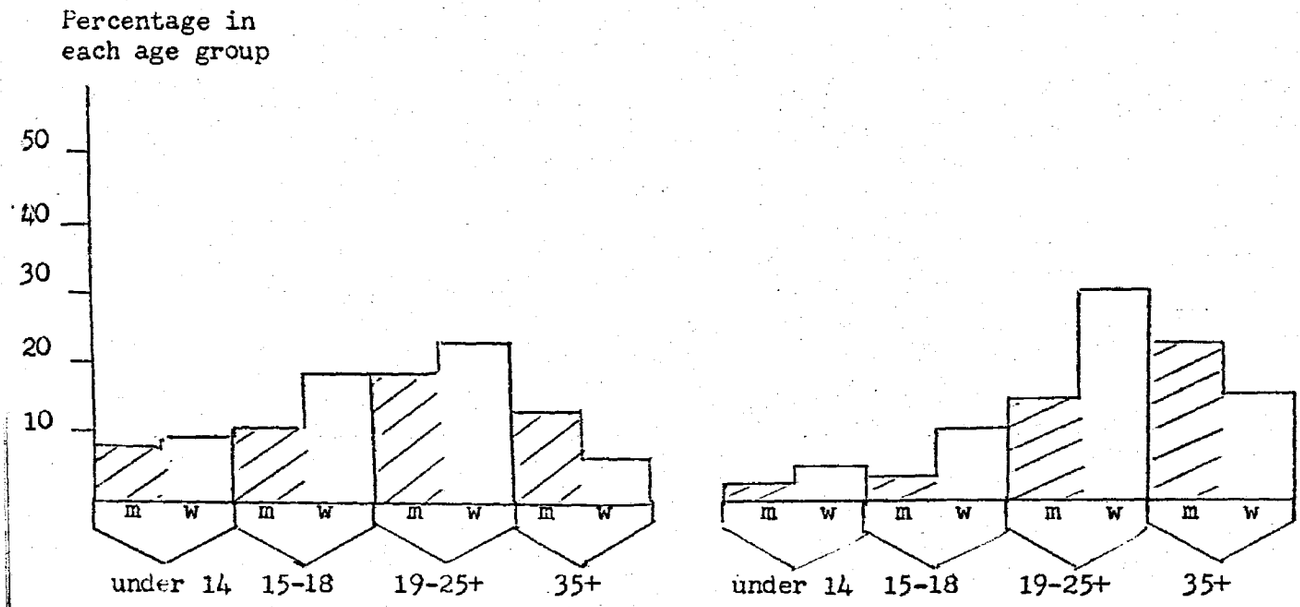


Figure 3. Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted spinning in Bradford

Men, n = 5497
Women, n = 13078

Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted weaving in Bradford

Men, n = 3261
Women, n = 13127

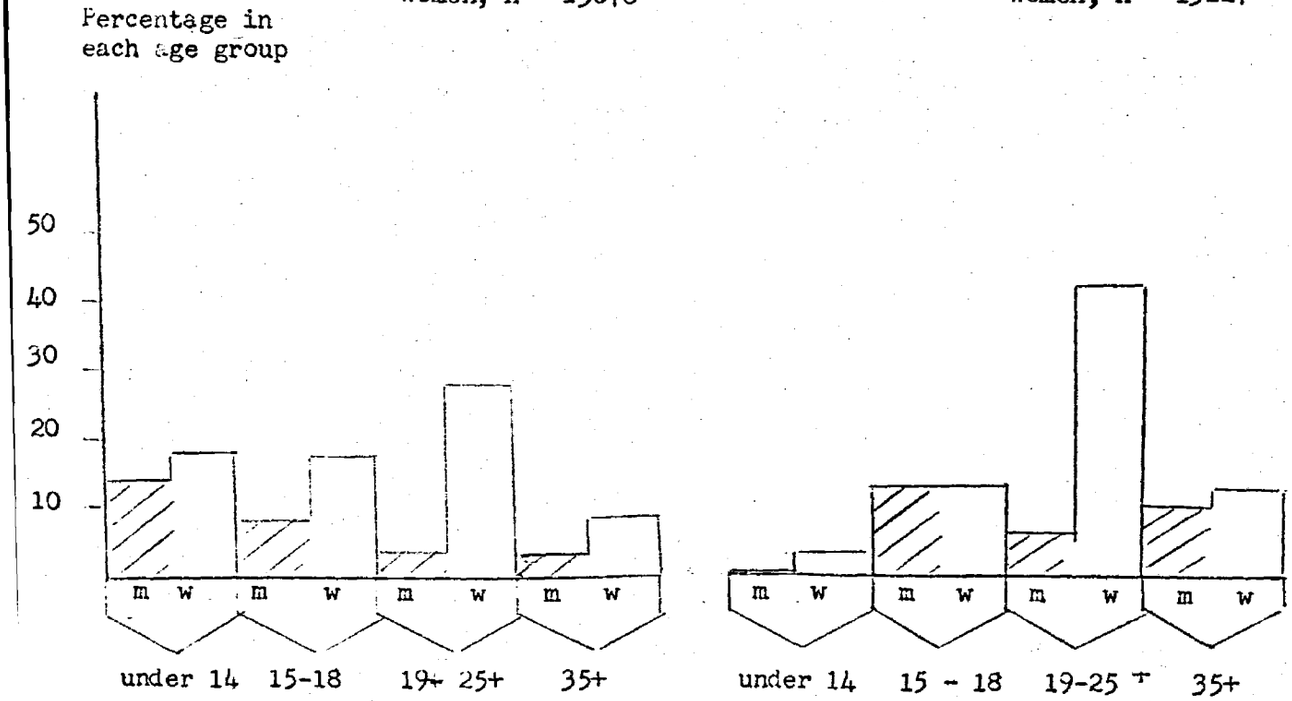
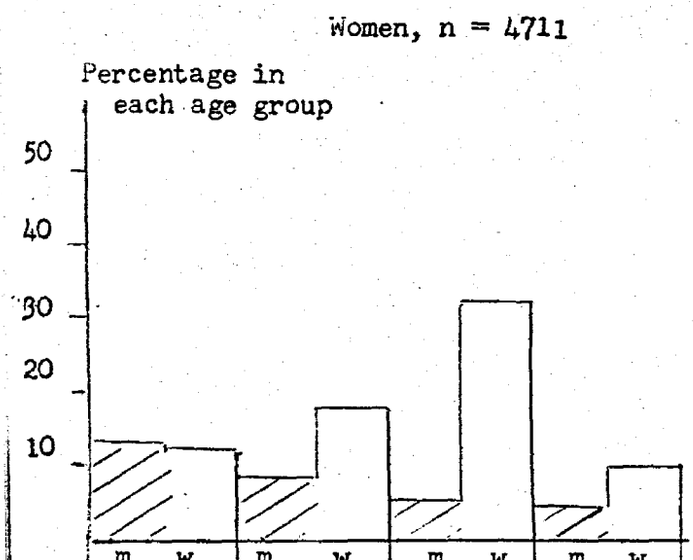


Figure 4. Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted spinning in Halifax

Men, n = 1957
Women, n = 4711



Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted weaving in Halifax

Men, n = 561
Women, n = 2567

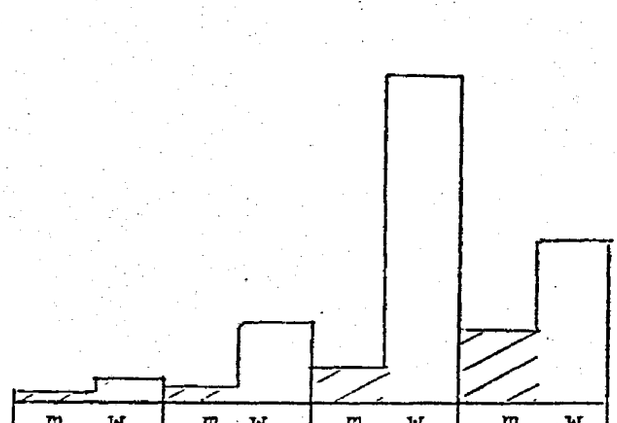
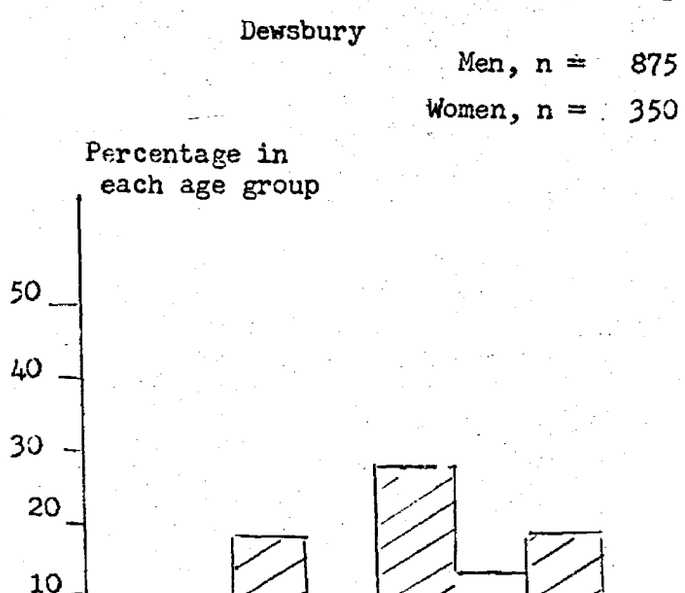


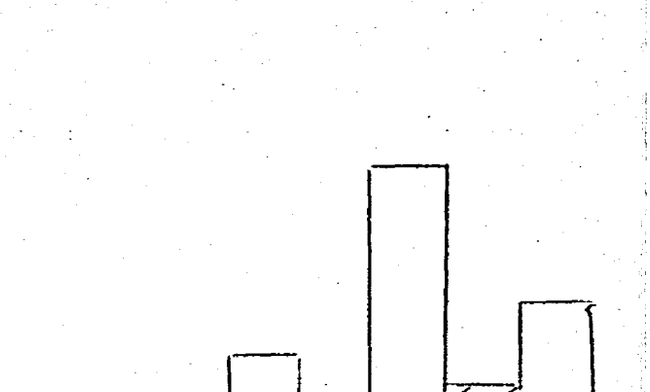
Figure 5. Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted spinning in Dewsbury

Men, n = 875
Women, n = 350



Proportions of men and women in woollen and worsted weaving in Dewsbury

Men, n = 871
Women, n = 3633



* Figures from 1911 Census

greater dependency on the production of worsted yarns and cheaper woollen cloths. There were to be various responses by employers to these changes, one appears to have been an expansion in the employment of young workers, particularly in worsted spinning. Thus, Rose Squire, a factoryinspector questioned about the numbers of half-timers in Bradford at the Committee on Partial Exemption, found that although numbers had decreased considerably in the 1890s, they had approached the levels of the 1880s by 1907, when 5,000 half-timers were employed in Bradford mills. This was despite the fact that the age for partial exemption from education had been raised from 11 to 12 during those years.(26)

Numbers employed overall in the industry had shown fluctuations over the fifty years leading up to the First World War. Witnesses to the Royal Commission on Labour of 1891 had repeatedly described the characteristics of recession in the industry. In many aspects, the wool textile industry epitomised the crucial weaknesses of the British economy. Industrial units were small in scale, individually financed and dependent on cheap and unskilled labour.(27) Economic recession was inevitably directly experienced by the industry.(28) Dependency on exports was to affect some parts of the industry in such a way as to prolong some of the difficulties introduced by the Depression. These, Sigsworth and Blackman, argue, were the result of foreign competition, particularly from French textile manufacturers who were able to exploit a change in fashion. This was to force manufacturers to concentrate energies into spinning yarns and producing mixed woollens which could more easily compete with French goods. As far as employment was concerned this implied a decline in demand for worsted weavers and expansion for yarn producers and shoddy manufacturers as woollen manufacturers sought to cheapen the cost of production by blending

mixtures of reconstituted wool with new wool. The result was that the industry was to see something of an improvement in its fortunes in the immediate pre-war years, with a 30 per cent increase of raw wool consumption for each worker in the industry.(29) This apparent success was due to technological innovation(30) as well as the opportunity available to British manufacturers to exploit colonial links and so side-step the obstacles imposed by French and American tariff barriers.(31) While an increased production of spun yarn seems to have been achieved through the expansion of young persons' employment, that of mixed woollen tissues would seem to have been achieved through a greater demand for men and women weavers in the woollen areas, though the extent of such increases was obviously tempered by increases in productivity and the loss of employment elsewhere in the industry.

To a degree, such changes were reflected in earning levels in the industry. These, authorities all agree, were notoriously difficult to assess accurately.(32) Though figures for the 1880s had obviously been affected by the downswing resulting from the depression years, there was to be a return, by 1906, to earlier levels.(33) Apart from the effects of changes in earnings levels, there were problems caused by variations within the industry and within occupations and districts. Some attempt at establishing averages for the main occupations was to be introduced with the Board of Trade's Earnings and Hours Enquiry of 1909.(34) Nevertheless, there were to be long-standing disagreements between employers and trade union officials, due principally to differences between payments and earnings recorded.(35) This was particularly the case for weavers who were affected by periods of waiting which could reduce a week's earnings considerably and which made average figures impossible to calculate accurately.(36) There were in addition some sections of the industry in particular night

combing, where casual employment was typically experienced.

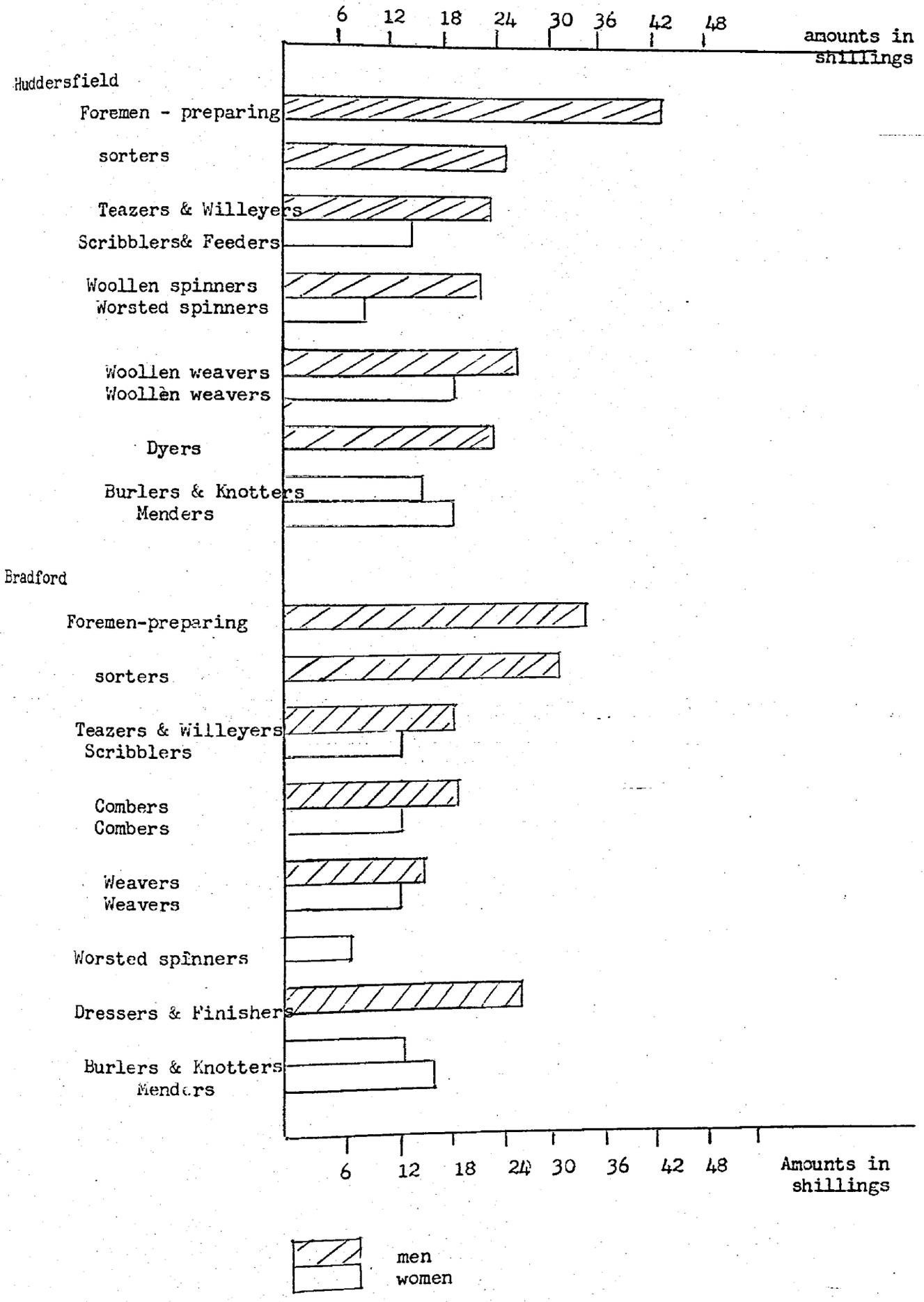
In addition to irregularities of payment, there were problems of estimation arising from the fact that so few standards existed in the industry. Wages varied between districts, with the highest wages for men and women being paid in the Huddersfield district, followed by Dewsbury and the lowest wages in Bradford and Halifax (see Figure 6). Such differences broadly reflected the fortunes of the industry as a whole, since it was the woollen areas of Huddersfield, Colne Valley and Dewsbury which were maintaining buoyancy in the pre-war years.(37) Within districts, amounts paid to workers in similar jobs might vary from mill to mill. G.H. Wood's wages notebooks, containing evidence collected for the 1909 Enquiry, show variations within districts for most occupations named.(38) Persisting differences in the most poorly organised areas, in particular Bradford, were to lead to contention over the effectiveness of union policy in dealing with such inequalities during the war years.(39)

Taken as a whole, wool textile earnings were undoubtedly amongst the highest and the lowest in manufacturing industry.(40) Figures collected for the 1906 Enquiry into Earnings and Hours showed top rates in Yorkshire for skilled men in supervisory jobs at well over £2 a week while some women in the Huddersfield area were earning nearly £1 a week in jobs such as mending and woollen weaving (see Figure 6). In contrast, jobs in Bradford's spinning industry could command scarcely 10 shillings a week, even for adult workers. Women's earnings in Bradford's trade were so low in some sections that application for Trades Board status was being considered by the union in the years immediately before the outbreak of war. On average, Yorkshire women's earnings were approximately half those of men in the industry. However,

this average concealed the fact that in Huddersfield, women earned slightly more than half the man's wage, but in Leeds, considerably less than half.(41) Such differentials were hardly untypical of manufacturing industry in Britain at this time, yet there were situations where equality in earnings was formally possible. This occurred among weavers and warpers in the Huddersfield and Heavy Woollen Districts. In Huddersfield in particular, it was not uncommon for men and women to weave together, side by side, and for men to teach women and vice versa. Nevertheless, inequality was institutionalised as women were consistently paid 10 per cent less than men.(42) Such a practice was indicative of women's marginal rights in production and was resented by those women who experienced it.

The general industrial setting which emerges from this brief description is one in which units of production were varied in size, many being small, fewer large, but almost exclusively privately financed. Competition between such units was keen, as manufacturers struggled with a market dominated by issues of fashion and overseas products. Within such workplaces, labour was, characteristically, divided by skill and sex, with these two criteria more often than not coinciding and in so doing relegating women to the least skilled and least remunerative occupations. Moreover, variations in demand, an employer's preference for cheap and dispensable labour and attempts to increase productivity through speeding up machinery were to place obstacles in the way of successful counteraction of a collective nature.

Figure 6. Average earnings in selected occupations for men and women in Huddersfield and Bradford*



* Figures from Earnings and Hours Enquiry, Cd 4545 (1909)

Notes

1. In, for example, G.D.H. Cole, Workshop Organisation (1923) p.106, the contrast is drawn between the non-standardised operations of engineering and textile production, where highly standardised operations were typical. According to Cole such variations in technological development determined levels of shop floor involvement and consequently, democracy. Thus in engineering, shop floor control was commonly found, whereas in textiles, the decision-making process was in the hands of officials at a distance from the work place. More recent technology-based explanations of types of industrial relations systems are critically discussed in R. Hyman, Strikes (1972) pp.61-65.

2. This point is argued out convincingly by Brown, in Leonard Barker and Allen (1976a) op.cit. Even H.A. Turner's classic work on the cotton textile industry (1962) op.cit., discusses women as a sub-group and neglects sex-linked divisions within his broader analysis.

3. A bibliography on pp.491+ff lists all sources, primary and secondary, used in this work.

4. Terms used in this and subsequent chapters are explained in the Glossary.

5. This distinction was not altogether exclusive, some worsted cloth production was carried on in combined mills. The general tendency in the Bradford and Halifax areas was for worsted production to be less integrated than elsewhere. At the same time, some of the largest combined firms were to be found in worsted cloth production, particularly in the Huddersfield cloth trade.

6. J.H. Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries (1907) pp.131-33. A survey of 245 firms in Yorkshire carried out by S.J. Chapman and T.S. Ashton showed a similar though not so total divide between the two branches of the industry. In Bradford, the maximum number of spindles was 4,000, while in Huddersfield the maximum was 2,000. Only 7 worsted spinning firms were found to have more than 15,000 spindles; amongst woollen firms, the maximum was 2,000 spindles. In weaving, the maximum number of looms in Huddersfield was below 25, in Bradford and Leeds, it was between 25 and 50 and in Bradford alone, between 175 and 200 looms. Chapman and Ashton made use of popular organic analogy in explaining this tendency. By comparing cotton, linen, flax, jute and pig iron production they argued that as businesses grew so did the proportions between their various parts. (See S.J. Chapman and T. Ashton, "The Sizes of Businesses, mainly in the Textile Industries", in Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Vol LXXVII, Pt. V (1914))

   A survey of the United States industry in the pre-war years found a similar specialisation in the worsted sector. Of 324 U.S. mills only 45 or 13.9 per cent performed every operation. In contrast, 76.6 per cent of 587 woollen mills were vertically integrated. (See L.D.H. Weld, "Specialisation in the Woollen and Worsted Industry", Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol XXVII (1912).)

7. Clapham argues that lower levels of specialisation in the woollen trade were due to later mechanisation, particularly in weaving. This retained production on a smaller, combined scale. In contrast, combing, from the 1840s and 1850s when successful experiments in combing by machine enabled large-scale ventures, became extremely profitable. Combers, often exploiting their own patents, were supplying spinners with 'tops', combed wool, often on a commission basis. (Clapham,(1907), op.cit.) Sigsworth is in partial agreement with Clapham, but points out that an increased demand for worsted yarn had already become established by the late 1850s, thus encouraging specialisation amongst worsted spinners. He also suggests that new entrants to the industry tended either to choose spinning or weaving, possibly for reasons connected with modes of capital investment in the industry. (See Eric Sigsworth,(1958) op.cit.) Looking at the woollen industry, Rainnie suggests that the persistence of combined, vertically integrated, mills was due to the importance of the colour and finish of the woollen cloth. This was a crucial question in a highly competitive industry and one which was of less importance in the more standardised production of the worsted sector. Maintaining competitiveness depended on close control and supervision of all stages in the production of woollen cloth. (See G. Rainnie (ed.) The Woollen and Worsted Industry (1965)) Weld's earlier study disagrees with arguments emphasising the greater demand for worsted yarn, both for internal markets in the industry itself and for external markets, such as hosiery and exports overseas. Taking the example of the American industry, where no such separate external demand for yarn existed on any large scale, Weld emphasises the development of standard products and suggests that worsted mills showed a greater tendency to produce a single class of product from year to year. However, Weld did agree with Clapham that the more elaborate preparatory stages in worsted yarn spinning were an encouragement to specialisation, since they required a greater capital outlay. (See Weld (1912) op.cit.)

8. Sigsworth and Blackman, using much more detailed statistics of businesses over a thirty year period would appear to be in disagreement with Weld. Their survey of directories for 1870, 1875 and 1912 shows that:

> 'This trend in favour of greater specialisation in the worsted industry had been apparent since 1856 but especially so after 1874, and was in itself partly a response within the industry to changing external market opportunities with growing foreign demand first for worsted yarns and then for worsted tops. This encouraged the tendency to treat worsted spinning as an end in itself and not only as part of the production of woven fabrics.'
>
> (E.M. Sigsworth and J.M. Blackman, "The Woollen and Worsted Industries" in D.H. Aldcroft, Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition, 1875-1914 (1968) p.138)

Sigsworth and Blackman are concerned to explain trends within the industry rather than explanations of forms of organisations at particular points in time. However, their evidence helps to show why the dominant distinctions had emerged by the pre-war years. As well as showing how specialisation in worsted spinning developed in response to changes in demand for worsted products,

Sigsworth and Blackman show that the woollen trade too was able to recover its position in terms of exports by the 1900s. Rising costs in raw wool and cotton, encouraged an increasing use of recovered or rag wool, shoddy and mungo. Where worsted cloth manufacturers, producing mixed cotton and worsted fabrics were unable to cheapen their products, woollen cloth manufacturers were to resort increasingly to blending rag wool with virgin wool as a means to keeping prices down. Such practices were inevitably to strengthen tendencies towards the persistence and survival of combined mills in the woollen sector. It was perhaps this process which Weld and Clapham were witnessing as they wrote in the early 1900s.

9. As Clapham observed,

> '... a few years ago - in the early nineties of the last century- companies that issued reports and balance sheets, whose shares were regularly bought and sold, were rare in all branches of the woollen and worsted and associated industries; though private companies of course existed. Even now, after the outbreak of company promotion in the late nineties, the number of spinning and manufacturing companies, whose shares are quoted on the West Riding Stock Exchange, is comparatively small.'
>
> (Clapham (1907) op.cit., p.153)

A.N. Shimmin, writing in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society in 1926, estimated that 56 per cent of firms in the industry were private. (Quoted by the Balfour Committee on Industry and Trade, Pt. III: Survey of Textile Industries (1928) p.177).

10. See Table 1 in Appendix I showing the extent of adoption of limited liability by 1912.

11. The Bradford Dyers' Association had been formed in 1898 mainly as a response to competition in prices and profits. This was an amalgamation of 22 firms, about 90 per cent of Bradford's piece-dyeing trade. Other associations of dyers had been formed in the following years, for Leeds and various sections of the dyeing trade. An association amongst woolcombers, Woolcombers Limited, was formed in 1904, this was to succeed, after an earlier attempt had failed when the association then formed did not take in the largest wool combing firm.

Apart from association in terms of production, employers also showed few signs of collective organisation, until the years after 1907. This point is discussed in some detail in Chapter 6.

12. This is a very broad generalisation and one which ignores the large size range which existed within both sectors of the industry and changes in investment which were occurring in the pre-war years. The commission trade which existed on an extensive scale in Bradford provides an exception. Here businesses were characterised by their small size and low overheads. (See description in chapter 8, n.48.)

13. Sigsworth describes how shoddy mills in Batley, Dewsbury and

Morley were filled with dust and stench from the grinding process. "Shoddy fever" was thought to be contracted through the inhaling of particles of ground fibres. The rag grinder was known as the "Devil" and its product, "Devil's dust". (See E.M. Sigsworth (1949) op.cit.)

14. Hartley and Ingilby describe how in the pre-war years the sorters were amongst the most highly paid in the industry ... 'they used to go to work in top hats and only worked in daylight so that in midwinter the hours were from 9am to 3pm'. Men worked on stands below a north-facing window and used both eyes and fingers to judge the fine differences in quality. (See Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby, Life and Tradition in West Yorkshire (1976), p.49)

15. 'One woman tends two or three of these (carding machines) her work being to feed the scribblers and mind the condensers and sweep the floor which gets rapidly covered with fluff ... in charge of a group of these machines are two men, the scribblers or fettlers whose work is from time to time to clean off the cylinders the large quantities of wool which are entangled, and do any other job requiring strength.'

(From G.H. Wood's "Wage Notes", p.929)

16. The introduction of women into mule spinning is discussed in Chapter 9 n. 18 and 19. One of Hartley and Ingilby's informants began his working life as a little piecer who was apprenticed to a spinner, he recalls, 'Some of the old spinners directing operations sat in an armchair in the mule gate, and paid us what they thought we were worth. The more they could earn by telling us what to do the more they could pay us'. (Quoted in Hartley and Ingilby (1976) op.cit., p.39.)

17. Warpers' resistance to women's introduction to the trade is discussed in chapter 2 n.51 and chapter 9 n.15.

18. Notes taken by G.H. Wood during the Board of Trade's Survey of Earnings and Hours (1909) show not only the relative size of departments in a woollen mill but also the range of processes included in a combing mill:

At Pearson Brothers, Slaithwaite, of approximately 360 employees in production when a return was made in 1906, there were:

		Wages earned
117 weavers (nearly all men in this particular case)		30s
30 scribblers and feeders	- men and women	24s and 14s6d
11 teazers	- men	35s
9 spinners	- men	40s
3 beamers	- men	21s
8 twisters and drawers on	- lads (ie. older boys)	17s
4 dyers	- men	25s
8 fullers	- men	35s - 23s
9 dressers	- men	35s - 24s
6 tuners	- men	32s - 26s
5 weftmen	- men	27s - 20s
20 piecers	- lads (and women in some mills)	14s
8 reelers	- women	14s

38 twisters	- women	17s
4 burlers and knotters	- women	13s6d
30 menders	- women	19s
23 warpers	- women (men in some mills)	16s
9 winders	- girls	8s6d - 5s

19. Clapham described the fluctuating nature of combing:

> 'This is a great hardship and a great grievance; but the attempts made by combers to regularise employment have not yet got rid of it. Without some fundamental change in the character of the trade it is hard to see how it could be entirely got rid of, for at present the employer cannot always tell his men in advance when they will or will not be wanted.'
>
> (Clapham (1907) op.cit., p.186)

See also discussion in Chapter 6 n 31 and 32.

20. 'The spinner is a girl, woman or lad - most frequently a a girl or young women - whose work is to watch two or three sides and instantly pick up any broken thread and to keep up the supply of roving-bobbins, placed on the top of the frame, whence the uniform roving is led.

'A squad of children, in many cases half-timers, is attached to each spinning room or group of frames. Their duty is to go to a frame as soon as it stops, remove the full bobbins which surround the metal spindles (hence the name "doffers"), place them with empty bobbins and attach the rovings. A frame is thus stopped, doffed and re-started with extraordinary rapidity. Doffers presently may become spinners and spinners can go to preparing or weaving.'

(From G.H. Wood's, "Wages Notes", p.926)

21. Mobility through mill occupations is discussed in chapter 4 where the influence of family ties is considered in the securing of preferred occupations.

22. See Table 2,in Appendix I

Clapham observed this shortfall in his account of the trade:

> 'But the fact that the total amount of employment has ceased to grow is some argument in favour of increased irregularity, at any rate locally; for a population accustomed to enter a certain trade does not lose the habit all at once; and if employment in the trade is expanding, there are likely to be more people qualified to earn a living in it than there are posts for them to fill.'
>
> (Clapham (1907) op.cit., p.184)

23. 'When an overlooker is required the smartest lad in the spinning room is taken, put in as an improver and gradually trained to the work.' (Survey of Industry and Trade, p.187)

24. See R. Tawney, "The Economics of Boy Labour", Economic Journal,

(1909) Vol XIX; see n.26 below.

25. The one exception to this was encountered in Marsden where women interviewed mentioned a woman overlooker in the winding room of one Marsden mill. She was recalled as having been the wife of an overlooker and in that particular department would have been overseeing the youngest girls in the mill. One Marsden respondent recalled that she herself had been offered this post but had refused it:

'Oh I didn't want to be anybody's boss. I shouldn't want to boss anybody.'

(Interview 1) Appendices 8 and 9 contain the Question Sheet used and biographical details of the Colne Valley interviewees.

26. Committee on Partial Exemption, q.1398, Rose Squire's evidence; see also q.1414-1422. Allen Gee was a member of the Partial Exemption Committee, questioning witnesses who included Ben Turner of his own union. Their opposition to children's labour was based not only on their personal experience as half timers, but also on their convictions that such employment was injurious to minds and bodies. Mixing with older people, who were both socially and sexually experienced, had the effect of maturing children who were not yet ready for such contacts. Other witnesses were concerned at the apparent freedom and independence which parents seemed to be prepared to yield to wage earning children. All were agreed, however, that arguments which claimed that half-time provided an opportunity for training which was not successful at the later ages of 13 or 14 were just not supported by evidence of employment in Bradford's mills. This was particularly true for boys who although almost equal in numbers to girls in the industry while they were between 10 and 14, numbered only half as many in the 15 to 19 age group (1911 Census figures). Thus the idea of the young boy typically entering the mill as a doffer and passing through various occupations to become a skilled spinner was part of a condoning myth. E. Dorothea Proud (Welfare Work (1916)) was one observer who recognised that such a term could equally as well be applied to young women workers. She argued for the development of a vocational attitude by both employers and girls themselves. (p.81).

Not all employers were in favour of half-time employment. In particular those from the Huddersfield area claimed to find no advantage in the system. According to his daughter, G.H. Wood, the Huddersfield employers' secretary was opposed to the employment of children in the mills:

'Father said they would have to manage with full timers or "Damn well have to invent a machine to do the work".'

(Transcript of interview with Dorothy Wood, Huddersfield Polytechnic Library.)

The issue of half-time employment was one which consistently divided cotton and wool textile workers' leaders during pre-war years. Turner recalls that during one International Textile Workers' Federation Congress, held in Berlin, the argument became so heated that the police, present in accordance with German law, closed the meeting:

'The late Mr. David Holmes, one of Lancashire's

> best trade union weavers' officials of his period, attacked myself and the Yorkshire delegates in general. He was not at all merciful ... and I replied to his scorn with equal scorn, and we got (so it seemed to the officers on the platform) pretty warm. After one of us had spoken and the interjections between the Lancashire and Yorkshire delegates had been pretty hot, the officers closed the meeting and we had all to turn out of the conference hall, and when we English folks got into another room and were smoking our pipes and chatting and wondering why the Conference had been shut down by the "bobbies", we were informed by old Liebnicht, who was then living ... that the officers, fearing a row between the Lancashire and Yorkshire delegates, and that disturbances would follow, had closed it down in the interests of peace. Good Lord! we were at peace, for we were as friendly personally as could be, but these "bobbies" couldn't understand how keenly we could argue and interject and yet be personally as we were on the best of terms.'

The fact that the Congress was taking place at the time of the Boer War - over which the two groups also had profound differences may have helped to accentuate the arguments on this occasion. (Turner (1930) op.cit., p.155)

Half-time labour was eventually ended in 1923, the last half-timers being recruited in 1920 and early 1921.

27. See John Saville, "Some Retarding Factors in the British Economy Before 1914", Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, Vol 13, 51-60 (May 1961). Sigsworth and Blackman in Aldcroft (1968) op.cit. note that among the responses to setbacks in the industry was an increased interest in technical education, although as a means of combatting foreign goods in the market, many employers seem to have been unimpressed with the results (see pp.146-148).

28. Sigsworth and Blackman's figures for bankruptcies and the replacement of businesses from the 1870s onwards suggest that the many small businesses so typical of the industry succumbed to the worst of the Depression (see pp.130-132).

29. See G.H. Wood's "Wages Notes", p.917; the Balfour Committee on Industry and Trade (1928) gives a similar figures, a three fold increase in the numbers of spindles, looms and quantities of material while the numbers occupied remained fairly stable.

30. Technological improvement also played a part in increasing productivity per worker. Among changes mentioned by the Balfour Committee (1928) were improvements in carding machines, involving an increase in the number of threads on each machine, larger and faster spinning mules, cap frames taking larger caps, larger bobbins and therefore less doffing, the replacement of narrow looms by broad looms and improvements in speed and technical details which improved output levels. Thus, in 1878, the standard loom ran at 50 picks a minute before the war, this

had been replaced by looms running at 100-120 picks. (See also reactions to the introduction of the pick clock or counter, chapter 6, n.43). It would be wrong to place too much emphasis on technological improvements in the woollen and worsted industries. Aaron L. Levine was unable to point to many innovations in his review of this period (See his "Industrial Change and its Effects Upon Labour, 1900-1914", Unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1964).

31. Sigsworth and Blackman in Aldcroft (1968) op.cit. argue that the woollen industry was able to improve its position in the immediate pre-war years by side-stepping the effects of the U.S. and continental trade barriers and exploiting imperial preference in Canada and by increasing exports in other British possessions such as Australia and India.

> 'The ability of woollen manufacturers to exploit these imperial markets by sharpening their price competitiveness through careful attention to the raw material content of their fabrics would therefore seem to be a reasonable explanation of the revival of this section of the woollen industry's export trade in the first decade of this century. In turn this was also another contribution to the continued embarrassment of the worsted industry after 1900.'
>
> (p.157)

G.H. Wood had noticed these changes in 1910, when he wrote in the Socialist Review:

> 'The woollen trade has been almost revolutionised since the "seventies". Thirty years ago Yorkshire made more "worsteds" than 'woollen's; today the Colne Valley is almost entirely engaged in the manufacture of fancy woollen cloths for men's and women's wear as outer garments, and the trade in these goods is expanding at the expense of all other branches. If this trade had not been introduced (and it was called into existence mainly by the wholesale ready-made clothiers) the industry would probably not even yet have got out of its slough. Other districts are following the Colne Valley lead, and this class of "Men's wear" is being made at Leeds, Batley, Dewsbury, Halifax and even Bradford, the home of the worsted stuff trade. The expansion of this branch shows no signs of giving out. New looms are being put in all over the district, and extensions of old mills or even the erection of new ones go on, all intended for making "Colne Valley" goods. Yorkshire is rapidly devoting itself to making "tweeds" for the multitude.'
>
> 'Henry Wilmott', "The 'labour unrest' and the Woollen Trades" in Socialist Review, November 1910, pp.212-213 (See Chapter 6 for a biographical account of G.H. Wood)

32. Assessment has not been helped by the tendency to aggregate figures for wool including Scotland, West of England and Yorkshire figures under the general heading 'Textiles'. Such averages

are unrealistically high since they are distorted by the higher earnings of the Scottish industry and also by including, on some occasions, the yet higher earnings of Lancashire cotton workers.

33. See evidence to Royal Commission on Labour (1891) where wages of between 9s and 16s for women and men weavers in the Bradford area were quoted. (See evidence of W.H. Drew to Mundella, q.5389 and 5394.) See figures in Table 3. Appendix I from G.H. Wood's "Wages Notes".

34. Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into the Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople of the United Kingdom: 1. The Textile Trades, Cd 4545 (1909). Calculations were improved mainly because the enquiry's methods of investigation were thorough and comprehensive, involving returns from individual firms, which showed weekly wages bills and lists of occupations and wages earned, both time and piece rates. However, in the case of the West Riding industry, the enquiry brought in a statistician of no mean ability, this was G.H. Wood, who was to stay on to work for the employers' association and to continue producing calculations of earnings and employment levels for the next three decades.

35. Clapham (1907) op.cit records labour dissension from officially estimated figures.

36. See discussion in chapter 5 n.24 and Ch.5, p.156. The Earnings and Hours Enquiry (Cd 4545) recognising the problems caused in attempting calculations of weavers' earnings sent out a printed letter to manufacturers requesting returns which showed actual payments over four consecutive weeks rather than earnings, since:

> 'in the majority of cases the returns show the payments made (their emphasis) for completed pieces in the week for which particulars were given and not the actual earnings of the different weavers for the work done in that week.'
>
> (Letter from the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, 14.3.08. In Wages Book of W.E. Crowthers, Crimble Mills, deposited in Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.)

Notes made by G.H. Wood reflect the reasoning behind this request:

> 'Time is always lost between the complextion (typing errors in original typescript) of one new warp, and when trade is slack this lost time is extended; with too (sic) looms one may be standing for warp while the other is running. There is no possibility of determining whether a weaver's looms have both been running the whole time she is in attendance, and therefore no exact time can be drawn between normal time and short time. Further the time taken in weaving a piece is extremely variable ... in some cases a piece takes a fortnight, in most the best part of a week. A weaver is in general paid only for the prices completed, and at each pay day some length of cloth will be on the loom and not paid for

till the following week.'

See G.H. Wood's, "Wage Notes", typescript "Wool and Worsted" pp.939-940.

37. See discussion in n.31 above.

The Earnings and Hours Enquiry (Cd 4545) (1909) was able to show variations between districts in Yorkshire's wool textile industry for a number of occupations:

Women (18 years and over)

	Yorkshire		Dewsbury		Huddersfield		Bradford	
	s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d
Combers (time)	12	5			11	5	12	0
Backwash & Box minders	11	11					11	11
Worsted spinners	10	1			9	0	9	11
Wool spinners' piecers	11	1			12	7		
Doublers (T)	11	1	12	0	11	0	11	0
(P)	14	8	15	6	17	0	12	10
Winders (T)	11	0	11	9	11	5	11	3
(P)	13	2			14	0	12	1
Warpers (T)	14	4			15	3	13	11
(P)	17	9			18	1	15	1
Woollen weavers								
1 loom (P)	15	8	15	4	19	6	15	11
2 looms (P)	15	9						
Worsted weavers								
1 loom (P)	16	3			16	9	14	10
(T)	16	7			19	11	14	6
2 looms (P)	14	0						
Burlers & Knotters (T)	13	2			12	9	14	6
(P)	14	5	12	0	15	8	13	7
Menders and Fine drawers								
(T)	15	4	14	3	16	5	14	11
(P)	17	9	15	2	18	9	15	7

Men (20 years and over)

Foremen - preparing	37	0	41	0	42	11	33	11
spinning	31	5	43	7	35	9	30	4
weaving	34	3	33	6	34	3	34	10
Wool washers (T)	20	3			22	6	19	11
(P)	25	2	21	11			23	8
Teazers & Willeyers (T)	22	8	22	6	23	6	19	5
(P)	28	5			28	5		
Combers - day	17	7					17	7
night	23	2					23	2
Wool spinners (T)	25	8	25	5	25	8		
(P)	34	3	34	8	33	1		
Wool spinners' piecers	17	3	16	4	18	4		
Warpers (T)	24	9	23	11	24	11		
(P)	28	2	26	9	29	11		
Beamers (T)	24	11	24	6				
(P)	26	9	24	4	25	5		
Twisters-in & Drawers-in								
(T)	25	4			23	10	26	1
(P)	30	4			28	7	18	2

(continued on p.45)

	Yorkshire		Dewsbury		Huddersfield		Bradford	
	s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d
Woollen weavers								
1 loom (T)	26	0			25	10		
(P)	25	11	21	4	26	4		
2 looms	24	10						
Worsted weavers								
1 loom (T)	23	2			24	8		
(P)	26	0			26	1		
2 looms	19	3						

38. G.H. Wood's "Wages Notes" provide examples of differentials within one district. Thus at three Colne Valley mills, spinners' wages varied from 50s to 40s, Beamers were earning 24s 2d, 25s and 21s, and at two other mills, burlers were earning 14s, 12s and 13s 6d. (See "Wage Notes", pp.586-7.)

39. See chapter 8 where the issue of Bradford's lower wages was central to a debate between GUTW leaders and some local Bradford members of the union.

40. See Table 6 in Appendix 1.

41. See Table 4 in Appendix 1.

42. This point is discussed in chapter 5 n.24.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL UNION OF TEXTILE WORKERS, 1883-1914

At the beginning of 1914, Cole and Mellor advanced their analysis of the state of Yorkshire's textile trade unionism. For them, the main obstacle to greater union strength was the existence of too many small unions and association who were causing a 'divide and rule' situation in the industry. They maintained that in the woollen and worsted trades:

> 'Trade Unionism is still in its infancy and none of the serious and pressing problems that affect it have satisfactorily been handled. Craft prejudice, narrowness of outlook, suspicion and "benefit hunting" are rampant. Indeed compared with any other industry or occupation, this branch of the textile trade of England is lamentably backward.' (1)

Where Cole and Mellor's criticisms tended to be directed at the smaller sectional unions, G.H. Wood of the employers' associations had earlier made criticisms of the way in which collective organisation was developing on the manufacturing side in general.(2) Pointing out that, in 1910, collective organisation covered only a tenth of all workers in the industry,(3) he suggested that the 'General Union' itself was pursuing hopelessly sectional policies at a time when boom conditions in the industry could have yielded rewards for the mass of workers in manufacturing.(4)

What then was the situation as it had developed from the point of the union's inception in 1883 to the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war in 1914?

Organisation in the industry was divided uneasily amongst thirty

or more small craft or supervisory societies, the three single process unions amongst woolcombers and dyers and two general unions, the GUTW and the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union.(5) The oldest unions in the industry surviving continuously up to 1914(6) had developed amongst men workers holding particular skills and in key positions in the industry. These two factors, single sex and single process were to be among the most crucial in determining survival rates and bargaining strength in the industry during these early years.

To an extent, survival rates and the ability to control entire processes were dependent upon the structure of the industry itself. Thus, the fact that woollen cloth production took place in small units characterised by a high division of labour, tended to particularise and isolate interests, weakening areas of potential collective strength It was not therefore altogether surprising that the most complete collective organisation outside the skilled and craft occupations was to emerge amongst woolcombers and dyers in Bradford.(7) Both processes were carried out in premises which were horizontally segregated from other stages in production, providing the opportunity for more complete control of the workplace. However, as will be argued below, the fact that organisation amongst workers in dyeing and combing was matched by organisation amongst employers may also have been of some importance.(8)

Changes in the industry's demand for labour have also been suggested as factors undermining the collective strength of workers on the manufacturing side. A surplus of men's labour and an apparent increasing turn to women's labour(9) have been cited as obstacles to successful combination at a time, 1890's onwards, when the cotton unions were making great headway. As far as Clapham was concerned, the diversity of the industry and the fact that women tended to predominate in the

only sections, worsted, where the trade was least differentiated, were factors jointly determinate of poor levels of association.[10] More often than not, there was to be a tendency to cite the predominance or even substantial presence of women in the industry as sufficient explanation of trade union weakness.[11] As will be argued later,[12] such arguments tend to be advanced in the face of evidence suggesting quite contrary levels of collective activity amongst women and discount the socio-economic relations of a sexual division of labour in which unions wittingly and unwittingly played a part.

The General Union of Textile Workers had originated as a weavers' union. Separate organisations in Dewsbury and Huddersfield amalgamated in 1883 to form a union known as the Huddersfield and District Power-loom Weavers' and Woollen Operatives' Association.[13] The original associations in the two towns had both emerged during protracted strike activity during the 1870s and early 1880s.[14] Although the union's name suggested a broad basis for recruitment and although, following amalgamation, leading officers in the Dewsbury district at least were drawn from the ranks of the most skilled textile workers,[15] it was not to succeed in recruiting and retaining a broad basis of members in its early years. It was to be as a weavers' union that its reputation was established.[16] Thus, for example, separate branches of spinners and blanket raisers were opened in 1892 in Dewsbury but were to fail within a few months of inauguration, the blanket raisers subsequently breaking away to form a separate association.[17] This failure to establish a universalist approach to membership meant that in its first two decades of existence, the only union which could claim to represent workers outside the craft and single process areas of the industry was in fact failing to provide leadership to many sections of workers in the industry. Thus, worsted spinners, workers in the preparatory

stages, willeyers, fettlers, teazers, women menders, burlers and knotters, rag sorters and rag grinders were without real representation, nor is there any evidence in the late '90s and early 1900s that the union's leaders were actively seeking to include these grades.(18)

Turner was later to criticise the union for a failure of nerve during these early years:

> 'We have done a dozen meetings a week, made scores of members, started fires of discontent here and there, but alas, our Union was somewhat antique. The governing body were afraid to spend sixpence to make a shilling for the Union, perchance they lost the sixpence.' (19)

There had been an opportunity in the early '90s to take in members in the West Country, when wool textile workers from that area had approached the union. Again Turner recalled:

> 'Our union officials had not then imagination (or pluck enough) to strike out and make our Union the National Union for Woollen Workers. We were too cautious of our pence to dare to do it.' (20)

During the two decades which followed its formation, the union was to display apparent timidity and unwillingness to engage with employers over wage reductions, price fixing or conditions of employment, where these were affecting wide sections of the workforce.(21)

Nevertheless, the problems faced by the union in these years were not entirely those of its own making. The industry, as shown in the previous chapter, was undergoing changes in the 1880s and 1890s which were to lead to the contraction of some areas of production, in particular Bradford's trade in worsted weaving, and the expansion of others. The response to changed markets and conditions of competition in the industry was initially to be characterised by wage reductions and economies in production which were to divided the workforce as women

and young people became increasingly preferred as employees in some sections of the industry.(22) The result was that, apart from the most skilled employment, work was insecure and earnings were relatively low in wool textiles. These were not conditions under which it could be expected that trade union membership would flourish.(23) In 1891, at the Royal Commission on Labour, with a union membership of 5,000, Drew was to explain the weakness of the union simply in terms of low wages in the industry.(24)

Recession in the industry undoubtedly played its part in these early years in weakening collective will, as had the legacy of two large strikes, in Huddersfield, in 1883 and at Manningham, Bradford in 1891, which though they gave a spur to trade union activity, had both been the occasion of defeat at the hands of the employers. It has been argued that the very failure of the Manningham strike and the defeat of what was to be the industry's general union actually contributed to the strength of the political movement. In the face of the actual course of events, the broad implications of such a statement are difficult to avoid. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence, in subsequent years, that it was those who were to engage most actively in labour politics who would provide the union with unlimited energy and devotion.(26) The reasons for the weakness of the union subsequently need not be sought exclusively in the strength of independent labour politics in the West Riding.

Industrial units with a high division of labour, impoverished workers', timid union policies, structural changes in the industry, all played their part in limiting membership and success through the early years. There was however another significant factor which Turner was to offer by way of an explanation of 'disorganisation' in the

industry. When asked by Mundella at the Royal Commission on Labour to explain poor levels of organisation, Turner suggested that lack of association on the part of employers as well as trade unionists was a major cause.(27) The consequences of such a situation were under-cutting by employers and difficulties in establishing district standards in payment. It is perhaps significant, that at a period of uncertainty and change in the industry, those sections which were to achieve relative strength in terms of representation and negotiation were also those areas in which the employers had successfully achieved or were to attempt collective organisation.(28) The importance of organisation on both sides of industry was to become increasingly the concern of leading trade unionists and employers during the years which followed.(29) The success which the union was to encounter in areas such as Huddersfield and Colne Valley, where employer organisation was most complete on the manufacturing side, in contrast to where it was formerly non-existent, as for example in Bradford, can perhaps be accounted for in terms of this factor. It should nevertheless be emphasised that the simple fact of employer organisation was not the sole or sufficient criterion. The significance of such organisation as it was to develop amongst certain groups of employers, notably those led by G.H. Wood, was that it was founded on the acceptance of a need for strong trade union organisation. This was seen as essential in order to negotiate terms and establish legalistic definitions of industrial rights which could outlaw independent action on both sides.(30)

The discussion so far has been tied mainly to the period which followed the union's inception and establishing as the focus for semi-skilled and unskilled workers in manufacturing in the West Riding. Although not immediately reflected in terms of membership figures,(31) there were to be some changes in the years after 1906-7 which were to

have positive repercussions for the union. Throughout, there was to be one constant factor which Turner himself regarded as crucial. This was the weekly paper, the Yorkshire Factory Times. The paper was founded in 1889 by John Andrew, who was already running the Cotton Factory Times through his firm, J. Andrew and Co. of Ashton-under-Lyne.(32) Turner's account of the founding of the paper and of his life in the late 1880s and 1890s(33) shows clearly how central the role of the newspaper was to labour organisation, both the trade unions and the new independent labour parties of the West Riding. Ben Turner and W.H. Drew were employed from the start as paid correspondents, Joe Burgess was sub-editor and Allen Gee was book-keeper:

> 'We kept the paper filled, and we kept the Union meetings going. We drew up price lists, helped to settle dozens of disputes, and the paper came to help our Union to grow. The establishment of that paper, with its liberty to Gee, Drew and myself to go on Union agitation, made our Union prosper.' (34)

Apart from sustaining the union through a period of weakness, union membership was hovering between 1,300 and 3,000 between 1894 and 1905,(35) the paper was to develop increasingly as the mouthpiece of textile workers. This was particularly so after Andrew's death in 1906, at the early age of fifty seven. His two sons, who took over the business transferred the printing of the paper to Dewsbury and placed it under the control of Albert Senior and a Mr. Lloyd of Southport.(36) By carrying news of industrial matters and by making the occasional flattering reference to more sympathetic employers and their policies, the union was ultimately able to ensure itself a wider readership than the working men and women it had originally been established to serve. Turner felt that the union had played a substantial role in improving industrial relations:

> 'The "YFT" also helped in moulding public

> opinion with both employers and employed. I have seen it in many an employers' office of recent date (in 1916). I used to see it in their offices many years ago.' (37)

Despite the fact that the only price lists in existence in the industry applied to weavers in the Huddersfield district,[38] the impetus for growth was to come from quite another group of workers. In 1906 and 1910 there were wages movements amongst the willeyers and fettlers in Colne Valley.[39] As far as Turner was concerned, it was, '... the beginning of the development to moderate strength of our Association'.[40] Not only did the movement bring success in that it was to lead to the first negotiated statement of wages in the industry, it signified a more determined stance on the part of the union in the adoption of a 'general' policy. Turner recalled:

> 'Mr. Gee, Mr. Hoyle and others of us determined to make our Union a General Textile Union including everybody within the mill gates. We opened the doors over twenty years ago to willeyers and fettlers, rag-grinders, and similar people. We included everyone within the mill gates, believing that the miners' plan of one Union for one industry was the right ideal.' (41)

Despite this avowal, the union was only slowly to amend its public image as a representative institution for all grades in the industry. Changes in the name of the union came by degrees and were only completed in 1912 when the title "General Union" was taken.[42] This move reflected change in the industry itself as the areas of industrial development and buoyancy tended to be the "mixed" process woollen districts of the Colne Valley and the Heavy Woollen District during the pre-war years. The movement towards a "general" membership was thus in a sense matched by the industry's own changing structure.

As well as changes in title, there were to be signs that the union was adopting a more confident and outward-looking image during

these years. A new banner, replacing the old one,[43] was advocated by Huddersfield and Heavy Woollen Districts of the union, though opposed by Colne Valley. Ultimately the "wider visions" of the union were to be expressed in a banner which showed a man and woman textile worker shaking hands. Turner's poetic talent was as usual in evidence with the inscription:

> 'The world is for the workers,
> We mean to have it too;
> Unite ye working comrades,
> And claim what is your due.'

Elsewhere on the banner the words 'There is no wealth but life' and 'United to win a world-wide brotherhood' were added. The idea of a union badge was resisted at first. Huddersfield district argued that: 'it would not be worn in this district'. However, two years later attitudes had changed, and following the lead of Heavy Woollen District, two thousand union badges and brooches were ordered.[44] As Turner rightly predicted, the union badge had psychological importance in an industry whose traditions, amongst management, had been typically anti-union.

Apart from changing the visual image of the union with banners and badges, the adoption of a "general" scope meant increased activity in relation to other groups. The union took definite steps to advise other unions of its altered boundaries of recruiting. Thus, for example, the Huddersfield secretary was instructed to write to the Healders and Twisters society to tell them of the name change and that 'after now, we take in as members all Textile workers'.[45] Propaganda in the period following the name change was increasingly addressed, in the union's leading districts Heavy Woollen and Huddersfield, to all groups of workers, including not only those for whom wages movements were in progress, but also others, burlers, menders and knotters. In addition,

the more general scope was supported by advocacy of a standard working week of 48 hours, the abolition of overtime and a united wage claim.(46) That a more aggressively propagandist stance was increasingly being adopted was evidenced by the speakers who were invited to address meetings in 1913. The list includes Tom Mann, Bob Smillie, Ben Tillett, J.R. Clynes and Vernon Hartshorne.(47)

Inevitably, the adoption of general status was to bring the union into conflict with the many small craft and overlooking societies in the industry, as older and more skilled men felt threatened and diminished by association with the younger and less skilled elements in the GUTW, in particular its women members. Unlike the situation in the engineering industry, where the Workers' Union was to arrive at a territorial arrangement with the skilled societies such as the ASE,(48) relationships in wool textiles would seem to have been riven with a variety of conflicts over demarcation of interests and responsibilities. There were continuing struggles over negotiating rights and breakaway tendencies. Cole and Mellor,(49) whose criticisms followed very closely those which Turner was to advance on many occasions, had little that was positive to say about the craft societies. They were criticised for having a divisive and weakening effect and a concern for an insurance and 'benefit hunting' rather than a trade union role.(50) Such unions not only maintained control over entry into certain occupations, for example, overlooking, tuning, clothpressing, they also held key positions of authority on the mill floor. For such men, combination with lower grades was quite often unthinkable. Many tuners and overlookers were remembered throughout weavers' and warpers' lives for their foul language and overbearing manners. Moreover, in many cases, young workers owed their positions to the influence that overlookers had with managers. They were crucial gatekeepers in the authority and employment structure

of the mills of the West Riding. On the other hand there were the tuners remembered for kindness and skill and the associations which sought joint organisation on some occasions.

Turner's criticisms and, at some points, his bitterness, can be more easily understood in terms not only of these vexed authority relationships but also within the context of struggle for his own union. He was aware that able members were deserting in some instances in order to pursue more sectional interests. There was at the same time concern that the persistence of independent claims by such associations and unions might undermine relationships which GUTW leaders were trying to establish with employers as part of an attempt to secure comprehensive negotiating rights for workers in the industry. Turner was vituperative in his attack on the Huddersfield Warpers' Association. This organisation had been formed at a time when the Textile Union had had two warpers on its Executive committee. As 'Yarnspinner' saw it:

> 'They believed that their craft was of high class importance and that they were of a superior character to some of the other mill operatives ... As an association they have been of little value to the Trade Union movement.'

Again, he criticised:

> 'This sectional union (which) has split off the great mother union of textile workers in this country. They have never been any good in the Trades Union world ... They are selfish and mean in their actions and outlooks. They are pleading for men to leave one union to join their craft union.' (51)

The union which had emerged from the 1883 amalgamation was to struggle to survive through years of difficulty and was only to see a real upward swing in membership after 1911. It had begun as a "weavers' and woollen operatives' association", indicating a qualified universalist

and general attitude to recruiting and representation. However, as argued above, it was not to become truly outwardly general in scope until 1912, when it ceased specifically to refer to weavers in its title. Nevertheless there were to be persistent signs of sectionalism even after this date, as it appeared that certain groups, notably women workers in the Bradford area, remained poorly organised and as women in general appeared under-represented in the union. This was despite the fact that women had played a crucial role at initial stages in the setting up of organisation.(52) Thus, with very few exceptions in these early years,(53) the union appeared to be entirely run and led by men workers in the industry. This was to be underlined in the union rules, since, until a change in 1912, women had paid a lower subscription rate than men.(54)

The conditions under which the week-to-week running of the union was organised, particularly in the pre-war years, were not to encourage collective action or commitment beyond a purely instrumental level. In common with those cotton union which had a high proportion of women members, the collection of subscriptions was carried out on a door-to-door basis, mill committees of the union being virtually unknown in these years. Although such a form of contact applied more or less equally to men and women, when compounded with other marginalising aspects of women's employment and trade union membership, this more indirect form of association was to prove an added distancing factor for women members.(55)

Collectors, appointed by the district committees, in many cases presented the only contact which some members had with the union itself. Ballot forms were delivered by collectors and, through their weekly or fortnightly contacts, collectors were able to keep a record

of members' movements within and between districts. Collectors were, in most cases men and worked mainly on a house-to-house basis, collecting contributions from heads of families or whoever had the responsibility for managing the domestic economy.(56) Working on a commission basis, they were allowed a certain percentage of each contribution, house-to-house collectors taking a higher percentage than mill collectors. In addition, winning new members was rewarded by a small bonus. Districts varied in their attitudes to collectors. While Colne Valley insisted on a complete separation of collecting and executive duties, other districts felt that such a distinction was unnecessary.(57) Collecting was regarded as a responsibility and rewarded as such. In the years before the change in methods of election, collectors were expected to ensure that members voted for the District's nominees not only by making sure that ballot papers were filled in, but filled in 'correctly'.

The union's dependence on house-to-house collection of subscriptions and its fewer mill collectors meant that it had developed very little in the way of shop floor control or organisation in the pre-war years. With a few exceptions only, those mill committees which did exist, some of which dated back to the 1870s and 1880s,(58) tended to function as a representative body of working people in relation to a specific workplace only. Such committees depended for existence on the goodwill and benevolence of employers who, in these few cases, saw the advantage of dealing with known leaders of a body of working people. There is little evidence of a widespread growth of mill committees amongst weavers, spinners or other groups on the manufacturing side at this stage. Dyers of course had established a closed shop which had proved a great organisational advantage, since non-unionists could be restricted or limited, and a measure of control instituted.

Collectors were occasionally called into conference to improve their efficiency and to emphasise union policy on key issues. At other times, and in the main, collectors were kept informed and supplied with advice when they returned their monies to their local office. The system of more indirect communication perpetuated through the house-to-house collecting process tended to militate against the development of independent rank and file activity at the place of work. A home rather than a work based collection of dues was mainly the result of an earlier period when members were few and employers hostile. Blacklisting of militants in small West Riding towns and villages was a well-known and persistent feature of mill life. For example Arthur Dawson of the NSDF and his brother who came from a well established radical family in Holmfirth had to find work in Huddersfield after they lost their jobs as dyers at Albert Mills.(59) The interconnections between employers were such that a whole valley of mills might become closed to a worker considered to be a trouble maker. Under such conditions, union organisation in mills was not likely to flourish leaving more scope for direct employer-official trade union contact over issues relating to members earnings and conditions of employment.

Following amalgamation, the union had been run from Huddersfield, until in 1892, a separate "District Branch" of the union was set up in Batley for the Heavy Woollen District. Ben Turner was to be the District Secretary from then on, with the district office operating from the front room of his house.(60) Huddersfield District of the union was formed two years later, though it was scarcely to be distinguished from the headquarters of the Union as a whole, since Allen Gee acted as secretary to both bodies until Ben Littlewood was made District Secretary in 1911. The two districts were to remain virtually the same size until the war years, when the Heavy Woollen District expanded

rapidly, with branches over a wide area, including Wakefield, Leeds and Spen Valley.

Membership was unevenly divided between the region's major population centres. Bradford remained one of the weakest areas for organisation and despite what both its critics and supporters recognised as special circumstances found itself somewhat overlooked in relation to policy matters. During the war years in particular there were to be tensions and counter allegations made by leading members of the union and members of Bradford's District Committee. Following the Manningham strike, a Branch of the union had been inaugurated at Bradford.(61) Membership in Bradford was to remain around the 250 mark until the immediate pre-war years, when there were nearly 1,000 members. As far as Turner and Gee were concerned, Bradford District had been a constant drain on union funds, and with no returns. Accusations as to the obstinacy and selfishness of Bradford workers(62) suggested that they were somehow immune to the collective spirit. With a predominance of younger and less skilled workers in Bradford weaving sheds and spinning mills and with some of the lowest wages paid in the industry, particular problems were involved. Neverthelesss Turner's criticisms and the difficult problems faced by workers in the industry in that town conflicted with evidence of other thriving labour organisations and the real achievements of municipal socialism. Critics of GUTW policy in Bradford tended to concentrate on three main weaknesses which it was considered the union displayed. These were the leadership's lack of involvement in Bradford matters, the need for a campaign for a minimum wage based on standard calculations and an end to married women's employment in the industry.(63)

The formation of other districts in the union followed slowly.

Branches at Slaithwaite and Marsden had existed in the late '90s and were to amalgamate to form the Colne Valley District in 1899. Halifax and Haworth had had branches in 1893 and 1894. The Halifax branch survived to become a district in the war years, as further branches were opened in Calder Vale, at Elland and Mytholmroyd. The Haworth branch lasted only two or three years and members in the Keighley district were to be enrolled in Bradford District, until a separate district was opened in 1919.(64)

Cole and Mellor and G.H. Wood's criticisms of the GUTW thus appeared broadly accurate in the immediate pre-war years. A small and scattered membership was led by a union without any apparent policy which could hope to attract new members or exploit situations in which its services might be called upon. Organisationally diffuse, competing with other sectional unions, the union appeared unprepared for expansion. Membership of the GUTW in 1914 stood at about 7,000, in a workforce of 200,000. In contrast, the dyers, admittedly drawing on a wider area, with branches in Cheshire and Lancashire, had a membership in their federation of 20,000. The woolcombers, Bradford-based almost entirely, had 7,000 members out of approximately 15,000 employed in the trade. The woolsorters' membership was 1,000. The remaining societies, unaffiliated to the TUC, had memberships which ranged from 1,000 to only two or three hundred.

The GUTW had few paid officers, only three, Gee, Turner and Watson,(65) until Huddersfield's Ben Littlewood had been elected to a salaried position in October 1911 and Harris Hoyle had taken up the paid full-time secretaryship in Colne Valley in 1910. The contrast with the cotton unions was only too obvious; lists, standard prices, specialised officials, and negotiating rights were only some of the

features yet to be developed to any extent in West Yorkshire.

For textile workers, membership in such an organisation provided uncertain returns. Low levels of organisation reduced chances of support and solidarity. The characteristics of unrest in the textile industry tended to be lack of cohesion and the isolation of groups of workers at various mills. Strikes might take place over a variety of issues, wages, hours, holidays, prices for work on various goods, against women's labour or the introduction of new workers. The contrasts with other West Riding unions, the dyers and woolcombers were clear, these unions having drawn up detailed and, in the case of the Bradford dyers, the ASD, comprehensive agreements with their respective employers' organisations.(66)

The language and concern of the GUTW in these pre-war years reflected primarily interest in the establishing of a machinery of collective negotiation with employers, the creation of financial security and control over memebership. This was to leave vast sections of the workforce virtually undefended and without leadership in the struggle over wages and conditions.(67) Another general union, recruiting in the industry, though mainly amongst dyers and certain skilled sections yet unorganised, provided a contrasting approach to questions of public image and recruitment. This was the Workers' Union, which in the years between 1911 and 1914 was to achieve a spectacular growth in membership nationally, from 5,000 to 143,000.(68)

Nevertheless there were to be changes in the three years before the outbreak of war, some a result of a general shift of interest on the part of workers in the direction of trade union membership, others the result of innovations introduced by the union itself. Apart from

the adoption of 'general' status, there were to be achievements on the wages front, with a series of negotiated agreements covering willeyers and fettlers and later, woollen weavers and spinners, drawn up in 1910 and 1913.(69) These changes were to be accompanied by the first definite increase in membership since the union had been established. The general turn to trade union membership which seems to have occurred after 1911 has been discussed by Hyman who shows that this growth was mainly in the unskilled areas, a form of regeneration of the earlier New Unionism. However, this was not simply a repetition of the events of the 1889-90 period. Hyman argues that new factors were at work which had a qualitative effect on trade union membership and growth. Dismissing factors such as the decline in real wages and the intensification of exploitation of labour as being insufficient as explanations, he prefers to cite a change in attitude towards trade union membership, a shift in perception and consciousness. He argues that:

> 'the changing manner in which workers perceived (his emphasis) their work situation, and the changing aspirations against which this reality was measured ...'

together account for increased trade union membership.(70)

Such an explanation required refining if it is to be at all useful to specific cases such as the GUTW. By 1911, the situation in which trade unions found themselves had perceptibly changed. Attitudes amongst all but the most entrenched anti-labour groupings had altered to acknowledge that trade unions in some form had become a permanent feature of the British industrial and political scene. Perhaps because of, rather than despite the legal battles associated with the Taff Vale and Osborne judgements, a certain type of permanence was emerging. It appeared as if employers were becoming more, rather than less, likely to resort to official trade union channels in negotiating with members of the labour force. This was certainly the case amongst some employers

in the wool textile industry.(71)

Union membership as far as wool textile workers was concerned was to appear more attractive as an investment as the first negotiated agreements were drawn up and as the union was able to establish representative status in a number of mills.(72) Another key factor at this time was the Insurance Act of 1911, which, as it involved the incorporation of Trade Union Friendly Societies, undoubtedly influenced opinion in favour of trade union membership.(73)

The visibility of trade unions was to alter in the pre-war years - this clearly was to have an effect on workers' perceptions of the trade union and trade union membership. Such a change was a feature of developments in the role of the GUTW and its leading officers. The participation of trade union officials in the ordering of industrial life was to increase as they were called upon to intervene on an increasing number of occasions by both employers and fellow members.(74) The visibility of the trade union official at the place of work was also accompanied by an increased visibility in other spheres of activity. It was this, according to Turner, which was an important factor in adding to the union's public image. Changes in attitude towards trade union activity came with the involvement of local officials in local politics, standing for Town Council, School Board, or Board of Guardians. As Turner explained it:

> 'The joining up of the trade union official with public work has done him good, and had done the public bodies good also. It has brought credit to the union as well. It has been one of the means of educating union members on public matters and of making the public bodies better acquainted with the life and labour of the democracy.' (75)

The involvement of trade union activists in independent labour

politics had been the first step in this process. Their successes in gaining election, initiating change and influencing the political balance of power, both locally and nationally, produced even more favourable results for those officials who had spent time and energy on political work. There were several GUTW officials who had entered local politics in the pre-war years. Allen Gee had first been elected to Huddersfield Town Council in 1892, remaining as a councillor and alderman for 21 years. Since 1906, he had been a magistrate, first for Huddersfield, and later, in 1911, on the West Riding Bench. Harris Hoyle was a County J.P. and a member of Marsden Urban District Council. Ben Turner rose highest in local politics by becoming Mayor of Batley in 1914, after 21 years on the Town Council. In 1906 and 1908 he had contested the parliamentary seat of Dewsbury. He lost heavily on both occasions.(76) Both industrially and politically, labour had acquired a public image and credentials not only amongst those who had voted for them, but also amongst their opponents.(77)

Greater visibility and apparent effectiveness of even a limited type led to greater enthusiasm and interest. Returns on union membership were also to a degree enhanced through the political and economic aspects of what is now described as "the Edwardian crisis". As prices rose and wages failed to keep pace, the incentive to press for change developed. The old system of non-participation came to be replaced by one which involved the representatives of workers, new institutions emerged or old ones adapted to channel conflict and effect compromise. These institutions, on labour's side included political parties and trade unions. This new situation generated new possibilities for trade unions both as amplifiers of opposition to employer interests and as respresentative institutions.

In this chapter the broad characteristics of organisation and of the GUTW as it had developed during the pre-war decades have been outlined. In subsequent chapters additional aspects will be considered in relation to these basic features. Thus, the development of collective bargaining and relationships with employers' will be discussed as will the union's attitude to women members and women in the workforce. It will be argued that the way in which policy developed on these two issues was to have a crucial effect on the union's subsequent development. The impact of the war will be another area of consideration and it will be suggested that many of the changes which took place had their origins in pre-war policies and developments.

There were many contradictions in the GUTW between the stated policy of leading members and the day-to-day policies and achievements. Ben Turner, though possessing impressive credentials gained in support of women's rights, municipal socialism and with a personal record of tireless commitment to labour politics and trade unionism was yet an uncertain ally over questions of equal access and rights in production for women and men and was to react strongly to any signs of independence or criticism from amongst the rank and file members of his organisation. Again, though committed publicly to a minimum wage for all adult workers by Turner, there was not total support for this principle as a campaigning issue within the union districts.(78)

Though there were to be variations in districts' attitudes to official GUTW policy, the broad characteristics of the union's approach were clearly evident. Weaknesses in levels of commitment at rank and file level, low levels of membership participation in decision-making and in policy innovation were to leave ordinary workers more exposed as the leadership pursued policies of conciliation in relation to the

employers. War-time wage bargaining was to intensify this collaborative undertaking at the highest levels in the union and though there were to be occasions when independent action on the part of rank and file members was scarcely to be contained, in the main, the precedents set in the pre-war period remained basically unmodified. Membership levels were improving and a militant turn in policy was more evident after 1911, but many questions were unresolved for textile workers. War-time production conditions were to force some solutions but without altering the basic issues - the divide between members and leaders and uncertain and varying conditions of employment in textile manufacturing.

Notes

1. G.D.H. Cole and W. Mellor: "Sectionalism and Craft Prejudice: Yorkshire's need for the Greater Unionism", Daily Herald, 14.4.14 (reprinted in Leeds Weekly Citizen, 24.4.14)

2. See Appendix 4.

3. G.H. Wood, secretary of the employers' association, had written articles under the pseudonym of 'Henry Wilmott' and 'A well wisher' which were published in the Yorkshire Factory Times and the Socialist Review during 1909 and 1910. His particular criticisms of the GUTW were made in "The 'Labour Unrest' and the Woollen Trade", Socialist Review, November, 1910. Talking of GUTW weakness in 1910 he observed caustically that:

> 'If a recently threatened strike in the Huddersfield district had taken place, the employers would, in that district alone (his emphasis) and in one section only of the trade, have locked out many more than double as many workers as the whole Union consists of.'

See 'Wilmott' (1910) op.cit., p.214.

4. > 'Here it is an isolated strike for more wages, there it is a strike against prosecutions for running away at unrecognised holiday and stopping whole mills without permission. Chaos reigns supreme, and nobody can speak responsibly or authoritatively. At least half-a-dozen strikes have broken out or been threatened, in one district in the past three months, without a single Trade Union member being concerned, and, what is worse, without a single Union Official interfering to recruit members and lead the movement. In the biggest boom time of a quarter-of-a-century the workers were beaten every time. With efficient leadership they would have won something tangible on each occasion.'

And again:

> 'The present policy of the General Union and its tiny fellow unions is absolutely sectional. One day it is willeyers and fettlers, another it is warpers, a third it is weavers, but always at different places.'
>
> 'Wilmott' (1910) op.cit., pp.214-5.

Wood's criticisms were intended to point up the results of more "efficient" and "tactful" organisation of dyers and combers in the industry and of cotton workers in Lancashire who had accepted the principle of piece work. This he argued had brought benefits to workers and employers alike. See below, pp.323+ff where piece work is discussed.

5. The Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union had been formed in 1887 and had only 2,500 members at its peak in 1918 when it

first affiliated to the T.U.C. Its secretary almost from the time of its foundation was one man, Herbert Lockwood. Turner's account of the history of textile unionism in Yeadon was that:

> 'Mr. Gee and I happened to organise them, and they did not see the wisdom of a general union at the time, but formed one of their own. It was a mistake, but it has gone on very well since. They wanted local autonomy, and of course, the thing happened that way.'

See his evidence to the Industrial Council's Enquiry into Industrial Agreements, Minutes of Evidence (1913) Cd 6953, q.6896.

6. Bradford Woolsorters, founded in 1838
Bradford Stuff Makers Up, 1843
Bradford and District Power-loom Overlookers, 1844
Huddersfield, Bradford and Barnsley Dyers and Finishers (later the National Society of Dyers and Finishers), formed 1851
(See Appendix 2)

7. The woolcombers had arrived at what Clegg, Fox and Thompson describe as 'the first substantial collective agreement in the industry', in 1907 when a general increase of 5 per cent for almost 4,000 workers was established. Again in 1909, there was a move against weekend labour which brought some success. These agreements were to a large extent responsible for an increase in membership during the pre-war years. It was later estimated that 45 per cent of women and 55 per cent of men woolcombers were union members. This later rose to 95 per cent during the war. War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Minutes of Proceedings, 27th day in LAB 5/1 part II).

Clegg, Fox and Thompson quote Clapham in relation to the Dyers' success:

> '... producers of any sort who are concerned only with a single essential process, and whose earnings do not form an important part of the selling price of the finished goods, have special opportunities for securing by combination what appears to them a reasonably reward.'
>
> J.H. Clapham, Economic History of Modern Britain (1938) p.168, quoted in H.A. Clegg, Alan Fox and A.F. Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889, Vol 1, 1889-1910, Oxford (1964) p.189, pp.455-56.

The centres of strength for dyers' organisation lay in Bradford and in Huddersfield. The Amalgamated Society of Dyers operating in a section of the industry where horizontal separation of the stages of production was the general rule, and recruiting only men, had established a closed shop and union management of job vacancies by an agreement signed in 1895 with the employers. The other main dyeing union, the National Society of Dyers and Finishers, Huddersfield, Barnsley and Bradford based, was smaller in size and had in the two years before the war, secured terms which included a 54 hour week and sixpence an hour as a basic wage. It was almost equal in size to the GUTW at this stage.

8. G.H. Wood had also some criticisms to make of employer organisation in the industry in his 1910 polemic; he spoke of 'rotten' organisation, 'sectionalism' and ''a chaotic policy of "each a law unto himself "'. However, he pointed out the dangers of delay

since:

> 'The employers are at present unorganised, but they are organising. It is surprising how quickly they can present an united front if they are attacked'.
>
> 'Wilmott' (1910) op.cit., p.213, p.217.

9. Clegg, Fox and Thompson assert:

> 'One important reason for the continued weakness of trade unionism in wool was that the industry was suffering from an excess of labour, especially male labour.'
>
> (1964) op.cit., p.186.

10. Clapham (1907) p.206. See also chapter 5, note 33.

11. See chapter 5, pp.168. Bradford District in particular was considered blighted in this respect. Explaining persistently low levels of membership the Annual Report of the union explained:

> 'It is especially difficult, we regret to say, because of a large number of women employed in the textile industry.'
>
> GUTW Annual Report, 31.12.14 (Copy in TUC library).

12. See chapter 5.

13. The origins of the Dewsbury union and the amalgamation with Huddersfield's weavers' union are described in chapter 5.

14. In the case of Dewsbury there had been a strike of weavers in 1875 and again in 1882 at Oldroyd's mills. At Huddersfield there had been a major strike in 1883 - this had been the occasion of the introduction of a Weavers' List, drawn up by the employers. See chapter 6.

15. See below p.55+ff.

16. An early union banner expressed clearly the weaving bias of the union at this stage:

> 'Let our warps be straight
> Our picks be true;
> The prices just,
> And paid when due.'
>
> Ben Turner, Short History of the General Union of Textile Workers, Heckmondwike (1920) p.187.

17. Turner recalled that he was asked to organise a branch of blanket raisers in Dewsbury and that within two weeks, 400 had joined. By 1895, they had, however, broken away to form the Yorkshire Blanket Raisers Association. Again in 1892, a branch of spinners had been formed from 400 who had enrolled, these members too were to be lost within a few months:

> 'It is not pleasant to relate that after branches had been formed, the raisersseceded, the blanket

> and cloth fullers, and the spinners' branches faded away and for a few years afterwards they were little heard of.'
>
> (Ben Turner, A short account of the Rise and Progress of the Heavy Woollen District Branch of the General Union of Textile Workers, (1917) p.55)

Nevertheless, a separate branch set up amongst spinners in Leeds was to survive throughout this period.

18. A completely separate union of willeyers and fettlers had existed in Leeds having been set up as the Leeds and District Willeyers and Fettler' Union in 1871.

19. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.178.

20. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.164. Later, Turner was invited by James O'Grady, who had been president of Bristol Trades Council and who was to become Labour MP for Leeds East in 1906, to help in the work of canvassing for membership for the textile union amongst textile workers in the West of England. The West Country Workers had, on being turned down by the West Riding union, set up their own organisation. This had already failed by 1895. Textile workers in the West Country were to have a chequered career organisationally. The GUTW was to open a branch eventually, after Turner describes, "prospecting" for members in Bath, Bradford-on-Avon, Stroud and Trowbridge, on one occasion speaking on a platform with Lady Dilke. The Stroud branch was sending in contributions in 1913 and 1914, and as Turner recalled was'very successful for a year or two. It gained victories. It saved money ...' The branch eventually grew to several hundred in size, taking in both woollen and worsted workers, but "local friction" and the enlistment of its newly appointed secretary led to it being closed down in the autumn of 1915. Turner's judgement on these events was: 'lack of knowledge of the operatives, hid away as they were in the West of England did not conduce to the steadfastness of the cause of the organisation'. Later, and even further west, a new district was opened in Wellington. This followed the official opening of a branch at a public meeting in Wellington Town Hall in July 1918. Support from Fox's, one of the two firms in that town, presumably helped the revived District to kindle interest in union membership locally. After six months, the membership stood at 1100. The GFTU, to which Gee was delegated, may also a have had a hand in events in the West Country. Appleton, in a typical statement to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, explained:

> 'The only way to get to know what women are really thinking about I think is for them to know you. You do not get to know at public meetings where they make speeches and pass resolutions. There is nothing so deceptive. If you can talk their dialect all the better and let them tell you exactly what they think in their own way. I have had little groups sometimes; I had a little Somerset group one day and I got a Yorkshireman telling to them in their dialects and between the two dialects we got at the truth.'

Clegg, Fox and Thompson (1964) op.cit., p.185,note 4; Yorkshire

Factory Times, 24.6.15, 7.10.15, 22.8.18; Report of the First Half-yearly meeting of Wellington District GUTW (TUC Library); LAB 5/1, part II, Day 8.

21. During these years, the Labour Department of the Board of Trade was receiving reports, quite probably from Allen Gee, one of their textile correspondents, of disputes in the industry. Thus for example, in 1899, there were 24 disputes reported in the woollen and worsted industries, 20 of which involved questions of wages. Workers taking action included pieceners, cutter lads and finishers, worsted weavers, spinners, overlookers, woollen weavers and spinners, rug weavers and warp dressers. Mills affected were in towns such as Bradford, Huddersfield, Shipley, Haworth, Batley, Bingley, Silsden and Heckmondwike. In 1901 there were 11 disputes, a majority ending in some form of compromise. In 1902 of 15 disputes, 8 were settled for the employers and 4 were compromised. Reports on Strikes and Lockouts for 1899, 1901, 1902, Cd 316, Cd 1236, Cd 1623.

22. See previous chapter and table 2 in Appendix 1.

23. This question is dealt with in some detail in chapter 1 and chapter 5 where the question of women's employment and union membership is considered in terms of women's position in production and the implications of a domestic-based role for women.

24. In answer to a question from Mundella, Drew replied:

> 'I have my own opinion about it, and it is this, that when people get down to the pitch to which the textile operatives are in the West Riding, they have very little heart for anything. They think that it is no use organising, and, in many instances, I am compelled to say that they cannot afford even the small sums of the subscription. We have ample proof of this in the fact that if our members get three months in arrears, as a rule we lose them. They cannot pull up again, and they see the difficulty and lapse out.'

Later Mawdsley was to suggest that Yorkshire workers, 'preferred to stick to their money than to pay it into a society', but Drew persisted in his original explanation: 'The difficulty with them is ... that they have not the money to pay'. However, he added that,

> 'Girls imagine that by-and-bye their mill life will be done with. That is a very important factor against their joining the organisation.'

On the same occasion Turner's explanation was similar to that of Drew:

> 'We have a difficulty sometimes in getting them on account of the low wages they have, which compels them to let the contributions run on. Sometimes these people will play five weeks at once, and they cannot afford during the time they are playing to pay their contribution, it gets into arrear, then there is a time of work, and before they have paid up there is playing again.'

Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, C.6708,

q.4784, 5499, 5537a, 5538, 5812.

25. The Huddersfield strike had led to the formation of the union in 1883, when amalgamation with Dewsbury's association took place. The Manningham strike, it is argued, gave rise to the Independent Labour Party. See chapter 5.

26. Clegg, Fox and Thompson (1964) op.cit. argue that the defeat of the 'future General Union ... added to the strength of the political movement', (p.187). The contribution of those who were members of the BSP and ILP to the sustaining and continued existence of the union through these difficult early years, cannot be ignored. Leading members of the union were consistently to be seen taking part in local politics and were frequently well-known as committed socialists.

27. Clegg, Fox and Thompson (1964) op.cit. in discussing these exchanges, ignore this point. Admittedly Turner was also to suggest that lack of organisation might be due to "thoughtlessness" on the part of wool textile workers. C6708, q.5702-5705, 5735.

28. See chapter 6.

29. See chapter 6, n.22.

30. See chapter 6, n.36.

31. See Table in Appendix 7.

32. John Andrew is an interesting figure who, through his sponsorship of newspapers aimed specifically at working people in Lancashire and Yorkshire, made an important contribution to the development of labour organisations from the mid-1880s onwards. Born in 1848, he was the son of a salesman in cotton machinery, who went to Russia to install equipment, but never returned. He was brought up by his mother who had a grocery or greengrocery shop and, in 1870, joined the Ashton Reporter as a junior member of staff. He married a daughter of the proprietor, the firm's book-keeper, and, on his father-in-law's death, became a partner in the firm with his wife's brother. In 1881, the business became his when he bought out his brother-in-law. From then, until his death in 1906, John Andrew ran the business with an eye for new readers and new ideas. It was these concerns which almost certainly led him into founding newspapers aimed at a readership of cotton and woollen workers. His grandson describes him as "a widely read man" who had

> 'a broad and real sympathy for people who did things such as work, effort and a distrust of and contempt for what is now classed as the 'Establishment'. He felt that the local newspaper should eschew involvement with any political party or any pressure group, any religious sect, any clique; in political matters ... (he was) ... a late-Victorian Liberal - but always liberal and human, with a general tendency to help the underdog, the struggler against circumstances by those trying to "get on" ... he was a Manchester Guardian Liberal - as it implied at that date ... he supported the Rationalist press. But he was ... no joiner-of-movements.'

(Personal communication from Mr. Gerald Andrew)

While John Andrew lives, the Yorkshire Factory Times and Cotton Factory Times, reflected his broad interests in providing an "alternative" newspaper, mainly written by working men and women or their respresentatives. Those he encouraged and appointed on the Yorkshire side, Ben Turner, Allen Gee and others were openly associated with independent labour politics, with the result that in time, and particularly after his death, the Yorkshire Factory Times became a more identifiably labour paper than its companion, the Cotton Factory Times. Turner preserved only one letter from John Andrew in his scrapbook, compiled in 1920-21. This, dated 21st October 1891, apologised for having forgotten to attend a meeting in Huddersfield and went on to say,

> 'I'm with you that some textile news should appear on page 1, but our people think so highly of "Nunquam" that for the present I've given way ...'

The "Nunquam" column was written by Turner, judging by the style, and contained philosophical reflections on current people and events. The letter would suggest that although Turner and other trade unionists provided copy and news, overall editorial decisions, while Andrew lived, lay in Ashton-under-Lyme. Following his death, and the removal of production to Dewsbury, the Yorkshire influence would appear to have increased. Nevertheless, the Andrew business interest and control appears to have remained.

33. See Turner About Myself (1930) pp.177-8; Yorkshire Factory Times, 25.6.14.

34. Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.177-8. Figures for the paper's circulation are not available. At times, according to Turner, there were financial problems. Turner mentions,

> 'having my wages advanced on three distinct occasions... I also remember that when the paper was being hard hit, especially during the war period in the nineteen hundreds, I voluntarily surrendered some of my wages so that the cost of the paper might be slightly reduced.'

Subsequently the paper was created a limited company when Andrew died. Printing and publication were then carried on from Heckmondwike and Dewsbury. By 1914, Turner was less dependent on the paper financially and was writing less copy himself, being able to obtain, 'the assistance of the Press who are members of the N.U.J.'. Yorkshire Factory Times, 25.6.14. Nevertheless, Turner remained the only original contributor over the entire period form its inception and the paper continued through the war years, carrying articles by 'Yarnspinner' which bore the clear impression of Turner's hand in style. There were to be numerous occasions when the paper was to play a clearly interventionist role in internal union politics, (see chapter 10 note 36), and in commenting on GUTW relations with other unions (see chapter 10 note 62). W.H. Drew's biography is outlined in chapter 5, note 51. Joe Burgess was a liberal, according to Turner, who became a member of the ILP in the 1890s. He resigned from the ILP in 1915 and campaigned as an ardent pro-war socialist. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.7.15, 6.7.16, 9.11.16)

35. See Appendix 7.

36. Yorkshire Factory Times, 22.5.19. Although it was not until May 1918 that the Yorkshire Factory Times began to describe itself as 'the official organ of the GUTW', trade union news had long since become concentrated on textile matters. Initially, as Turner recalled, news from a broader industrial front was included, with correspondents sending news in from dyers, woolsorters and railwaymen. The Yorkshire Factory Times normally carried a number of syndicated articles from national labour papers, covered local sports, included a women's section (on domestic issues), local news items of general interest and many column inches of matters relating to industrial injuries, mill matters and local labour politics and personalities. In November 1919, the paper was renamed the Labour Pioneer, reflecting its active support of the Labour Party, it later, in 1922, reverted to its original title and finally ceased appearing in April 1926.

37. Yorkshire Factory Times, 6.7.16.

38. The 1883 List is discussed in chapter 6, note 33. A scale for length pattern weaving had been drawn up between the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers and Spinners Association and the GUTW in 1908.

39. Discussed in chapter 6. These wages movements coincided with the period of Victor Grayson's successful parliamentary candidature. Turner makes only slight reference to Grayson in his history of the union, although leading members of Colne Valley District Committee took part in the 1907 by-election which took Grayson to parliament. Sam Eastwood, Joel Firth, Harris Hoyle, Joe Varley were all members of the Colne Valley Socialist League and active in 1907 and again during Grayson's unsuccessful context in the General Election of 1911. See Ernest Lockwood, Colne Valley Folk (1936); Reg Groves, The Strange Case of Victor Grayson (1975).

40. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.166.

41. Ibid.

42. In the early 1890s the description 'power" was dropped from the original Huddersfield and District Power-loom Weavers' and Woollen Operatives' Association. A further rule change in 1899 led to he the adoption of the name "General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers". Clegg, Fox and Thompson wrongly ascribe the final name change to 1900 (see (1964) op.cit., p.184). There was to be a move in 1912 from Colne Valley for an alternative name, "The Yorkshire Textile Workers' Association", however, this was rejected by delegates at the rules revision meeting of 1912.

43. See above.

44. Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.187-88; Huddersfield minutes, 24.11.11, 20.6.13.

45. Huddersfield minutes, 2.8.12.

46. Huddersfield minutes, details of preparations of public meetings held in March, April 1913.

47. Colne Valley minutes, 25.1.13. Tom Mann had of course a long connection with the area. He had contested the Colne Valley constituency in 1895 and according to Ben Turner, Charles Whitwam, a member of the Huddersfield District Committee from 1909 and president of the District from 1912 had remained a friend. On his return to England the District considered inviting him for a week or fortnight's propaganda work. However, the minutes record that his terms were beyond them. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.76; Huddersfield minutes, 6.3.16, 14.3.13.

48. See R. Hyman, The Workers' Union L(1971) where it is argued that in relations with the skilled unions, the Workers' Union showed a remarkable acceptance of the status quo. Thus, though the ASE and Workers' Union were both nominally all grades, there was a well established recognition of separate spheres of interest. Most ASE branches still were unwilling to recruit from amongst the ranks of the less skilled. On their part, the Workers' Union tended to recruit in industries in which the skilled had already organised and were willing, sometimes actively so, to support and encourage separate organisation for labourers and the less skilled.

49. See above

50. Harry Hoyle, recalled his own tuners' union as being stronger than the textile union in his early working days. However, when asked about his fellow members' political activities he recalled that they were

> '... not actually in the labour movement, they seemed to confine their activities mainly to the Union business at that time ... the President of our Union - Cockaine, he never took a really active part in politics.'

He insisted though, that Cockaine "was a labour man", and a member of Milnsbridge Conservative Club, "simply because of bowling". Looking at the Tuners' minutes for the period, 1907 onwards, the divide between labour and friendly activities seems less and less clear. Harry Hoyle's union, though small and sectional, had, after lengthy discussion voted in favour of supporting Harry Snell's Labour candidature in Huddersfield in 1910. During the pre-war period it had opposed Compulsory Military Training, voted a £10 grant to the Dublin Transport Workers and two shillings and six pence to the Musicians' union and was actively pursuing a policy of amalgamation with other tuners' associations and the establishment of a minimum wage of 38 shillings a week. Although in no sense universalist and certainly cautious in its approach to other labour organisations, allegations of isolation and craft centredness seem an extreme criticism. What Turner and other critics disliked was the very persistence of single trade based organisations, their insistence on independent relations with employers and their tendency towards exclusivism in relation to other groups of workers. A letter sent by the tuners to the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers and Spinners Association in early 1912 illustrates the state of competition which existed between the two unions at that time.

> '... our Association has been in existence for over fifty years and the absence of friction between ourselves, your Association or any individual Master, ought to be convincing evidence of the

reasonableness of our request. We don't know how long your Association has consistently pursued the policy of recognising only the Weavers and Textile Workers Union, but in July 1909 you asked for and was granted an interview, regarding what you considered the unfair tactics of a tuner whom you had been informed was a Member of our Association, and we honestly told you, he was not, or ever had been a Member ... and we might say, we are not amalgamated with the W. and T.W. Union, and you don't think we shall find ourselves in such a humiliating position as to go to them with a dispute in our hands...'

I am grateful to David Clark of Huddersfield Polytechnic Department of History and Political Science for allowing me to quote from the transcript of his interview with Harry Hoyle, nephew of Harris Hoyle, Colne Valley District Secretary of the GUTW. The interview was carried out in August 1974. Minutes of Huddersfield Power Loom Tuners' Association, deposited in Huddersfield Local History Library.

51. Yorkshire Factory Times, 9.3.16. Early officers in the Heavy Woollen District of the union included Benjamin Turner of Ravensthorpe, a foreman spinner and District President from 1903, Armitage Wilcock, a willeyer and vice-president, Joseph Hudson, treasurer from 1903 was a foreman beamer at the CWS mill where J.J. Greenwood, district auditor, was also a foreman. Such men persisted with GUTW membership, nevertheless others were to prove less loyal.

The active persistence of a sectionalist outlook was clearly seen from the fact that two societies had been set up as breakaways from the GUTW in 1895 and 1907, these were the Yorkshire Blanket Raisers and the Huddersfield and District Warpers Association. Writing the obituary of a leading Dewsbury Blanket Raiser, John Sykes, in March 1916, 'Yarnspinner' recalled the events of twenty years previously. A blanker raisers' branch of the union had been set up in the early 1890s which, 'Yarnspinner' claimed, had involved virtually all the men in the trade in the Heavy Woollen District. However, a decision was made to break away and a separate organisation was formed. As 'Yarnspinner' saw it: "they were evidently a bit too proud to mix with the ordinary running of factory workers". He ascribed their later weakness and loss of importance in the trade to the decision to break with the larger organisation.

Antipathy with the Huddersfield warpers dated from 1908 when a dispute arose between warpers and a Colne Valley employer over a wage reduction and, subsequently, the introduction of young workers, girls in the main, to warping. In a latter to the Yorkshire Factory Times. A. Brook of the Huddersfield Warpers described the introduction of these younger workers as 'the most serious a part of the dispute'. The Warpers contested the GUTW's claim to negotiating rights, since, they alleged, the GUTW had only 'one warper-member in that mill'. A Brook protested:

'It would not have mattered whether it caused a reduction in wages or as many warpers at the beck and call of the masters, so long as the General Union could have control of individuals working in the Federated (ie.

belonging to the employers' association, J.B.)
Mills (these only) by their signed agreement."

Nor could Turner be sure that further movements to breakaway were unlikely to recur. In 1915, foremen cloth and blanket milners in Dewsbury had formed their own union. Despite a proposal at their founding meeting that they should join the Textile Union, the decision was made to go for separate organisation. 'Yarnspinner' claimed:

'It is not really a Trades Union and I believe it is not intended to be such and is really being established because they want to avoid Trades Unionism and feel themselves disinclined to co-operate with the ordinary working man milner and scourer and yet want to claim that they have some organisation which is supposed to deal with their situation. It is really a class distinction organisation that they are establishing...'

Turner renewed his attacks on "sectional unions" in March 1918. This time it was the incipient formation of a foremen spinners' organisation in Morley which was the subject of his rebuke. On this occasion, too, he claimed to have control over the question of smaller organisations' affiliation to the TUC:

'... there are three or four unions in the county that cannot affiliate because they are bodies that ought to be part and parcel of the GUTW. The Trade Congress (sic) and the Labour Party do not allow such to be affiliated except with the consent of the Chief Trade Union organisations of good standing.'

Turner maintained that certain sectional organisations would have to conform to "Trade Union principles and constitution" before being allowed to continue with their affiliation to the NAUTT. He had been asked his opinion of the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union by the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC and had replied that he had no objection to their affiliation since:

'they were an old Trades Union of nearly thirty years' standing; they were a recognised body and they have done work in the Trades Union world, are now joining up to the TUC and the Labour Party.'

Relations with other unions in the industry are discussed again in chapter 10 where the development of a policy on amalgamation is traced. Yorkshire Factory Times, 3.6.15, 9.3.16, 23.3.16, 13.4.16, 28.3.18.

52. Outlined in chapter 5.

53. Julia Varley's career provides the obvious exception. See Chapter 5.

54. Initially this had been set at 8d for men and 6d for women, relatively large amounts when set against average earnings in manufacturing. Turner (1917) op.cit., p.62.

After 1912 a separate rate was applied only to young persons. Otherwise contributions were paid and benefits given according to a general scale which began at 2½d a week, rising to 6½d a

week.

55. See chapter 4.

56. The payment of union subscriptions is discussed in chapter 4.

57. In 1915, Colne Valley District ruled that no full-time collector could serve on the District Committee (Half-yearly Meeting of Members, Colne Valley minutes, 31.1.15; Yorkshire Factory Times, 29.7.15)

58. Martin Sons and Co. at Lindley, Huddersfield were mentioned as having had a mill committee for many years, by the workmen's witnesses to the Royal Commission on Labour, C 6708, q.4903, 5180.

59. Their grandfather was a chartist who served a prison sentence. Their mother was active in the women's suffrage movement and was "a fan" of Bradlaugh. Arthur Dawson remembered Katherine Bruce Glasier and the Pethick Lawrences visiting the family home at Holmfirth. (Interview with Arthur Dawson)

60. 'The office was at our house; rent, rates, gas, coal, cleaning, etc., 1s per week; salary £12. What a task it was! What a family task it became right to the edge of the war! All my daughters helped me when they got able to enter books up. They would take collectors' contributions, pay them their commission, and take down many of the complaints. I could not have gone through it but for their help.'
Turner (1930) op.cit., p.99.

61. See chapter 5, note 52.

62. Turner claimed that the union had spent "thousands of pounds" and had been "literally milked by Bradford", between 1887 and 1907. He accused Bradford workers of being 'too obstinate to listen to reason, too blinded to accept wise counsel, and too indolent to be awake to the necessities of the day'. He alleged that Bradford men had 'kept their wives and daughters outside the Trade Unions'. The union had had:

> 'full time women organisers and full time men organisers. It has initiated policies for adult weavers and menders for which neither the weavers nor the menders care a tinker's curse or showed practically a jot of interest in anything done for them...'

and that:

> '... the work is enough to make any christian feel inclined to swear at the backwardness of Bradford textile operatives.'

Turner (1920) op.cit., p.127; Yorkshire Factory Times, 18.2.15.

63. See chapter 8, note 32.

64. Union growth during the war is discussed in chapter 10.

65. J.H. Watson had originally answered an advertisement for the post of general organiser to the union a few years before he was appointed

to work in Bradford. According to Turner 'several Lancashire men were in the final list' however, Watson, who had been president of the Blackburn weavers' union was the one who was appointed. His task was to publicise the union through canvassing, holding meetings and leafletting, throughout the West Riding. His experience of work in North East Lancashire, where union membership amongst textile weavers was something of a contrast with Yorkshire, appears to have brought appreciable returns to the union. From the time of his appointment, membership was increasing slowly, but steadily. In 1914, when it was agreed that Bradford should have a permanent full-time secretary, Watson was appointed, the expenses of his post being shared by the District and the Union as a whole. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.127.

66. Strikes reported to the Labour Department of the Board of Trade were listed in Reports on Strikes and Lockouts for 1899, 1901, 1902, Cd 316, Cd 1236, Cd 1623.

67. See chapter 6.

68. The publicity and propagandising style of the Workers' union was based on an appeal to the workforce made in direct terms and in a language which was both familiar and direct. Moreover, as Hyman shows, the union's attitude to recruitment was both universalist and non-utilitarian. That is, the Workers' Union aimed to recruit all grades and without, apparently, paying too much attention to financial security, or at least, not making this the determining factor. This would seem to contrast with the GUTW at this time as evidenced in the emphasis given to savings and investment. Turner himself hints at disagreements within the union as to style and approach to recruiting. The whole structure of the Workers' Union lent itself to ready recruitment, with flexibility at local levels. Districts were opened and organisers appointed without resort to rule change. Wherever the workers' union attempted to organise the basic approach was to go for a minimum wage. This was true for women engineering workers in the Black Country and for agricultural workers in East Anglia, though with varying degrees of success. What was so new about this approach, as Hyman suggests, was that for the Workers' Union, any section of the workforce was considered capable to organisation. It is interesting to note that one of the GUTW's most promising women members, Julia Varley, was recruited as an organiser for the National Federation of Women Workers in 1908. Two years later she had joined the Workers' Union and remained a militant members in the Birmingham area. See Hyman (1971) and Sheila Lewenhak, Women and Trade Unions (1977) p.124-5, p.140; see also chapter 5 where Julia Varley's career is discussed.

69. See chapter 6.

70. Hyman (1971) op.cit., p.193.

71. Changing attitudes amongst woollen and worsted employers are included in the discussion of pre-war developments in collective bargaining in chapter 6.

72. The agreement "Rules to be Observed in this Mill", signed in 1908 by the GUTW and the Huddersfield and District Woollen and Yarn Spinners' Association, though restricted in impact, were an

important innovation. See chapter 6, p.204 and Appendix 5.

73. Insurance, the effect of the 1911 Act and the debates about its extension in 1916 are discussed in chapter 10, note 6.

74. Thus, for example, the movements amongst willeyers and fettlers in 1906 and 1910 gave the union and its officials greater visibility both to workers and management. It is from this period onwards that sympathetic managers and employers came to rely on local officials, such as Harris Hoyle, Gee and Turner, to intervene when disputes arose in their mills and yards. The union official thus came into more direct contact with work and management situations. Even if this visibility tended to be restricted to visits to the management's end of the premises, this was a significant change from only a few years' previously, when union officers were snubbed or even physically ejected from mills and workplaces. Nevertheless, progress was uneven and not always certain as a letter from a Linthwaite weaver, written in 1913 and sent to Harris Hoyle testifies vividly:

> 'I sent a notice round the shed telling them you wished for a meeting to explain the offer of the employers, but they seem to have lost the spirit they had when the ballot was taken. They seem to want the advance but are afraid to arrange a meeting. I suggested sending delegates but they all want each other to go. The thing is they want a leader. The men are always coming to me grumbling about one thing or another, suggesting this should be done and that should be done, but wish to take no active part in the matter. Both men and women expect me to do all the work call the meetings and address them, while they, the persons who are always grumbling stay in the background. I have got about full up with them, for they are worse than a lot of children. I told them, both men and women that I took the part of leader before, and, had they given me their assistance I would have taken it on again but as I had to stand alone they must find another man to do the work. You must understand Harris I don't intend to risk my place again unless they all (the weavers) mean business.'

Letters to Harris Hoyle, NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library.

75. Turner (1930) op.cit., p.103.

76. Turner was almost certainly a victim of the understanding which leading LRC members had developed with members of the Liberal Party at this time. (See Frank Bealey and Henry Pelling, Labour and Politics, 1900-1906 (1958)) Despite local support for Turner, see his chapter "Parliamentary Election Contests" in Turner (1930) he seems to have had some difficulty in persuading key members of the LRC nationally to support his candidature. In letters which Turner himself preserved in a scrapbook, both Shackleton and Henderson found themselves unable to accept his invitation to speak on his behalf in Dewsbury. Both declared themselves unconvinced as to the wiseness of his decision to stand. Shackleton explained:

> 'My only thought when I said, the action at

Dewsbury would injure the National movement' was that which was in the minds of many members of the Committee last year, namely: That quiet (sic) sufficient seats were being contested, and to add to their number would probably end in a less number of Labour MP's being returned. I know very little of the local feeling in Dewsbury, or as to the chances of success. The above was the only reason which guided me in my decision, I do not think the action of the local liberals against Mr. Jowett is approved off (sic) by the heads of the Liberal Party in London, and I am hoping he will have a straight fight and a good win at the General Election.'

(Jowett was to win in a three-cornered fight against a Conservative and a progressive Liberal - despite attempts by local Liberals to do a deal over the two Bradford Wards. The only other MP to be elected in a three-cornered fight in the 1906 election was G.N. Barnes at Gorbals, Glasgow. Fenner Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years: The Life of Jowett of Bradford (1946) p.68-69)

Letters from Shackleton and Henderson in Ben Turner's Scrapbook, deposited in Huddersfield Local History Library.

77. Allen Gee and Ben Turner, general secretary and president respectively of the Union for well over twenty years are central figures in any consideration of the Union's policies and development between 1883 and 1922. Allen Gee, born in 1853, was ten years older than Ben Turner, nevertheless, the two were close associates and collaborators from the time they first met in 1885. The complementary character of their approaches to trade union and political life is borne out not only by the record of their interactions, but also by those that knew them. Turner's emotional appeals in public speeches and writings contrasted with Gee's more dour approach to employers and political opponents. Turner frequently referred to clashes of temperament and policy in his estimation of their friendship, as for example in his tribute to "My Pal Gee":

'We've argued points aght varry keen,
Fowks thowt we wor across
When seein us i'streets or loin
Talk strong, that wor becoss
The' wor a big desire to see
At ivvury thing should be
I' just agreement reit an' fair
Between my pal an' me.'

On the occasion of his Golden Wedding, the Leeds Mercury, carried an appreciation of Allen Gee:

'... the men and women all through the vast textile industry (know); ... that they owe a great deal of what they are today to the quiet persistent, tactful and broadminded man, who for over 30 years guided the destinies of the Textile Union, the man who never called a strike, but who by this means and by that succeeded in winning for his mates, the wages and conditions which make the industry what it is today.'

At his death the Huddersfield Examiner recalled,

'... an active man with a virile temperament ...

> a broad brimmed hat, gave him a distinctive,
> almost a Quakerish, touch and his face,
> adorned with a close-clipped beard, had a
> genial behaviour.'

Allen Gee had been born in Lindley, Huddersfield, of a handloom weaving family. His mother was widowed when he was four years old and brought up her family of five children carrying on her trade. Gee began as a bobbin winder for his mother and then went at eleven to work as a piecer for a hand-mule spinner and later worked as a power-loom weaver. He became a union member in 1881, in the old Huddersfield weavers' union and the following year, an official. In 1889, he ceased working in the industry he when he was appointed to work for the Yorkshire Factory Times (see note above). He was a founder of a number of organisations, including the Lindley Liberal Club, Huddersfield Friendly and Trades Club, Huddersfield Trades and Labour Council and the General Federation of Trades Unions. He became a director of Thomson's co-partnership business (see Appendix 3). In 1892 he was elected to Huddersfield Town Council, becoming an alderman and Borough Magistrate. In 1911 he joined the West Riding Bench and was later to be chairman of the Licensing Committee. His involvement with government departments had begun with his appointment as a labour correspondent with the Board of Trade in the 1890s, later he was to be a member of the Committee on Partial Exemption which was to recommend the raising of the school leaving age to 14 and was asked to be present in Dublin during the Transport Strike of 1911. During the war, his appointment were to increase (see below). In 1917, he was to receive, with Turner, the O.B.E. and in 1918, stood, unsuccessfully as Labour candidate at Blackpool during the General Election. His obituary writer noted that in relation to politics:

> '...he was brought up in the old Radical school,
> and, being a tolerant man, he had never lost a
> sense of kinship with Liberalism.'

Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.79-80; Leeds Mercury, 9.5.25; Huddersfield Examiner, 19.8.39.

Ben Turner had come from a similar textile background, but with a more distinctively labour tinge. His early years and political development are described in his autobiography, About Myself (1930). What is evident from his description is that he was involved in radical and labour politics from an early age and had begun writing short pieces for local newspapers before he became a correspondent for the Yorkshire Factory Times. His formal political education began when the family left Holmfirth for Huddersfield and he joined the Secular Sunday School Movement. Later he was to live in Leeds during the period when the Gasworkers' Union was formed. For two years he was part of the "advanced Labour and Socialist movement", associating with Tom Maguire, Alf Mattison and the Ford sisters. In 1891, he moved to Batley which was to be his home for the rest of his life. Like Gee, Turner had begun his working life in the mill, as a half-timers, and, like Gee, he was implacably opposed to the system of half-time education.

Turner was a prolific writer and speechifier, producing newspaper articles and dialect poetry. His politics were more firmly situated in the labour movement than those of Gee's and he was to become a well known figure at Labour Party Annual Conferences and T.U.C.'s

over the decades. Though he was to gain an O.B.E. with Gee in 1917, recognition from the Labour movement nationally was to come later. Although Turner was chairman of the General Purposes Committee of the TUC from 1916, wool textile workers were not to gain representation on the General Council of the T.U.C. until after 1921 when this body was enlarged. Until that time, cotton workers' representatives had taken up the place reserved for textile workers. In 1921, he finally took a place on the General Council. He was knighted in 1931 after having been Parliamentary Secretary for Mines in the Second Labour Government. See chapter 10 for further details of his life.

Publications by or about Turner include: Ben Turner, Pieces From a Yorkshire Loom (1909); Collected Rhymes and Verses (1934); Heavy Woollen District Textile Workers' Union (1917); Short History of the General Union of Textile Workers (1920); About Myself (1930). John Waddington-Feather, "Sir Ben Turner, 1863-1942", Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, Vol 12, part 69 (1969) - this article reviews Turner's contribution to dialect poetry favourably and describes Turner's friendship and correspondence with G.B. Shaw particularly in relation to the help which Turner gave Shaw in devising dialect speech for St. Joan.

78. Before the war, no agreements had been made which even prepared the way for establishing minima in such key areas as weaving or the lowest paid occupations, burling and mending, which were exclusively women's jobs. While Colne Valley District could pass a resolution at a members' meeting in July 1913 calling for the government to enact a 30 shilling a week minimum wage for all adult male workers, it was nevertheless unwilling to initiate a broad wages movement for all grades at this time. It was in 1913 too that Turner got unanimous support for his resolution at the TUC calling for a minimum wage for all adult workers and intervention by the government to ensure a fair wage was paid on government contract work. In Huddersfield, the only district in the industry to have a weavers' scale, members had been pressing for some years for local action to bring the lowest paid firms up to the highest district rate. These issues were being debated and advanced in areas of relative strength for the union, in Bradford, where wages were lowest and the union weakest, the issue of a minimum wage became the basis for an attack on union policy and record. Colne Valley minutes, 26,7.13; 1913 T.U.C. Annual Report, pp.244-5.

CHAPTER THREE

WORKING AND LIVING: THE ORAL EVIDENCE

In this and the following chapter, evidence from interviews with Colne Valley workers will be drawn on.(1) Oral evidence provides an insight into the place of work in a community dominated by wool textile production. Thus, socialisation into patterns of work discipline, expectations about work, mobility within and between occupations in the industry, conflicts and solidarities within a mill can be reconstructed from the personal accounts of those who were to a large extent brought up in the industry. Colne Valley has its unique characteristics in terms of products, ownership and typical form of mill organisation.(2) Consequently, those brought up to work in its main industry were to differ in their experiences from those who, for example, grew up in Bradford, where other industries, engineering and building, together with a more elaborate structure of service and tertiary occupations presented theoretically competing opportunities. In addition, the organisation of worsted production was dissimilar, in many ways presenting a more highly segregated array of occupations.(3) Nevertheless, the basic features of mill life and of textile production in this period are shared. Recruitment for an industry which required a mass of semi-skilled machine operators and minders, with varied job security and low earnings, was bound to show particular characteristics. These characteristics can be confirmed by the Colne Valley interviews, but also in those carried out for the survey, 'Family Life'and Work before 1918'. This nationally structured project included interviews from a number of West Yorkshire towns with men and women whose working lives in textile production began before 1920.(4)

A workforce predominantly young in age and, in the case of Colne Valley mills, with less sexual differentiation in some occupations, seems

to have been controlled by practices learned both outside and inside the mills. During the period up to and including the First World War, employment opportunities for young workers within textiles were expanding. Families needed workers to balance their economies, but mills too needed workers to boost production.[5] The mills were a draw to outsiders,[6] with the prospect of good and reasonably steady and increasing wages for girls. For those born locally there seem to have been few alternatives to mill work. Evidence from an admissions register for Slaithwaite Nields School between 1896 and 1917 shows that the largest proportion of leavers, both boys and girls, were going into mill work during these years. Domestic service appears to become less popular by the later date and at any rate seems to have been rated extremely low as an occupation by local girls:

> 'Do you know the first time I went to Barnsley, her aunt says, "Do you still work in the mill?" I says "Yes." She says, " Oh you are common." I says, "Well I think skivvies are common." She says, "And what do you call skivvies?" I says, "Servants," I says, "We're not servants, we can please ourselves when we come and go. Skivvies can't." And I let her know what I thought about her. I says, " You mustn't think you're better than what we are because we consider that the girls in Barnsley, that have to go into service are very unlucky.'[7]

Those few pupils who found alternatives[8] were destined for shop work and a narrow range of skilled trades, dressmaking and millinery for girls, carpentry and tailoring for boys.[9]

Farming was an alternative area of employment in Colne Valley. However, few families within walking distance of a mill appear to have relied entirely on a farm economy. As on the Lancashire side, farming and millwork complemented each other in the sense that a smallholding might provide employment for some members of the family, while mill employment produced the steady income. Many children were thus brought up experiencing both types of work.[10] School log books mark the effect of the seasons' agricultural work as much as education for mill discipline.

Haymaking in July reduced attendance at valley schools, although this could be given the widest interpretation, as one head teacher commented in July, 1909:

> 'A visitor last week thought that haymaking appeared to last from May until August; he was not far wide of the mark,' (11)

The oral evidence shows that families with farms and samllholdings were producing on a fairly small scale, with some members employed in mill work and quarry work (12) One woman whose school board teacher father, always in poor health, was put on a smallholding by her grandfather described the farm as:

> '..an old farm cottage really. Two bedrooms and just a cottage and kitchen. And we had the dairy and mistal and that sort of thing. And we'd a horse and about three cows and then a lot of pigs and all that sort of thing you know. But me father's brothers helped along with them you know.' (13)

These small farm economies provided enough for a family's subsistence and also found ready markets for any surplus in the small mill towns below them. As farms they were not big enough to absorb a whole family's labour, but could be maintained by a woman with additional help of men and children for haymaking and extra jobs. Nearby mills enriched such families as children became old enough to bring wages home. (14)

Children and young people came into the mills from differing backgrounds, not solely those found close to the mill gates themselves. The need for employment, an environment which was work-oriented and which was dominated by one industry, produced a definite socialising effect which helped prepare the younger members of the valley townships for a working life and mill discipline. Apart from the needs of the family economy, (15)

there were social controls of a variety of types which helped shape attitudes to work. Elizabeth Roberts has shown how in Lancaster and Barrow, children's early exposure to the form and content of working life came through work, play and family life.(16) Carrying dinners, for perhaps sixpence a week, into the mills for workers at mid-day, might be done for pocket money, or the family budget, but this was also one way of becoming familiarised with not only the noise and characteristics of particular processes, but also the hierarchy of personnel within the mill:

> 'I used to go up during the school holidays and me mother used to sit me on the loom .... I used to go up and take their dinner. You know Granny used to make them some dinner. And I used to come all up through Milnsbridge... I'd a good half hour's walk. Me Granny used to make them pies ... And she used to put them in hot, straight out of the oven and wrap them in old towels and put them in a basket. And I had to trail all up there with them. And I used to go at dinner time and I'd stop while about three o'clock.' (17)

There were too. many total aspects of this industry which surrounded the youngest members of the community. Living near the mills and with most families having at least one worker, the pattern of mill life dominated each day. Knockers-up might be paid to tap on windows or call out a name, but in most places it was the factory buzzers which called workers each morning and which marked their letting out at dinner time and at night. In small communities such as the Colne Valley townships, the mills dominated all aspects of life. Conversations at meal times, at home and between neighbours and friends would be filled with allusions to family members' work, changes in employment, brushes with bosses at work and comments on difficulties with materials and happenings at work. Such a mill-oriented climate left the younger people with fairly limited horizons, as respondents recalled:

> 'At home all the talk about work was about weaving.
>
> You do'nt think about it when you're a child you see. You know you've just to get up and you were shoved into the mill. That's all.'

> '... they never thought of it - I don't think it was ever thought of in our district it was always the mill, or you was a bit better off, getting into a shop or learning to dressmake or something like that you see.'
>
> 'It came from one generation to another. You see, your father was a weaver, you went weaving.'(18)

Asked questions about the schools' methods of preparing their pupils for a working life in the mills, informants were vague. Certainly punctuality, cleanliness and obedience were vividly recalled. Few remembered school days with any affection and those who did tended to be the ones who had hoped, or been encouraged, to stay on to turn their success in the classroom to some advantage in life. School log books reveal little which indicates consciousness of any broader horizons for valley school children. One entry in February 1906 by a headteacher typically conveys education's range:

> 'A very beautiful morning. Took the first class down to the Pleasure Grounds to notice any signs of approaching spring. Showed them the huge boilers of the Globe Worsted Spinning Co' and the gasometers.' (19)

The Globe Worsted, a spinning enterprise, had a reputation amongst local workers for strictness and employed so many young workers that it was known as the "Children's Home".

Object lessons in the class room were strictly related to domestic and industrial utensils, such as shovels, and sponges and were quite obviously complementary to a life of fairly restricted and predictable dimensions. In contrast, lessons in history were more distantly based, tending to cover periods quite remote in time to the children's own lives. The effects of a totally work-oriented upbringing are discussed in the following chapter. At this stage it is only necessary to emphasise the formative aspects of a continuity of experience in which schooling played

its part. Many of these children were the first in their families to experience more than two or three years' free education. Those born towards the end of a large family had parents whose education was virtually non-existent. One girl's mother had been in service at the age of 8, her father too had been working at the same age. Another girl's mother, orphaned at an early age had started work at 7 and had never been to school. She learned to sign her name in order to be able to draw her sons' army allowance during the war. For such parents, education had little relevance and with the immediate benefits conferred by the wages of working children, there were few who felt able or capable to take the risk of keeping even the most promising child at school. As one woman explained:

> 'Well I don't think they thought much about it in those days. They didn't seem to bother - not like they do now you know. They were waiting for the time when we could leave school and start work, earn a bit of money.'

And another:

> '...mother, although she thought we ought to go to school and she insisted on us going to school until we were 12 or 13, but she thought when we'd been to school until we were 12 or 13, we'd got all the education that was necessary. And she definitely said and thought and said that reading was a waste of time'(20)

De Rousiers, a French observer of working class life visited England and Scotland in the early 1890's. He was impressed by the early training which children were receiving from parents in the ways of working life. Parents treated their children as young adults, listening to them reasonably while inculcating ideals of work and service. In France, he observed, the attitudes were more indulgent, with the exit from childhood being delayed for as long as possible. (21)

An interesting illustration of the attitudes of some school leavers

in this locality is presented by a wool textile version of the national school strike movement.[22] In contrast with children in Dundee, Southampton, Llanelly, Islington, Manchester and other areas who took action in the summer of 1911 against harsh school discipline and excessive amounts of school work, Marsden scholars protested in January, 1912 about the raising of the school leaving age by West Riding County Council.[23] The school log book for Marsden describes sixty "scholars", "playing truant" as a protest against the new Byelaws "which came into force unexpectedly on the Ist inst. and provide that all children must attend school full time up to the ago of 14 years unless between the ages of 12 and 14 they can pass Standard VII". One of the Colne Valley workers was "in it", but ... "It fell through anyway.. I know we went back the next day ... we couldn't stick it out.. there was some ring leaders we just followed them sort of thing".[25] During that day of action however, protests were not restricted to Marsden or Marsden school children. The log book from the next school down the valley, at West Slaithwaite, refers to a "mob of Marsden scholars... led and incited by two or three mill boys pelting the school with stones and calling the children to join them". Further down at Slaithwaite Nields School, twenty three boys aged between seven and thirteen joined the protest. The headteacher noted that "boys and girls from Marsden" had demonstrated with sticks and stone throwing. The next day his pupils were told of the "folly of their action" but no worse punishment seems to have ensued.[26]

The transition from school to work was in most cases immediate, providing no opportunity for alternative perspectives or choices to be offered.[27] One girl was sent to the mill rather than being allowed to continue helping in the family shop:

> '..they was going to keep me at home with the business but I started sort of running about like they do when they're young and me mother said I wanted some proper work and you know, proper master like.' (28)

Unless they were required to work in the home or were in too poor health, these children had only a weekend between school and work once they had reached their thirteenth birthday and had the required number of attendances to their credit. There were some of course who had already made the transition, partially at least, and who were working half-time. Despite the claims made by Turner and Gee in evidence and questioning at the Committee on Partial Exemption, (29) there were still half-timers in this part of the industry during these years. A Colne Valley woman remembered that because her mother:

> 'had five of us. And she had me eldest brother he'd gone half time - he went when he was 12 to work. And she went for his full-time papers to see about his full time papers and they said, "Oh well they hadn't come." She said, "Well I'll have another half-timer." So she put me down for half timer. And that's how I went half time.' (30)

Some of the Colne Valley children who came from large families and whose fathers were lower paid, had had older brothers and sisters who went as half-timers. Others remembered children from poorer families going to work at 12. At this stage and in this area it seems certain that in contrast with some supporters of the system, in Yorkshire and in Lancashire, that half-time work and schooling was becoming less popular. One woman whose father left the home when she was quite young recalled that:

> 'One or two of the elder - boys and girls in the family - especially the boys - had gone half time. But by the time - my brothers next older than me went half time- but I think they themselves hadn't liked it. And they'd quite decided there was going to be no more half time in our family.'

As the woman had herself worked half time explained,

> 'There were these poorer families that had a few children and they hadn't a lot to go on with. But if me Dad had been all right we shouldn't have been as bad.' (31)

Despite the fact that so many had had first hand experience of the noise and dirt of mill life before they started earning, the first day's work could still come as a shock. Occasionally a young worker was lucky enough to be able to state her preference. One such, an only child whose mother was a weaver, remembered that her mother had asked the boss on her daughter's behalf:

> 'She told him, she says,"She doesnt like the machinery". When I was going through me mother's two looms I used to go like this. And she says, "You don't like weaving. You don't like the noise do you?" And I says, "No I don't." So she says, "Well I'll take you round to look at the warping.' (32)

An only child working in the same mill as her mother might be able to choose. Others just had to get used to the high noise level and stuffy atmosphere. A woman who began as a winder, as many young girls did, felt:

> 'It was a bit, shall I say, frustrating at first you know. You wondered what was happening. You see you were in the weaving shed and all the looms were clattering away you see. And all the noise till its a bit overpowering when you're so young.' (33)

Another girl, just arrived from a mining village at 16, vividly recalled her first day as a doffer at the Globe worsted:

> '..Oh I kept going to boss, "What time is it?""So and so." Oh I thought it were a damned long day. Good God. And I'd see him again, "What time is it?" "Art tha lost lass?" I says, " I must be." Anyway, when I got home me mother says, "How have you got on?""Don't ask me. My God, Don't ask me," I says. "I've asked about time about fifty times," I says. "That fellow will be thinking me a damn nut." So I got me tea, half on it, fell asleep, got in rocking chair and I - I were there at twelve o'clock at night, asleep in rocking chair. Mother, "Hey, come on lass, it's bedtime, twelve o'clock," "Ooh"I says, "My God is it?" ... a woman telled to me mother it were oil at made you sleep, smell o' t'oil and that... Oh my God.' (34)

Children's lives at this time, as ever, were marked by struggles between desires for independence from and conformity with an adult society. As a central feature, work and the adults associated with it, could become objects to be both desired and opposed. This process might begin at the earliest ages, with games and "plaguing" continuing into mill life until the young workers had themselves acquired the standing of adult workers. They could then play the adult's part in what Paul Thompson has described as "The War with Adults". (35) Understandably, examples of conformity are much less commonly recalled than those of "plaguing." (36) Plaguing in the streets in the years before work began can be seen as a response to controls imposed by adult society, playing tricks, banging gates, rattling windows, were all mentioned by the Colne Valley workers. This might continue, within the confines of the mill. Weavers might be plagued by little winders:

> 'telling them ... one thing and another and doing silly things at them. Going pinching their weft and one thing and another. Not winding for them.' (37)

Some, though not all, recalled playing and having fun in the mills, cutting each other's hair or playing with jecks and a ball if there was a chance to go to the toilets together:

> 'We used to have to go up the mill yard to the toilets and I remember when we got in there, we used to learn to dance ... we used to take twenty minutes. You did get a break you see, off your work - and we used to learn to dance in the toilets. And I know once we'd stopped over the time. And ... we had a woman boss, I remember now ...but she was very nice with us. I know she came and caught us - she came up and caught us dancing when we ought to have been down. Well, we were only children really, weren't we.' (38)

Apart from carrying on children's games within the mills, there was scope for various kinds of entertainment and "devilment" for some younger workers. In addition there were examples of "play" which related more to

group assertion and the establishing of seniority. Mild tricks such as being sent for rubber hammers and rubber oil cans or being egged on to call out nicknames after older workers were harmless enough, though humiliating to the youngest workers. There were, however, more dangerous practices, verging on the iniatory, as one man recalled:

> '... they used to put 'em in the wuzzers .. I'd been there a year or two... I was sick as a dog. What they did.. instead of turning it on they went and turned some steam on and it went too fast. Well you know it just flung me right up at side... eeh I was sick.' (39)

Imprisoning young boys in skeps on top of handcarts and pushing them down slopes in the mill was a potentially less dangerous form of "play". The accidents entered in the General Register of one mill provide evidence of "larking" with various consequences, thought few serious. Such incidents were, however, never so frequent nor so serious as those caused by machinery or working conditions. (40)

If games, "plaguing" and "larking" can be seen as both responses to and a part of a system of control, there were also more direct forms of reinforcement, both positive and negative in type. Several of the Colne Valley respondents remembered being given sweets or tips by weavers when they were little winders, as inducements to keeping them well supplied with weft:

> 'They'd bring some sweets and things you know. We used to work like billy-O then.'

> 'At Christmas time, they would have given us a few coppers perhaps threepence or something like that you know. Which wasn't bad at that time. If you'd a few weavers that you were winding for you might get five shillings or something like that, which was quite nice then.' (41)

Leniency and encouragement had their place in some mills. But

there was too, increasingly as workers grew older, an imposing system of employers' discipline and controls. Though some workers recalled no leniency while they were young workers, others drew contrasts between the type of control enforced at earlier and later periods in their working lives.(42) This might depend upon the size of the mill as well as the way in which the mill was run. One woman remembered being caught playing by the mill owner himself.

> 'Eeh he chased us one dinner time. We'd been playing you know and he didn't like you playing among the bales. Of course we were playing at hide and seek. And he came out and chased us... chased us all over and he says ... "you ought to have more wit. If I were your mother I'd jowg your head against sahdboard." We did nowt, Only laugh at him. He said, "You ought to have more wit." Just like that.' (43)

A sympathetic boss might be aware of ways of inculcating good time-keeping amongst young workers:

> '...it depended on the boss you got, Now I never grumbled at my boss at all ... And I remember too that I wasn't a very good time-keeper when I first started to work. And he came - for the first few weeks I didn't go in very early. And he came to me one morning and said, "Are you never going to come first thing?" So I had to start and be more punctual. But I never had anything wrong with him at all.' (44)

A more easy-going boss might be more typical in a mill which was less harshly disciplined in its running. The Marsden mill at which the young girl just quoted began work was remembered for its more easy regime:

> 'At Bruce's we were very very fortunate. There were of course there were rules. We had to get to work at a certain time and we weren't supposed to be off the premises until the buzzer had gone. The buzzer had to go before you could go off the premises. But when it was dark weather you know we used to slip out and buy some fish and chips and bring them back in.' (45)

Time-keeping was a major means of enforcing control. The sound of the buzzer was a generally ordered command. Reaching the mill gates

before they closed at or around six o'clock (46) was a daily personal goal. Again, mills might vary in the way the young worker learned punctuality. In some cases no distinction or leniency was involved. All, without discrimation felt the pressure of this imperative sound:

> 'At Bruce's you could get in and out at any time you see.. We used to walk out and go to the sweet shop if we had any coppers or something like that you see. But the gates weren't always fastened ... But at Company Mills it was something that people didn't like - you could be up to the gates - just as they were closing and you'd to go through the office and you got quarter of an hour knocked off your time.' (47)

The practice of shutting gates to exclude late-comers and the coupling of this with a virtual fine or penalty for lateness was a typical experience:

> 'Buzz used to go at quarter past six and if you were 20 yards outside that gate you were locked out and you had to go back till breakfast time.'

> 'When I started at John Ed's there's some gates and there's spikes on top and when that buzz blew in the morning ... they were shut. There used to be an office man wind them to and if you were late, above so many minutes you'd to go home for the day ... depending on the ... length of time you were late you'd to go home then till breakfast time and have another go to get in. Oh it - were like gaol. You couldn't get out you know, once you'd got in without a pass out check. And you'd to have a legitimate reason for getting out.'

> '... at Crowthers (Crimble) when we started at first we hadn't a check in. We just used to walk through mill gates you know. And then they used to close at a certain time. And I've seen us duck under and run to go through the office. Well you see there was somebody stood at the office window.'

> '... Robinsons we used to be locked out till breakfast time. And you know when you'd come a long way ... I'd two miles to walk before you start work, it takes you all your time to get there ... and however soon you set off, you know, you didn't always just hit it...'

'If that gate was shutting you couldn't get in ... you'd to wait while - you'd to go in dining room - sit in dining room while breakfast time.' (48)

The closing of gates was clearly established as a question of individual work discipline. One mill in Marsden allowed those travelling by tram or train to come through after the buzzer had gone. Those who lived in Marsden and who came late were not allowed in. (49)

Locking mill gates is vividly and bitterly remembered by retired mill workers. This was a highly individualised and rigidly enforced control which not only ensured the daily submission of each worker to an employer's power over labour, it also served to distance the worker from that labour. Thus not only were the gates closed, but a worker was prevented from working. The employer, by depriving himself of this labour, was serving up a reminder of a worker's dependency on employment and an employer's apparent freedom to employ or not. Such practices illustrate an employer's willingness to enforce work discipline at the expense of a worker's output.

The foregoing pages have illustrated the young worker's introduction to work discipline and the determining role of work controls in a community. However, the very existence of such controls, their persistence and repitition suggests that these should not be viewed simply as a set of imposed and accepted practices, but also as expectations of and responses to, resistance and opposition. In the pages which follow, some of these lines of resistance and conflict will be outlined. This will involve considering the differences which existed between groups of workers, the role of a hierarchy of power and command and the complex inter-twining of deference and antagonism which characterised workers' perceptions of mill owners, managers and bosses.

Oral evidence as to conflict and resistance requires careful evaluation and the recognition of a number of processes. None of those interviewed presented an account from which conflict was absent. Those most commonly described incidents related to questions of disputes with overlookers over the quality of work or material allocated and the consequent effects of this on earnings. Such conflicts were related in specific detail and had a variety of results. A worker might prove her point or be forced to leave her employment, or he or she might be put to different work in the same mill. The standard of material was crucial to the worker, weaver, spinner, warper or twister, because time wasted in fastening broken ends or having to watch for changes in quality usually meant less pay at the end of the week for those who were not on a standing wage. (50) Weavers were particularly vulnerable to such variations. The ways in which such conflicts were resolved depended on the practice within any mill, the value of the individual worker to that mill and the particular set of social relations of the workplace. Thus, some overlookers were only too ready to shed workers who were unpopular personally or whose output was considered too unreliable or whose skill could easily be replaced. Those labelled troublemakers for whatever reason might find opportunities for employment close by severely limited. Mill owners and mill managers supplied each other with information about worker's histories consequently, it was not unknown for a worker sacked at one mill to find the gates of another closed. (51) As one worker explained:

> '...they used to think you were very unlucky if you could get any down valley. Oh no, you had to look after your job. You had. And if you wanted anywhere you had to go a long way you know, Milnsbridge you know, getting on to Huddersfield before you could get on anywhere. Oh it wasn't easy then you see, you'd all those fares to pay.' (52)

Recalling a pattern of authority and ownership involves a variety of influences in an individual's life experience. What may appear to an outsider as obvious exploitation and oppression can through lived experience

in a community of work and domestic life appear quite differently to a participant. Moreover the participants themselves vary in terms of length of work experience, level of skill and length of employment at any particular mill. Thus, those men and women who had an unbroken lifetime of work, in particular weaving, tended to present a picture of work and skill relatively free from conflicts over earnings, material and changes in employment.(53)

There is too the question of the overlaying of an ideology of employers' position in the industry, sustained by the persistent liberal democratic traditions of the area and appearing as a counterweight to the opposing labour and radical life of the valley. Such an ideology while admitting certain levels of authoriarianism on the part of employers could, at the same time present these same figures in a benevolent and paternal light. The actual ideological content of such world views derived from the support which employers, the Crowthers, Firths, Robinsons, Mallinsons and others gave to such institutions as the local Liberal party, hospitals, schools, churches and chapels. It also followed from a more recent popular literature which, springing from the writings of local historians, developed the image of those families as recently risen from the ranks of those they employed by means of individual strength, thrift, and application.(54) Such a collection of images contributes to the ideology of employer benevolence which as the industry suffered defeats and contraction, can be portrayed as one amongst many victims of social and industrial change. Nevertheless, despite the overlaying effect of this idyll on some memories of textile life and employment, the oral evidence persistently yields examples of moments and periods of conflict and revelation. As a postscript to this brief discussion, Florence Lockwood's view, as an outsider, presents an opposite image, when she describes her future husband's appearance. He wore "a workman's blue smock and diamond ring."(55)

In their responses, most of the Colne Valley information showed an awareness of the fact that employers were quite intolerant of collective action in the years before the First World War. At this time, and later in some cases, few recognised the GUTW. Fear of an employers' ability to control access to mills and their ability to dismiss at the shortest notice meant that few people in the early years of the century had risked open membership. Even employers such as Crowthers at Marsden who were to accept a mill committee during the war years left an oppressive reputation in the minds of those they had employed. The practice of house - to - house collection of union dues persisted partly as a result of this. (56) There were those who had experienced direct conflict and challenge to employers' powers at a number of points in their working lives and who tended, consequently, to hold less conciliatory attitudes towards employers. This seems to be true of both men and women workers. One man had, for example, taken part in a strike of twisters-in as a young worker in 1913, though he never maintained continuous membership in the union subsequently. The twenty two young twisters-in brought out the 1500 workers at Bank Bottom in a strike for an extra halfpenny in 1912. For most of the six weeks the mill was not running normally, despite Crowthers' introduction of blacklegs. At only 14, he played a minor part in the strike and was not allowed to join the older boys' band, since his parents disapproved of their fund-raising in public houses:

> 'A party of them at the older end they formed a band
> They used to call them the Wessen pub and band and they
> used to go up and down like from pub to pub for meetings
> and collecting for expenses for them like you know.' (57)

The shifting pattern of employment which many young people followed in the industry tended to leave them with more experience of different types of employer and mill discipline. In particular the effect of "blind alley" jobs left many boys with frustrated ambitions or a less than committed involvement with particular mills and employers. As the young striker of

1912 put it in his interview:

> 'Well it was one of us ... just kicked up at finish like. One or two together see at older end like. You know they said other people were getting it you know.(the increase in pay)... And you see you couldn't - you were supposed to go weaving when you were 18 but they couldn't always put you in you see. It depended how work was you know.' (58)

Changing employment often involved some kind of conflict as a young worker found him or herself without prospects in one mill and was forced to seek employment elsewhere. One woman described her experience:

> 'We wanted a rise and there were about seven of us twisters and some weavers and we asked for a rise. And they only give you sixpence you know for a rise ... And we refused and we left ... we were satisfied to have a shilling but he wouldn't give it us.' (59)

Such conflicts helped to shape an experience of employers' interests and powers and provide explanations of incidents at later stages in working lives. However, it was not until the two strikes of the twenties and thirties that any large scale collective test of employers' strength was to be carried out. (60)

One other reason why the position and interests of employers may have been less clearly defined or identified was the hierarchy of managerial and supervisory positions which meant that ownership and control appeared to be separate in some mills, and were often separately experienced on a day-to-day basis. Many of those interviewed had seen and even spoken to the owners of the mills in which they worked, but this was mostly on a distant basis, as employers made daily tours of inspection. On the other hand, workers had only too close a contact with those who executed and interpreted employers' decisions and quite frequently it was these men, managers, overlookers, bosses who were recalled for their partiality, bad language and arbitrary rule. It was moreover incidents and practices of

an individual nature which only too frequently led to conflicts.

One obvious practice which was greatly resented by weavers was that of fining. The 1916 TUC had passed unanimously a resolution put by J.W. Ogden of the Amalgamated Weavers and seconded by Ben Turner, which called for legislation to "prevent deductions for any purpose or cause whatever from wages, bonus, commission or other earnings." Turner blamed bad material for the incidence of bad work and stressed in typical style:

> 'There is no logical or Christian justification for the fining system. Everybody is liable to make mistakes at one time or another, because there is no man without faults. The last perfact man was crucified 2,000 years ago, but until you find the perfect workman you cannot find the perfect piece.' (61)

Fines were bitterly resented, as was the lack of allowance for poor quality material. Some blamed the employers' extensive use of "Dewsbury wool". As one ex-spinner described it:

> 'I've seen there be 4 and 5 men and lads in one mulegate and they they couldn't keep the mule running ... we made more waste that ran onto the floor nor what we did yarn.'(62)

Again, experience might vary as to mill and worker. In a mill where various members of a family were employed or in which a more personal relationship was involved between bosses and workers, bad work might be shared out and a sympathetic view taken at pay day:

> 'Bad, good and indifferent was supposed to be shared out. And, if you'd had a bad week and you went into the office and said, "Oh I've had a bad week, I've had some shocking work in, I haven't been able to earn me wages. " Well they'd look down the books and see what you'd been earning and they would make your wage up to that.'(63)

Similarly, a weaver with some years' employment at one firm might be entitled to more consideration after a week of struggling:

> 'And if there was you see with these looms only being slow and only putting so many picks to the minute in - all those picks to an inch, you couldn't get a piece out in a week. And so they'd go to the designer, "Well Percy, I can't go home without any wage. Can I have so much ?" You see they'd probably say how much they'd done ... Mind you, you had to be an old worker to do that because some youngster would get some money and they wouldn't finish it out you see. Well, and they'd have to pay that twice for somebody else to weave you see ... you had to be you know, two years before you could sub.' (64)

Valued workers were in a stronger position. One woman remembered how she dealt with what she considered to have been more than a fair share of bad work:

> 'I went to that man and he said, "You must weave it." I says..."If you put me another in, I shall go for me cards." You see. And he knew I was - what they call a - you see there's different classes of weavers, always, even now. "I shall go for me cards." He didn't put me another in you know.' (65)

Many others were not so fortunate, just 'put up with' bad work and some weeks took no pay, or greatly reduced earnings home. Figures from an employers' wages book for the period 1905 to 1910 show the extent to which a weaver's or warper's wage could vary, week to week, in contrast with those, such as finishers and tuners who were on standing wages. Some weeks show wages well over the pound mark, at £1.5.9, £1.3.11, £1.2.9, for example. Between these figures are weeks when well below 15s is taken home and occasionally scarcely more than 10s. (66) Although warpers' and weavers' descriptions of their pay were invariably "we had what we earned", this was quite clearly not always the case. What in fact was measured was the inches of woven cloth or completed warp, rather than the hours of struggling with poor material, difficult patterns or badly prepared yarn. Not only was such time not remunerated, time spent waiting

for a warp or fore the twister-in was not paid for either:

> 'Oh you couldn't rely on same wages every week you know ... because you'd what you earned. And then when you'd downed - you'd finished a warp - you'd to wait of another twisted in.' (67)

Passing through various stages of scrutiny, a completed piece might not reach the point at which payment was calculated in time for pay day:

> 'And they wouldn't pay me money. We had to eat credit... I could have the money the week after but it was booked that that price had gone in the week after you see.' (68)

The separating out of such issues as fining and dealing with bad materials is and was a complicated matter. Fining was a matter of personal humiliation and loss:

> 'If you had anything wrong you had it taken off your wages.'

> 'If a weaver... if she didn't turn her work out right she had to pay for the mender to repair it you see. There ... was a standard rate for each piece, the quality you see, different qualities were different standards and that piece was exceptionally hard, difficult to put right - the menders were put on time and they used to - have to book how many hours it had taken them to do it and you see they .. got so much an hour extra for doing that piece ... The weaver didn't know (how much fine would be taken off) but the mender knew how much she would get you see because she knew the rate the hourly rate and she booked so many hours.'(69)

Perching the cloth to check for faults was a man's job, with the aid of a boy calling "hole" (70) If a finished piece was examined and found to have more than an acceptable number of faults then the weaver concerned was called down to the mending room and a fine was marked up. Too many fines would lead to a sacking. The process was a highly individualised and personal one which could set weaver against weaver and weavers against menders.

Struggling with badly spun weft could disturb other weavers and proving to the weaving overlooker that faults were caused by material rather than carelessness might not be easy. Allegations of favouritism by the 'putter up' who put the warps in the looms accompanied fears of bad work and fining. When asked if they had ever thought of complaining to the unions on issues of bad work, none had considered it. Occasionally a parent might offer help, even accompany a young weaver to the mill in support. Generally speaking, such issues were dealt with on an individual basis, both the complaints and the responses.(71) Apart from questions of varying materials, fines and individual error there were matters of general behaviour, authoritarianism, price fixing and management of the work place. It has already been suggested that the larger employers at least tended to be viewed at a distance and frequently escaped the less flattering comments since they were not involved in day-to-day issues of the work-place. Even employers who owned the most rigidly run and rule-bound mills could engender feelings of loyalty and maintain personalised relations with employees by the use of gifts, trips to Blackpool and commemorative acts of a variety of types.(72)

Responses to questions of poor materials and old machinery might be personally and individually dealt with, favouritism might be feared or suspected, however, the oral evidence suggests that responses to those directly involved in giving orders relating to standards of pay and conditions of work were of a more collective nature. Here at least there were occasions when the union might be called upon to help or when a group of workers might take matters into their own hands. In July 1915, a group of menders walked out of a Marsden mill in protest against their foreman's behaviour. Bad language, changes to price lists and "undue piling of pieces" had brought matters to a head.(73) At a more strongly organised place, things were more quickly resolved, as one woman remembered at her first weaving job at Newsome in Huddersfield:

'Now at Taylor and Littlewoods they was all union people. Now then if the lights - if they was late putting on the light, it were getting dark and you couldn't see, they just used to put their coat on and (the boss came) like lightning down to see about lights being put on. But they said, "It's too late we've got us coat on." And you know, next night they were on in good time you know.' (74)

At Colne Valley mills workers recalled less formal responses to unpopular acts and individuals, though one woman recalled a twisting overlooker who was sacked for having favourites. Younger workers might feel prevented from taking their opposition much further than expressions of hate and dislike, particularly was this the case for an overlooker at a worsted spinning mill who was renowned for throwing bobbins at workers he found sitting down. Any boss who became too oppressive could be certain of engendering some form of solidarity:

'... he had you on your toes all the time and if he was seen at the doorway there used to be just a tiny bit of a whistle went round and we knew he was coming.'

Another boss was reduced to spying through the keyhole to check on his workers on their twisting frames to make sure they were all at work until the end of the day. (75)

Apart from experience of authority, working together in one room in one process could engender friendships and solidarities. Betty Messenger's collection of industrial lore from the north of Ireland's linen mills and factories illustrates the strength and range of feelings which could exist. (76) The Amoskeag workers also show this side to industrial life. The Colne Valley workers, particularly the women, stressed the friendships, singing and good times:

'You helped one another and I think that's main really when you're working in mill. Help one another. It helps you a lot everyway.'

'In the mill you know - ooh you're friendly with everyone. You don't fall out with folks.'

'Well we liked it very much. But I mean people that had never seen a mill they would'nt hear tell of it. But I mean we had to do it and ... I'd rather go weaving than spinning. You know I'd much rather be in the weaving than the spinning because they seemed more a friendly lot you see. If they'd any mullocks or any accidents they'd help each other you see.' (77)

There were various ways of celebrating solidarities within the mill, apart from singing, support against some more unpleasant overlookers and help with production problems at times, there were also more ritualised activities. Marriage presented an opportunity for joint activity. At one Marsden mill it was customary to hang a chamber pot on a loom with a ribbon, "until everybody knew it were them". At the same mill, one of the few to have a kitchen, there might be a "wedding breakfast" of ham and eggs cooked for the couple. (78)

Friendships in the mill could last a lifetime and were not always confined to working hours. Particularly in the war years when women might be more likely to support each other in the absence of husbands and fiances:

'With me Dad being at war and that they used to take their own enjoyment.. when they'd been working about a month one of them would say, "Oh let's have tea at our house on Saturday"... and ... we would all try and take a bit of something you know, to help out you see with it being war time. And that were how we used to get our pleasure... An we used to fore-gather at people's houses and they were very interesting these people. You know, they spoke very broad and they could tell very amusing things about things that had happened to them you know.' (79)

Christmas and birthdays too provided opportunities for festivities in and out of the mill and for strengthening and sustaining friendships in work.

Within a woollen mill there was usually the complete set of processes from raw fibres to finished product. Some observers have pointed to this as a source of differentiation and divisiveness amongst workers and in particular the existence of an actively maintained status hierarchy has been detailed.(80) Florence Lockwood's description of homegoing workers provides a typical picture:

> 'The row of women menders, arm in arm, with scissors hanging on strings from their belts, wear neat black skirts, and boots instead of clogs. The girl with gold-rimmed spectacles, wearing a tam o' shanter and long waterproof and carrying a cloth bag, is the typist in the office.' (81)

One of the Essex interviewees was a Keighley woollen manufacturer who was asked about differences in social classes in the period before 1918:

> 'I can tell you the classification - which was the biggest one of all - of our work people. Spinners the lowest grade. Twisters the next grade. Minders probably the next grade. Weavers the next grade. And menders the top grade. They were very rigid, and I remember once we were going away on a trip, you see. An they came up to me and they said, "Mr. Frank, there's been a great mistake." I said, "What in the world?" "There's some spinners in our coach. In our bus."' (82)

Certainly it was true to say that groups of workers did perceive differences between them in terms of work carried out in the mill. The differences were obvious, some jobs were cleaner and better paid and required less physical involvement. Consequently workers' appearances and dress could vary, this was particularly true for those who found that black Italian Cloth overalls and clogs were more convenient than a white apron and shoes. However, there were too the distinctions based upon age and sex which linked with broader social configurations, these were not generated by mill workers themselves. It was these differences which employers maintained and exploited in the organisation of the work process.

Asked questions about social class, the Colne Valley workers described textile workers in non-differentiated terms. Over and over again, it was stressed that mill workers were "just working people", "everybody helped everybody else and everybody worked in the mill", "they're not looked down on, the mill workers in Marsden. There's no class distinction, not in the Colne valley there isn't".

The one occupational group amongst women workers which was accorded high standing was the menders, "They were the aristocrats of the mill then - menders", "the warpers could earn a lot more money than us and then the menders could earn more than the warpers", "they always used to think that menders were kind of better.. it seems as though they were a bit higher in the social scale." (84) Such perceptions were based on the realities of higher earnings, better working conditions and a postion of some responsibility for the finished or almost finished piece of cloth. Moreover, mending jobs, in proportion to other jobs in mills were fewer and open only to workers with experience in the mill or with family connections in the mending room. If workers perceived these distinctions it was because of the very real advantages which mending presented as an occupation. For a woman, mending could present the ideal job:

> 'It's the best paid job in the West Riding is mending. They even have it in their homes... Some that have a spare bedroom would have it up in the bedroom you see, and they could just go and do a bit when they wanted.'

> '..they were menders for life... you see they used to have mending at home. Oh yes, they used to have the pieces brought in.' (86)

The practice of fining also had its distancing effect in terms of relating mending to other occupations in the mill. Money taken as fines from weavers' wages, was, in some mills, paid to menders as a bonus:

'But they got that little bit extra - it came out of firm then you see - to pay menders ... Before they had us up. Well - when they had had us up like to look at piece - they'd tell us. But before they took it off you see they'd paid menders for doing it.

So it would mean that the menders might want you to be fined?

Yes, they did, many a time.

So it doesn't help you to sort of get on with them does it?

No, they used to look down on us sometimes.

The menders used to think they were it, you know.

If a weaver - if she didn't turn her work out right she had to pay for the mender to repair it you see - and it was taken out of her wage.' (87)

However, workers perceived each other and employer interpreted workers' actions. It would be wrong to assume that such distinctions had priority in ordering social and power relations in a mill. For one thing, such distinctions were never so fixed nor so finite as those which existed between owner and employee. Weavers in particular were keen to point out the positivie advantages of a more active and lively type of employment and the fact that the skill of the most experienced weaver matched any other skilled occupation.

There were other factors which helped to defuse and cut across occupational status groupings. Those interviewed in Colne valley had sisters, aunts, cousins, neighbours and friends in a variety of departments in mills. Sisters were employed in different mills and in different departments in the same mills. Two women, themselves weavers, had older sisters who were menders. Another woman had a sister who was a warper, another woman warped while her mother wove. In addition, as the following pages will show, few workers experienced less than two working situations or occupations. All girls began invariably as winders, boys began as twisters-in, in woollen mills. This movement between occupations and mills and the familiarity with a variety of occupations and conditions of employment tended to

counteract exclusivist tendencies. Furthermore, there were the externally derived changes of war, trade depression and employers' fortunes which could and did alter opportunities and security, preventing any long-term consolidation of advantage or superiority.(88)

The previous pages have set out to show the points of conflict and solidarity of a daily and more permanent nature which existed in mills in Colne Valley during this period. The pressures towards association and individuality varied in time during a workers' workspan, in occupation and in mills. Such pressures presented uneven opportunities for the emergence of collective responses. Each day's work with its pattern of production and power relations constituted a lived experience of established labour-capital relations. The mobility of workers within and into this system provides an added dimension of analysis and experience. It has already been pointed out that changes of mill and occupation were a characteristic of this industry, particularly amongst certain age groups and jobs. Job changes might tend to counteract any loyalty to employer or enterprise, while at the same time tending to be used by the unscrupulous employer to shed himself of troublemakers of various types. Of the twenty one informants, only four had not changed their place of work while they were employed as textile workers. The rest had, particularly as young workers, but continuing into later life in some cases, made numerous changes, with and without the help of neighbours, friends and relatives. Changes were made to gain experience, better pay, to escape unpleasant overlookers, because parents made a decision or simply because of lack of advancement in a particular mill.

There was too another aspect to mobility, that of workers brought into the industry or who had migrated to it. While many families could trace textile workers back through generations,(89) others were more recent arrivals to the district. Some had come with railway, canal or waterworks construction, others had specifically sought textile employment.

Amongst those interviewed, the parents' generation showed a variety of origins. One woman's father and uncle had come from Bristol to work on Marsden Railway Tunnel.(90) Finding work in the mills, her father became a teazer and feeder in a Marsden woollen mill. The father of another woman had come from Gloucestershire with three brothers to work in Slaithwaite mills. Work as a domestic servant had brought another woman from Suffolk to the Huddersfield area. As well as those seeking work there were those whose employment brought them to these valley regions. A man from Lincolnshire who 'used to follow waterworks all round the country', as his tenth child described it, came to Marsden,

> '.. when we were getting ready for working you see. When we were getting ready to go into the mills and it was a place where there was plenty of work at that time. And so that's how we came to be in Marsden.' (91)

Apart from parents it was not uncommon for young workers to make their own way or be sent to Colne Valley to find work. One of the Essex interviewees had started her working life in her home town of Rotherham in a sweet factory. When she was 15 she was sent through an agency with five other girls to work in a Marsden mill. However, although they liked the mill, they stayed only a week because of the "terrible lodgings" they were given.(92) Others were luckier, stayed longer, eventually settling down in the area and making their own homes there. One woman who with her six sisters came from Barnsley to work in a valley cotton mill described how:

> '..We followed one another when we were thirteen... The first two that came, me two oldest sisters, they came as servants... and then as they got to know people they got into mills ... As we left school one got the other over. I had another sister came, Emma they called her, that were three and then I'd another sister called Maggie ... she came 13 years old, than I came at 13 and then I've a younger sister than me ... she came over. I got her over. We've all got the other over in lodgings.' (93)

Miners' daughters might lodge and eventually marry, either in Colne Valley or back in the pit village. However, some families of girls were responsible for the entire families removal. One girl whose parents found her the customary 'place' at 13 as a nurse girl in Leeds, stayed only a month and then went to Slaithwaite with a mining family who had already found work at the Globe worsted. She lodged with them until at 17 she took a house and brought over the other members of the family, her father joining them subsequently and finding work as a labourer in local mills and on farms. (94) Yet another girl came from service to Elland at first where her four younger sisters were supporting the rest of the family. They had been pressed to leave Castleford:

> 'You see the girls were old anough to go to work and they did'nt want to go to service. So they were seeking girls for working in mills then and somebody had been to see if they would go and work in this mill at Elland.'
>
> 'Then... there was a man came for Slaithwaite to see with there being such a lot of girls you know. They used to seek families up that had a lot of girls, to go and work in the mills... if they heard tell of anybody that had a family of girls they used to go and seek them up and get them to go and work in the mill.' (95)

Girls brought over from the nearby mining districts sometimes found a contrast with the villages they had left. Despite the fact that people seemed better off in Colne Valley than in the mining areas, leaving home meant hardships for 13 and 14 year old girls:

> 'They'd all to come away at that time you know. There were no work for them in Barnsley. I've often thought, I used to think, Oh for years I have, when I see them going home on these buses and such I wish we could have done same and gone home and given us mothers us wage.. It took me a while to settle. I missed open air. I didn't think at first that I should be able to stop it with being out in country you know, living in country, going into Spinning Company.' (97)

Occasionally a non-textile background meant that the type of action taken by a worker and the type of support given by a family contrasted with local practice. Some workers found textile mill discipline harder to take and parents might be prepared to take unusual steps. One woman whose mother had come as a servant from Bungay in Suffolk remembered being encouraged to stay at home while her boyfriend had two weeks' leave during the war. She was inevitably sent her cards. However, her mother was not prepared to leave things at that, she went to see the manager:

> 'She says "Now I've only come to see if Mabel's been doing her work properly". He says "Yes we've no complaints with her work whatsoever, No complaints whatsoever, But" he said "we couldn't do with this time off, being during the war and we was busy" . ... she says "I'm very pleased that I've been, I only wanted to see that if Mabel was doing her work right." He says "Now would you like her to come back?" She says, "On no account, no. Oh on no account do I want her to come back."' (98)

Another girl, small for her age, escaped from the mill after walking out on some bad work, by running through the managers' legs. Later when she too was sent her wage, she recalled that her father, an ex-miner, had stood up for her:

> 'Me Dad says,"She's only stuck up for her rights. And I should have done same. She takes after me ... she's done right."' (99)

These actions and responses to what was considered unfairness by management were in no sense untypical in that local workers did on occasion take some form of action themselves if this was felt to be the only alternative. However, there would not seem to be grounds for supposing that those brought in were any less prepared to stike at what they considered right and just. This was no closed community of radical traditions but one which took 'comers in' who quickly learned textile ways and practices proper to working lives.

Conflicts over wages, bad conditions of employment, the daily experience of work discipline and the solidarities engendered by working life in the industry's mills sustained an awareness of labour's position and opportunities. In the chapter which follows, these common experiences serve as a basis for the analysis of the close interdependence of home and work and the implications of this for woman in the industry and their trade union membership. The ways in which young people were introduced to a life of work in wool textiles and the ways in which such a working life was continued and lived should be an integral part of what will later be an examination of the course of trade union organisation and industrial relations before and during the war. The nature of labour as a factor of production thus acquires a reality and a quality which is essential to its complete understanding, and which tends to be obscured in most documentary sources.

Notes

1. See Introduction where the use of oral evidence is discussed. Summarised biographical details of the twenty one interviewees appear in Appendix 8 together with the interview schedule in Appendix 9. The interviews were carried out during two visits to the Colne Valley in July 1975 and March 1976. Initial contacts were made following replies to a letter placed in Huddersfield and Colne Valley newspapers. Following this, visits to a pensioners' club in Marsden, introductions arranged by local health visitors and appointments with individuals in sheltered accommodation for the elderly led to interviews with men and women who had worked in the industry before 1920.

2. See Ch. 1 where variations between districts in terms of wool products and industrial structure are dscussed.

3. See Ch. 2.

4. The project 'Family Life and Work Experience before 1918' carried out by Paul Thompson and Thea Vigne, provided twenty-three examples from the taped interviews deposited at the University of Essex. These comprised millworkers in the main from Keighley and Bradford.

5. The pull of work and the push of family necessity will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

6. See discussion on pp.112+ff below.

7. Interview 17. Servants in this and surrounding textile areas came from the mining village and towns in and around Barnsley, Castleford, Doncaster and Normanton.

8. The question of alternatives and family pressure will be discussed in the following chapter.

9. Admissions register held at Slaithwaite Nields School. Thirty four children over the entire period 1896 - 1915 went to higher grade school, grammar school and technical school. Each year about 70 children left the school.

10. See Ch. 9 Mary Luty the GUTW's first Huddersfield woman organiser experienced this type of existence over the top in Rawtenstall, Lancashire.

11. West Slaithwaite National School Log Book. Other references to hay-making occur in Slaithwaite Board School Log Book, July, 1899, Slaithwaite Nields School, July, 1904; West Slaithwaite National School, July, 1899, July 1900, July, 1909.

12. Quarrying was an important industry in this and surrounding valleys during the C18 and C19 with particular areas providing noted qualities of stone. Millstone grit in particular was quarried and exported to many parts of the world for dock and harbour construction. Railways, mills, warehouses, banks and museums were constructed from West Riding

rock. Ellan Edge Flagrock was in particular demand for wall Stones, paving, kerbstones, setts and roofing slates. See Hartley & Ingilby (1976) op.cit., Ch. 6 'Paved with Gold'; Arthur Raistrick; West Riding of Yorkshire, (1970) and Raphael Samuel (ed), Miners, Quarrymen and Saltworkers, (1977).

13. Interview 10.

14. According to Arthur Raistrick the typical arrangements in the pre-factory period of the C18 was for land to be settled as 'intake' from the moors above the villages and townships. This was in parcels of between half an acre and an acre in size, providing milk, cheese and eggs and with pasture land for livestock. The men wove, while the women spun and managed the animals. Such smallholdings had to be near enough for weavers to be able to carry pieces to the fulling mill and finishers. Such farmsteads usually included a pony or donkey to help with transporting the cloth and goods for market. As the domestic system came to be replaced gradually by factory employment during the nineteenth century, cottages came to be built nearer to the early factories. At higher levels in the valleys, farming continued as a joint or in some cases a dominating occupation. See Raistrick (1970) op.cit.

15. This area will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter when the importance of becoming a worker and the ways in which family relationships were used to aid entry into work and afterwards in work, will be detailed.

16. Elizabeth Roberts: 'Learning and Living - Socialisation outside School' in Oral History, Vol. 3., No. 2.

17. Interview 16.

18. Interviews 17, 9, 11, 17.

19. Slaithwaite Nields Log Book

20. Interviews 20, 11. It is interesting to note in connection with this that children at school in 1901 were told how to help their parents complete the Census. (Linthwaite School Board Minutes, 15 March, 1901; Marsden Church of England School Log Book contains the same reference).

21. Paul de Rousiers, The Labour Question in Britain, English translation (1893).

22. See Dave Marson, Children's Strikes in 1911, History Workshop pamphlet No. 9, (1973); B. Edwards, The Burston School Strike, (1974) describes a more successful movement.

23. West Riding Education Committee minutes for June 27th, 1911.

24. Marsden Church of England School Log Book, entry for 23.1.12.

25. Additional interview material from Colne Valley. Mr. B., B. 1900, Father pattern weaver and part-time shorthand teacher, died when Mr. B. aged 7; Mother ran a Cafe; half-time at 13 because of lack of attendances - piecening; weaving at 17 because of war; later worked for Gas Company.

26. West Slaithwaite School log book, entry for 23.1.12; Slaithwaite Nields School log book, entries for 23.1.12 and 24.1.12.

27. See the following chapter for a discussion of this point.

28. Interview 13.

29. Cd. 4887.

30. Interview 3.

31. Interview 11. This and other oral evidence from the Essex interviews, contrasts strongly with the more accepting impressions assembled by Hartley & Ingilby (1976) op. cit., in their chapter "Half Timers". The contrasting interpretations emerge from differing perspectives. To say that "no one has grumbled" while at the same time describing the half-time system as "undesirable" (p.39) implies a gap in analysis revealed by more systematic questioning of the type adopted in the Essex survey and with the Colne Valley informants.

One of the Essex interviewees (H. 149) describes taking part in a strike of little half time doffers for a threepence rise. Others pointed out that between 12 and 16 there was nothing but rough and unskilled work for young people in mills. It was a question of waiting for the opportunity for more skilled work. This was open to only limited numbers of boys and girls. While the Essex interviews suggest the inevitability of half-time and the desire of younger children to become workers, they need also, as do the comments in Hartley & Ingilby, be placed in the particular context of different types of production. Thus, whereas in Colne Valley and Huddersfield half-time was becoming less popular and less common, in Bradford, Keighley and Halifax where many of the Essex and Hartley and Ingilby Interviews derive, this was not the case. (This point is discussed in Ch.1, note 26.)

The result is that half-time was seen as unavoidable and accepted in such towns. One boy who stayed on to go to Technical School eventually even recalls envying those who had already started work:

> '.. you noticed it very - very much those children when you went to school. And the boys sat next to you had a - had a belt on with a number of a licence for taking papers out. And besides that ... he'd have - a smock to denote that he was going in the afternoon, to work in the mill ... we noticed the difference but we were oblivious of the fundamental difference because some of us - we envied them going out to work.' (172)

What the Committee on Partial Exemption (Cd 4887) discovered was that half-time employment for 12 year olds became developed as a pattern within specific areas. The result was that half-timers were found in a number of industries and occupations, working for hairdressers, an undertaker, a confectioner, a fruiterer, a hosier, a Christmas card maker, as a dressmaker, a domestic servant, and a nurse as well as in textile mills. (Appendix II, Carlton Street Boys' School and Girls' Schools, Bradford). Under such conditions, half-time work was much more likely to be recalled as the normal and desirable

state of affairs and predominantly without criticism.

32. Interview 16.

33. Interview 2.

34. Interview 7. Betty Messenger, Picking up the Linen Threads: A Study in Industrial Folklore (1975) refers to a fever which it was alleged was common amongst beginners in linen mills in the North of Ireland. Lasting only a few days, it was thought to be due to the warm humid atmosphere of the spinning room.

35. Paul Thompson: "The War With Adults", Oral History, Vol 3, No 2.

36. Messenger (1975) op.cit., cites an interesting example of conformity from a street game amongst doffers:

> 'We played in the streets after work to let all the people know what we were in the spinnin' room. We used to get the wee ones that wasn't workin' at all and get them to doff their shares at the window ... we used to say, 'You doff there, and you doff there'. And then I had a wee whistle and all. So you were doffin' mistress then and you were only twelve or thirteen.' (p.204)

37. Interview 18.

38. Interview 17.

39. The wuzzer, a form of large spin-dryer, was used in the scouring department to extract water from treated wool fibres. Interview 22. Messenger (1975) cites several examples of quite elaborate initiatory practices, some explicitly sexual.

40. Accidents recorded in the Globe Worsted's Register included broken bones, acid burns to eyes, crushed fingers and hands, wrenched arms; several of the Colne Valley women displayed damaged finger ends and even missing joints to fingers.

41. Interviews 20 and 2.

42. Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach contrast the testimony of workers employed before and during a company's decline. At earlier stages workers recalled a more relaxed work ethic - during the depression years, a more ruthless and open exploitation was evident, see their, Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-city in New England, 1979.

43. Interview 18.

44. Interview 1.

45. Interview 1.

46. This was a starting time for most mills in the pre-war and war-time years. Other mills might vary this slightly. After the war a later start of seven o'clock was introduced.

47. Interview 17. Company Mill was part of the Crowthers of Marsden

establishment.

48. Interview 12 and 16. "John Ed" was John Edward Crowther, the youngest son of John Crowther of Golcar. Trained in the mills by his older brother, Joseph, whose partner he became, he took over control of the Marsden Mills in 1901 when the partnership ended. He was noted for the strict and personal control of this large company. In 1931, following the death of his wife and the closure of New Mills in Marsden during the worst of the depression he shot himself. Interview 10 and 3.

49. Interview 18.

50. See chapter 1 for a discussion of weavers' pay.

51. During early 1915 the Colne Valley District of the GUTW was engaged in an agitation to draw attention to the fact that employers were "refusing the right to change situations". The effect of this was to drive young single men into army recruiting offices it was alleged. (C.V.D. minutes, 31.12.14, 29.1.15, 24.2.15).

52. Interview 19.

53. This is also an impression which comes over from the Amoskeag and linen workers. See Hareven and Langenbach (1979) and Messenger (1975).

54. The works of Phyllis Bentley are the most obvious example of a popular literature which has quite clearly helped shape the self images and social structural perceptions of at least two generations in this area. In addition, Thomas Armstrong's, The Crowthers of Bankdam (1940) was even more deeply infused into the local popular culture when it was filmed, as "The Master of Bankdam" in Marsden itself. The impact of such a story placed in a small town where the main employers, the Crowthers, operated from a mill called Bank Bottom, can hardly be ignored. There is too, a tradition in the area's local history which seems to require the portrayal of employers as more than simply well-disposed towards their workforce. See for example the following description of Joseph Crowther, elder brother to John Edward:

> 'Elderly people in the Colne Valley today, recollect Joseph Crowther for his kindly countenance rather than his astuteness, and add that not only did he install the finest machines for his operatives but he also built them homes. Nor is there any stain on the firm's history in the exploitation of young children. Rather, new entrants were welcomed and carefully trained, for even in those early days, Joseph Crowther recognised the value of a happy labour force.'
>
> John Crowther & Sons (Milnsbridge) Ltd. A History, Huddersfield Chamber of Commerce Journal, 44-45, 1962-63, p.19.

The radical local historian D.F.E. Sykes played his part with a description of another Marsden manufacturer, J.B. Robinson:

> 'Though he loved punctuality for himself and others, he was a very amiable and considerate employer, and

> if any workpeople turned up late in the morning he would chaff them good humouredly as to where they had been overnight, call them into the office, and get them to sit down for a while, telling them it was not good for their health to hurry unduly to their work.'
>
> D.F.E. Sykes, The History of the Colne Valley, Slaithwaite, 1906, p.404.

55. Mrs. Josiah Lockwood, An Ordinary Life (1932) p.88; see also chapter 9, note 1

56. This point is taken up in more detail in the following chapter.

57. The official account differs slightly from that recalled by the informant. Whereas he states quite definitely that they decided on action to obtain an increase of ½d in order to bring them in line with other mills, the official account states that the strike took place as a 'refusal to perform additional work without extra pay'. Report on Strikes and Lockouts in 1913, Cd 7658 (1914); Interview 12. This strike was typical of a number of strikes which took place in cotton and coal at this time amongst young men approaching adult status.

58. Interview 12.

59. Interview 3.

60. The same man who took part in the 1913 strike contributed an anecdote from the 1930 strike. A proposal by employers for a wage reduction in October 1929 was put to a ballot of union members. The proposal was rejected and the Minister of Labour appointed the Rt. Hon. H.P. MacMillan to head a court of inquiry. The inquiry found for the employers who proceeded to announce reductions. The result was a strike which lasted four months and ended in a defeat for the workers. During this time a prominent mill owning family built an extension to the congregational chapel in Marsden. The coincidence with the "MacMillan" strike led to the chapel being called the "MacMillan Chapel" by Marsden people. "They said he'd built up you know to profit like with not giving wages", (Interview 12; "The Woollen and Worsted Industry, The Wages Structure", manuscript document held at Employers' Association, Toller Lane, Bradford).

61. Annual Report of TUC, 1916, pp.375-6.

62. Interview 6.

63. Interview 16.

64. Interview 19.

65. Interview 17.

66. W.E. Crowther, Crimble Mills, Wages books, July 1905 - August 1910, collection in Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

67. Interview 5; see discussion in chapter 1.

68. Interview 17.

69. Interviews 19 and 11.

70. Additional interview material from Colne Valley.

71. An extreme example of an individual response to a question of poor machinery was recalled by a woollen spinner who made certain of improving on his mules by first spinning badly and then smashing up his old mules with a sledge hammer. (Interview 6)

72. Gifts and treats mentioned by employers included trips to Blackpool usually to celebrate weddings in an employer's family, gold sovereigns for any returning voluntary recruits during the First World War, a free trip to the Wembley Exhibition held in 1924, with train fare and meal included.

73. Colne Valley District minutes, 31.7.15. The firm made no moves to solve the issues and the menders were advised to stay out to ensure a "satisfactory settlement".

74. Interview 19.

75. Interviews 17 and 3.

76. Messenger (1975) op.cit.; Hareven and Langenbach (1979) op.cit.

77. Interviews 18, 17 and 10.

78. Interviews 13 and 4. Again Messenger (1975) has many examples from country mills and factories in the North of Ireland of wedding celebrations and rituals relating to the seasons and religious and political anniversaries.

79. Interview 16.

80. Messenger's (1975) informants were apparently as keen to stress the solidarities amongst spinners in mills and weavers in factories as they were to impress on her the distinctions between these two workplaces.

81. Lockwood (1932) op.cit., p.98.

82. Essex interview H.282.

83. Interviews 15, 16 and 17.

84. Interviews 4, 17 and 2.

85. Finish menders dealing with the cloth at its ultimate stage of production were the highest paid of all menders.

86. Interviews 16 and 13.

87. Interviews 18, 1 and 11.

88. The foregoing discussion requires more extensive analysis than is possible here. There were undoubtedly some occupations, feeding, rag sorting and others which were less popular and which might

employ only the poorest members of the community. The role of family ties in securing entry to employment which was either skilled or limited in some way to those with expertise or acceptable (to employers) manners and appearance, requires further examination. Mary Higgs, in her Glimpses into the Abyss (1906) emphasises the importance of appearance and cleanliness to women at this time in establishing access to more pleasant types of employment. An early attempt to quantify boys' tendencies to enter fathers' trades is, S.J. Chapman and W. Abbott, "The Tendency of Children to Enter Their Fathers' Trades", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, LXXVI, 1912-13. See also Ellis Thorpe, op.cit., though this relates to boys again and to a highly restricted occupation.

It is quite possible that within the working class, millworkers constituted a group whose range of incomes, though extensive in Colne Valley, did not encompass the entire local range of earnings of heads of families. As one woman weaver explained, millworkers:

> 'weren't what you might call right poor. They'd be middle group likely - but not middle class, not what you'd call middle class ... I never saw any really poor people, not round us. There was some went to school you know. But I mean they didn't live roundabout us. You could see them at school.'
>
> (Interview 15)

89. See Hartley and Ingilby (1976) op.cit., "Recollections of the Domestic System", chapter 1. Ben Turner's grandfathers had both been cloth weavers, Allen Gee's parents had been handloom weavers.

90. In addition to the Huddersfield and Ashton Canal Tunnel opened in 1811, four railway tunnels were driven through from Marsden in the nineteenth century. The first was opened in 1848, while the third, a double tunnel, was finished in 1894. See Lewis Buckley Whitehead, Bygone Marsden (1942).

91. Interview 1: Many reservoirs were constructed in the late nineteenth century. Five main reservoirs for domestic use had been begun in the years between 1870 and 1891. In addition there were 18 service reservoirs at lower points, filter beds constructed between 1899 and 1900, canal feeders and separate supplies of water for mills in the valley. See Whitehead (1942) op.cit; and T.W. Woodhead, History of the Huddersfield Water Supplies (1939).

92. Essex interview 273.

93. Interview 21.

94. Interview 7.

95. Interview 14.

96. At the time of the interview (1976) it had been the practice for several years to bus women out of the neighbouring mining areas on a daily basis, to work in some Colne Valley mills.

97. Interview 21.

98. Interview 10.

99. Interview 7.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOME, WORK AND TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

The inter-connections between home and work will be considered in this chapter. The way in which the claims of the domestic economy encroach on women's industrial role help to define women's marginality and dependency in production outside the home. This will be shown to have implications not only for women's involvement in trade unions, but also for the ways in which a union segregates the struggle for women's political rights from issues raised by women's position in industrial production.(1) Thus, home and work will be shown to be closely interlinked, but, as far as women are concerned, in a way which contributes to inequalities. By taking home and work as interdependent the implications of a home centered definition of women's role can be more fully realised. As a part of this interdependency, a trade union can be seen as both a product and as an agent in establishing women's position. This necessarily involves a new approach to writing and understanding trade union history. Again, in this chapter, oral evidence plays an important part providing new insights and validations as well as enabling a broader interpretation of what is relevant for consideration.

A conventional approach to trade union history tends to rely on minute books and written documents which survive the years of official and less official 'weeding'. The result is an organisation-based history mapped out in terms of resolutions, decisions and official actions. What such an approach lacks is any interpretation of the union as a set of social relations and as party to particular types of definition of crucial determinants of power in, for example, family and domestic life. By concentrating analysis at the point of

production, other important social and economic factors are left out of play. Thus both in terms of types of evidence and focus for analysis, trade union history has neglected the interdependence of home and work. This has had important implications for the explanation of men's and women's roles and relationships at home, at work and as trade union members.

What is here termed as the conventional approach to trade union history has been given theoretical foundations in a wide range of studies, emphasising the separation of home and work in physical terms. In particular the development of a nuclear family structure and the throwing into competition of individuals who previously, it is argued, worked in some form of productive unity within the family has been argued to be a necessary feature of the process of industrialisation.(2) Following from this the family is shown as having moved from the economic sector to the social sector as it becomes an instrument for consumption rather than production. Recently the notion of an isolated nuclear family emerging during the process of industrialisation has been under criticism.(3) Other writers have stressed the role of the family in the political economy of capitalism.(4) However, some aspects of the general theory of separation of home and work persist. One example is the argument that the working woman in industry is liberated through the separation of home and work. This position is developed in most detail by Stearns, who sees the young woman factory worker at the turn of the century as mistress of her own life due to her earnings. He draws a vivid contrast between the independence of the young working woman and her depressed and enslaved married sister. A similar argument, though relating to a period some hundred years earlier, is developed by Shorter. Here the contrast is drawn between women's chastity in pre-industrial France and England and a sexual

freedom which accompanied economic independence presented by the market forces of industrialising societies.(5) What both Stearns and Shorter ignore are the close ties which remain between family and work. The survival of the family economy through the activities of its wage-earning members necessitates an inter-relating with production outside the home, despite physical separation. Women, while they continue to be defined in terms of domestic role have any freedom, sexual or economic, consistently qualified by the demands of the family economy and domestic role. The effects of a marginalisation which follows from dependency means that wage-earning is not a matter of individual freedom, but is circumscribed by the social and political relationships of the family economy.(6)

The conventional trade union approach and the stress placed on the physical separation of home and work are part of a tradition which draws attention away from the inter-relationships of the work situation and the domestic economy. An analysis which sees home simply in terms of reproduction, socialisation and consumption neglects the surviving yet changed economic relationships which family members must play within the capitalist mode of production. To say that capitalism needs the family is not the simple story of the exploitation of its members. It is also the story of how those members learn to survive and support one another within the constraints of the wage labour - capital relationship.

Analysis of the oral evidence suggests three points at which home and work seem to be in close articulation. These are, firstly, the transition from home to work, secondly, the destiny of the wage and thirdly, training in work. Bearing these points in mind, the final section of the chapter will consider trade union membership

and how this was acquired, conceived and operated.

In the transition from school to work, consideration of the home situation over-rode other factors. In the preceding chapter, the effects of a strongly work-oriented environment on young workers' perceptions were outlined. In common with boys and girls from working class homes at this time, the children in Colne Valley left school at the earliest possible opportunity on attaining Standard VII at their thirteenth birthday. Most went straight to work in the mill:

> 'My idea was to get to be thirteen as quickly as I could so that I could get in the mill and earn some money.'
>
> 'Oh they was waiting for you in them days. It wasn't bad getting a job in them days, not when I started work.' (7)

Glyn Hughes quotes a textile worker who began her working life near Halifax at the same time:

> 'When we left (school) we got so many marks from the teacher to say whether we were fit and intelligent enough to go to work. The men that were the overlookers used to be looking out for girls that were leaving school and two or three asked my mother if I could go and work in their mill. My sister started when she was twelve. I wasn't very strong: I don't know why I had to go in the mill because every now and then I had to have a month off poorly. I think my dad realised I wasn't very strong but I don't think it was ever thought you could do anything else. They were poor and they needed the money and as soon as they had a worker that was it, you had to work to bring some money home and so you didn't think about your health.' (8)

The Essex interviews present the same feelings of driving forces of family need and a demand from industry. One Keighley man recalled:

> '... I would have loved to have been a signwriter. But of course - these things - well economic circumstances come, there were three more mouths to feed beside mine so it was case of going to mill. I didn't want to go to mill, I didn't like the mill.' (9)

As described in the previous chapter[10] some children left school even earlier, under economic pressure to work half time at twelve years of age. This was, in Colne Valley at least, becoming a less common practice but was not unknown in families where a father's wage was particularly low, or where a father was absent or dead. One Colne Valley man described how he was unable to leave at 13 since he had not sufficient attendances. His widowed mother managed to find him half time work until he was 14. Another man whose father had died of tuberculosis when he was 10 had tried for half time work at 12 but had not been allowed to start because of his own poor health and suspected tuberculosis.[11] Those who delayed entry to mill work were in no sense idle at home. There were younger children to be cared for if a mother stayed in work, there was domestic work and occasionally work in the family business. For one young girl, the First World War came as something of an opportunity:

> 'And when I went weaving the first it was at when the First World War started. I wasn't going to have to go weaving you see. (she was lame) But I were glad when war started in me own mind and I knew I shouldn't have to stop at home. I used to think, I'm a little slavey enough without that.' (12)

Choice over the question of what type of employment did not seem to to enter into any discussions within families at this stage. There was little in the way of alternatives. Shopwork and jobs involving more than a few weeks' training were only for more comfortably off families. Service was disregarded as an occupation for girls as was building or navvying for boys. Family pressures tended to narrow down the range of opportunities. Several of the Colne Valley workers referred to lost chances:

> 'The headmaster wanted me - to know if I could go to grammar school. But I just felt as if I had to go to work. We all had in those days ...

I didn't think I wanted to go. It wasn't me parents that stopped me. Probably they'd have let me go if I'd - if I'd wanted you know. I suppose I should want to go working like me friends was. We all thought we had to go in the mill in those days you know.'

'And why did you not go into dressmaking?

Well for the simple reason that you had to pay to learn and you'd no wages. You'd no wages. If you learned your trade you'd no wages.

But were there not other people at home earning?

Oh, if they had - if they had 10 or 12 shillings they had a good wage in those days.

So you couldn't learn?

Oh ... 8 shillings or 10 shillings, 12 and 6 pence, something like that. Oh they'd no wages.

So when you left school you were in Huddersfield were you?

Yes and I'd 4 shillings a week.'

'(The schoolmaster) came to see me father and he wanted to compensate me father, moneywise, to let me go to a higher school and to train for a schoolmaster. And me father wouldn't.'

'Well I would have gone to learn to dressmake - but me mother didn't seem to fancy us going then you see.' (13)

Dressmaking might be a possibility for the younger delicate girl in a large family but it was out of the question when the family needed the young worker's wage. Paying to learn for the two to three years of training was still normal practice at this time. Even the four shillings brought in by the young girl above was a vital contribution. Thus, as will be argued, the wage came to represent not only the individual's reward for hours of labour but also the family's dependence

on this earning power.

Leaving school for work presented a continuity of experience and also established obligations. Wages earned by family members were vital to the family grouping. On becoming a worker, a child was promoted to breadwinner with the family's economy laying first claim to earnings. Thus the freedom formally conferred by the individualism of the labour market was consistently compromised by the need to bring back a reliable wage to the family. Such conditions presented the working-class school leaver in the Colne Valley with little opportunity for independent choice in the selection of first employment.

The automatic nature of the transition, ensured by demand from industry and home alike was clearly recalled by one of the Essex interviewees:

> '... When they were thirteen they were ready for work. And you supposed to pass labour exam weren't you. But I never knew of anybody fail it. Never knew anybody fail it.' (14)

The close articulation of home and work is seen in the actual finding of a job, the final stage in the transition from school to work. If the freedom conferred by wage labour status and the pressure of industry were totally paramount, then the influence of home would appear minimal. However, this is not the case. Family connections were crucial when it came to securing employment:

> '... you see me sister worked there for a start. When she started - she were first - me mother knew the foreman when she were going you see. So she went to his house. And he told her to come morning after you see and start. Well with her being there you see, she arranged for me to go.' (15)

Socialisation into work discipline and expectations also played its

part in securing employment. Taking sisters', relatives' or neighbours' dinners or listening into conversations over dinner in houses close to mills where friends and relatives might gather to eat at mid-day could provide information and introductions to opportunities:

> 'I went with her mother dinner (of niece who was present) and me other sister's dinner. And just got on and they said, 'Yes come in the morning'.'

> '... I was ill away from school. And I went to me Auntie. They used to take dinners to the workers you see. And I went with me auntie to take her son's dinner and she asked for me because it was coming time for me to start at bobbin winding.' (16)

Textile jobs began with bobbin winding for girls and twisting-in for boys invariably. But relatives already well placed in the mill could secure entry to preferred jobs, or at least try to:

> 'My sister was what they called a mender. And of course it was supposed to be both a skilled job and a job they could earn middlin' a money and not as dirty as some of the other jobs. So when I was going in the mill she asked if I could go and learn to mend straightaway.'

> 'I went with me mother ... me mother had always worked at Hoyles. And like she said, she wanted me under her eye you see. And I got with a young lady warping and there was two warpers that were needing - we were called clerkers.' (17)

The second point at which family and work can be seen to interact is at the question of the destiny of the wage. Stearns states:

> 'Of course most of their earnings were paid to their parents for board and room ... nevertheless ... they kept a significant portion for their own use (their counterparts on the Continent normally turned over all their pay to the family fund). Daughters at least were winning a new role in the family.' (18)

This assumption seems to be based on evidence from the Report published by the Board of Trade in 1911 of a Survey of wage-earning women and girls' budgets.(19) However, even amongst the 30 case studies published by the Board of Trade, there are six women who state that they gave their wages intact, that is they 'tipped up', to their mothers. The Essex interviews present no complete picture of board for this country, showing variations according to region and social origin as well as family composition. Thus Stearns' statement simply does not fit the facts. The difference between paying board and tipping up a wage to the family, as represented by the mother, is crucial in determining both the relationship of the wage earner to the family and the wider economic significance of the wage beyond the point of production.(20) Although economic independence may appear as a natural corollary of waged employment this freedom of the wage earner is limited in a number of ways. The encroachments of capital are already well documented in the literature of industrial relations and labour history. What is being discussed here are domestic relationships. The interdependency of wage earner and family is based upon issues of survival. Thus the family in capitalist society is seen not only as a creation of economic relationships but also as a response to these, a necessary adaptation and expression of the will to survive. Tipping up a wage to the family relates directly to the needs of the family unit and its individual members. This means that gender and age and economic circumstances may all determine the incidence of tipping up.

Wages were tipped up straightaway and intact to the mother. Only two Colne Valley workers mentioned giving their wages to anyone else. These were girls who, for various reasons, lived in the grandparental home. Their grandmothers received the wage;

'... It was 12 and 6 pence (a war time wage).

> And I said to me mother, 'Can I give it me granny?' She said, 'Yes, you can'. And I gave me first week's wage to me granny because she'd always been so good to me.' (21)

Local, and in fact contemporary, custom decreed that a 'penny in the shilling' could be kept for pocket money:

> 'Mother got the wage and I got five pence.' (22)

The first pay day could be a red-letter day and respondents could all recall the feeling and moment of pride as the first wage was brought home:

> 'It was an exciting moment you know that, when you went home with your wages.'

And:

> 'I should be pleased I daresay, I was contributing.' (23)

The linen workers interviewed by Messenger shared the same experience, as one woman who began in a spinning mill in a small town in 1917 recalled:

> 'I remember my first pay. I brought it home to my mother. She spit on it for luck ... All our mothers done it, when we were all young ... spit on your first pay for luck ... Out of seven and six, I got the sixpence.' (24)

As wages rose gradually from the starting point of five shillings for a girl, slightly more for a boy, to somewhere about the pound level before the war, more could be kept back for spending on amusement, entertainment or for saving towards holidays or marriage. However, the family's needs still came first:

> 'I went home and others were buying a cream slice with the twopence of the wage. We'd so much and this bonus on because of the war. And we'd this out of the wage and I know I bought this cream slice. I didn't half get it for it.' (25)

The amount kept back is less significant than the actual tipping of

the wage. What was left for spending or saving was determined not by the wage earner but by the parents plus family. This could affect girls more adversely than boys.

> 'Our -- were married and there was only me and me brother next to me. And then he were paying board and I had to tip all me wages up."
>
> *Why did he pay board while you tipped your wages up?*
>
> Oh well that's a question isn't it? ... I know me mother gave me some spends and I daren't spend it because I was frightened we might want a meal during the week. And I said: "well you'll have to give me mother more money". I says, "I can't see why you should be going out every night a week and if me mother doesn't give me half a dollar I can't go out. Put some more money in."' (26)

Hareven quotes statistical evidence to show that amongst New England textile workers, daughters shouldered an uneven proportion of the family budget. Figures collected by the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics showed that daughters were handing over 95 per cent of their wages to parents, while sons were giving up only 93 per cent.(27)

Accounts of tipping up are graphic and resentment was experienced all over again in the telling:

> 'And I said one Friday night, I were coming up to being married. It'd be about 12 months before I got married. And one Friday night - me mother used to sit there with her apron open and we used to tip all our wages into her apron, me father, me and me sister. And I said to me father, I thought, Oh, I'll try it on, and I just - and he'd a big moustache, he'd a Jimmy Edwards moustache had me father you know. And I says, "Oh father, I'm thinking of starting paying board." You see I were earning about six or seven quid a week then, spinning which was a good wage then. And I just looked at his moustache and I could read his moustache. When - it used to drop some way when he were disappointed or angry. And he looked straight back at me and the only words he said to me were, "If you do, you'll be the first one that ever has done at

> this house." And I says, 'Right". And I tipped every penny up to me mother up to getting - before I was getting married.' (28)

The feeling that as the young worker grew older he or she might be the local exception in the tipping up custom was frequently expressed. This may have been due to the fact that the determinants of tipping up were specific to each family in the sense that each family differed as to parents' occupations, numbers of siblings, ratios between sexes and age of parents. In general however, it seems to be the case that tipping up continued until the son or daughter left to form their own family or formed their own home in the parents' home. Those who never left or who married later than most, in their thirties and forties, only stopped tipping up when their mothers died or became too infirm to manage household affairs:

> 'I gave me mother ... my wages until I was well over 20. And she said, "Well", and she had got to that state that she couldn't do either shopping or housekeeping or anything, and she said, "what's the good of giving it me, it's you that have it to see to".'

And

> 'I tipped up as long as my mother lived.' (29)

An alternative to tipping up or negotiating the vexed question of paying board, could be found in taking lodgings, or in the case of a boy, going into the army. Those who talked of paying board at an earlier stage were saving towards an announced marriage or might be fortunately placed in the family, for example, a younger sister to older brothers. Family composition could be crucial:

> 'We could have new clothes you see and me mother used to make all our dresses ... when she'd got those workers we had, we could have the best of hats ... the best of coats. I remember having two pairs of shoes at once. One was ordinary shoes ... and then we had some rinking boots ... And oh, we thought we were well off then. Well we were. But

> you see it did away with all - anything like
> that when the First World War started because
> we'd no workers.' (Her five older brothers
> left for the army.) (30)

Those few who did recall paying board rather than having to tip up their wages tended not to be those with reliable workers, but those whose family circumstances were secured in other ways. These were the families which had a business or whose fathers tended to be amongst the most skilled workers in the industry, textile craftsmen and overlookers.

The question of the mother's role as receiver of the wage suggests a possibility of economic power for the woman, within the domestic situation. It also links the domestic economy with the cash nexus at the point of production. This could be expressed directly as one woman recalled:

> '... when I got into the twisting part,
> well you see I wasn't taking as much money
> as I had been winding and me mother called
> me for it you see. She said I was playing,
> well I wasn't.' (31)

In law, the woman was dependent, politically she scarcely existed, yet she had a key role in maintaining and servicing family members. Her banker's role was determined however, by her husband's legal powers, his willingness to tip up his wages and her dependence on the wages of other dependents in the family as they came of working age and stayed within the family unit.

As far as the young worker was concerned, changed family circumstances as brothers were called up to fight or left home under more normal conditions, a father's sickness, drinking habits or low wages could all limit independence as a wage earner. Girls seem to have suffered more from this than boys. What the Board of Trade approvingly described as:

> '... benefit of the Lancashire custom of

> pooling the family income and treating all members of the family according to their needs.' (32)

has to be viewed in the context of a number of factors, not the least important of which are the dependency of women and the economic circumstances of the family.

The third area of relations between work and family is that of training at work. Unlike cotton and outside the craft and supervisory jobs which are almost exclusively male, there were no examples of controlling entry from the mill floor, nor was the system of sub-contracting as general. Those girls and women who learned warping and weaving would not be paid during the few weeks of learning. It was only after the First World War that mills themselves began to pay weavers as they taught, a final recognition that monetary loss to the weaver had been involved as well as gains to the concern:

> 'And you see they do lose something with learning. Because you see unless they tell you what to do and stop your loom and tell you what's this and that you throw them out a lot. In fact you used ... to learn a fortnight and if somebody was learning you used to have to pay them to learn. You used to have to give them something to learn you to weave.' (33)

There was thus a convention that learners would pay their teachers, but there were ways of circumventing this. Here again, the family played its part.

First jobs for thirteen year olds entering the mill were usually winding for girls and reaching-in for boys in woollen and doffing for either sex in worsted. These jobs would be taught by fellow workers and would be learned within a day or two at the most. The more skilled jobs of warping and mending required lengthier training of perhaps two weeks in the case of weaving and even longer in the case of warping or

mending. There were many tasks to learn and the more complicated weaving machinery took some managing. The most usual way of by-passing the question of cash payment to a worker-teacher was of course to contain the function within the family or wider kin network. If there was no weaver, warper or mender in the immediate family then family friends could take on the job and again direct cash loss could be avoided:

> 'I know they did use to pay a pound a week to learn to weave. But it was a friend of me mother's that learned me and she wouldn't take anything.'

> 'You've to learn a fortnight. Then they found me a loom near the girl that had learned me you know. But, nowadays you see, they pay them a wage to learn to weave. But we, it were into our own goodness if we wanted. I gave the girl that learned me - well me mother gave it to me to give her - a pound note you see ...

> *And do you think her wage was affected?*

> Well it would be a little because I mean you couldn't shuttle as fast. And you couldn't thread ends as quickly. And she'd to stop her loom to show you how to do. Whereas she'd have to stop in any case but she'd do it quicker than you, if you know what I mean. But she would certainly lose a little bit, bound to do. But there again, we were neighbours, so she never bothered you know. And she used to come to our house a lot and have teas ... I've seen ladies learn men you know. We used to sort of - it were this style. If you saw anybody in street and they wanted to come into the weaving and they might be friendly with you and they'd say: 'I would like to come, will you learn me?' You sort of, well I suppose you couldn't refuse. Like this neighbour of mine she were only next door but one. I says, "Our Lucy's weaving you know". But she hadn't been weaving long enough to learn me.'

> 'She did throw me out but with it being my cousin ... we didn't charge her anything.' (34)

The young worker's career through the mill was punctuated by

frequent job changes sometimes in pursuit of more wages, other times in search of experience.(35) More congenial working conditions and the location of a skilled uncle or father who could teach a weaver might also influence mobility. The girl who stayed put was a rarity and few made only one move. Mills varied in size from perhaps only a score of looms to several hundred. This meant that to get a loom a would-be weaver might have to leave her twisting place to find not only training but a guarantee of a machine. Under such conditions of mobility and uncertainty, family ties could be a positive advantage for quite a number of years.(36) There were of course times when fixed ideas of parents could limit or restrict a young worker's progress:

> 'I remember I went to a few of the girls round at home. They worked at Marsden and they were menders and so I wanted to go being a mender, but I remember bringing a bit home you see to show how to mend and when my mother saw it she says, "Oh if that's mending", she says, 'don't go any more".'

> '... I was piecing, what they call piecing ... and I'd only 8 shillings a week ... when I started. And I were in the mulegate and the office boy came up, and he went like that. It's a long way to walk across the mule length, so I went and I says, "What's up?" He says, "Mr. Crowther wants you in his office at Bank Bottom". I says, "What have I done again?' Because I knew I never went up there unless - I'd mixed some waste, put rotten yarn or something. "OH', he says, "I don't know, you go and see him". So I went and knocked. I called him the Great White Chief. Anyway he were a smart fellow were John Edward Crowther. Oooh you talk about a deportment, and white, silver-white hair and a silver moustache and he used to go off the deep-end occasionally. He were next door to a genius were John Ed he were - he were a terror to work for you know ... So I just went and he just looked and he says, "Come in boy". And he says, "what's your name?" And I told him. "Where do you work?" I told him. "How much do you get a week? Where does your father work?" Here. "What's his name? ... I know him. Would you like to work in an office?" I says "I should sir". He says, "Well you can start on Monday at nine o'clock"... I thought, "Ah this won't work." So I says "how much is the wage sir?" He says, "considerably less

> than you are getting now". Now I were getting 15 bob then. I say, 'how much less, sir?". He says, "You will start for 8 shillings", - oooh - I thought - now. So when I got home, I'm sat here, me father's there, me mother there, me sister here, me brother. I says, "John Ed sent for me today, father." "What did he want?" I told him. "Stop where you are". So, I might have been manager at John Ed's ... today ... No I'd a lot of opportunities ... but they said they couldn't afford to let me go.' (37)

There were other disadvantages too. Rules of precedence in the family would determine choice of action in times when work was short as happened to one young woman:

> 'Now then, I was one of the last to finish really but I had an uncle that was a weaver up there as well and when it came to my turn I let him have it because he had a wife and child - we had the business going on so I let me uncle ... have my place.' (38)

More immediately of course, those working with relatives endured a closer supervision than other workers:

> 'Me Dad worked there and he asked for me. He wanted me to get there ... and it were a pity he ever did. Because you know if ever I did owt they always told me Dad. He always knew. He used to say we were too long at toilets you know.'

Another girl had her brother-in-law for her overlooker:

> 'I didn't like me brother in law. I think he made me work harder than anyone else, so they wouldn't think he was ... giving me a favour ... If there was anything he wanted altering - a few of us would go into the office and of course I was the one. And the man that owned ---, he'd say, "And you ..." he'd say, "and --- your brother in law." I'd say, "Well what difference does it make?" I says, "The wrong's there just whether ---'s my overlooker or not." You know, I stuck up for myself.' (39)

The close articulation of home and work maintained through dependence on and exploitation of family ties provides the context for the acquisition of trade union membership and activities related to trade unions. Viewing the process from this angle rather than from

simply that of the union as an organisation with members in particular work situations may help us to understand the situation of women in unions in the first twenty years of this century. Central to an explanation of union membership in terms of interdependence of home and work is the dependent position of women and their definition as marginal in the place of work. Thus it is not only important to stress the non-segregation of home and work, but also the differing sex roles of men and women into the two areas. It is these sex roles, with those of class, which inevitably decide on the scope of activity and access to political and economic resources of men and women in the industry. Within such an analysis, trade unions can be seen as determined by both domestic and work relations and as part of the unequal role relations of men and women in those two spheres.

There are particular features in the structure, organisation and ideology of trade unions which can be seen as expressions of marginality and dependency. Barbara Drake[40] has shown the exclusively male origins of all major unions at the turn of the century and cites evidence of inequalities even amongst the cotton union, thought to have had a more advanced policy in relation to their women members. She refers to unions which charged a lower level of subscription and therefore paid less in benefits to women members. The custom of excluding low-scale contributors from office had not long passed when she wrote her history. The double workload of most working women, curtailing available time for association outside working hours, was of course an enduring feature. There were other aspects of trade union life which tended to militate against equal participation by women members at this time. The Webbs, in discussing organisation amongst cotton weavers, refer to:

> '... the disadvantage of needing ... a large staff of paid collectors to secure the regular payment of contributions from the girls and married women who are indisposed to bring

> their weekly pence to the public house in which the branch meeting is still frequently held.' (41)

The establishment of Socialist Clubs and Trade Union premises went some way in the two decades before the war towards neutralising the problems associated with collection in public houses in open situations. However, the predominantly male clientele of the Clubs and the attractions offered, beer and billiards, tended to moderate these changes in ownership and management. Although premises and rooms in Batley and Bradford were maintained on teetotal lines, these remained exceptions.(42)

There are numerous possible areas of investigation into the nature and experience of trade union membership. Two will be taken up here. These are the role of men in introducing union membership to young women and men and the system of house-to-house collection of union dues.

The Colne Valley workers, predominantly the women, in discussion and without prompting, tended to mention their father's or uncle's influence in the question of joining.

> 'When we went to Taylor and Littlewoods everybody had to be in. There were people in the union ... me father learned me and as soon as ever I got onto a loom of me own, man went: "What about that lass of yours being in the union?"' (43)

Her account is revealing because she shows the appeal being made over her head rather than directly to her. Another woman was recruited by her uncle and describes what happened in appropriate West Riding speech:

> 'I asked me uncle --- if he'd learn me to weave at Bates's and he said, "Yes". So I went and he says: "I'll tell thee summat". He talked just like that ... he says: "Tha's to join union before tha starts". I says, "How d'you mean?" He says, "I'll tell thee tha's to join union afore tha starts weyving".' (44)

The explanations of others were similar, if not as graphic:

> 'I'd always to be in a union when I were younger ... me Dad made us all go in the union ... There was a man collected - Oh me Dad were a big union man. I tell you he were a big Labour man as well.'
>
> "Me father,- me father was in so I guess I should join then."
>
> *'When did you first join the union?*
>
> "Well when I first started working love. My father was a big socialist and a big union man ..."' (45)

One girl who never joined explained why:

> 'Me father wasn't a member of the union and so we weren't encouraged to join a union.' (46)

This is not to say that weavers taught by women friends did not ever experience the same encouragement to join the union when they got their looms. They did, quite naturally, in those mills where union membership was accepted by management and made almost universal by workers. Such situations were few enough prior to the war. However, the role of male relatives in presenting union membership is significant. Young workers would be about 16 or 18 when they first acquired a loom suggesting that union membership was seen as an accompaniment of increased age and skill. The exclusion of the young and less skilled either by neglect or design was always, as suggested elsewhere in this work,(47) a weakness in textile union activities.

In other chapters, the history and development of women's trade union membership in the industry is examined. It will be argued that membership was consistently similar in proportion to that of men in the industry, but that few women gained or were offered positions of

authority in the union. Both in terms of policy and the presentation of membership to women in the industry, the union appeared both paternalistic and distant in its involvement. This can be traced to basic assumptions as to the marginal position of women in production and their dependency in the domestic situation.(48) An institution run and dominated by men and one which was, it seems, invariably presented by men was the one to which young working women were expected to look to for representation on wages and work matters.

The women interviewed in Colne Valley had few positive statements to make about trade union membership.(49) None had ever considered approaching the union over a shopfloor matter such as bad work or unjust treatment from a superior. Their association with the union was largely indirect. For this group of workers, payment of the weekly subscription was usually carried out at the doorstep by mothers and grandmothers from the family kitty on behalf of the young worker to a collector who worked on a house-to-house basis.

'*And did you pay your subscription from your wage - or how was it paid?*

It was out of me wage, yes.

And you paid it yourself did you?

No, they used to come to the house for the union.

Would your mother give it them?

Yes.'

'Just used to come - no they wouldn't let them collect it in the mill. They didn't like the unions you see in the mill ... none of them. They didn't want you to be in a union. They could pay what they wanted if you wasn't in the union. If you was in the union they didn't like it.

So they came round the house for the money?

Yes, yes more or less.

And would your mother give your money, or did you give the money?

Oh well - it came out of the wage.'

'Me Dad made me be in ... He was a strong union man.

How did you pay your dues to the union?

Well there was a collector used to come for them ... He used to come about once a month. And it wasn't so much at that time. You used to have to pay him.

And did you pay or did your father pay for you?

Well I had - well it'd be paid will all the lot I expect. We were all in.'

'*Who paid your dues - your subscription?*

Me grandmother ... well they came collecting every week.'

'I don't think I paid it, me father might have paid it for me.'

'Well, me father paid my turn though and then when we came here the union man used to come round.' (50)

Even the woman who had worked in a well organised mill had had her subscription paid at work by her father. Those who paid board might pay their own way with the union of course, but for the rest, the majority, union membership took its place with other more mundane forms of defence such as the weekly or monthly insurance payment. For many this was the only moment of contact with the union as an organisation. The fact that it took place in a domestic environment through intermediaries only helped to fix its distant relevance to its women members.

The combined effects of economic marginality and dependent status at home and at work helped to sustain unequal rates of pay in the industry. Elsewhere[51] it will be described how men's and women's levels of remuneration remained unequal even in processes, such as woollen weaving, where the labour performed was identical. In Colne Valley and Huddersfield, a ten per cent difference in wages paid to men and women weavers was argued as necessary on the grounds that men could lift the finished pieces from the loom and required less attention from the tuners. These were debateable points[52] and clearly perceived as such by the women weavers who experienced these inequalities. As one woman clearly saw it:

> 'Oh I don't think it's right that a man have to have more money. We've said so many a time, because they didn't do anything any different.
>
> *They carried pieces and stuff.*
>
> Well they only lifted them off, they never carried them. They'd only to lift them into a cart. That's all. And the tuner took them away. Lifted the empty beams out and that's all they did. And lifted the piece off.'

> 'When you finish your job the men used to be able to lift their own beams out and a woman wasn't expected ... that was about the only thing they did more than we did ... And they used to get many a shilling a cut more than we did for that ... All the time the women grumbled about the men having more than them you see for doing the same type of job. Because lifting the beam out it was a hard, heavy job, but it was only a matter of two or three minutes you see.' (53)

Interview material has been used in this chapter to provide an analysis of trade union membership which is not simply production based. Not only have those commonly less well documented through official means been brought forward into the centre of the discussion,

but the locus of the discussion has itself been changed. Analysis solely at the point of production ignores the significance of that point to different members of a family at different points in that family's life cycle. Production in the domestic sphere comes to be seen in close articulation with production under capitalist relations when we follow the course of the wage past the point in its initial handling at the work place. The early twentieth century family is thus seen not only as a product of capitalist relations of production with its formally independent wage earners, its physical separation from the work place and the forced contribution of all its members to the wage earning process whether in paid work or not. It can also function as a means of survival, a dual role, which although for example binding its women members especially close can also provide the means to by-passing some of the purely competitive aspects of the labour market. Again, the pooling of the wage, in theory providing a form of security to individuals at the mercy of the system of production, has to be set against its effect on women and young persons whose lesser wages may be more subject to the varying economic fortunes of the family unit. This is especially the case I would suggest for women, since the assumed marginality of their involvement in the sphere of paid work weakens their attachment and claim to the wage. Being kept at home as a child housewife or as an adult housewife is indicative of a relative low productive status in an economy where wage earning is, because of its nature, rated highly.

It is against this analysis and this evidence that union membership in the industry needs to be interpreted and understood, both that of men and women. Simplistic formulations explaining the low level of involvement of women in terms of alleged apathy and disinclination for collective action need to be reviewed and the significance of the

domestic sphere and the actual economic position of women at home and at work emphasised. Furthermore, the meaning of trade unionism in any historical context can be understood at two interactive levels. One indicates protection and defence against employer action and the other indicates the union's part socially both in providing security for members and members' families but also in the role of providing explanations and perpetuating social relations between men and women as members of the working class.

Notes

1. See Introduction, p.5.

2. The role of the family in industrialisation is developed in the work of, for example, W.H. Goode, World Revolution and Family Patterns (1963); N.J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution (1959); V. Klein, Britain's Married Women Workers (1965); Edward Shorter, The Making of the Modern Britain (1975).

3. See M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire (1971); P. Laslett (ed.) Household and Family in Past Time (1972).

4. See J. Harrison, "Political Economy of Housework", Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, Spring 1974; Wally Secombe, "The Housewife and her Labour in Capitalist Society", New Left Review, 83; Jean Gardiner, "Political Economy of domestic labour in capitalist society", in Barker and Allen (1978_a) op.cit.. On the Political Economy of Women, Conference of Socialist Economists Pamphlet, No 2, 1976.

5. Peter N. Stearns, "Working-Class Women in Britain, 1890-1914" in Martha Vicinus (ed.) Suffer and Be Still (1972); Peter N. Stearns, Lives of Labour (1975); Shorter (1975) op.cit., chapter 7.

6. This point is elaborated below, pp 132+ff.

7. Interviews 11 and 12.

8. Quoted in Glyn Hughes, Millstone Grit (1975) pp.91-92.

9. Essex interview No 181.

10. See chapter 3, pp.92+ff.

11. Additional interview material from Colne Valley. Mr. S., b.1895, Father worked on railways and reservoirs, mother went out washing after father died when Mr. S. was 10; youngest of five children; percher's assistant then cuttler; enlisted 1915; never returned to mill.

12. Interview 17.

13. Interviews 15, 19, 6 9.

14. Essex interview No 170.

15. Interview 12. Hareven and Langenbach (1979) op.cit. include several examples from the New England mills of family ties aiding recruitment and guaranteeing employment. With workers coming from a variety of European and North American backgrounds a complex form of ethnic and cultural segregation ensued.

16. Interviews 5 and 8.

17. Interviews 11 and 16.

18. Stearns (1975) op.cit., pp.110-111.

19. Accounts of Expenditure of Wage-Earning Women and Girls, Board of Trade, Cd 5963 (1911).

20. This is not to argue that workers who paid board were any less involved in the domestic economy. Their relationship was differently ordered and a measure of freedom assured. However, closer examination of board-paying dependents would probably reveal similar claims by the family grouping in situations of crisis.

21. Interview 16.

22. Interview 1.

23. Interviews 2 and 15.

24. Messenger (1975) op.cit., p.41.

25. Interview 17

26. Interview 19.

27. Quoted in Tamara K. Harever, "Family Time and Industrial Time" in Family and Work in a Planned Corporation Town, 1900-1924" in T.K. Hareven, Family and Kin in Urban Communities (1972) pp.197-8.

28. Interview 6.

29. Interviews 11 and 5. The same practice was true of the north of Ireland linen workers, wages were turned over 'to the member of her family who kept house. It was not unusual for this to continue until the girl married, or, if she remained single, until she was well along in years.' Messenger (1977) op.cit. p.41.

30. Interview 17.

31. Interview 17.

32. Cd 5963, p.45.

33. Interview 19.

34. Interviews 4 and 10.

35. See chapter 3, p.101+ff.

36. An interesting contrast is presented from an interview with a Keighley millworker recorded for the Essex project. His father was a gas worker's labourer and his mother a piece mender in a mill:

> 'My father's principle was this: when we come to be working age we're not working at same place, none of us. We're all working cos we're not tying ourselves up with one another to be too dependent of other people. We'd all work at different places, and we did you see.' (Interview No 206).

37. Interviews 2 and 6.

38. Interview 13.

39. Interviews 3 and 15.

40. Drake (1921) op.cit.

41. Webb (1897) op.cit., p.106.

42. Cyril Pearce describes the 'Labour Clubs' in Colne Valley as having been set up in two 'waves'. The clubs set up in the 1890s were 'dry' with premises being shared quite often with the Labour Church. The second 'wave' came with the Grayson campaign. Socialist Clubs were set up between 1906 and 1914 on a rather different basis. Clubs set up at this time, in Golcar and Slaithwaite did not (and still do not) admit women to full membership. (Personal communication from Cyril Pearce.)

43. Interview 19.

44. Interview 18.

45. Interviews 3, 4 and 5.

46. Interview 2.

47. See chapter 6, p.208.

48. These points are argued out in chapter 5.

49. Their post-war experience of membership had not been encouraging. Weakness in defending earnings levels in the 20s and 30s had been accompanied by failure to pay out benefit. Many of those interviewed had continued in membership on an intermittent basis only. In addition, unemployment in these years had hit married women, predictably, before other groups. Several of the women interviewed had been sent home for shorter or longer periods until sent for by mills as production picked up.

50. Interviews 1, 9, 3, 18, 17 and 19.

51. See chapter 5.

52. The arguments advanced are outlined in chapter 5, note 24 and note 25.

53. Interviews 18 and 11.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN AND THE GENERAL UNION OF TEXTILE WORKERS - THE PRE-WAR YEARS

In this chapter, it will be argued that women's role in production was typically portrayed and maintained as marginal in pre-war years. For both women and men, this marginalization, when combined with a weak industrial policy, was to have definite implications for levels of involvement in the union. Occupational segregation has already been discussed.(1) The social and ideological controls which sustained this segregation and marginalization will be examined here. In particular, the ways in which conceptions of women's labour and social role were developed, by both employers and leading trade unionists, to the detriment of women's reputation for collective action and levels of participation in the trade union, the GUTW, will be considered.

Women in the wool textile industry of West Yorkshire as elsewhere were, though in a slight majority numerically(2), typically restricted by a number of social controls which tended to guarantee more skilled employment and higher earnings for men. These social controls were characteristically sustained by jointly held notions of women's lesser needs and lower productive potential. Women's needs as workers were generally defined in domestic terms. Though the most extreme situation and consequent marginalization was reserved for married women,(3) those who were single also tended to have their needs as workers defined in terms of family relationships.(4) Although debates about women's lower levels of pay showed concern and sought solutions, they were frequently couched in terms which assumed fewer needs for women.(5)

The definition of women as dependents and therefore in less financial need than any man had two implications; firstly it denied a woman the right to a worker's wage and secondly it ignored the fact

that many women were themselves the breadwinners or mainstays of their families, with dependents requiring support.(6) The notion of man as breadwinner and woman as dependent was one which pervaded and still pervades discussions of work and domestic relationships. It affected women's status as workers throughout their lives. As young girls, notions of expected domestic role tended to determine the moment and point of entry into employment. The influence of family and the pressures of the domestic economy have already been discussed.(7) Skilled occupations were less likely to be sought if marriage and child-bearing were considered the main career for a young woman. Nor were the most skilled jobs likely to be made available if employers, managers and foremen also shared this perception.(8) Economic considerations could help to compound inequalities so far as girls from lower income families were concerned. Young women and girls living at home with parents might be regarded as preferable employees to those who had left home,(9) but the acquisition of a skill was seen as rightly complemented by low earnings and domestic dependence. This tended to make skill a less attractive proposition to girls from lower income families. For these the alternative might be to break away entirely from the family and find an independent existence in unskilled work.(10)

Inequalities of need were further supported and matched by a second set of judgements, those relating to women's productive potential. During the forty years preceding the First World War, there had been a constant battle between those women who were opposed to restrictions being placed on women's employment and those who supported the exclusion from contact with toxic chemicals and who advocated a shorter working day for women. These debates have been variously explained;(11) nevertheless, to someone like Mrs. Paterson and her fellow activists

in the Women's Trade Union League, the arguments of those who sought to restrict women's scope for employment carried with them strong suggestions of segregation, hostility to women workers and a proprietory attitude to the work place. Assumptions about women's lesser productive potential, whether expressed in terms of suitability for different types of work, or lower output were incorporated in statements, articles and actions taken by key figures in the trade union movement and amongst an increasing number of interested observers.(12) The arguments were to become more explicitly worded and carefully elaborated during the war years, when, despite the known facts of women's productive capacity, it was still felt necessary to emphasise their suitability for certain types of work.(13) Although it is not possible to argue out the full historical implications here, it would seem that advocacy of the alleged lesser needs and lower productive potential of women only became elaborated in a period which saw the development of the cult of domesticity and the partnership of complementary individuals in the Home.(14)

The effects of such social and ideological limitations in a particular industry, wool textiles, can be estimated by considering earnings. Wool and worsted production was a part of that great band of industries, textiles, in which the wages earned by women workers were higher than in most other areas of gainful employment. Taken as an undifferentiated whole in 1906, women's earnings were, at over 56 per cent, in greater proportion to men's earnings than in any other industrial group. However, within and between various categories of occupation there were wide differences.(15) Furthermore, general figures conceal the fact that earnings were determined largely by the occupations which were open to women. Restrictions on women's scope within the labour market meant that certain occupations were open to

women.[16] There were of course particular problems associated with the nature of the wool textile industry itself.

All pre-war observers were struck by the problems of attempting some form of representative statement of earnings in the wool textile industry, few dared to advance one. As G.H. Wood explained:

> 'There is very little standardizing of wages (especially for the women) or of work. There seems to be little integration of labour even between neighbouring districts and the supply and demand of labour are adjusted in each district especially.'

He added that this made calculations of wages: 'extraordinarily difficult; in all cases great deal depends on the sample selected.'[17] Average earnings for both men and women varied between districts, though consistency was greater amongst men than amongst women with men's earnings varying from 26s to 29s and women's earnings varying from 12s to 17s.[18] This would lend support to G.H. Wood's contention as to the effects of a localised labour market.[19] One way of explaining variations by district is to consider the relationship between amounts of earnings and proportion of men and women in the industry. In those towns where women predominated in the industry, their wages tended to be lower, while in towns in which the numbers were more nearly equal, wages tended to be higher. Given the large discrepancies which did exist between men's and women's earnings in the industry, it would be unwise to read too much into these intra-urban differences. However, the extent to which sections of an industry become identified with women's employment and consequently are marginalized and relatively low paid is worth considering.[20]

Differential earnings for men and women in the industry were maintained through periods of rising and falling prices. Despite assertions to the contrary,[21] the difference in some occupations between men's and women's wages had been maintained throughout the

years of depression in the 1870's and 1880's.(22) In the case of Huddersfield, women weavers actually took a proportionately greater reduction than men.(23)

There thus appeared to be well-established norms by which a distinction was maintained between men's and women's earnings within the industry's various districts. Furthermore, where such established practices were threatened, differentials could be maintained by other means. In the heavy woollen and fancy woollen trades of Dewsbury, Batley and Huddersfield, there was said to be no particular advantage in employing a man or a women in weaving. Consequently men and women could be found side by side on similar work and machinery in some mills. In the Huddersfield area however, women were paid at rates which were between 10 and 15 per cent less than those of men. Those who supported this inequality claimed that it was due to the fact that women weavers needed more help from tuners, preparing looms and in carrying finished pieces from the looms. Allen Gee explained to Mundella at the Royal Commission on labour that:

> 'The looms are exactly the same; but I will tell you one reason why women, to a certain extent, do consider that they are not altogether entitled to the same rate of wages as the men. In weaving, as anyone who knows anything will be aware, the loom will require a certain amount of what we term in that district "tuning".... Tackling it is called in Lancashire; that it, it breaks down, it wants repairing, and a few other things. Very well, a woman does not as a rule do as much of that sort of work as a man will.'(24)

There were also arguments which claimed that such differentials reflected actual amounts in output.(25) However, such calculations tended to ignore factors of skill, age, type of cloth woven and varying access to overtime earnings. These variables could all affect estimates of women's average earnings making the basis for comparison somewhat less than equal.(26)

Inequalities in earnings and access to more remunerative occupations played their part in delimiting women's scope of action in the pre-war years. Such factors need to be considered when women's propensity for collective action is being considered[27] and need to be kept in close articulation with the historical record of women's involvement in the wool textile trade union movement.

Those who were actively engaged in encouraging women to join trade unions and to strengthen their bargaining power were aided by the two waves of militancy in 1889 to 1891 and 1911 onwards.[28] During these years, enthusiasm for labour organisation was manifested in strikes and open defiance amongst groups of workers whose pay and conditions of labour were notoriously poor. Inevitably, these included women workers. The result was that general unions, catering for the less skilled, both men and women, increased in strength during the pre-war years.[29] It is against this background, very generally described here, that the development of women's membership in Yorkshire wool textile unions took place.

The earliest textile unions in Yorkshire have left very little evidence of their scope and activities, nor is it clear to what extent, if any, women took out membership in organisations such as the "West Riding Fancy Cloth Weaving Union" and the "General Union of Weavers and Spinners" of the 1820's.[30] Outside the skilled men's societies, dating mainly from the 1850's and 1860's[31] there were no successful attempts at organisation among the less skilled sections of the industry. Groupings emerged in towns and villages, but tended to centre around individuals or incidents and failed to secure more enduring bases.[32] Organisation among woollen and worsted workers did not match the achievements of the cotton, hosiery and boot and

shoe industries during these years.[33]

This apparent failure on the part of woollen and worsted workers cannot be attributed to any lesser trade union consciousness amongst women workers. The first successful attempt to found organisation in Dewsbury took place amongst women workers, as did the momentous Manningham strike in Bradford. In Dewsbury, a wage reduction imposed by the employers was rejected by women weavers who, in 1875, left work and formed an all-woman strike committee[34]. After several weeks, a compromise was reached, reducing the actual cut imposed by the employers.[35] More significant than the final agreement was the decision taken after the strike to form the Dewsbury, Batley and District Heavy Woollen Weavers' Association. The significance of this event was that a mixed union of men and women had originated from action taken initially by women. Although men had played a part, chairing and speaking at meetings, it is clear from surviving documentary evidence that the origin and drive behind the successful movement had come from women weavers. The union set up as a result of the strike, drew its strength directly from weavers in mills in the district. Contributions made to the strike fund had been made, to a large extent, by groups of weavers at various mills in the district and further afield. It is not difficult to imagine the impact which women speakers at mill gate meetings must have made in the area, during the strike.[36]

Despite the militancy surrounding its inception, the new union seems to have survived only with difficulty and was to see leadership become concentrated increasingly amongst men members.[37] In 1883, the Dewsbury association voted to amalgamate with the coexisting Huddersfield and District Power Loom Weavers' Association.[38] After the amalgamation, women took even less of a leading role. The new body,

the Huddersfield and District Power Loom Weavers and Woollen Operatives' Association, elected three Huddersfield men to the leading posts. Allen Gee became chairman, Albert Shaw was secretary and George Armitage, treasurer. Of the ten committee members, only four were women, one of these being Mrs. Ann Ellis of the original Dewsbury strike committee.(39) She was elected with Allen Gee to go to the forthcoming TUC at Nottingham. This was her second visit to a TUC, but Allen Gee's first. At the 1883 and 1884 TUC's she played an active part, identifying herself clearly with the feminist wing of the women's trade union movement in opposing further limitations solely to women's employment. Thus at the 1883 TUC, she spoke up uncompromisingly against the exclusion of women with young children from factories and workplaces and managed to defer a resolution on this subject simply through the conviction of her speech. Ben Turner described Mrs. Ellis at this time as 'the recognised women's textile leader for Yorkshire'.(40) She continued to occupy a local position of some importance in the small union which had emerged from the amalgamation of the Huddersfield and Dewsbury societies. She was involved in trying to establish women's associations elsewhere in the West Riding, particularly amongst women weavers in Leeds where she had already helped to form a society of Female Machinists.(41) In 1885, after having attended and spoken at the Industrial Remuneration Conference in London, she returned to her work to find that she had been sacked on a pretext. She was thus forced to leave the area and went into service as a housekeeper in Brighton. While there she remained active in the local labour movement, organising laundresses and agitating amongst the Brighton unemployed. She eventually returned to Bradford, where she worked as a foster mother for the Bradford Board of Guardians. In the early 1900's she put her energies into the campaign for women's suffrage, being active in collecting signatures for the Yorkshire section of the women textile workers' petition for a franchise,

presented to Parliament in February, 1902[42]. Although Mrs. Ellis remained an honorary member of the union until her death,[43] she no longer played an active part and her going seems, as Barbara Drake argues, to have led to a general loss of confidence by women in union affairs.

The events surrounding the foundation of a weavers' union in Dewsbury show that women were not lacking in militancy nor the ability to organise in defence of their interests as workers. Nevertheless, the founding and the running of a union would seem to be differently ordered activities. What was to become the nucleus of the union, the centres of organisation for weavers in Dewsbury and Huddersfield, had lost women's leadership by 1885. The Huddersfield union had been an entirely men's union from inception to amalgamation. The coming together of the two associations was not to prove of advantage to women trade union activists.

Despite the growing tendency for men to dominate the leadership in these early years, women did appear, typically at lower levels. New branches opened in the 1890's in Halifax, Heavy Woollen District, Slaithwaite, Haworth and Bradford all included women committee members.[44] The situation in Bradford was potentially most promising, though here too, events ultimately followed a familiar pattern.

When the Manningham strike began in 1890[45] there was no strong local organisation of weavers and spinners, although the dyers' union, with three Bradford branches was well established, as were a number of craft unions and soeieties. The strike followed the introduction of wage reductions in December 1890 and affected 11,000 workers, employees of Lister and Co. Ltd. The management cited the McKinley tariff as

having depressed trade but further claimed that wages earned in the firm's Manningham mills were 'not natural'. The strike lasted five months and was to attract countrywide interest with over £11,000 being collected or raised in support of the workers involved. As soon as the wage reductions were announced, Gee, Turner and the local Bradford representative, William Henry Drew, were drawn into organising the strike, publicity and fund-raising. The majority of the strikers were women plush-weavers and few if any had been trade unionists at the beginning of the strike. What began for the employers as an apparently straightforward price reduction in order to maintain competitiveness, became a widely based symbolic struggle with far-reaching repercussions. Although finally defeated, the impact of the strike on Bradford was great enough to create a strong basis for local independent labour politics.(46)

As at Dewsbury, women played an active role in the strike. A photograph of the strike committee shows a large group of twenty-seven persons, of whom sixteen are women. Women were appointed collectors, carrying round cigar boxes, slit open to receive money and Lister's wage slips as proof of identity.(47) Pearce contrasts the existing weak organisation of textile workers, attributing this to the many divisions in the processes of production each with their 'distinct groups of workers' and the 'high percentage of female labour', with the events of the Manningham strike. He argues that 'the presence of large numbers of women in some departments tended to make the workforce less than militant', but then finds that at the Manningham mills the majority of strikers were women who displayed great militancy and unity.(48) Despite drawing attention to this contrast, he does not attempt to explain it.

Prominent women, such as Lady Dilke and Isabella Ford, daughter of a silk manufacturer and a popular speaker for local trade union and socialist meetings, with the interest and conviction to develop a trade union consciousness amongst women workers, had helped to organise the strike.(49) Despite Isabella Ford's successes in Leeds, where permanent organisations of women clothing workers had been formed, and despite the general climate of agitation and organisation amongst women workers generally,(50) there appears to have been no carry through, organisationally, so far as women textile workers in Bradford were concerned. Indeed it is significant that in relating the details of the strike in 1920, Turner was unable to name a single woman who appeared in the photograph of the strike committee.(51) Following the strike, a branch of the Union was formed in Bradford. In 1892, membership was put at 800. By 1900, at the Huddersfield TUC, membership was given as only 284.(52)

The Manningham Mills' strike politicized a town's working class and despite the fact that W.H. Drew of the weavers' union was prominent among the founders, if not the instigator, of the Bradford Labour Union. formed towards the end of the strike and becoming Bradford ILP in May 1891, the impact on weavers' and spinners' organisation in the town seems to have been minimal.

Nevertheless Bradford would appear, in the early years of the twentieth century, to have had a fertile basis for mass organisation of all members of its working class. Margaret McMillan, who was to be the leading spirit in educational reform in Bradford and with the widest national influence, had sensed something of the special nature of Bradford's political life. On her first visit in 1893, addressing a meeting at the Labour Church, she had determined to make the town her home.(53) A well-informed and well co-ordinated band of labour activists

were to bring about some of the first successes of municipal socialism in the town, with school meals and milk being introduced as well as school baths and clinics during the two decades before the outbreak of war. On the trade union front, the dyers and combers had taken pioneering steps in the direction of the closed shop. As with other West Yorkshire towns, Bradford was also to witness growing support for adult suffrage amongst a broad section of the population. Thus The Woman Worker reported a franchise meeting of 60,000 women at Shipley Glen in 1908.(54)

Throughout this period the impact on the union of women trade unionists seems to have been remarkably limited. This was also despite the fact that women predominated numerically in the union, or at least made up an almost equal number to men. Figures which the Association witnesses gave to the Royal Commission on Labour show that in the 1890's women were outnumbering men in the union. Turner for example, described his 1000 strong Dewsbury branch, in curiously revealing terms as having: '190 men, and the remainder are women'. According to Gee, in Huddersfield the 2000 membership was equally divided as between men and women, while overall in the union, 60 per cent of members were women. Drew's figures for Bradford, estimated so soon after the Manningham strike, show a larger figure than that reported a year later to the TUC. Nevertheless, of the 2000 members, three quarters were women.(55) By 1907, figures were more nearly equal, with men in a slight numerical majority, of 4,200 members, 2000 were women.(56) Despite a respectable membership, there is little evidence that women were taking leading roles within the union, apart from the occasional exception, nor is there any strong evidence which indicates that women were given any special consideration as workers or as union members.

During these years however, there was one spark of hope in the shape of a new and very young member of the union, Julia Varley. She had been brought up in a family with traditions of Chartist activity, and it seems that she entered very early into trade union politics, though the evidence as to precise dates conflicts.(57) Having joined the union before the Manningham strike in 1891, she soon became a branch officer, and according to one source, was a delegate to Bradford Trades Council at the age of 14. It may have been symptomatic of the new union's weakness that such a young worker took on these responsibilities. Nevertheless, she was able and hardworking, remaining Bradford District Secretary for fifteen years and attending three Trades Union Congress meetings in the 1900's as the branch delegate.(58) Those women who did succeed in the union in the pre-war years, Julia Varley and Helen Hillas, both from Bradford, were also active ILP socialists. This may have been due to the slightly more equal role which women played in that organisation, in contrast with the SDF. In this respect they were similar to some leading men in the union who had become leading socialists in their own towns. Julia Varley was elected a Bradford Guardian from 1901, along with Fred Jowett and others. She took an independent role in ivestigating women's conditions, tramping as a casual from Liverpool to Bradford and even spending five weeks in a Central London lodging house. She was also active as a woman's suffragist, and was imprisoned twice for this cause. But whatever local use the GUTW may have had for the skills of Julia Varley it is perhaps significant that in 1908 an invitation to work for the National Federation of Women Workers proved a more attractive alternative. She left Bradford that year and was never to work for wool textile workers again.(59)

Looking at minute books it is not clear that women played

any part at all in union policy making or organising in the years after 1900. Certainly there were individual women who were active and vocal on a number of issues. Such women seem to have had scope for involvement in Bradford rather than in any other district of the union.(60) Even in that town, opportunities seem to have been limited. Outside Bradford and Leeds, in the smaller Yorkshire towns of Huddersfield and Dewsbury, women appear to have played an extremely minor role within the union. Huddersfield had no women district committee members until the war years, nor had Colne Valley. Minute books provide no evidence of any attention to issues relating to women, nor of any special concern to attract women as members in the underunionised areas of the industry, until shortly before the outbreak of war. Reading minute books for the years up to 1912 and 1913 might give the impression that women's membership in the union was insignificant were it not for the fact that actual figures belie this.

A general growth in radical activity and militancy is apparent in 1912 and 1913. As a part of this, broadening and radicalising, Huddersfield, though not Colne Valley district, turned its attention to the question of recruiting and organising women members. In April 1913, Huddersfield district asked the Union executive for 'a woman organiser for a week or two'. A Miss Newton was taken on for a week and six meetings arranged in different parts of the district on successive days.(61) The following year the district began considering the appointment of a woman organiser for an initial twleve month period. Letters were sent out to other unions enquiring as to the terms and wages typically offered. After some discussion, it was agreed to offer an appointment at between £2 and £2 5 shillings a week. Preparations were under way, the decision had been ratified by the bi-annual members' meeting, when war was declared. The appointment of a woman organiser was then

immediately suspended.(62)

Julia Varley's departure and the minimal involvement of women in trade union affairs would suggest an element of blocked mobility existed for women within the union structure itself. This mirrored the situation as it existed within the mills. That this was not untypical, even in areas of majority membership and organisational strength, such as cotton weaving, has been graphically described elsewhere.(63) However, what was unusual in the Yorkshire case was that leading men in the union had for decades supported women's suffrage and the issue of a minimum wage for women workers.

Allen Gee and Ben Turner had been consistent champions of women's suffrage and taken part in various activities and functions which sought to improve women's civic and economic powers.(64) Both Turner and his wife had supported the women from the early days in 1884, when the union had its own petition on the issue of the vote and had taken part with its banner in one of the mass demonstrations organised by the National Society for Women's Suffrage.(65) It was Ben Turner in particular who kept the issue of women's, as opposed to adult, suffrage before ILP and Labour Party conferences through the pre-war years.(66) Year after year, Turner put resolutions calling for a vote for women on the same basis as for men. In doing so, he, as Hardie, was going against majority opinion in the organised labour movement. It was not until the 1912 Labour Party conference that, after persistent betrayals by Asquith and the Liberals, a resolution pledging the Labour Party in Parliament to support only those Franchise Bills which included women was passed. Turner, as chairman of the conferences spoke strongly in favour of women's suffrage:

> 'I trust that manhood suffrage may not be accepted by men, unless sex disabilities are removed. Fight for the whole,

but have something like fair play for women or refuse the half loaf of manhood suffrage.'(67)

Despite their national reputations, the GUTW's leaders appear to have had a marked lack of success in mobilising or supporting women in their own industry. A partial explanation of this could lie in the division which Gee and Turner appear to have maintained between women's civil and production rights and in the persistently paternalistic language in which women's membership was discussed. From the 1890's onwards, when questioned about women's poor showing in their union, Gee and Turner consistently stressed a need for education, the role of men and the problematic aspects of women's involvement.(68) The language of paternalism and marginality and the emphasis on the problematic nature of women's trade union membership provided no encouragement to recruitment of and participation by, women members. Moreover, the position taken by key members on the question of one particular issue, married women's work, can be seen as reinforcing the marginality of women's productive role. The qualifications attaching to women's status, then as today, specify dependency both before and after marriage. However, attacks on married women's employment can be seen as having important implications generally for women's productive status, since by diminishing this category of labour, inevitably the importance of men's role was exalted and emphasised.

Union witnesses at the Royal Commission on Labour in 1891 had been particularly critical of married women's work. For example, J.W. Downing, president of the West Riding Power Loom Weavers' Association complained that in his Huddersfield District there were:

'scores, hundreds, of able-bodied men walking the streets, good weavers, who cannot get employment in consequence of women's labour. I should like to speak more particularly of the married women's labour. I think myself, ... that it is a disgrace to humanity to see married women pulling their children out of bed in the morning, wrapping them in shawls, and taking them in all kinds of weather — in

some cases half-a-mile — to nurse, so that they can go into the mill, and in the long run take the men's places and throw the men into the street.' (69)

Those who favoured restrictions on married women's employment were supported by employers in the industry.(70) Turner's views on the question and his ideals of relationships between the sexes were expressed in his poetry. In 'If Christ came to Dewsbury', he describes the many social and economic problems Christ would encounter and the remedies he would advocate. In particular:

'He'd point to women's wages, and ask if it were true
That married women's toil was sought and children left to roam
Without a mother's guiding hand, and spoiled was many a home? ....

He would not feel surprised because some homes were not as clean
As houses He would like to see where human beings live.
He'd know the women could not work, and to their houses give
That full attention they should have.' (71)

Turner appears to have had a happy married life and his family of five daughters played active roles in aspects of his public life, as mayor, trade union official and lecturer. Living in Batley, he had witnessed the low wages, poor conditions and double workload of the married women worker. This was to make him keenly aware of the cruel contradictions faced by many working wives and mothers. The result was that in his poetry, married couples are portrayed as partners in life, mates in a joint endeavour. His husbands are not portrayed as masters or supermen, nor his wives as mindless submissives.(72) Nevertheless, the segregation of spheres of interest and competence is clearly expressed. As a non-denominational evangelist of Christian ethics(73) he was as much an advocate of better human relationships as a portrayer of real life. Having been brought up and continuing to live in the heart of a textile community, he must also have been

daily aware of marriages which in no way resembled even the limited ideals which he advocated.

Within the union there were differences in the emphasis placed on the impact of married women on the labour market. Turner and Gee, while regretting the double workload of working mothers, tended to advocate the raising of wage rates, both men's and women's, as a means to making paid employment for a mother less essential. In their industry, they saw married women's work as an aspect of general low wages, uncertain earnings and poor working conditions. Nevertheless, deprecation of married women's work and the segregation of work roles without demands for the means to ease the married woman's position and without mention of the rewards of work for a woman as much as for a man, were part of the marginalising process of discouragement for the woman trade unionist.(74)

There were others too in the union who took a less tolerant view, even after the worst aspects of the Great Depression had been overtaken. Occasional references to married women in district minutes betray attitudes of criticism and a desire to exclude. In Colne Valley, the only reference to women workers as such in district minutes, between 1910 and 1914, is in relation to an item on an agenda for discussion with employers in July 1914. The question of married women's labour was earmarked for discussion when establishing priorities amongst workers as to lay off during a trade depression.(75) In Huddersfield, in 1909, weavers at a mill objected to a man being appointed as collector, 'owing to his wife working'. The District Committee gave the weavers permission to call a meeting and suggest another collector.(76) Apparently the work of a wife was equal to a collector's commission.

Even the Yorkshire Factory Times carried a number of articulate and outspoken criticisms of married women's work. These were written by Jessie Cockerline, a weaver, who became secretary of the new ILP branch at Clayton, Bradford, in 1915, where she was outspoken as a member of the party's pro-war minority.(77) Her argument was that low average wages in Bradford were caused to a large extent by married women who accepted low wages and who presented problems for organisation because of their 'domestic activities'. She advocated a three-point programme for Bradford women workers which would seek to build the union and abolish child and married women's labour. In 'Married Women's Labour. A Blessing or a Curse?', she took the union's executive to task for not taking a stand against married women's labour.(78)

Statistics reveal that married women's labour played a much smaller part than critics such as Jessie Cockerline were suggesting.(79) As in Lancashire, there were differences between towns. With a national figure of 10.3 per cent of all women workers being married, West Yorkshire women showed a higher rate, though not so high as parts of Lancashire.(80) However, if taken as a proportion of all workers in wool textiles manufacturing, married women constituted only a relatively small group. Beliefs in the depressive role of married women's earnings seem to have played a greater part in shaping policy rather than any 'hard facts'. Apart from the question of absolute numbers, the very existence of arguments which sought to exclude one group of workers based on assumptions of less eligibility and allegations of 'greed' added to the already marginal status of women as productive workers.

Many women undoubtedly enjoyed working outside the home for a wage and were fortunate to encounter no obstacles to this, before or

after marriage, with or without children. Others had no choice in the matter, faced with inadequate earnings, large families, illness or other expenses, work was a continuous experience. But there were too those who, through education, family, leisure patterns, popular culture, had come to view themselves primarily as domestic workers in the home. The frustrations of Turner, Gee, Julia Varley and Jessie Cockerline were born out of real situations as were the fears of men workers, supporting families, who had watched their wages decline through the 1880s and 1890s. Nevertheless it would appear that women did join the union at least in numbers as respectable as those of men, though not always from all sections of the industry in similar proportions and there is no evidence that these rates were determined by marital status.

Within unions themselves, the practice and interpretation of sex segregated roles in home and work, led to many informal and formal limitations on women's activity. Barbara Drake, documented the ways in which, though numerically dominant, Lancashire women rarely rose to occupy positions of responsibility within their unions. Many of the points which she makes also apply to Yorkshire women. Thus the holding of union meetings in working men's clubs, many of which were not teetotal, and after working hours, at a time when women were likely to be involved in domestic work, were likely to act as deterrents to many potential committee women. And the collection of subscriptions on a door-to-door basis, while encouraging family membership and enabling a close check on members' movements, tended to prevent collective action based on the place of work and confirmed a perspective in which the demands of home took priority.

For women, definitions of socio-economic role in terms of domesticity had the result of designation as problematic and marginal

in the workplace. Such designations, both imposed and internalised had obvious results for women, whether married or single, and for their participation in the organisations of labour, the trade unions. For men, there were the contrasting implications of power and the status of wage earner. Dependence for women carried with it the superior rights of men. The wage became a matter of family survival but traced through the external and worldly representative of the family, the husband and father. For men, unions were a matter of defence of their rights to work and improving their conditions of labour. For women, the experience was shaped by more conflicting pressures.

The evidence presented in this chapter has suggested that women workers in the wool textile industry appear to have been as willing as men to act in defence of earnings levels and in setting up collective organisations. However, involvement over a longer period does not seem to had led to the maintenance of leading roles within the union. In this respect, women differed very little from men. Overall levels of membership appear to have been affected by trade depression and relative bargaining strengths of employers and labour. But with women there was the crucial factor of marginality at the place of production and a language and practice of socio-economic status which was a discouragement to greater involvement. In addition, during periods of hardship, it was not uncommon for certain categories of women workers to have been attacked by union members for working.

These experiences were not untypical, but surprising perhaps, given the union leadership's backing for women's suffrage, and long-standing commitment to the need for a mass membership of women members in the industry. The evidence would suggest that a certain ambivalence over such matters as women's role in production inevitably weakened

this more advanced position in practice. In addition, as will be argued in the following chapter, the implications of the GUTW's wages policy, as this was to emerge in pre-war years, were in general disadvantageous to women. In contrast with cotton, where leaders of the less skilled women workers in the cardroom and weavers, had made a point of mass recruitment from the 1880's onwards and had sought standard rates as a foremost activity, the GUTW lagged far behind.

For women in the Yorkshire wool textile industry, the advantages of an apparently sympathetic leadership presented few opportunities while women's role in production was not yet clearly established, while leaders continued to speak in paternalistic tones and while women's collective spirit was doubted and not supported or developed within the union's structure. It was, thus, not sufficient for women to be led by men who committed themselves to equal political rights, while inequalities in production and in trade union organisation were allowed to persist without even critical comment.

Notes

1. See ch. 1.

2. See table 2, Appendix 1.

3. Discussed below.

4. The ways in which such definitions were effected within the family are discussed in the following chapter.

5. This was something which Sidney Webb had commented on in an article published in 1891. Of the four reasons which he alleged gave rise to differences in levels of pay, one is given as:

> '.... lower standard, caused partly by a lower standard of life, both in physical needs and in mental demands; and partly by the presence of "make-weights", in the shape of assistance from family or husband.'

Nevertheless concern about the 'family wage' had been expressed by textile witnesses at the Royal Commission on Labour. W.H. Drew, when questioned, criticised employers who:

> 'Instead of considering each individual on his merits consider a family on its merits, and, as a rule the wages of a whole family are just what one person ought to earn.'

Later debates which attempted to establish criteria for determining wages for men and women workers tended to be dogged by such considerations. Thus for example, Rowntree, writing in 1918, was still asserting that 'It is not normal for women to have to support dependents', and 'It is normal for men to marry and to have to support families, and provisions should accordingly be made for this when fixing their minimum wages'. Sidney Webb, 'The Alleged Differences in the Wages Paid to Men and Women for Similar Work', Economic Journal, vol.1, 1891, pp.635-662; C 6708q.5554; B. Seebohm Rowntree, The Human Needs of Labour, (1918), p.115.

6. The Fabian Women's Group in the pre-war years were among those who sought to emphasise the burden of dependents which many working women carried. They estimated that half of all working women contributed to the maintenance of dependents. Such a figure, a rough estimate only, included not only the widowed, separate or single women and their dependents, but also the many thousands of low earning families where women's earnings were a vital contribution to the family budget. Opposition to the notion of the family wage for the man and its corollary, lower earnings for women workers, was based on the assumption that the security of families was dependent on a male breadwinner's earnings. Any attempts by women and their advocates to improve relative earnings were constantly thwarted by these dominant assumptions and the institutions which supported them. During the pre-war period, following campaigns and discussion surrounding the Right to Work Bill and the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, the notion of state support for dependents, the elderly, unemployed and children, was gaining broader recognition. However, in practice, little was done to remove this source of

inequality in earning powers. Despite the experience of war-time production and the payment of separation allowances according to family size rather than the earnings of the father: 'the largest experiment in the State endowment of maternity that the world has ever seen', inequalities in need were to remain a dominant feature of arguments which explained relative earnings of men and women at this time and subsequently. State support for dependents was feared as undermining matrimony and although fiscal policy allowed for the costs of the children of the better off as early as 1909, state allowances on a universal basis were not to be established until 1945. Eleanor Rathbone, 'The Renumeration of Women's Services', Economic Journal, Vol.XXVII (1917); A Bill to provide work through Public Authorities for Unemployed Persons; and for other Purposes connected therewith, House of Commons, March 13, 1908, (Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, vol.clxxxvi, pp.10&sqq); S. & B. Webb (eds.) The Break-Up of the Poor Law: being Part One of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission; The Public Organisation of the Labour Market; being Part Two of the Minority Report of the Poor Law-Commission (1909): See also Rowntree (1918) op.cit., pp.117 & ff where it is argued that women required additional allowance for clothing since without 'attractive clothing' a woman might lose her chances of marriage; Richard Titmuss in 'The Social Division of Welfare', Essays on 'The Welfare State' (1958) shows disparities in fiscal and social welfare policies; Hilary Land, 'Women Supporters or Supported', in Diana Leonard Barker and Sheila Allen (eds.), (1976b) argues that State Family Allowances introduced in 1945 were seen as anti-inflationary as much as of importance to women.

7. See above, chapter 4.

8. Observers in the pre-war years varied in the reasons they gave for this tendency. Some like M. Mostyn Bird complained:

> 'However little fancy she may have for matrimony in theory, she is aware that some dominating male creature is someday likely to appropriate her and her energies to his own exclusive uses ....'

She argued that this immanent Man made young women workers 'content with' poor conditions, low wages and dislike of long training. E. Dorothea Proud felt that young girls needed to be convinced of vocational certainty in their working lives. Even when apprenticed there was a need for convincing them:

> 'that efficiency was necessary for their future, whether they be married or not, and if they could likewise be convinced that industrial efficiency in no way impaired their values as wives and mothers, and would meet with adequate recompense, the human element in production would become much more effective, and the nation would reap the benefit.'

The responsibility for women's apparent neglect of their working role outside the home was frequently laid at women's own feet at a time when successful middle-class women of more independent means were 'discovering' the work-situations of their working class sisters in mills, factories and workshops throughout the country. Newly appointed women factory inspectors while active in condemning sweated working conditions in laundries, shops and workshops too frequently appeared to have felt that further improvements to

women's employment opportunities lay with women individually and rarely sought explanations which lay in the nature of domestic relationships which defined the youngest girl as a mother. Moreover, the benefits of improved training and status in the working situation were largely seen as accruing to the nation and the race rather than to women as a disadvantaged group. M. Mostyn Bird, Woman at Work, (1911) p.3; E. Dorothea Proud, Welfare Work, (1916), p.81.

9. Proud (1916), op.cit., p.79.

10. In time, the skilled worker would continue her attachment to the home as a form of the family's return on investment in her acquired skill:

> 'Those who do stay will more often be in the position of helping than of being helped; the quiet steady girl who is earning good money helps to bring up the younger ones, or contributes to her parents' support. In short, the skilled workers supplement the family income; the unskilled largely shift for themselves.'

Helen Bosanquet, 'A Study in Women's Wages', Economic Journal (1902), Vol.XII, p.43-44. The emphasis on family ties also had its effects on men's employment. Bird (1911) op.cit. observed, 'The man without ties .... is rarely a first class worker', (p.41).

11. Accounts of the exchanges vary. Barbara Drake (1921), is non-partisan, while later historians have been less restrained in their analysis. See, for example, Marion Ramelson, The Petticoat Rebellion (1972). 'It is unfortunate that the first women delegates to the TUC should have been the purveyors of a feminist viewpoint which had no relationship to the real problems or their solution...' (p.103). Sheila Rowbotham, Hidden From History (1972), pp.60 & ff is brief in her account and reveals no clear bias. Norbert Soldon, Women in British Trade Unions, 1874-1976 (1978) sympathises with the WTUL delegates, pointing out Broadhurst's paternalistic and exclusive attitude towards women workers (see pp.19-21). Lewenhak (1977), tends to sidestep the issue by emphasising the League's equal commitment to joint action with men's unions as a basis to prevent wage undercutting (see pp.71-75).

12. See for example the views propounded by Clara Collet in a paper published in 1911, 'as working women have grown independent, an idea is beginning to spread that the bearing and rearing of children and the making of a home are a sufficient strain upon a wife and that she should not be called upon to be a breadwinner also'. This is an entirely modern phenomenon'. Women in Industry (1911) p.14. Compare Broadhurst's famous dictum of some thirty years earlier, at the Leicester TUC: '... it was their duty as men and husbands to use their utmost efforts to bring about a condition of things, where their wives would be in their proper sphere at home, instead of being dragged into competition for livelihood against the great and strong men of the world'. Minutes TUC, 1877.

13. See in particular Appleton's evidence given to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, minutes of Evidence in Lab 5/1, 1917-1919.

14. The origins of these ideals are discussed in Leonore Davidoff,

Jean L'Esperance, and Howard Newby, 'Landscape with Figures: Home and Community in English Society', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, The Rights and Wrongs of Women (1976).

15. See Tables 5 and 6 in Appendix 1, and Figure 6 in Chapter 1, p.34 This was in an area which, with Lancashire and Cheshire, enjoyed above average wage levels throughout the period between 1850 and 1914. See E.H. Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914, (1973).

16. See ch. 1. A very few occupations in the industry, mending, finished pieces, fringeing rugs and shawls and whipping blankets provided out-work in the industry, and still do in some areas. Men might carry home shawls for their wives to fringe at home at night, boys might deliver pieces and shawls in barrows after school. Hartley & Ingilby (1976) op.cit., p.42-43.

17. G.H. Wood Typescript, p.919.

18. See Table 10 in Appendix 1.

19. He had advanced this idea in an article, 'Stationary Wage Rates', Economic Journal, vol.XI, 1901. Here he was interested in influences which maintained a wage rate, though not earnings, at a stationary level over a number of years. He concluded that local influences as well as dependency on an export market and raw materials were factors contributing to the maintenance of a stationary wage rate.

20. See Table 11 in Appendix 1.

21. C 6708 q.4930, 5085, 5442, 5778, 7111.

22. Sources may vary, depending on the figures quoted, but the general tendency seems established. Wage levels, for both men and women fell in the intervening years, from about 1877, rising gradually from the mid 1880's to regain their earlier levels by about 1906. It was certainly true that in 1886, men weavers in Huddersfield were earning at levels approximating to those of the women in 1877, that is, 22/10 and 20/- respectively. However, wage levels as a whole had sunk and it was no longer appropriate toconsider 20/- as a women's wage, since women, by 1886, were earning only 15/6. See also G.H. Wood's notebooks containing references to 'A.L.B.'s Notes in Sep. '07' (p.594 of notebooks) Gee is quoted as having said that there were more men relative to women in 1901, but that latterly the proportions had evened up. He added that 'many men' had 'accepted' women's rates. 'A.L.B.' was A.L. Bowley. Weavers' figures in G.H. Wood's Wage Notes B383 to B637.

23. Rough calculations based on a table in G.H. Wood's 'Wage Notes' B383 to B637 give a 29 per cent drop for women and a 19 per cent drop for men weavers in Huddersfield and District.

24. Gee then goes on to explain that not only were wages affected by this, but earnings too, since:

> '.. a woman will have to wait occasionally for a tuner to attend to the loom, where the man would not wait, and he would therefore get on with the work a little quicker. There are exceptions, I had better say, where some women will turn out quite as much work as men, but they are very rare exceptions indeed.

And when they did turn out quite as much work, did they receive a considerably reduced pay? — Yes, from 15 to 30 per cent, as the case may be.'

It is interesting to note that at a later date, and on, presumably, a less formal occasion, Gee estimated that the odd jobs carried out by men for women could account for only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the difference in wages paid to men and women weavers. The remainder of the difference was made up by men's greater production and resort to overtime.

The question of waiting time was one which caused much hardship and annoyance to weavers of both sexes. But since, as a rule, women were more likely to be subjected to this, it is certain that its effects on women's earnings and output were greater. It was waiting time which tended to lead to different estimates in wages earned by weavers. G.H. Wood acknowledged this when he included in his notes the observation that:

'There is no possibility of determining whether a weaver's looms have both been running the whole time she is in attendance, and therefore no exact time can be drawn between normal time and short time.'

The results for Huddersfield weavers, according to the 1906 Survey, were that whereas men woollen weavers, paid on piece rates, were averaging 26/4, women were averaging only 19/11. C6708 q.4827-4835; G.H. Wood's notebooks, 'A.L.B.'s notes', p.594; Turner (1930) op.cit. pp.336 & ff describes taking a holiday while waiting for a warp in the 1880's. He travelled as far as Nottingham and Hull; 'Wool and worsted' typescript in 'Wage notes', p.939, G.H. Wood; Cd 4545 p.86-87.

25. G.H. Wood, in his evidence to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, was in no doubt that these figures represented absolute amounts. Basing calculations of 'output capacity' on the differences in earnings between men and women weavers, woollen and worsted, in Huddersfield, he arrived at an estimated 22 per cent greater output by men. By the same methods, he calculated a 19 per cent difference in favour of men warpers in the Huddersfield trade. He was confident enough to claim that the difference:

'substantiates the conclusion that in jobs where men and women work side by side, and continuous application is required, a man is on the average worth about 20 per cent more than a woman on time work and earns about that amount more.'

Report of the Committee on Women in Industry, Appendices: Summaries of Evidence, Cmd 167, (1919), p.85-85. Wood's figures on earnings were those collected for the Board of Trade enquiry of 1906.

26. It is unlikely that G.H. Wood attempted any kind of test of his figures against actual production so that his claims for absolute superiority for men weavers and warpers in levels of output require some qualification. It is unlikely, for example, that such very general figures, based as they are on the earnings of some 8000 weavers expressed the particular features of men's and women's employment. There were for example age differences in the composition of the two groups, men and women. While men weavers were spread more or less uniformly across the age groups, up to age 55,

the majority of women weavers were below 25 years of age. Although the basic skills of a weaver were learned in a matter of weeks, experience and length of service could make crucial differences. Older women who stayed in the industry as weavers, without a break, were frequently noted for, and justly proud of, reputations for skills in teaching, efficiency, and, quite frequently, tuning their own looms. Thus length of employment could affect earnings levels and was more likely to be of advantage to men in making comparisons as to output and costs of production. Apart from failing to control for age or experience, G.H. Wood also neglects to standardise for type of product. Huddersfield produced a wide variety of types of cloth, fancy woollens which changed frequently in style, government contract work, including serges and uniform cloths and linseys, woven on lighter 'dolly' looms. Within mills there might be precedents established as to attention from tuners, allocation of work and numbers of looms tended. A tendency to allocate the heaviest and most complex looms to men, could also increase their earnings. Prices were determined by a complex computation of calculations based on numbers of shuttles and picks to the inch. Each additional shuttle being paid for an, in a-dition, there were extra payments for additional healds on a loom. Any difference in output affected earnings since, so far as weaving was concerned, weavers were paid by the type of completed piece. Thus superior skill, experience, the ability to deal with problems without calling for a tuner, and the amount of time spent in waiting for a tuner could all affect earnings. Pieces might vary in length or quality of yarn or in complexity of weave. In addition, in the pre-war years, it was more likely to be men than women who would work overtime or take on a night shift — these extra hours would have their own results for comparative earnings levels. In cotton, equal pay was a recognised formality. Turner (1962) op.cit., quotes Zweig to the effect that interruptions in a woman's working life had the effect of excluding women from the better paying jobs. He further argues that where women and men were theoretically interchangeable, as in weaving, the tendency was for men to be employed in the more profitable work. Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit. discuss the issue of weaving pay and conclude that, '... completely equal pay in the weaving sheds was a myth', pp.95-96.

27. Webb (1891) op.cit. lists 'lack of protective power, through failure to combine', as one reason amongst others for inequalities in women's earnings, p.661. What is being argued here is that approaches to collective action and its institutionalisation need to be viewed more in an entire context of structural and ideological limitations on women's productive role.

28. Accounts of women's trade union activity from the early nineteenth century onwards appear in Lewenhak (1977) op.cit. and Soldon (1978) op.cit. Soldon's account links events more closely to broader political issues, however, Drake (1921) op.cit. still remains the most reliable secondary source for the years up to 1920.

29. Of those unions which emerged during the last twenty years before the turn of the century, the textile and hosiery unions of Huddersfield and Leicester had been the first to admit both sexes without discrimination. The Boot and Shoe Operatives- union admitted women from 1884. Women workers in the cotton industry were in the Amalgamated Association of Card and Blowing Room operatives from 1886, if they were cardroom workers, but not until 1900 if they

were ring spinners. Men and women had, however, been recruited on an equal basis into the Blackburn and Burnley weavers' associations which came together in 1884 to form the Northern Counties Amalgamated Association of Cotton Weavers. By 1891, 2 out of 3 of the 65,000 members of this union were women. Unions which recruited on a general basis, the Gasworkers' and General Labourers, formed in 1889 and the Workers' Union, formed in 1898, had accepted women from the start.

30. Mentioned in Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.7-8. Women's participation in early reform and other political movements in the West Riding are described in Dorothy Thompson, 'Women and Nineteenth Century Radical Politics: A Lost Dimension', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds.), The Rights and Wrongs of Women, (1976) pp.117 & ff.

31. See Appendix 2.

32. In Holmfirth, organisation appears to have developed from a weavers' strike in 1872. Turner talks of this union as still existing in 1879. His father had been a committee member. (Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.17-18). In Bingley, a union had been formed in 1876 following a strike in 1872. It had a membership of 300. this appears to have lapsed by the late 1880's. (Mentioned in E.E. Dodd, Bingley: A Yorkshire Town through Nine Centuries, (1958), pp.162-164).

33. As far as Clegg, Fox and Thompson are concerned, poor levels of organisation had two main causes. Firstly, the relatively late arrival of mechanication in the industry, in contrast with cotton. Secondly, the effects of the Great Depression in the industry were such that numbers employed dropped and there was a shift away from men's employment as cheaper products and cheaper labour were sought. Such an explanation rests on the assumptions that mechanization, factory-based labour, is a pre-requisite for the emergence of trade unions and that organisation amongst men workers was the only guard against a "women's rate" being imposed. As Clegg, Fox and Thompson argue: '... whereas in cotton the male weavers organized the women and brought them up towards men's standards of wages, in wool the women dragged the men down to theirs'. Lateness of mechanization did not prevent organisation in other industries, such as mining or quarrying, nor when it came, did it always facilitate organisation. Clegg, Fox and Thompson (1964) op.cit., p.34.

34. The events of the strike are described in Turner (1920) op.cit. 'The Foundation of the Union in the Heavy Woollen District'.

35. While out on strike, large meetings some 7,000 and 9,000 strong were addressed by the strike committee members and their supporters who included the prospective Liberal M.P. a Mr. J.C. Cox of Belper, Derbyshire. All the leading Dewsbury manufacturers were involved in the dispute, which lasted several weeks during February and March of 1875. The final agreement was signed by the Local Manufacturers' Association and Mrs. Hannah Wood, President of the Weavers' Strike committee. The Women's Trade Union League had been involved from the outset, though it is not clear to what extent. A Miss Ashworth of Bath, a niece of John Bright, donated £10 to the strike fund. It is presumably she, whom Barbara Drake describes as a 'friend' of the WTUL. (See Drake (1921) op.cit.) pp.13-14; Lewenhak (1977) is inaccurate in some details of the strike.

36. Union subscriptions were fixed at one penny a week, with a sixpence entrance fee. It is interesting to note too, that meetings were held initially at the Old School, Batley Carr. This would be a location acceptable to an organisation led and dominated by women and in complete contrast with the usual meeting place, a public house. During the strike committee rooms had been hired at the Albion Hotel, Batley Carr and the Bull and Butcher at Batley as well as the Old School room.

37. Early meetings of the union show it to have comprised women entirely, with four women as auditors. However, after about two months, a Charley Grant, on his own suggestion was made general secretary for a year. Following this, reports Turner, there is a blank in the minute books for over three years, until 1878. During the next years, until amalgamation with Huddersfield and District Power Loom Weavers' Association, the union's fortunes varied. Campaigns to draw in more weaver members seem to have met with little success and an attempt to extend membership to other grades, 'liggers-on', was defeated. By October 1881, the committee was led by men. President, secretary and treasurer were all men, as were four of the ordinary committee members.

Allen Stringer, whose daughter Grace had been treasurer for a short period, was appointed full time collector. He replaced the previous successful candidate who had been appointed after winning support. Kate Conran, one of the original strike committee had been proposed as full time collector, but failed to secure enough votes. Allen Stringer's appointment followed soon after, when the successful male candidate appeared in the County Court 'for monies he had received'. Turner (1920), op.cit. p.105.

38. The Huddersfield union had been founded in 1881.

39. Ann Ellis had been treasurer of the Dewsbury strike committee and a frequent platform speaker. The strike was to project her into a leading role within the Dewsbury and later amalgamated association.

40. Attending the TUC was to bring Ann Ellis into contact with active suffragists, feminists and others who were outspokenly in favour of a more emancipated and equal role for women, both politically and productively. In particular, she became well known to Mrs. Emma Paterson and members of the Women's Trade Union League. At the 1883 TUC she stood for the Parliamentary Committee, but received only 24 votes. Despite this defeat, she played a forceful part in the proceedings, speaking against the extension of the Factory Acts to cover girls under 14 on the grounds that this should be applied to boys too. In opposing the exclusion of mothers of young children from factories and workshops, she argued that the inequality of piece-rate earnings as between men and women woollen weavers was the result of restrictions on overtime and night work. At the following year's TUC in Aberdeen, Mrs. Ellis was to make an even greater mark on proceedings, clashing with Broadhurst over the question of excluding young girls from ironworking and identifying herself clearly with those sections of the women's movement which were opposed to fixing limitations solely on women's employment. Mrs. Ellis and members of the League were resisting the increased attempts to marginalise women's productive role outside the home and the attempt to incorporate this into the programmes of emerging labour organisations. Despite her leading role amongst textile workers at this time, it would appear from the record of proceedings at the 1884 Aberdeen TUC that

her views were not shared by all members of the union she represented. Allen Gee, her co-delegate, spoke in favour of curtailing women's hours of work in the textile trades, on a resolution from the Hosiery workers. Nevertheless, he did support increasing the number of factory inspectors and seconded a resolution which, when amended, demanded that women be granted the same franchise as men. See n.11 above; Turner (1920) op.cit. 1119; Report of 1884 TUC: Drake (1921) op.cit., p.21.

41. Mentioned in Turner (1920) op.cit. p.119-120.

42. Soldon (1978) op.cit., p.73. Yorkshire Factory Times 17.6.04. See also Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit., pp.149-153, for a description of the collection of signatures in Yorkshire in 1901-2.

43. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.109.

44. A branch which opened at Haworth in 1893, though it failed to survive had three women amongst the seven committee members. In Colne Valley, the first committee, at Slaithwaite, which met in January 1894, included three women. However, following amalgamation with the branch at Marsden and the formation of the Colne Valley District, in 1899, the new committee and officers appear not to have included women. Halifax, for example, had at one point a woman secretary, and also Laura Buckley 'a noted Labour woman and one of the Halifax ILP' as a committee member from 1897 until 1900, when she resigned on marriage. And on the Heavy Woollen Branch committee formed in 1892 were a majority of five out of eight, although as normally only men were officers. Significantly, and presumably due to the teetotal views of the new secretary, Ben Turner, the first meeting was held at the Exchange Coffee Tavern, Batley. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.115, 154, 156, 159-60.

45. The strike is described in some detail in Turner (1920) chs.20 and 21, and in Cyril Pearce, The Manningham Mills strike Bradford, December 1890–April 1891, University of Hull Occasional papers in Economic and Social History, no.7 (1975).

46. The Manningham strike was followed by the foundation of the ILP in Bradford and the first of many successful labour candidatures in local politics. Turner compared the impact of the Dockers' strike, initiating as it did trades unionism amongst the unskilled with the Manningham workers' strike which helped:

> '... in making or paving the way for the present Labour dominance on the public bodies and public life of Bradford. This great strike was a hurt to those in it, but it was a blessing to humanity in general.'

Turner (1920) op.cit., p.129.

47. Pearce suggests that this was calculated to gain sympathy from the public. They also took part in street processions, 'the men in front and the women behind, three deep', and in selling draw tickets and in the preparation of food for the soup kitchens. As much as £11,000 was raised during the strike, with donations presented from groups of workers in all parts of England, Scotland and Wales. Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.132-137.

48. Pearce, op.cit., pp.55-56. Cf E.P. Thompson, 'Homage to Tom

Maguire' in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), Essays in Labour History, (1960), where similar comments are made, again without explanation.

49. Isabella Ford played a leading role in trade union activity and early socialist organisations in the West Riding from the 1880's to the period of the First World War. A member of a wealthy silk manufacturing family, her home, at Adel Grange, Leeds, was open to trade unionists and labour activists and she was a well known and popular speaker throughout Yorkshire and beyond. (See E.P. Thompson, 'Homage to Tom Maguire' in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), (1960) op.cit.

50. Some women's unions sent contributions to the strike fund. These were the London Women Bookbinders' Society and the City Women's Amalgamated Boot and Shoemakers' Society. (Turner op.cit. p.147).

51. 'I know all the faces, but cannot remember the names. I knew them all so well, but only Drew ... can I mention by name. I cannot find any record of any of the names either ... The committees were good souls, and they stuck together with the minimum of friction to the last. They worked hard and worked well, and it is due to them that I give them the fullest praise, and the fullest credit for the unswerving attention to the work they had in hand. Some are dead; some are in foreign lands; some are still at Manningham Mills. They were the people who made the movement for wider Trades Union spirit and activity.'

(Turner (1920) op.cit., pp.137-8.) In fact all he could recall was that the women had insisted that he wore a black suit for the picture. As he had only one suit, not black, he borrowed one of Drew's which was some sizes too small. W.H. Drew played a central role in Bradford trade union and labour politics in the period following the mid 1880's. A weaver, he had played an important part in building up Bradford Trades Council. See Fenner Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years (1946) pp.37-38 where the origins of independent labour politics in Bradford and nationally are attributed to Drew.

52. Report of 1892 TUC. The ASD membership was 3000 at this time, while the Woolcombers numbered 1500. Reference to a comment by Will Thorne to a 'new, a poor organisation' of Bradford weavers is made in Yvonne Kapp, Eleanor Marx Volume Two (1976) p.428, n. Thorne wrote his comment in the 2nd Yearly Report of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union of Great Britain & Ireland, to March 31, 1890-91, General Secretary's Address.

53. See Brockway (1946), op.cit., pp.60-62.

54. The Woman Worker (5.6.08) The history of the suffrage movement in West Yorkshire has yet to be written. It is difficult, in the absence of documents such as those which survive for the Lancashire movement, to reconstruct events and networks of support amongst the various groupings in Yorkshire. Despite the enthusiasm with which women textile workers signed the 1901 petition, there is little surviving evidence of any persistent organisation amongst working women. This may be partly the result of a lack of surviving documents, but it may also be due to the fact that in

Yorkshire, those who were active in the ILP were automatically active in the suffrage movement in some way. That is, in contrast with Lancashire, there was no division. People, men and women, if they were socialists, tended to work for the ILP and for suffrage. With such pioneering figures as Isabella Ford and Ben Turner embracing both these issues, and from an early period, in the 1880's, suffrage campaigns took on a rather different development in Yorkshire. This is not to argue for plain sailing for suffrage issues amongst Yorkshire socialists and trade unionists, there is evidence, particularly amongst some men, of hostility and disregard particularly for the more outspoken position of the NUWSS. Thus, for example, 'Jacobus' in the Huddersfield Worker, in 1910, was complaining that in municipal politics women vote 'against our candidates ... (so that) ... it can hardly be expected that we should display much enthusiasm over the introduction of their reactionary influence into the Parliamentary arena as well ... Can they give us no assurances? We are entitled to some consideration. We turn aside from our own work to help them with theirs, ... Even a small instalment of Socialism NOW is of infinitely more importance than the Parliamentary franchise for women. The franchise of itself will fill no bellies and cover no backs ...'. (Worker 12.3.10) In contrast, Ben Turner's in his 1906 Election address stated that he stood for '... Women's Enfranchisement, Adult Suffrage ...' (Yorkshire Factory Times 12.1.06). I am grateful to Gloden Dallas for discussing some of these issues with me.

55. C 6708, q.5692, 4785, 5383.

56. Cd 4651. This is the only report for this period which gives separate figures for men and women members.

57. Lewenhak (1977) op.cit., gives her ages as 13 in 1901, whereas Soldon (1977) states her dates as 1881 to 1952. Soldon's dates would seem to accord with what else is known of her early life.

58. An appreciation of Julia Varley appeared in the Yorkshire Factory Times of 1904, written presumably by Turner, as one in a series of 'Pen and Ink Sketches of Notable Trade Unionists'. The account provides details of her background and work amongst Bradford's textile workers:

> 'She is a Yorkshire young lady all through, though from her refined way of talking one would never gather that she understood and could read, write and talk the dialect ... Miss Varley learnt to weave when she first began work as a full-timer and she joined the Weavers' Association nearly as soon as she commenced working, some time prior to the Manningham weavers' strike in 1891. She has been on the Weavers' Executive locally for nine years, and has also served a term on the Weavers' General Executive. She is a delegate to the Bradford Trades Council, and has done good work for that body. No one is better known in the trade union clubs, for she has addressed numerous meetings with the object of trying to urge the men to enrol the women workers of their families in their trade unions ... Miss Varley had found out how hard it is to get trade union fathers to make their daughters into trade unionists ... For her own part she had been trained to be a trade unionist. The family comprises eight, six of whom are in the union, and

two cannot be. Her great grandfather was a Chartist, and to this may be attributed some of the zeal for Labour which Miss Varley displays. She says her great grandfather was once talking to an old crony when she was a child, and was dilating upon the ways of the aristocracy and the aims of the democracy, and ... she said to him, "what do you mean, Grandfather?". His reply was, "Eh, love, you cannot understand now, but when you get to be a big girl I want you always to think for the people, and live for the people, for it will be a long time before they can do it for themselves"...' (Yorkshire Factory Times 22.7.04).

See also Lewenhak (1977) op.cit., p.124; Bondfield (1951) op.cit., pp.43-44.

59. It was her organisational skill and her eye for impact which helped the women chainmakers at Cradley Heath to win acceptance of Trade Board rates from employers. She became the first woman executive member of Birmingham Trades Council, and in 1912, the first full-time woman officer of the Workers' Union. In the two years before the outbreak of war she was a leader in the successful Black Country Strike movement for minimal wages for men and women. See Soldon (1977) op.cit., p.120; Lewenhak (1977) op.cit., p.125; Hyman (1971) op.cit.

In later years she was to become a pillar of the moderate group within the trade union movement, occupying the post of Chief Woman Officer in the Transport and General Workers' Union at the time of her retirement.

60. At the outbreak of war, Bradford was the only district to successfully nominate a woman to the union's executive committee. This was Helen Hillas, elected in early 1914.

61. Huddersfield minutes 9.5.13.

62. Huddersfield minutes 9.7.14, 10.8.14.

63. See Drake (1921) op.cit. and also the personal account of Alice Foley, A Bolton Childhood, Manchester University Extra-Mural Department & North Western District of WEA, Manchester (1973); Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit. Ch.V 'Weavers and Winders' contains a valuable examination of women's position within the various cotton unions.

64. Allen Gee had, for example, been a founding member of the WTUL's 'Committee of Counsel' formed in 1893. Other early members included Mr. Cross, Secretary of the Northern Counties Weavers, Mr. Mullins, secretary of the Association of Card and Blowing Room Operatives, Mr. Mawdsley, secretary of the Cotton Spinners Amalgamation and Miss Marsland of the Mossley Association of the Card and Blowing Room Operatives. (In Drake (1921) op.cit., p.31, and Soldon (1977) op.cit., p.36.)

It is interesting to note that the old Dewsbury union of the 1870's had, before its amalgamation with Huddersfield, a sub-committee of women active in the campaign for the vote.

65. In the period of later militancy he recalled taking part in demonstrations in London, with his wife and daughters. In addition:

'We had numerous demonstrations in Yorkshire for Women's Suffrage, and many of the leaders stayed at our house,

where every one of us were ardent supporters of the cause.'

Turner (1930), op.cit., p.278. At about the same time, G.H. Wood of the Employers' Association was a supporter of Full Adult Suffrage, speaking in defence of this at the Northern Fabian Conference in 1911.

66. See Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit., p.237-8.

67. Quoted in Ramelson (1972) op.cit., p.158.

68. Textile witnesses at the Royal Commission on Labour in November 1891, only a few months after the Manningham strike could recall only rare examples of women on mill committees. It was suggested that women were unwilling to take on committee work, preferring to leave this to the men. Turner was asked to account for the fact that, unlike other unions, the woollen weavers had made so little progress. He explained: 'It is easier to organise men than women, because the women imagine that they will leave the mill some time'. Just over twenty years later, after a period of upturn in union growth, the explanation of Bradford district's failure to match other districts' expansion was that: 'it is difficult ... because of a large number of women employed in the textile industry'. (C 6708 q.5189-5194, 5816; Annual Report of the GUTW 31.12.14.)

When, in 1900, the League asked trade union leaders to provide their accounts of women's slow turn to trade union membership, Allen Gee was to reply for the Yorkshire textile union. His emphasis, in keeping with his general outlook on life, lay in the need for education as a means to improving women's skills as union members and activists. Typically too, and this was a recurrent theme, he maintained that: 'the men-folk have been to blame in not educating their sisters and daughters...'. This argument tended to lay the onus on the men without suggesting any changed role for women. In emphasising a leading role for men, any independence by women, on behalf of women, tends to be disregarded. Although it is difficult to argue for any direct causal link from expressed views to actual levels of membership and activity, it would appear quite probable that such paternalistic and cautious attitudes were unlikely to spark any confidence in women workers, members or not. Continuing with his explanation, Allen Gee went on to talk in terms of education bringing future change:

> 'When the idea has permeated their minds thoroughly, and they have given in their names to join a union, women have been as loyal as men... one reason which, I think, tends to keep women out of the union is the lack of training which women have had in managing such an organisation as a trade union... When they have been educated sufficiently to do the work of negotiating with employers, and also in keeping the accounts, I think that women will be far better organized than they are to-day; for, after all, it must be admitted that women can understand women's grievances better than men can.'

In contrast, Isabella Ford, who in 1900 was Honorary Secretary of the Leeds Society for Workwomen, emphasised the problems caused by women's social training in submissiveness. In order to become a trade unionist a woman had to be a rebel, this was contrary to all aspects of women's lives:

> 'The political world preaches to women submission, so long as

it refuses them the Parliamentary franchise, and therefore ignores them as human beings. Society encourages selfish indifference amongst women, in that it considers a woman's home must make her sacrifice to it everyone else's home and all public honour.'

She felt that this subservience was not inherent in women themselves but part of their social and political situation. Drake (1921), op.cit., pp.41-42 (quote).

69. J.W. Drew, when asked by Mundella if the prevention of married women's work would not be opposed by both women and husbands, answered that men might support this if it meant that by working themselves they could earn enough to 'keep their wives at home'. He was certain that by restricting the employment of married women, the price of labour could be increased. Gee and Turner, though both deprecating married women's work, did not go as far as Downing and Drew in advocating a total ban. C 6708 q.4999, 5442, 5586, 5711 & ff.

70. Thomsons's, the co-partnership form, of which Gee was a director excluded married women from employment. At Mark Oldroyd's in Dewsbury, married women were not encouraged to seek employment. The comments on Oldroyd's policy are to be found in notes made by G.H. Wood on a confidential report made by Thomas Jones, as part of the investigation into the Poor Law. The original observations were made by an assistant on a visit to the mills in November 1907. (P.1686 of Woods' 'Wages Notebooks', 1638-1703).

Mark Oldroyd, a leading Dewsbury employer and local Liberal, had particularly strong views on the qualities of his workforce, as one of the Essex interviewees recalled:

'You see Mark Oldroyd's people going to work was an education. They all wore shawls. Some of them wore the shawl over their head but many of them wore a hat and the shawl round their shoulders you know, and hanging down and — they knew how to put them on and they were all spotless. And of course in those days everybody wore black woollen stockings and clogs and their clogs shone. They'd such pride in them and they had toe caps of either brass or steel and — the strap over was decorated with either brass or steel, you could see yourself in them, they were beautifully kept. And no — nobody would have gone to work untidy. They — he expected his workpeople to turn out well and they did. He was a very strict man. But — he seemed to get work people who — responded to him ... I passed his — big mill as I went to school. And I would see them when I was coming home for lunch. I would see them coming out you know, crowds of them, hundreds of them and it — it was an education to see those — those girls, they were mostly girls, there were men as well. The overseers were men but — I never saw a dirty scarf — shawl and I never saw a dirty pair of clogs. And one or two of them, when I got older — old enough to be a Sunday School teacher — I — chatted to them about it you know and — they said, wouldn't allow anybody come into out — our works with dirty clogs on. There was a real pride — in their appearance. I expect the others would be with — with the — the better class mills, they would be the same.'

Essex interview, number H.143.

71. Ben Turner, Pieces From a Yorkshire Loom, (1909) pp.90-91.

72. Turner's ideal men and women are described in another poem: 'The Folks I like':

'The manly man is he I like,
One not too proud or humble,
Who won't too freely show dislike,
Nor yet too freely grumble;
Who is not sad
When times are bad,
And not afraid to stumble.

The womanly woman I can prize,
The one you talk to proudly,
Who'se not too over worldly wise,
Yet doesn't talk too loudly;
Whose love is great
For home and state,
And faces danger boldly.'

Turner had an apparently happy marriage, with five daughters, and his personal knowledge of the low wages, foul conditions and double workload of the married woman worker made him keenly aware of the cruel contradiction faced by many working wives and mothers. Other poems depict scenes of the home in terms of domestic harmony and shelter from a harsher outside world. In 'Welcome Whom Lad', a wife is helping her husband relax in front of the fire:

'Cum draw up thi cheer on to th'harthsone, thi feet put on th'fender an'rest,
Awm fain tha's cum whom thro thi wark lad, an' landed safe back to thi nest.
Aw feel so mich better at neet time, when tha's getten safe to thi tea,
Mun it's lonely sometime when thart absent, an nubdy's it haase nobbut me.'

Turner (1909), op.cit., p.78, p.6.

73. Thompson (1960), op.cit., p.289, n.2, included the information from Norah Turner, Ben Turner's daughter, which states that he 'never belonged' to any Church.

74. Towards the end of his life, Gee seems to have adopted a more tolerant, perhaps more realistic attitude towards the situation of married women workers. In an interview reported on the occasion of his golden wedding, Allen Gee spoke of ... 'the employment of women in the mill, Mr. Gee was not prepared with wholesale condemnation, though he admits that it has a tendency to keep down wages, while married women in particular are tempted, when there are men's wages coming into the house, to accept terms which a single women would not, and could not accept. But he does not see any harm in a young married woman going to work, when there is no family, or perhaps one or two babies than can be left in Granny's charge; they can often that way save the money for furnishing a house, which he has often known to be done.' Leeds Mercury, 9.5.25.

75. Colne Valley minutes, 15.7.14.

76. Huddersfield minutes, 9.6.14, 11.6.14.

77. Jessie Cockerline was a weaver and shop steward at Alfred Priestman's Ltd. She contributed many articles to the local labour press. She wrote on themes which included child labour, married women's labour, standing as a candidate in a local election and during the war took on questions of a national and international type. She developed a pro-war socialist line in articles on strikes in war-time and the need to destroy German 'bloodlust' yet was strongly opposed to conscription and upheld the right to strike in war-time. Her activities as a member of Bradford District are also discussed in Ch. 9.

78. The issue had arisen over taking a stand against married women's labour. The issue had arisen over the advertisement which Huddersfield District had placed seeking a woman organiser. No married woman was encouraged to apply. Jessie Cockerline applauded this stand. She attacked the labour of married women for its damaging effect on women and children and rejected the suggestion that employers should make provisions for their married women employees. This was simply a 'palliative'. Women who worked drove their husbands to the public house by baking and doing housework in the evenings. Employers who took advantage of a married woman's need for flexible working hours, in particular the commission weavers, were undercutting prices. By restricting work to men and single women the price of labour could be raised and the employers forced to pay more in wages. Yorkshire Factory Times, 12.11.14.

79. See Table 12 in Appendix I.

80. Eric Hobsbawm in an article, 'Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography' in History Workshop, no.6, (1978), looks at one way in which the language of marginality which was becoming prevalent in the labour movement came to be expressed graphically in union banners and decorative art. He argues that 'The paradox of the labour movement was ... that it encouraged an ideology of sexual equality and emancipation, while in practice discouraging the actual joint participation of men and women in the process of labour as workers'. However, he criticises un-named 'feminist historians' for failing to accept that few married women were in paid employment and that the pattern of the male breadwinner and dependent wife was not simply an ideal, but a fact of life. Estimates as to the importance of a wife's earnings and the extent of married women's part-time, seasonal and casual employment are hard to fix exactly. Evidence which does exist would suggest that Hobsbawm underestimates this. Documentary evidence is sparse on such matters. The census provides few references, if any, to taking in washing, child-minding, cleaning and the many other jobs taken on by women in and around the home. Oral evidence would seem to be more reliable, see especially the work of Elizabeth Roberts 'Working Class Women in the North West' in Oral History, vol.5, no.2, 1977. A much earlier attempt to assess the financial contribution of women's work within the home is that of Ada Heather-Biggs, 'The Wife's Contribution to Family Income'. This was a paper read to the British Association in 1893 and reprinted in the Economic Journal, vol.IV, 1894. Looking at domestic employment, where several members of a family are involved, she took examples from history, as well as contemporary France and East London. In South Staffordshire, the man's 'stint' in the wrought nail trade included the labour of a wife and daughter, although only his name appeared on the master's books. She added: 'I venture to think that a great deal of woman's work in the past has escaped the

notice of economic inquirers through this practice of throwing in (her emphasis) her work with her husband's'. (p.54) And 'At no time in the world's history has the man's labour alone sufficed for the maintenance of his wife and children' (p.55).

Apart from the question of contributing to the family budget, there is also the question of the differential shares which were allotted. If the wage was earned by the head of the household, then very often too, the distribution was also his prerogative. Booth and Rowntree were both familiar with the situations of women and children who starved while the head of the family ate. Subsequent studies of working class families in the '20's, '30's and '40's found that few women knew their husbands' earnings. A wife's 'wage' was therefore a problem for negotiation under such conditions and her own earnings a vital safeguard. (Discussed in Michael Young, 'Distribution of Income Within the Family', British Journal of Sociology, 3, 1952. The analysis is deficient in other respects in that the implications of an ideology of segregated roles by sex are not examined. For women, the implications were low wages, unskilled work and political and social obstacles to successful combination.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCILIATION BEFORE 1914

Relations between employers and employed underwent many changes as industrial production became subject to greater mechanization and closer scrutiny during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Factory legislation and an increased involvement of government through the Inspectorate and departments such as the Board of Trade and its officials reflected one aspect of change. Another aspect was introduced with the espousal of conciliation by some employers and trade unionists as a means to improving industrial relations through the prevention of strike activity.

In recent years, historians of British industrial relations have tended to take up one of two positions as to the effect of the adoption of conciliation on the relative strengths of employers and workers. Based on studies of key industries such as cotton, coal, engineering and building, historians such as V.L. Allen[1] have emphasised the weakened position of the workforce and the institutionalising effect of the development and introduction of conciliation machinery, especially when followed by the adoption of sliding scale agreements. Others, such as Flanders have emphasised the benefits derived from an industrial relations system based on collective bargaining since it is alleged that this:

> '... does more than influence the distribution of incomes and the allocation of resources; it also introduces the rule of law into industrial relations and is, in itself, a step towards industrial democracy.'[2]

A more cautionary note is introduced by Porter[3] when he emphasises the impossibility of measuring the 'success' of any conciliation scheme. Success in relation to some notion of a fixed progression or course of development for either party or in any particular direction can only be hypothesized. Thus Porter is critical of Allen's assumption that conciliation machinery and its operation acted simply as a brake on workers'

demands and brought no positive effect for the workers represented. However, he is under no illusion as to the real limitations which conciliation boards and agreements placed on workers' bargaining power in the industries which he has researched, hosiery, lace, boot and shoe, cotton spinning and coal. Agreements which insisted on restrictions on wage rate fluctuations, or which excluded questions of minimum wage rates or profits from discussion and which employed cumbersome procedural delays were more closely a reflection of employers' perceptions of the situation. Burgess[4] also shows that the development of unskilled and semi-skilled workers' movements in the last decade of the nineteenth century only helped to recommend conciliation to employers in additional areas of the economy. Furthermore, the trade union official came to be valued as a mediator and a controller of what appeared to be an unpredictable and sometimes dangerous element in production. With this attention, many trade union leaders and officials became enthusiastic. Agreements with employers provided enhanced status and power which unruly elements might be less likely to threaten. The ability of such mediators, who were almost exclusively men at this time, to contain and accommodate demands was measured by the existence of agreements with employers and the implementation of the disputes machinery contained in the clauses of such agreements. Burgess also shows that employers and trade union leaders shared a similar perception of an industry's economy and tended to devise and operate agreements according to this common model. That the model was a capitalist one is evident from its various descriptions. In engineering and building it was referred to as 'the state of trade'; in coal-mining it was the 'selling price sliding scales'; in cotton it was 'the margin'.[5] The practical effects of the adoption of such a model were that during periods of recession and of boom the workers' interests were not reflected. Limits

on wage increases, as in the Brooklands agreement of 1893 in the cotton industry and the adoption of elaborate disputes procedure in other trades, tended to prevent opposition to speed ups, price adjustments and poor working conditions. The ability to take action over such issues usually enables an effective response to changes in the cost of living and in the work situation. Once contained within the strictures of institutionalised contacts these responses tend either to dissipate or to become 'unofficial'.(6)

Thus the evidence for Flanders' theory that collective bargaining can not only 'influence the distribution of incomes and the allocation of resources' but also introduces the 'rule of law'(7) seems to be overwhelming, in the case of cotton, provided this is seen as gains accruing to employers and law as defined by them. The employees' benefits would seem to be somewhat less than this.

Opinion amongst trade unionists and employers in the pre-war decades was similarly divided. While some employers, notably those in the cotton, boot and shoe industries, together with some from the iron and steel trades, favoured the development of conciliation and collective bargaining machinery, others were implacably against this. Trade unionists showed a similar division. While some were strongly in favour of conciliation and the development of joint bargaining machinery, others were suspicious. However, in all cases, circumstances and opportunities could alter opinions and actions. Major confrontations with labour, in particular the 1889 Dock strike, the Manningham strike in Bradford of 1890-91, convinced some employers and trade unionists that voluntary conciliation machinery supported by Government agencies such as the Board of Trade was necessary to maintain industrial peace. Beyond conciliation both sides were aware of problems. Clauses which bound employers to a particular level of wage payment could be weakened by undercutting amongst those who had not

signed such an agreement. Trade unions were willing to abide by agreements only while wages and prices remained in unchanged relationship. While prices rose faster than wages in the pre-war period, agreements had only short lives. Recognition that problems of scope were leading to confusion and breakdown led some observers to distinguish between short and long term aspects of agreements. Thus what an employer, Siemens,[8] called 'disputes of fact' and what the Webbs called 'disputes of right' had to be segregated from 'disputes of principle' (Siemens) and 'disputes of interest' (Webbs). The distinction was felt to be necessary since it was clear that problems frequently arose as to whether members of joint committees could or should concern themselves with drawing up further terms or merely restrict themselves to interpretations of existing agreements.

Various attempts were made, following the initiative in the hosiery industry of A.J. Mundella, a liberal M.P. from 1868-95 and President of the Board of Trade from 1892-4, to establish boards for negotiating hours, wages and working conditions in a number of industries during the later part of the nineteenth century. Such attempts were lent support centrally after the formation in 1893 by Mundella of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. Information gathered as to wages, living standards, strike activity, conciliation, organisation and the development of institutions such as Friendly Societies was collected and disseminated by successive labour correspondents and investigators. Thus comparisons as to wages, hours and types of organisation could be made and applied to negotiations.[9] Thus, conciliation boards and conciliatory employers and trade unionists were supported by a sympathetic government department and by legislation of a limited form. By the early 1900's the principle of conciliation in industrial relations was gaining a wider acceptance although its application

was still tending to be more limited than its advocates had hoped. Numerically the number of disputes settled by conciliation remained small. An article in The Times of January 1902[10] showed that between August 1896 and June 1901 out of 3,868 disputes only 113 had been dealt with under the 1896 Act. As late as 1913 only 150 of the 1497 disputes notified were settled by conciliation or arbitration.[11]

The main obstacle to conciliation lay, of course, in the nature of the socio-economic system itself, as both sides of industry were well aware. The incompatible interests of capital and labour could not be united through discussion, even when this was given the solidity of a signed piece of paper containing agreements and penalties. Flanders' notion of a 'rule of law' in the area of industrial relations is ill-fitting when seen in relation to the varying uses to which law was put during this period. Workers were unwilling to accept arbitration or to go beyond the sanction of moral pressure given the experience of the Taff Vale and Osborne judgements.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of the trade union official, anxious to extend membership and organisation, conciliation procedures and the associated goals of standard wages and prices in an industry had an obvious appeal. Establishing norms for dispute and for wage levels conferred an illegality to certain types of activity which were problematic for employers and trade union officials alike. For trade union officials in industries such as wool textile manufacturing, the hope of introducing collective bargaining with the aid of conciliation machinery lent a weak union stature. In some cases it almost reversed what had become the more normal order of events and gave the union the basis to organise and to be heard. Moreover, in an industry distinguished for its high degree of heterogeneity in all sections and at all levels, the establishment of norms

of procedure, district price lists and certain, albeit limited, areas for debate provided a basis for comparison, modification or elaboration on subsequent occasions and in different locations.

On the employers' side there were similar preoccupations not only with the activities of the disorganised sections of the workforce but also with employers who broke agreed rates of payment or hiring practices within a district. Amongst employers too, and particularly was this the case in the wool textile industry in the Huddersfield area, there was dependence on the role of mediator and organisation developed and a paid official was appointed. Fragmented and competitive as the privately owned and managed wool textile industry was, some employers had come together in association at the time of the Great Depression in relation to the struggle over the 1883 Weaving list for Huddersfield. This is not to say that informal and more formal contacts were not maintained throughout the period and before in relation to arrangements over finance, government policy, prices, strikebreaking and of course the isolation of troublemakers in the workforce.(12) The very nature of the industry meant that connections between employers were close and were constantly being renewed through marriage ties and family obligations.(13) What is new about the period after 1883 in the wool textile industry is that employers began to associate formally over a particular issue, relations with the labour force. This association tended to emerge from concern over price fixing, falling profits and levels of wages in the industry. However, the object was a common front as a counter to worker strength and organisation which tended to manifest itself in an increasingly collective and self-sustaining fashion.(14)

There was to be one crucial mediating influence directing the development of the employers' organisation and, inevitably, conciliation in the

industry. This was the appointment in December 1907 of G.H. Wood as the secretary of the newly formed Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers and Spinners Association.(15) G.H. Wood was at this time an active Fabian, who had worked in close collaboration as a statistician with A.L. Bowley collecting evidence amongst cotton and wool employers for the Board of Trade's Earnings and Hours of Labour Enquiry.(16) He came from the relatively humble background of a West Country village tailoring family.(17) After an engineering apprenticeship he was employed by the Bimetallic League as a lecturer and began writing articles on labour issues for the Llanelly Mercury in 1896-7. He became a member of the Fabian society in 1896, remaining until February 1918, though he rejoined briefly in the winter of 1920-21. A self-taught statistician, Wood was to become the youngest Fellow ever elected to the Royal Statistical Society in 1897 and a Guy Silver Medallist of the Society in 1907. During the First World War he was to be chief Statistical Officer to the Department of Wool Textile Production, working as a War Office employee at the Bradford Cloth Office.(18) G.H. Wood, whose politics have been described by his son as 'left of common sense',(19) married a domestic servant also from the West Country, Emma Wilmott, whose own views were staunchly labour and who was to become President of the Huddersfield Branch of the Co-operative Women's Guild.(20) Together they were active members of the Huddersfield Fabian Socialist scene in the pre-war years. It was at their home that national figures such as Margaret Bondfield and R.H. Tawney were given hospitality on visits to that part of the West Riding.(21)

G.H. Wood was to play a crucial role in mediating between the most unbending and recalcitrant employers and the union in the industry. He regarded the organisation of both sides as being of the highest priority.(22)

Articles published in the local and national press under the name "Henry Wilmott"[23] appeared in 1909 and 1910. These urged textile workers to join their union and to seek collective redress against low wages in the industry.[24] G.H. Wood's skills and attitudes to issues such as low pay were to gain him admiration and respect from some labour and trade unionist adversaries, 'the best man we have,'[25] though he differed over questions of trade union rights[26] in law and in later years was to develop the more characteristic position of the professional employers' representative. It would seem to be more than a matter of coincidence that the development of disputes machinery, together with agreements covering work conditions and holidays followed closely after the time of G.H. Wood's appointment.[27] In other parts of the industry, on the manufacturing side, employer organisation and industrial relations remained at a very low level of development in pre-war years.[28]

Collective bargaining and conciliation procedures were late and fairly rudimentary in their emerging. Unlike the Lancashire cotton weaving industry, where prices for different machines, speeds and types of material had long been established and had paved the way for quite elaborate forms of collective bargaining,[29] wool textile trade unionists operated according to price lists having the narrowest reference in terms of both process and district. The negotiation of price lists and their acceptance as a standard within a district was in many ways a precondition for establishing collective bargaining machinery and drawing up longer term agreements relating to disputes. A willingness to draw up price lists suggests a certain form of control and intent on either or on both sides. A price list may be enforced or agreed between parties. But its form denotes a certain attitude to the sale of labour and the conditions under which that sale takes place.

Such conditions and attitudes were to a large extent absent amongst West Riding wool textile employers. Intense levels of rivalry, small size of undertakings and traditions of insecurity of employment in the industry meant that agreed standards within and between districts were rare.

According to Clapham,(30) fashion dictated levels of employment in the industry, resulting in bouts of uncertainty. Evidence from the 1891 Royal Commission on Labour and later enquiries in 1908 and 1912, suggest that there was a day-to-day insecurity and uncertainty which characterised much employment in the industry. Workers entering a mill for a 10 hour shift might find the engine stopped without notice during mealtimes, so they could work - and earn - for 8 hours instead of 10.(31) Some parts of the industry, particularly worsted combing and spinning in the Bradford area, operated on a pool of labour system which effectively casualised employment. In particular, night workers were affected and the least skilled women. At the same time, even skilled trades such as weaving were characterised by uncertainty and periods of waiting, making the calculation of standard and average earnings problematic.(32)

Apart from private lists drawn up at individual mills during the pre-war period there were only two district scales in operation and these applied only to weavers in the Huddersfield District. The 1883 Weavers' Scale for men and women had originated in an attempt by employers to enforce a wage reduction.(33) Never signed by the union, it had nevertheless survived as a district scale and was to form the basis for an attempt to introduce industry-wide price lists in the last months of the war.(34) In addition, a scale for length pattern weaving had been agreed between the employers and the union in 1908. This introduced piece work where time work had been the practice and fixed payments for extras such as scouring and drying, twisting-in and fetching weft if a change made this necessary.(35)

The scale applied only to woollen weavers in the Huddersfield and Colne Valley areas and so was fairly restricted in its impact. Before 1914, Bradford, Leeds, Dewsbury, Halifax, Keighley and many of the country districts had no standard price lists for piece work which could be described as agreed or fixed in any way beyond the most informal or individual.

Amongst hourly paid workers there was to be a limited degree of progress on the wages front in the pre-war years. Following a dispute amongst Colne Valley willeyers and fettlers in 1906, both employers and the General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers, as the union was then known, took steps to improve their local organisation.(36) Nevertheless, further strikes succeeded in 1909 and spread amongst willeyers and fettlers, beyond Colne Valley and Huddersfield to the Heavy Woollen District.(37) On this occasion, Board of Trade negotiators were called in, Cummings, Burnett and later Askwith all being involved.(38) The agreement signed in 1910 referred to as the 'Willeyers' and Fettlers' Charter', fixed hourly rates and laid the basis for permanent conciliation through joint discussion and reference to a mutually agreed arbiter.(39) Thus strike action amongst hourly paid workers, although it brought limited increases on basic wages for a limited group(40) had recommended organisation and joint action to both employers and trade union leaders.(41) Those covered by the 1910 and 1911 agreements were exclusively men in the preparatory stages of manufacturing and mainly in the woollen section of the industry. In the Huddersfield and Colne Valley districts these would be willeyers, teazers and fettlers, working on the raw wool before it was turned over to the spinners. At Ossett, Morley and Dewsbury, in addition to these groups, rag machine feeders, rag shakers and carbonisers and some dyers and warehousemen were included. Such male time-workers numbered approximately a quarter of the entire workforce.(42) Outside and so far untouched by any agreements between employers and trade union were spinners, both men and women, workers in other parts of the spinning processes, twisters, winders, burlers, knotters

and menders, and for the largest part these were women's occupations. In terms of districts, only Huddersfield and the Heavy Woollen District had got agreements controlling wage levels at firms affiliated to employers' associations.

Despite the prestige and standing accruing from recognition as official representatives of the workforce and despite changes in policy and growth in size,(43) there were still large sections of the workforce who remained virtually unprotected and unrepresented by the union. This imbalance in representation was one which was not to be satisfactorily resolved and which was to reduce the union's bargaining strength in years to come. The increased legitimation conferred by adoption of a joint approach to disputes served only to increase this distancing as both employers and union leaders sought to outlaw the 'unofficial' and spontaneous in wages movements during the years immediately preceding the war.

Agreements signed in 1913 followed an officially-led wages movement. These were broader in scope including weavers and woollen spinners and allowed for the setting up of joint committees or councils as well as a fixed time period for the life of the agreements. Although still referring only to Huddersfield, Morley and Batley, both time and piece rates were included for an increased range of occupations.(44) The 1913 agreements marked the beginning of a period of greater militancy amongst broader sections of the textile manufacturing workforce. The GUTW was sharing in the national turn to trade union membership which was typical of the years 1911 to 1914(45) and its adoption of a general title was a declaration of intent so far as representation of the entire manufacturing side of the industry was concerned.

The joint committees allowed for in the 1913 agreements were to be set

up in the event of either side seeking to adjust prices or conditions. Such joint committees or joint boards had had a chequered life on the manufacturing side of the industry in the West Riding. The earliest joint boards to involve wool specifically were district rather than industry based, with certain exceptions. Witnesses to the 1891 Royal Commission on Labour referred to three local joint boards, in Yeadon,[46] Bradford[47] and Leeds[48] with the proposed formation of a joint board in Huddersfield.[49]

The early district boards foundered for a number of reasons. They attempted both too much and too little in that although they appeared to represent the entire industrial life of larger towns, in composition and areas of concern this tended to be solely on the terms of one set of protagonists, the employers. In the economic climate of the late '90's they were not likely to prove appealing to workers' organisation as it was beginning to emerge. Problems facing the textile trade as it encountered tariff restrictions abroad and competition from European textile industries led employers to seek to reduce labour costs. This meant wage reductions and the expansion of employment amongst young people and women.[50] While union organisation on the manufacturing side remained weak, joint negotiations with bodies which accepted employers' definitions of issues were unlikely to be profitable to unions. The result was that little recourse was made to the joint boards, and although encountering some opposition, employers were frequently able to pass on economies to their own labour force without hindrance.[51]

From 1907 onwards there were moves to incorporate the joint approach to disputes in fixed agreements specific to the wool textile manufacturing side itself. G.H. Wood's hand in these developments is obvious, as he sought to improve and regularize contacts with official trade union leader-

ship. This was in part a response to developments in collective organisation on both sides, employers and trade unions. In addition, wage reductions cease to be the predominant cause of strike action after 1906, suggesting that a period of revival in the industry was being experienced. These various factors meant that local committees, independent of other unions and organisations and solely representative of the manufacturing side became a viable possibility. The example set by the dyeing unions[52] and employers and by the Lancashire cotton industry was also to provide encouragement to those who sought to establish permanent machinery for conciliation and management of issues arising between employers and sections of the workforce.

The first steps towards creating the machinery for joint negotiation between employers and unions were made in April 1908 when the document, 'Rules to be Observed in this Mill' was signed by G.H. Wood for the Huddersfield and District Yarn Spinners' Association and the Woollen Manufacturers' Association and Allen Gee for the GUWTW. The rules forbade smoking, cleaning moving machinery and were to fix mealtime regulations. Terms of notice for either side were specified and any disputes over instant dismissal were to be solved by appearance before a Joint Committee which was to have 'full powers of settlement'.[53]

In the years which followed, this Huddersfield-based committee broadened its scope beyond matters of dismissal and became a regular means to resolving disputes. Thomas Hirst, giving evidence to the Industrial Council on behalf of the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association felt that all but the most minor, sectional disputes had been eliminated. By emphasising the notion of fixed rules, stoppages were rendered illegal:

> 'Workpeople are very apt, we find, to commence negotiations by throwing down their work, and by pointing out that in these rules they have agreed to continue working or give one week's notice before ceasing work, it has usually had the effect - indeed, it has always, I think, had the effect - of getting them back to work, and we have been able to settle disputes by negotiation.'(54)

The success of the agreement depended of course on the goodwill of the principal union, the GUTW, as G.H. Wood, the employers' association secretary explained:

> 'They have in two cases actually sent the workpeople back to work. They have said in effect, "No negotiations as to your grievance can take place at all until you are working".'(55)

Gee and Turner at the same enquiry declared themselves as quite satisfied with this 'unwritten basis of conciliation board' as Sir Hugh Bell described it.(56) Both agreed that it needed making more powerful so that all types of dismissal, not simply instant dismissal, could be brought before the members.

This small example of success in establishing conciliation procedures owed much to the fact that mediators from both sides shared similar admiration for the industrial relations structures of the Lancashire industry. G.H. Wood was convinced that friendly relationships with well organised and broadly based representative trade unions were the key to industrial peace and prosperity. His antipathy for low wages, sweating and sectional unions was matched by that of GUTW leaders such as Turner and Gee. Nevertheless there were limitations to this shared vision. Where Wood placed crucial emphasis on the extension of piece work as a basis for standard prices, Gee and Turner were resistant and in this were backed and supported by some of the most militant sections of their union.(57)

The 1913 agreements contained clauses which formalized the practices which had emerged during the previous five years. In the event of a dispute arising between employer and worker as to the terms of agreements or wages to be paid, the issue was to be referred to a Joint Committee

of employers' associations and union for settlement. The decisions reached by that committee were to be binding on either side.(58)

The development of formal conciliation procedures in the wool textile industry of West Yorkshire, though small in scope and late in development in comparison with other industries, showed interesting features which owed much to the world views of key men acting as mediators on both sides. It would be wrong nevertheless to imply collusion or consensus of a complete nature between employers and workers' representatives. Although both were anxious to outlaw independent or rank and file action amongst their own members and although industry-wide standards of pay and conditions of employment were agreed ultimate goals, there were basic issues of dissension. Thus, G.H. Wood seems, from his evidence to the Industrial Council enquiry of 1912, to have favoured the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 and a return to the situation which obtained after the Taff Vale decision. Turner and Gee on the other hand, took a more reserved attitude to the law. Although Gee personally accepted the possibility of fines being imposed by a national authority, he was careful to point out that this was not the view of his executive. Turner felt that he might be prepared to go to prison if an agreement were to be broken by his side, yet with Gee he stressed the need for stronger organisation supported by moral pressure as the answer to the question of control. In their opinion, statutory sanctions would be unnecessary, except as a last resort.

There was too the obvious factor that in terms of scope and defined issues for action, the concerns of joint conciliation in the industry were exclusively employer defined. Although improvements in hourly rates, working hours, holidays(59) and conditions were secured, some without displays of militancy on the part of the union, other areas remained beyond discussion.

Thus, matters relating to profitability, living standards, representation at mill level, rights to trade union membership, unemployment and other issues remained beyond discussion, bound by the acceptance of notions of proper spheres of competence and isolated as matters of 'principle' and 'interest'.(60)

Despite an increase in membership in the years immediately before the outbreak of war, the union could still not claim to represent more than 7000 workers out of a possible 250,000.(61) At the same time, disputes with sectional unions continued to concern GUTW leaders. The formalization of contacts and the claim to represent the majority of workers in the industry helped to lessen the effect of a weak position numerically. By gaining acceptance as the sole representative of large sections of the workforce, wages agitations could be successfully concluded and the union strengthened in reputation.(62) To that extent, the development of conciliation brought recognisable benefits to the GUTW as a representative institution.

Concentration on 'legality' by leaders such as Turner and Gee led to the management of wages movements in such a way as to guarantee agreement over limited short-term issues for fixed periods of time rather than establishing more permanent gains such as wages minima. It cut down on rank and file involvement in negotiating and the exertion of pressure on employers, except to the extent that this was within control. Thus stoppages might be threatened, if they helped speed-up negotiations, but rarely, if ever, sanctioned. An increasingly personal style of involvement with employers as middlemen, controllers of the 'labour' side to production added to this separation from the rank and file and made disputes procedure an attractive goal since this appeared to guarantee industrial peace.

For the employers, conciliation was to be advantageous when changed technology and productivity were being pressed in order to gain benefits

from the expansion of demand for cheaper woollen products.(63) Two-loom weaving, piece work, faster loom speeds and aids such as the pick clock were being introduced on an increasing scale in Huddersfield, Colne Valley and the Heavy Woollen District during these years. Agreements over the introduction of such innovations and the opportunity to contain resistance were essential to employers at this time.

Given the narrow range of effect which joint conciliation had achieved in the industry in pre-war years, it is difficult to attempt measurement of its impact in terms of earnings levels, in the way developed by theorists such as Allen and Porter. Wages overall in the wool textile industry remained low in comparison with other similar trades; nevertheless, wage differentials still characterised the wages structure, with wide variations within and between districts. Clearly those groups which managed to obtain standard increases in wages in the years before the war were those which managed to initiate change through militancy or threatened withdrawal of labour. Thus, men on preparatory work, men and women woollen weavers and worsted weavers in the Huddersfield area and men mule-spinners had gained increases in 1913. Nevertheless, the isolation of strength and the lack of representation of certain groups within the industry, particularly less skilled women and young persons, meant that issues of minimum wages and industry-wide standards were neglected. It is possible that the combination of low levels of organisation and union weakness with an acceptance of joint negotiation further isolated the most marginal and least powerful sections of the workforce. Such differential effects of conciliation are not included in approaches by Allen and Porter.

The bulk of wage gains were, of course, made in the woollen sector, where business was good in the years before the war. The absence of Bradford, Halifax and Keighley from the statistics of wage gains could well

be due to the poorer showing of the worsted trade. Thus, advances gained in the Huddersfield, Heavy Woollen and Colne Valley districts cannot solely be attributed to the advantages of collective bargaining. All that can be safely asserted is that through pressure, representation and negotiation some share of the increased wealth of the woollen sector was acquired for some of its workers at this time. A weak union, facing divided and divisive employers had few prospects for pursuing an alternative line, so that any attempt to project a different development for wages in the industry would seem to be futile. Nor is it possible to speculate about what might have happened in the absence of union control, since a comparable group of workers does not exist within the West Riding. In the West of England woollen industry, where trade unions had made only a slight and intermittent intervention, wages were on average 5 shillings a week lower for men and women workers than in the Huddersfield district.(64)

The outlawing of independent action and the definition of standard procedures shared by both sides were probably the most long-lasting features of the pre-war industrial relations developments in the industry. As in cotton, the acceptance of norms of procedure rather than the amounts of wages and earnings negotiated were clearly formative and defined boundaries of action and limits to independence. The 1913 agreements were given a two-year lifetime. However, war time changes were to shorten this. Despite persistent wages movements during the war years, the growth of militancy amongst previously quiescent groups and a greatly increased influence, nationally and locally, for union officers such as Gee and Turner, the basic scope and form of pre-war conciliation remained. As developed in pre-war years, conciliation benefitted employers, trade union officials and those sections of the workforce more directly represented

and more able to force the pace of settlements. Those sections which remained in a weak relatonship, not only with employers, but also with other sections of the workforce, particularly women workers and more especially those in the worsted trade of Bradford, Keighley and Halifax, remained distanced and disadvantaged while the machinery of conciliation and arbitration was strengthened and elaborated.

Notes

1. V.L. Allen, 'The Origins of Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration', International Review of Social History, lx, (1964).

2. Allan Flanders, Ch.V, 'Collective Bargaining' in A.D. Flanders and H.A. Clegg, The System of Industrial Relations in Great Britain, (1954), p.316.

3. J.H. Porter, 'Wage Bargaining under Conciliation Agreements, 1860-1914', Economic History Review, XXIII, (1970).

4. Keith Burgess, The Origins of British Industrial Relations: the nineteenth century experience, (1975).

5. Ibid., p.311.

6. Burgess shows how the Brooklands Agreement fixed a five per cent limit on wage increases at a time when prices were rising continuously. At the same time, workers were isolated and increasingly took 'unofficial' action in attempts to both improve conditions and increase wages. After twenty years the principal cotton unions withdrew from the Brooklands settlement, but the style of the agreement and its workings had left a mark and quite possible had more long term effects on collective bargaining in the industry. Op.cit., pp.288-290.

7. Flanders (1954), op. cit.

8. Siemens' distinction was made in a memorandum submitted to the Industrial Council's Report on Enquiry into Industrial Agreements, Cd 6952 (1913), pp.20-22.

9. The Liberal Government of 1892 came under pressure and criticism for its expenditure on labour matters in general. Moreover, its employment of 'outsiders' such as the first three labour correspondents under the Chief Labour Correspondent, John Burnett, himself a trade unionist and early advocate of conciliation, reflected the type of influence and experience which the Labour Department and with it

more advanced sections of employer thinking and the more moderate of the trade unionists were bringing to bear on the field of industrial relations. Charles Drummond was a conservative trade unionist and secretary of the London Society of Compositors, John James Dent had, according to Wigham, 'experience with co-operative production and with working men's clubs. Clara Collett had worked on Booth's survey into the living conditions of the poor in London. These three and other members of the Labour Department, working in conjunction with thirty local correspondents who were frequently trade union officials, provided the statistics and analyses which helped to shape the developing industrial relations policy of subsequent governments. The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour had shown the interest of many witnesses in casting the notion of conciliation in some legal form. It was felt that government had a role to play in upholding the principle of conciliation. However, the ways in which this principle could be upheld were not agreed. Some witnesses quoted the compulsory arbitration which was due to be introduced in New Zealand and some Australian states. Wigham contends however that opinion in the Board of Trade was against compulsion and in favour of voluntary conciliation and arbitration operated through boards representing entire industries. The outcome of this debate in statutory terms was the 1896 Conciliation Act. This was put through parliament by a Conservative administration and only went as far as to empower the Board of Trade to appoint a conciliator or a board of conciliation should a party to a dispute request this. Such an appointee could enquire into causes of disputes in order to attempt rather than enforce a settlement.

Eric Wigham, Strikes and the Government, 1893-1974, (1976) contains a detailed account of the political background to the emergence of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade.

10. Quoted in Wigham (1976), op. cit., p.15.

11. Throughout the early years of the century the conciliation party continued to put pressure on government, employers and trade unionists. It was now greatly aided by the able and vociferous Charles Macara who had played a leading role in drawing up the Brooklands agreement and who was president of the Employers' Parliamentary Association from 1912 to 1916. The events of 1911, when railwaymen and dockers were in open conflict with employers gave the conciliators the chance they needed to advance their case. A campaign launched through the press and in questions to ministers in parliament drew attention to the proposals of Macara. These were that a central body of employers and trade unionists should be established and that disputes would then be referred to this body for investigation or arbitration. Asquith was sympathetic and the government was under considerable pressure to make some gesture. Providence took a hand for on the very day that Asquith had arranged a meeting to sound out employers and trade unionists as to Macara's proposals, 15th August 1911, the railwaymen's unions had decided on strike action and troops were firing into crowds at Liverpool. The outcome of deliberations and discussions was the formation of the Industrial Council with George Askwith in the chair under the title of Chief Industrial Commissioner. Askwith had a legal background and experience since 1896 as a negotiator under the Conciliation Act. In 1909 he was appointed Comptroller-General of the Commercial, Labour and Statistical Departments of the Board of Trade. Davidson sees Askwith as

typical of leading opinion in the Board of Trade at the time. While maintaining a strict adherence to established law and precedent he had some sympathy for trade unionists' demands and was critical of employers who depersonalised workers and viewed them as expendable and a reducible cost of production. Askwith's autobiography reveals an informed and often perceptive appreciation of the frustrations and fears of trade unionists. Visits to the scenes of industrial disputes such as the Belfast transport strike of 1907 and the dock workers' strikes in Hull, Manchester and Liverpool in 1911 gave him first hand knowledge of the real deprivation which led to strike activity and which, not infrequently, accompanied it. Macara had hoped for a new government department to deal specifically with labour affairs, however this was not to emerge until recommended by the exigencies of a war situation. The Industrial Council over which Askwith presided comprised thirteen men from both sides of industry. The employers were from those industries which had experimented with and adopted conciliation machinery in some form, iron and steel, the railways, cotton spinning, boot and shoe, shipping, building and engineering. The trade unionists appointed tended to represent moderate opinion and included Clynes of the Gasworkers and Mosses of the Patternmakers. Although the Industrial Council had its own conciliation department and premises its effect on the development of industrial relations in the direction which Macara had intended was limited. Its terms of reference were vague and its powers nonexistent. Trade disputes referred to it were to be investigated and advice supplied - however no compulsion was included and no penalties could be attached. Charles, in assessing the work

of the Industrial Council, concludes that its composition was of moderates who sidestepped the real issues which had led to the events of 1911. Mass poverty and a refusal to accept this condition, he argues, could not be solved by conciliation. Furthermore, the lack of conciliation and negotiation procedures at a local level in most industries prevented the effective development of machinery which could have any lasting significance at a national level. Charles' conclusion is that the Industrial Council's main effect was in the consolidation of moderate opinion. In general its interventions into disputes were unsuccessful although it did have some influence during the 1912 mining strike. To Macara's dismay his own industry refused to use the Council's machinery in 1911 when the North-East Master Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Association would not call it in during the cotton lock-out.

The one main report of the Industrial Council following its Enquiry into Industrial Agreements and the minutes of evidence indicate no definitive statement on government role and rest on the force of voluntarism based in greater organisational strength as the means to securing joint agreements. Although some members were keen to advocate powers to enable the extension of the terms of agreements to all employers and workers in a given district, whether signatory to agreements or not, other members dissented. Its minutes of evidence, as we shall see, present an interesting account of moderate opinion from the evidence of employer and trade union witnesses and reveal the intentions and policies of its members through their lines of questioning and suggestions to witnesses.

References: Roger Davidson, Introduction to, Industrial Problems and Disputes, autobiography of Lord Askwith, first published 1920, new edition, 1974.

R. Charles, S.J. The Development of Industrial Relations in Britain,

1911-1939, (1973); Wigham (1976), op. cit., p.31; Industrial Council, Enquiry into Industrial Agreements: Report, Cd. 6952, (1913); Minutes of Evidence, Cd 6953, (1913).

12. See Ch. 3, p.101.

13. Public companies were a relative rarity in the industry and the role of the dynastic family a well-known feature. See for example the Crowther family of Milnsbridge, Golcar and Marsden mills.

14. Apart from the Yeadon employers who had their own association and the separate organisations for employers in dyeing and finishing and in woolcombing, there were only two associations for employers on the manufacturing side before 1907. These were the Huddersfield Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association which had been established in 1883 and the Association of the Woollen and Worsted Manufacturers of Huddersfield and District which is first mentioned in the Directory of Industrial Associations in 1902. In 1907, a split occurred in the first of these two associations when the fine cloth (worsted) employers broke away to form separate organisations to represent their own special interests. Both trade and labour issues were a basis to employer association. The organisation of employers outside the Huddersfield and Colne Valley areas tended to be organised through chartered accountants often working on behalf of Chambers of Commerce. Thus agreements with Dewsbury, Batley, Ossett and Morley employers had been arranged on an ad hoc basis in 1910 failing attempts to establish more permanent organisations based on these towns. In Bradford and Leeds, employers' organisation emerged only in the years immediately preceding the war.
See H.A. Clegg, 'The Employers' in Flanders and Clegg (1954) op. cit., for a general description of the growth of employers' organisations.

15. The secretary of the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association of Huddersfield and of a similar association covering Leeds, Bradford

and the Halifax Districts was W.H. Hughes, a Huddersfield chartered accountant.

16. Cd. 4545, (1909), see above p.31.

17. Details of G.H. Wood's background and life have largely been compiled by Andy Johnson at the Library of Huddersfield Polytechnic, where G.H. Wood's notebooks and collection of books and pamphlets have been deposited. An interview with Miss D.M. Wood (transcript supplied by Huddersfield Polytechnic Library) has provided details of her father's family life and political activities. G.H. Wood wrote the programme introductions to delegates at the Bristol T.U.C. in 1898 and first met A.L. Bowley at a meeting of the British Association in Bristol in the same year when he was 24. He began collaborating with A.L. Bowley in 1899 and was producing articles on wages for the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society on a yearly basis until at least 1906. From 1903 on the recommendation of Miss B.L. Hutchins to whom he had been private secretary he worked for the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, though was never an established civil servant. (I am grateful to Roger Davidson of the Department of Economic History, University of Edinburgh for details of Wood's involvement with the Board of Trade.) G.H. Wood appears not to have had a very high opinion of the Department, 'I was on the staff of the Board of Trade, and, of course, that being a Government Department, nobody does anything in particular there'. (From 'A Talk with a Statistician' by 'Autolycus' in Yorkshire Factory Times 1908). Wood's connections with the northern Textile industries were created when he was employed on the Earnings and Hours Enquiry as an investigator, first for the Cotton Trade and then for the Woollen and Worsted

Trade. Miss D.M. Wood tells how when at Huddersfield, at a firm, '... it was put to him about the Federation they were intending to form and said they needed a Secretary. They outlined the job and said that the Secretary would receive a salary of £500. My father said that they would get people from the Civil Service applying since the salary was twice the amount he was getting in London. The next morning when he went in they offered him the job and he accepted. My mother hated the idea of moving to Huddersfield, but said they must because it was best for the family. £500 was a very comfortable salary and you could live well with some to spare.' Ben Turner's salary as a union official was about £100 p.a. in 1914. See Turner (1930) op. cit., p.99.

18. See Ch. 7.

19. Information from Geoffrey Wood, (younger son) provided by Andy Johnson.

20. Emma Wilmott was 'a Labour woman' according to her daughter. Her family were Somerset farmers. Born in 1871, she had only four years' schooling before she became a pupil teacher and then parlour maid. In Huddersfield she became, with her husband, an honorary member of the Huddersfield and District Co-operative Friendly Society and later the first woman director of the society. As well as being President of the Huddersfield Branch of the Women's Co-operative Guild, she was, in 1915, Vice-president of Huddersfield W.E.A..

21. 'Margaret Bondfield always stayed with us when she was in the North. She stayed as long as four months once. We always hoped that she would be Prime Minister, but she was a very loyal servant of Clem Atlee', (From interview with Miss D.M. Wood).

22. To the Industrial Council Enquiry of 1912 he described the organisation of employers in much the same way as any trade union organiser:

> 'I have talked to employers in other districts until I am nearly tired of it. I have got to do it again until it is done. But there are one or two very large men in the trade who are regarded as indispensable (you had this in the cotton trade, but you have got over it) and put themselves on too high a pedestal to associate with their fellow-mortals in manufacturing'

Cd. 6953 q. 5541.

23. Under the name of 'Henry Wilmott' he published five articles in the Socialist Review in 1909; as a 'Well-Wisher' he published 'Sweating in the Yorkshire Textile Mills' in the Yorkshire Factory Times. This last article, which appeared in April 1909 appears in full in Appendix 4. See also Ch. 2.

24. Wood greatly admired organisation amongst cotton workers and recommended their acceptance of piece rates and the 'universal adoption of the principles of collective bargaining'. He argued his case forcefully in The History of Wages in the Cotton Trade during the Past Hundred Years (1910), p.143.

25. Turner said, of the employers, 'They never found a better man... he lives with figures and statistics' (1920), op. cit., p.78. Miss D.M. Wood, who 'worked in the Federation from the beginning as my father's secretary' recalled that; 'once during one council meeting when the employers and the Union men had separated to discuss proceedings I walked through the room where the Trade Union men were. Allen Gee, he was a cantankerous old devil, was grumbling about my father, but one of the others said "Don't be daft, he's the best man we have". (From interview with Miss D.M. Wood).

26. Wood took the position of supposed equality of employers and trade unions before the law and favoured a return, in 1912, to the position which had obtained after the Taff Vale judgement. See his evidence to the Industrial Council Enquiry, Cd 6953, q.5600, q.5605.

27. The agreement regulating holidays was signed in December 1911 by representatives of the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association, the Huddersfield and District Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association, the Huddersfield and District Yarn Spinners and the GUTW. Following a ballot of all GUTW members it was agreed that from 1912 there would be a total of 12 days holiday in the industry. The main holiday period was to be the six days after the first Sunday in September. (In the 'Wool Textile Agreements, 1883-1925', NUDBTW collection, Bradford Local History Library).

28. The only other employer body which could claim majority organisation in the industry, on the manufacturing side, was the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association, also based in Huddersfield. Apart from co-signing the Teazers and Fettlers' agreement and the scheme covering holidays, it had only completed isolated agreements with a number of skilled trades in 1912. (See evidence to Industrial Council Enquiry, Cd 6953, q.8064). However, in 1913 the worsted employers were to join with the Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association and the GUTW in signing an agreement which was much broader in scope. (See below, p.202).

29. In the cotton industry, price lists had been drawn up at an early stage of union growth. The first example was the Blackburn weaving list of 1853. This list, agreed to by both sides established criteria for earnings according to changes in the quality of material and in conditions of production. It provided a basis

from which local differences could be calculated thus enabling the isolation of firms which sought to undercut. Implicit in the Blackburn list were the notions of fair competition between employers and a fair weekly wage. These reflected the attitudes of employers and trade unionists alike. Writing in 1910, G.H. Wood noted that the list was still in use in some mills but that it and other early lists originating in Burnley, Preston and Blackburn had generally been superceded by more universal lists covering whole sections of the weaving and spinning sides of the industry throughout Lancashire. Many Yorkshire observers took Lancashire practices as their model with regard to price lists and organisation. Wood was in no doubt that the lack of standard price lists, together with a lower proportion of piece work in the West Riding Wool textile industry, contributed to its lower levels of efficiency and lower wages. Another contrasting situation, and one even nearer to home was to be found in the dyeing and finishing sections of the woollen industry, at least in the Bradford and Huddersfield areas. In 1894, the Amalgated Society of Dyers had made an agreement with the employers in Bradford which incorporated a number of features which were to remain unique in the industry. The agreement included a fixed minimum standard of wages for the various districts covered and established a wages board comprising equal proportions of employers and workmen. Initially the agreement provided for a closed shop though this was subsequently amended to allow non-union men to be taken on pending membership. All vacancies in the original agreement were to be filled through the union. The reasons for this contrasting situation I do not intend going into here. Briefly, the

two main factors to which contemporary and subsequent accounts give prominence are the predominantly male membership of the dyeing sections of the industry and the tendency towards amalgamation and association amongst employers. The first combine, amongst piece dyers, was formed in 1893, to regulate prices. After various attempts to strengthen this arrangement, following the breaking away of a number of firms, the combine was re-formed in 1898 and re-named the Bradford Dyers' Association. This group virtually monopolized piece-dyeing in the West Riding. In 1899 the BDA drew up an agreement with the unions, enrolling dyers as members, which carried on the principles of the 1894 agreement. Employers in the dyeing trade were quick to appreciate the advantages of co-operation and uniformity in their approaches to unions. The union leadership on its part was no slower in recognising the advantages of acceptance and agreements with employers. (See below, n.52).

See G.H. Wood (1910) op. cit., pp.146-148; Walter Bateson, The Way we Came, (1928), (the history of the Amalgamated Society of Dyers); Clegg, Fox and Thompson (1964) op. cit., pp.189-190, contrast the weakness of Lancashire Dyers' organisation with the strength and assurance of Yorkshire Dyers' unions. Interestingly this was quite the reverse of the situation on the manufacturing side of the two industries.

30. Clapham, (1907), op. cit., p.180 and ff.

31. At the Royal Commission on Labour in 1891 Allen Gee appeared as a witness and was questioned by Mundella as to the varying rates of demand for labour:

(Mundella) 'What wages do the men earn under this scale?- If they are paid according to the scale their wages will vary according to the quantity of work or the time that they

> work. A man fully employed for a year on this rate, that is, fairly fully employed - we never expect in the weaving trade to be fully employed - for instance, if a man finishes a warp - at the very earliest as a rule it will take, say, three to four hours - if a man finishes a warp at dinner-time he would very rarely expect to begin again the same day.'

In woolcombing, as the woolcombers' representatives explained to Sir Frederick Pollock the situation was even worse:

(Pollock) 'I should like to get from you, please a little more clear evidence about this matter of making new rules without notice. I suppose the engagements run in your trade from week to week; there would be a week's notice on either side?- No.'

'What notice would be given?- None at all.'

'A day's notice?- No; as soon as ever you have done, you are told to go, either in the middle of the night or the day.'

'Then a man may be taken on without a day's notice or discharged without a day's notice?- (Mr. Marran) That is so. (Mr. Shaftoe) As a rule they go to the firm at night at six o'clock; if they are required they start; if they are not required they are told to go home; if they work three nights, as soon as the three nights are up they are discharged till they are wanted again.'

'In fact there is a new engagement every day?- Yes; there is no notice of any kind given by either party.'

(Royal Commission on Labour: Minutes of Evidence, C 6798 (1892) q.4820; q.6177-6181.

Mr. Harry Smith, Secretary of the Bradford Cinderella Club, explained to the Committee on Partial Exemption in 1908, why men were under-represented in textile employment figures. This was due partly to the fact that few skilled jobs were available but also because,

> '...these figures for the whole trade include many of the unskilled and irregular occupations, such as wool combing, in which the work is very irregular, and the wages are very low. It is a sort of casual employment. The work is mostly done at night, and the men go and stand at the mill gates and await their turn. If they are picked by the manager they get a night's work, and, if not, they have to go home. It is very casual and very irregular. The figures also

include the dyers whose labour is quite irregular and unskilled and very poorly paid.'

(Report of Committee on Partial Exemption from School Attendance: Minutes of Evidence, (1909), Cd 4887, q.3893).

Mr. T: Hirst an employer and member of the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association appeared as a witness at the Industrial Council's Enquiry into Industrial Agreements, in July 1912. He is asked by Mr. Siemens, a member of the Industrial Council:

'Your talk about stopping the engine during mealtimes; did you give notice to the men?- (Mr. Wood) Not in this case; there was no contract. (Mr. Hirst) The night workers did not come under these rules, and they are not subject even to a week's notice.'

'I am not talking about the rules. You said that you got on with your men very well?- We did not give them notice.'

'Do you not think that would provoke them?- No. They have an arrangement of a certain price per hour, and I do not think it is provoking them to reduce the hours.'

'I do not know. Would you not consider it provoking if you thought you were going to a mill to work 10 hours and get 10 hours' pay and then on a sudden you were told, No, we will allow you only to work eight hours?- That is taking away two hours' pay without notice?- No. It is part of the business that there are two processes going on, one is carding and the other is spinning; the carding finds the material for the spinning. The spinning had got behind and it was not necessary to run the carding for the mealtime. The men, therefore, could see this was a necessity....'

'I only put it as a bit of good feeling; would it not help you in dealing with your people to tell them beforehand? If there is good reason for it, so much the better. Would you not have avoided the trouble by telling them?- We did not expect them to object to it.'

(Cd 6953, q.5648-5651.)

Note the employers' assumption that the workers would understand the logic of their situation and accept it too. Writing some ten years earlier, a German observer, von Schulze-gaevernitz compared the Lancashire and Yorkshire industries. He concluded that the

position of the Yorkshire workers was '... insecure and miserable' and described the wool textile industry as one in which:

> 'productions still retain that feature of a handicraft industry which shows itself in constant change even when it has adopted the methods of the Great Industry'.

G. von Schulze-gaevernitz, Social Peace: A Study of the Trade Union Movement in England, (1893), p.142.

32. Again, witnesses to the 1891 Royal Commission cited many examples of informality in the calculation of prices, a situation which was to change little until the years immediately preceding the war, and then only in certain parts of the industry. Employers such as Herbert A. Foster and E.P. Arnold-Forster of Bradford referred to a 'sort of unwritten price list' known to weavers and to a 'well-understood scale'. A witness from the union side also referred to such understandings as 'a custom.... they know from week to week and from year to year; it is very rarely indeed there is a variation.' However, this witness, Mr. Edward Hatton, a woolcomber, was clear that this type of arrangement was found only in the large spinning firms. Amongst the smaller woolstaplers and dealers in Bradford who employed men as sorters, selling the product to the spinners he described a very different situation. To the amazement of Mundella who was questioning him he stated that men might work without knowing before they began what they might earn by the end of the day. Ben Turner gave evidence about the Dewsbury area where he lived and organised. He referred to attempts then being made to apply a statement drawn up with employers after a recent dispute at a certain mill. This was being used as a standard where possible, however, the size of the union made acceptance of the statement

problematic. It was clearly an innovation in this district. Elsewhere Turner refers to the lack of any real standard merely, for weavers: 'a method of payment by picks, lengths, shuttles and beams' but lacking any written status. The only 1891 witness who referred to the existence of a list in his trade was Mr. Andrew Hopkinson, president of the Warp Dressers' Association in Bradford. However, his was a skilled trade and numerically accounted for only a tiny fraction of workers in the industry.

(C.6798, q.6678,6528,6729,6228-6230,5762,5678)

33. The Huddersfield 1883 scale's introduction led to a strike lasting over ten weeks from February 26th to May 7th, 1883. The original scale had been drawn up by the employers' newly formed Huddersfield Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association and although in preparation for some time was posted up without notice on February 26th 1883. Gee maintained that the scale was a response to union attempts to establish a district wage rate, begun by the Huddersfield and District Power Loom Weavers' Association. Almost from its inception in 1881, the union had become increasingly aware of the effects of changing loom speeds on earning levels. The employers' organisation was formed in order to forestall action according to Gee. The events which led to a barely modified form of the scale eventually being applied took place in the final stages of the deflation of the 'Great Depression'. Falling profits during the 1870's and 1880's led employers in most industries to adopt various strategies. Those with least foresight chose to pass reductions on to labour in the form of wage cuts. Ben Turner in his history of the union recalls a local account of how the employers came to adopt this approach:

> '... old Mr. Mallinson, of Linthwaite, and his wife were having a chat one day and considering how to increase their growing wealth more speedily, and the story goes that he had found a way to make another £5 a week. His wife asked how, and he replied, 'Well, tha sees, if we drop a shilling a cut an' th'weyvers turn aght a hundred pieces a week, that a'll be five pahnd for us. It 'ull nobbut be a shilling a cut for them.'

Speed ups and fining became common practice together with attempts at direct wage reduction. According to Laybourn, the more forward looking policy of mechanisation and innovation was not followed by textile employers at the time. In Yorkshire it was only the iron and steel and engineering industries which attempted this approach to the problems brought about by the depression. The strike which followed the announcement of the introduction of the scale in February 1883, affected all the major mills in Huddersfield. Twenty years later an employer was to tell the Industrial Council that they had 'never recovered from the 1883 strike in Huddersfield'. Nevertheless, the outcome was victory to the employers since the return to work was on the basis of the new list, with only minor modifications. The scale represented a maximum level of payment for weavers, with differing rates for men and women. Despite the fact that the union never signed the scale and the continuing practice of many employers to pay below the rates fixed in the scale, it remained the only district scale of wages in the industry. Its unpopularity with the weavers stemmed from the wage reductions it introduced - in particular women were badly affected - and from its introduction of two-loom weaving to the Huddersfield area.
(See C 6798 q.4923; Ben Turner, (1920) op. cit., p.28; Cd 6953, q.8238; Keith Laybourn, 'The attitude of Yorkshire Trade Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-1896), unpublished Ph.D., University of Lancaster, (1972)).

Laybourn (1972) op. cit. argues that although the 1883 scale was based on one-loom weaving, the fact that it provided an option for two-loom weaving effectively guaranteed the introduction of the two-loom system.

The Scale is described in the 1910 Report on Collective agreements Between Employers and Workpeople (Cd 5366). In its mode of calculation it resembled the scales drawn up for weavers in the cotton industry. The chief elements on which the scale was based were the speed of the loom, the number of picks and the number of shuttles, healds or beams used in the production of the particular type of cloth being woven. Computations could then be made according to these elements. A separate set of basic rates was drawn up for men and women, the women's scale being roughly ten per cent lower than the men's. Following the strike slight modifications to the original list were added. These guaranteed payments for second shuttles and for warps of only one cut in length and up to 30 picks an extra 6d was to be allowed. (See Gee's evidence to the R.C. on Labour q.5082). In 1907 an agreement was added to the 1883 scale to allow for the increased use of faster running looms. 100 pick looms were to be paid at the rate of 10 per cent less than the scale amounts for 70-80 pick looms. In this form, the scale remained as a basis for prices until at least the end of the Second World War.

The events in Huddersfield had an interesting parallel in the small town of Yeadon at about the same time. The district surrounding this town was rural and relatively isolated though commercially it was linked to Leeds. What emerged here tended to be exceptional in terms of the general pattern of industrial relations in the industry. An independent union of a more general type had been set up, based

on Yeadon, in 1887. The Yeadon, Guiseley and District Factory Workers' union led a strike, shortly after its inception, against an attempt by local employers to increase output without a corresponding increase in pay. However, unlike the situation which developed at Huddersfield, the response of employers and trade unionists was to form a board of conciliation. The result was that, as a local employer testified to the Royal Commission in 1891:

> '... for the first time in our district what I may term standard lengths and standard widths were established, any deviation from which of course was recognised. Any increase beyond that standard of length was met by a corresponding increase on payment and any diminution by diminished payment.'

(C 6708. Mr. Jonathan Peate, q.8022). The situation in Yeadon was unique in the industry. A price list seems to have been set, revised and operated over the years. In 1899 a strike of weavers who accused employers of paying below the price list and which lasted 5 days was ended when reductions were withdrawn and an examination of the district scale was promised. (See Report on Strikes and Lockouts for 1899, Cd 316). The Yeadon District Wages Board continued to support independent agreements for that district. A strike of warp twisters and drawers in 1909 was settled pending the adoption of a scale to be drawn up by the board. In 1913 an agreement covering all processes, and resembling those drawn up by the GUTW elsewhere in the industry, was signed by members of the Yeadon and Guiseley Manufacturers' Association and the Yeadon Union. This was to remain in force until October 1915. One interesting feature of this agreement is that amongst the signatories appears the name of Alma E. Drake. Hers is the only woman's name to appear on any agreement in the West Riding wool manufacturing industry since the time of the women militants in the 1870's.

34. See Ch. 8.

35. Copy in 'Wool Textile Agreements' 1883-1925' in NUDBTW collection, Bradford City Library. The Agreement is discussed by Wood in evidence to Cd 6953, q.5518.

36. As witnesses to the 1912 Industrial Council Enquiry, both Wood and Turner indicated that this strike had been something of a turning point. Wood pointed out that firms dealing individually with unorganised workers could not cope with unannounced strike activity. Certain lessons were learned from this dispute:

> '... that was the first occasion where the employers as a body met the recognised officials of the local trade union, and since then I think there has never been any question as to whether they should meet them or not in case of any disagreement'.

He went on to say that the only way the men could be got to go back to work was:

> 'By making an arrangement with the trade union officials, their influence was sufficient to get them back to work when the officials had agreed to a small advance on what these men were getting...'

Finally, his summing-up of the events:

> 'In effect, although not in intention, the employers had to call the trade union officials in to get these men to agree to something because they could not deal with the men themselves; they could not get at them because there was nobody could speak on their behalf'.

Ben Turner, questioned at the same enquiry, put forward the union's interpretation of the events of 1906, and their significance. The agreement reached was to become untypical since it was made with:

> '... non-organised persons who went on strike ... without giving the formal statutory notice. Since that time, 1906, there has been no strike of any illegal character; they have been of a legal character, giving the proper term of notice. The first was one of those rushes that occur occasionally.'

The strike had involved 250 workers directly and was finally settled through the mediation of the Lord Mayor of Huddersfield.

Cd 6953, q.5419,5420,5421,6940.

37. Turner (1920) op. cit. p.166 and ff.

38. Askwith recalled that the employers and Board of Trade were concerned that the dispute ... 'promised to have serious developments, as it would have affected so many other sections'. (1974) op. cit. p.137.

39. The agreement, reached after a long conference, was between the union and three local employers' associations, the Huddersfield and District Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association, the Huddersfield and District Yarn Spinners' Association and the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association. The principal features of the agreement were that it referred solely to willeyers and fettlers, that the working week was to be 55½ hours, wages were to be paid at the rate of 5½d an hour and that overtime, not including night work, was to be paid at the rate of 6½d an hour. While the importance of the agreement for the workforce lay in the fact that for the first time a district standard rate was established for hours, pay and overtime, for the union and the employers, the last two clauses were of equal, if not more, importance. In future, there were to be no further stoppages of work following a dispute while the employers' and workers' associations were in discussion. Any disagreement between the parties was to be settled by an arbitrator to be agreed by both sides, or by the Board of Trade. Longer term alterations in the agreement were to require six months' notice in writing by either side.

40. The terms of agreements covering willeyers and fettlers in Morley, Batley and Ossett which followed the Huddersfield agreement are, however, much less extensive and relate only to wages and hours, stipulating no conditions as to disputes procedures. At Morley, a short strike was followed by meetings in the Cooperative Hall and

Picture Palace. Subsequently the first ever agreement for textile workers in Morley was drawn up and signed by individual Morley cloth manufacturers, Gee, Turner and three local men representing Morley workers. At Morley the working week was to be 58 hours but at the slightly higher pay rate of 6¼d an hour. The agreement was to stand until October 1912 with three months' notice of any proposed change to be required from either side. At Batley, a similar agreement was arrived at a few weeks later in August 1910, based on a 55½ hour week and signed by Gee, Turner and by the President of Batley Chamber of Commerce on behalf of Batley manufacturers. Dewsbury and Ravensthorpe willeyers and fettlers were to be subject to the terms of yet another agreement fixing hours and pay and requiring six months' notice of alteration. This was agreed in November 1910 between Gee and Turner, representing the workers' side and a certain Lewis Lee, for eighteen Dewsbury and Ravensthorpe firms. At Ossett, things moved more slowly since, according to Turner, the employers were unwilling to meet the strikers. After six weeks both sides agreed that the Board of Trade should be called in and John Burnett finally persuaded the employers to accept joint negotiations. Turner also points out that the local co-operative society's decision to grant £250 to relieve the strikers, 'flabbergasted' the employers. They, 'could not understand it, especially as some of them were prime movers in the society'. However, pressure of local opinion and the skills of John Burnett prevailed and a settlement was finally reached in 1911 covering workmen in the Ossett, Mungo and Shoddy trade. The signatories in this case being G.H. Wood for the newly formed Ossett employers' association, Turner and Gee for the workers and Burnett for the Board of Trade.

The original settlement in Huddersfield was used as a reference and as a starting point since not only were these grades previously without a generally agreed statement of earnings, but the agreements themselves were innovations for most districts. Turner records that additional agreements were drawn up with employers in the Calder Valley and in the outskirts of Bradford, at Eccleshill and Farsley. In addition, the small union at Yeadon had negotiated an agreement covering willeyers and fettlers in August 1910.

Turner (1920) op. cit. p.168-9; Cd 6953, Appendix XVII and XVI; Turner (1920) op. cit. p.171; Cd 5366, Appendix III.

41. Cd.6953, q.8165.

42. Taking figures from the Earnings and Hours Enquiry: The Textile Trades in 1906 Cd 4545 (1909) it is possible to show that in Yorkshire the proportions of time and piece workers in the manufacturing side of the industry were roughly equal. However far more women than men were piece workers, 62 per cent as compared to 31 per cent. Taking the Huddersfield area alone, 76 per cent of all women workers were piece workers, while 51 per cent of all men were piece workers. In the Huddersfield area, firms responding to the 1906 enquiry employed just under twice as many piece workers as time workers.

43. During this time the union was moving towards adopting a general status amongst manufacturing employees, in doing so it was encountering opposition from craft and sectional unions. See Ch. 2.

44. These varied according to the district and the job involved. Morley willeyers and fettlers, for example, gained an extra ¾d an hour on daytime rates to eventually make a rate of 6¼d an hour. However, willeyers and fettlers in the Heavy Woollen and Huddersfield

Districts had their new hourly rate fixed at 6d. The working week was shortened for Morley workers to conform to the industry's standard 55½ hour week. This was apart from willeyers and fettlers. Overtime payments still varied according to process or job. No overtime rates were mentioned in relation to weaving whereas in the dyeing sections of the Huddersfield district a two-tiered system of overtime payments was introduced.

The GUTW were at this time attempting to enrol dyers in competition with the National Society of Dyers and Finishers which was centered on the Huddersfield area. Hence the clauses referring to dyeing, milling and scouring present something of a contrast to those negotiated on behalf of other sections. Mention is made of proposed negotiations with the Employers and the NSDF for a scale of minimum rates of pay for finishing departments. According to the agreement, the initiative for the inclusion of the GUTW in the negotiations was to be taken by the employers. If unsuccessful, a separate joint committee was to be set up to establish minima with membership drawn from the GUTW and the employers' associations.

Apart from the dyers' and finishers' sections then, willeyers, fettlers, rag packers, rag shakers, carbonisers, blenders and packers were given advances in hourly and piece rates which were now increasingly industry based. However, in addition to these groups which had in the main been included in the 1910-11 agreements, new groups were included. Mule minders and spinners on the wool side of the industry, and who were exclusively men, were to have both time and piece rates increased, the amounts involved being dependent on the district. Thus while spinners on day rates in the Huddersfield area were generally to obtain increases of a shilling to bring their

wages up to 28 shillings for a 55½ hour week; mule-minders covered by the Heavy Woollen District were to be advanced to 26 shillings a week. These were the first increases negotiated on behalf of spinners in the industry. Here again a striking contrast with the cotton industry is presented. Women in woollen spinning processes, feeding and minding machines such as condensers were to receive another shilling a week if their wages were less than 14 shillings a week.

Another addition to the range of occupations now negotiated for in the Heavy Woollen District were the warpers and beamers. It was only in this district that the GUTW had been able to make any headway in extending membership in these more skilled sections. This was due to the fact that separate unions for warpers, overlookers and beamers had not been set up in the Morley, Ossett, Batley and Mirfield districts. Elsewhere, in Huddersfield, Leeds, Halifax and Bradford, the GUTW found itself in competition with well over thirty smaller unions which took in the skilled workers of the industry.

Weavers too, in the Heavy Woollen District were to enjoy some increase in earnings. Attempts were being made to establish some form of district standard of payment for weaving all the varied types of cloth and blanket produced in the Dewsbury and Batley areas. As a preliminary to this the signatories agreed to establish a minimum Tariff of 15 shillings a week for plain goods weavers, 17 shillings for fancy goods weavers, 14 shillings for Ordinary Blanket or Rug weavers and 16 shillings a week for Jacquard Blanket and Rug weavers. These minimum rates were agreed to after 'a searching enquiry' had revealed a wide variation in rates of pay. The next stage was to be

the drawing up of weaving Tariffs which would cover all the different types of goods made in the Heavy Woollen District. The minima mentioned in the agreement were based on an average of the top 75 per cent of all earnings, eliminating the lowest 25 per cent. The agreement refers to the proposed formation of a Joint Committee of the two Manufacturers' associations in Huddersfield and the GUTW, 'for the purpose of compiling scales for payment for weaving by a pick clock or counter'. Any new scale was to be based on the 1883 scale, thus retaining the Huddersfield practice of paying men and women at different rates. The pick clock was being introduced to woollen and worsted weaving at about this time. It was attached to the loom and enabled the number of picks woven in any hour, day or week to be registered on a clock mechanism. This enabled a check on both loom and weaver efficiency and was set and reset by the weaving overlooker. Use of the pick clock meant the possibility of continuous weaving with shifts and night work more easily accommodated. Weavers were customarily paid by the piece according to loom speed, weight of cloth and length of piece in 'cuts'. Payment problems might arise, if, at the end of one week a piece had not been completed. Depending on the employer, a weaver might be paid for part of a piece. However, it was not uncommon for a weaver to take home little or nothing at the week's end. Thus, it was argued, the pick clock could be of advantage to both weaver and employer since an exact knowledge of cloth woven was available. No weaver need suspect an employer of lengthening a warp without increasing payment, it was argued. However, it was clear that the pick clock encouraged competitiveness and productivity checks. It tied the weaver more closely to the loom and restricted informality in the weaving shed.

Hutchinson, in his description of Orme's pick counter explains the advantages from the employers' point of view:

> 'An observant weaver soon knows what the loom is capable of doing as a maximum, and this is the goal of her daily endeavour. Higher figures mean more money. It is a check against gossiping and laziness, and also acts as a spur to the over-looker to keep every loom in a state of efficiency. The way to keep good weavers is to make it possible for them to have a good average wage.'

Amongst weavers there was less conviction as to the pick clock's advantages. One district executive committee of the union, Colne Valley, passed a resolution in 1911 criticising the general executive of the union for deciding to send a deputation to the Dobcross Loom Makers to see the Pick Clock. They felt that the issue was allowing the employers to sidetrack the question of grievances over warp lengths. Opposition to the counter was acknowledged in the Huddersfield agreement in that an immediate 2½ per cent increase on the 1883 scales was to accompany any introduction of the mechanism. Agreements referred to above are:

1. Terms of Agreement between the Heavy Woollen District Manufacturers' Association and the GUTW to take effect from June 27th 1913.
2. Terms of Agreement between the Mungo and Shoddy Manufacturers' Association and the GUTW, to take effect from June 27th 1913.
3. Terms of Agreement between the Morley and District Woollen Manufacturers and Rag Merchants and the representatives of the GUTW. To take effect from July 1st 1913.
4. Agreement for regulating the wages and conditions of labour for operatives employed in Woollen and Worsted Manufacture in the Huddersfield district. Signed on Nov. 5th 1913 by representatives of the Huddersfield Cloth Manufacturers' Association,

the Huddersfield Yarn Spinners' Association and the GUTW. (Reproduced in Appendix Six).

Copies of these agreements are deposited with the NUDBTW papers in Huddersfield Local History Library.

J.W. Hutchinson, The Art of Loom Tuning, (1946 ed.), p.319. Colne Valley Minutes, 12.6.11. Hattersley's loom catalogue of 1913 refers to an "improved model". This suggests that the pick clock may have been in use earlier in this country. There are references to a similar, though simpler, mechanism dating from 1889 in a German textbook, Power - loom weaving, by Anton Gruner, (1900). I am grateful to George A. Feather, librarian at WIRA, Headingley Lane, Leeds 6, for information about the pick clock.

45. Minute books available for Huddersfield and Colne Valley Districts of the GUTW show a marked difference in levels of activity and concern with national labour issues after 1910-1911.

46. The events which gave rise to the formation of a board at Yeadon have already been described above, see n. 33. Herbert Lockwood, secretary of the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union was also the secretary of the Yeadon, Guiseley and District Conciliation Board, suggesting that although nominally a district board it was principally an industry board. Lacking a Trades Council, the small township of Yeadon and Guiseley relied on the principal local union for initiative in matters of conciliation.

47. The Bradford Board of Conciliation, set up in October 1891, was a rather different type of body. According to E.P. Arnold-Forster, an employer representing the Bradford Chamber of Commerce at the 1891 Commission, the Bradford Board was set up to settle strikes

and lock-outs. It had twelve members, nominated in equal proportions by the Chamber of Commerce and Trades Council. It was the aim of the Board to cover all industries in the district. No compulsion was to be involved, only the opportunity for parties in dispute to put themselves before the Board for settlement of differences. Since the chairman was a prominent Bradford merchant, Sir Henry Mitchell, it was not surprising that the Board was concerned more with industrial action rather than wages or prices. The origins of the Board lay in reactions to the Manningham strike which ended in April 1891 after having split the town of Bradford into various openly antagonistic factions, with the employing class itself showing divisions. The employers and establishment were concerned at the duration of the strike and its widespread effects. The Bradford District Board met seven times in its first year and during its most active period dealt with or settled a number of disputes in the district. However, Laybourn argues that once the dyers had formed their own board with their employers in 1894 the district board became less significant and eventually faded away. C. 6708, q.6416. See Cyril Pearce, (1975) op. cit.

48. The Leeds Board ante-dated the Bradford Board by some two years, having been set up in 1889, according to the evidence of its vice-president William Marston a journeyman tailor, secretary of the Leeds branch of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and witness to the 1891 Royal Commission. It had the same origins as the Bradford Board in the coming together of representatives of the Trades Council and the local Chamber of Commerce. It was much larger than the Bradford Board, with 13 representatives from each side, an

acknowledgement of the fact that, outside London, the city of Leeds had possibly a greater variety of industries than any other English town. Again, its aims were limited to disputes settlement, without the power of arbitration. The moral effect of the knowledge of such a body's existence was felt to be great enough to make any State board of arbitration unnecessary. However, the Leeds Board sought to encourage industry-based boards which would arbitrate issues based on information specific to a trade. Again, the president was a prominent employer, a tanner with a reputation for fairness amongst the workpeople's representatives. Although the vice-president was a workman, the Board met in the rooms of the Chamber of Commerce at the Royal Exchange and the overall bias of the Board was towards establishing an industrial peace in the town through mutuality of interest and concern. The Leeds Board was still in existence in 1907, when a solicitor was secretary but no later mention is made. It was basically quiescent. (It was to play no part in the negotiations which accompanied the Gas workers' strike in 1913. See J.E. Williams, 'The Leeds Corporation Strike in 1913' in Asa Briggs and John Saville, Essays in Labour History, 1886-1923 (1971).
C. 6708 q.9338-9370; Directory of Industrial Associations in the United Kingdom, Cd 3554 (1907).

49. In Huddersfield there was a short-lived attempt to maintain a local Board in 1892. Unlike the Leeds and Bradford boards the initiative came from one industry, textiles. Allen Gee in reply to questions at the Royal Commission in 1891 described the proposed Board. It was to be a joint board of six workmen and six employers who were to act as a board of arbitration for the district. At the time of the Royal Commission it had not met but the participants intended

as a first task the drawing-up of a minimum scale. The board would then 'use its influence' to prevent payments lower than the amounts in the scale. Strikes were to be referred to the board if those involved were members - however, what was to be done in the case of strikes at firms which were not represented had not yet been decided. On the workers' side, the initiative had a basis in a joint committee of the Huddersfield and District Associated Trades and Labour Council and the Huddersfield branch of the Weavers' and Textile Workers' Association as the GUTW was known at that time.

Despite this interest and initiative the Board was dominated by the employers when finally formed. Unlike Gee's anticipated six employers and six trade unionists and despite local Trade Union protests the board comprised three trade unionists, three employers and three independents. These last were the mayor, the president of the Technical school and the president of the Chamber of Commerce - all employers. Predictably, the Board had a short life, sitting only three times between November 1892 and May 1895.

C. 6708, q.5959; Laybourn (1972) op. cit.

The remaining conciliation boards in this early period were at Keighley, Dewsbury, Morley, Halifax and Wakefield. Most of these had very little effect on local industrial events. With the exception of the Board at Halifax, which survived into the immediate pre-war years, few lasted longer than a short period after their inception. (Cd. 3554 (1907)).

50. Discussed in Ch. 1.

51. The Yeadon and Guiseley Board provided an example of the way in which issues could be defined and decided by a joint approach, dominated by employers. The local textile union submitted a case against a

20 per cent reduction in wages. After deliberation it was decided that there were to be no reductions, however, the three main employers, of whom one was actually chairman of the Board, rejected its findings. Despite this experience, the Board continued to be resorted to during subsequent disputes. (See Laybourn (1972) op. cit.).

52. Joint boards had existed in Huddersfield and Bradford since 1892 and 1893 respectively. Clegg, Fox and Thompson describe in some detail the emergence of trade union strength and the development of bargaining machinery in the Yorkshire dyeing industry. They point out that whereas wages were higher, working hours shorter, and union membership greater in Yorkshire, the same was not the case for Lancashire. This was in complete contrast with the spinning and weaving sections of the two industries. They offer no simple explanation for this, however early employer combination in the Bradford piece-dyeing trade, resulting in the formation of the Bradford Dyers' Association in 1898 must have played an important part. This, together with the fact that for years Yorkshire dyers were exclusively men and predominantly skilled, enabled the early closed shop agreement of 1894 (see n. 29 above) to further strengthen the unions principally the Bradford-based Amalgamated Society of Dyers, which emerged as unified and credible organisations offering a wide variety of benefit to members. Dealings with the BDA over wage increases, reorganisation of plant and machinery and redundancies led to a series of agreements. An agreement in 1909 even produced an arrangement over a wage reduction which involved calculations based on the BDA's earnings as described in their financial accounts. This was followed in 1912 by a wages

agitation which was resolved by the adoption of a Yorkshire minimum wage in dyeing. The existence of Joint Boards and complex machinery involving the three unions enrolling dyers as members was no guarantee of industrial peace however. In 1913 a seven week strike over the introduction of piece work took place. The point is that a quite different pattern of industrial relations had emerged. Employers in dyeing were anxious to contain competition and establish district prices for products and labour. The closed shop, though modified in 1896, was accepted, as was the right of strike action against employers who broke away from the agreement. Bargains were made which involved concessions on both sides for whatever reasons. The contrast with manufacturing is not simply that these concessions were arrived at and administered, but that either side was willing or able to bargain in this way at all. The possibility to calculate and manipulate may have been based in the more uniform nature of the dyeing process in contrast with the intricacies and secrecies of cloth production. Sigsworth and Blackman argue that combination in the dyeing trade was 'very largely a defensive reaction, especially to low prices and profit margins'.
See Clegg, Fox and Thompson, (1964) op. cit., 189-90, 454-55; E.M. Sigsworth and J.M. Blackman, 'The Woollen and Worsted Industries', in Aldcroft, (1968), op. cit. p.151.

53. Copy in NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library; included in Appendix 5. This agreement applied only to woollen mills in the Huddersfield and Colne Valley districts. The worsted employers, Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association were not party to the terms. Cd 8964, 8965.

54. Cd 6953, q.5408.

55. Cd 6953, q.5409.

56. Cd 6953, q.6940.

57. For G.H. Wood, piece rates had the advantage that:

> 'the operatives... have every inducement to keep pace with faster and better machinery if their price lists are so arranged as to give them the advantage of greater output'

Such a system also had the advantage, when fixed in standard rates for districts, of penalizing the least efficient employer. Comparing wool with cotton he found a sad variation in progress towards greater proportions of piece rate working. Huddersfield led in this respect with 54.9 per cent. However, Leeds and Bradford were trailing dismally with only 33.8 per cent and 28.1 per cent respectively. These all contrasted with cotton's 65.7 per cent.

Wood (1910) op. cit., p.143, p.148.

See also Ch8,p301 where the issue of piece rates is discussed in a war-time context.

58. Agreements signed in 1913 allowed for such Joint Boards to be set up between the GUTW and the Huddersfield, Heavy Woollen and Mungo and Shoddy Manufacturers' Associations. A joint board was also instituted for the adjudication of the introduction of the pick clock, see n. 44. See Appendix 6.

59. See n. 27, above.

60. This point is elaborated in more detail in relation to the issue of war-time control machinery in the industry. (See chapter 7).

61. Membership is discussed in Ch. 10.

62. GUTW relations with craft unions is discussed in Ch. 1.

63. Discussed in Ch. 1.

64. Cd 4545, pp.97-99.

CHAPTER 7

THE WAR, THE INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT CONTROLS: THE RESPONSES OF CAPITAL AND LABOUR

In this chapter, the organisation of war-time production of wool textiles will be examined. The way in which the organisation developed in relation to employer and government pressures and the responses of labour to this will be considered. Depending on their overall theoretical or ideological approach, various commentators writing in the First World War period and more recently, have attempted to assess the impact of controls introduced in the wool textile industry during the latter part of the war. In most cases, these are seen as part of the movement towards reform and reconstruction which appeared to develop in broad sections of society during these months. What is suggested here is that war-time controls in the wool textile industry, despite their reconstructionist appearance, were no triumph for democracy in industry. They were the outcome of the interactions of a government policy shaped by the exigencies of carrying out hostilities and the maintenance of the socio-economic relations of private ownership. In this situation, the part played by labour was marginal. This marginality was delimited not only through the existence of close inter-relations between government and employers' representatives but also by the narrowness of labour's self-conceived role.(1) The argument will therefore include not only an examination of the events of war-time control, but also the responses of employers and labour to this.

The writing of war-time history has been, generally speaking, the writing of a history of social change.(2) Evidence for such change is typically demonstrated from the social and political reforms

which followed both major wars and from the reorganisation of everyday life necessitated by war. Titmuss tends to overstate the case for a war-reform relationship through his patterning of the argument into the simplistic framework of mass mobilisation generating social reform and equalising tendencies in the post-war period. This is only possible if war-time events are isolated from their pre-history and from their general socio-economic context. Marwick,(3) though he dissociates himself from Titmuss and Abrams'(4) interpretations, provides a no more convincing argument. By insisting on the independence of social change he too ignores a number of crucial continuities in the state and economy. For both Marwick and Titmuss, changes in the use of wealth and political power and the rhetoric of the reformers seem to signify more profound social upheaval than they do to other observers.(5) The reforms which do emerge from the First World War represent only a tithe of what was proposed or under discussion during the war and survived only in highly modified forms.(6) Further, the narrowness of the spectrum of reforms was determined by the class nature of the society in which the reform developed.(7)

The question of government intervention in areas of the economy and society was one which arose in connection with the organisation of war production and the reconstruction of post-war society. Johnson(8) considers the process of dismemberment which befell the reconstructionist policies of the 1916 to 1920 period. His verdict is that, "... Britain, for all her goodness and strength, was not community but lacked in 1919 either the capacity for the teamwork reconstruction demanded or a bloc that could inspire its will".(9) Abrams suggests that war-time government deliberately avoided any precise definition of what was meant by social change, or even the objects of the limited reforms pursued.(10) He argues that labour, women(11) and business were

required to carry out government war-time policy but that labour's participation took the form of ratification of, or consultations about, policies already formulated, decisions already taken and that: "Labour was invited to exert itself only to support schemes which others had designed".(12) Despite his reference to business involvement, Abrams' attention to the role of business in the downfall of reforms is incomplete. Thus, for example, his explanation of failure of post-war housing policy does not include any account of business attitudes in the building trade.

By examining surviving records of government management of the wool textile industry, the close involvement of businessmen in decision-making and the sensitivity of leading government officials to their concerns is most clearly seen. Similarly, the partial and only barely tolerated involvement of labour is clearly revealed. The structural relationships of wage labour and private ownership are seen as underpinning and permeating all other relationships, determining both the nature of and accessibility to, decision-making processes. The chances of survival for any reform, or of building on changes in the status quo, were thus minimal while this basic relationship remained secure or remained unchallenged.(13)

On labour's part, the arguments for workers' control of industry had yet to be debated at mass level within the labour movement at the outbreak of war.(14) The question of the nature of the state in a capitalist society, the means by which change could be brought about and the ways in which life and work might actually be organised had enjoyed no detailed debate. Within a broadly socialist spectrum, ideas ranged from those who rejected notions of state power, favouring forms of industrial unionism to those, greatest in number, who, while

vocal and active in opposition to economic inequality and social privilege, involved themselves increasingly in the political institutions of the country with the aim of providing a voice for labour in the state's decision-making procedures. Participation of this type was seen by men such as Turner as not only a means of radicalisation of the working people, but also as a basis for making 'socialism' acceptable to the majority of the population.(15)

The dominant feature of labour's involvement in the decision-making process at this time, and later, was the limitation over its sphere of competence. Thus, whatever or however concessions were wrung, standards set or debates engendered, the areas affected were those in which it was argued labour had a special interest. As an improvement over previous decades and the denial of competence of any kind to labour, this was, of course, no small achievement. However, there were still vast areas of governmental decision-making to which labour appeared to have no right of entry. These related to trade, industry, production and commerce. These were areas in which government itself had only recently been directly permitted to play a part. Largely through the efforts of Board of Trade officials, and, in particular, Lloyd George as minister, had it become accepted that some form of centralised intervention or control might be beneficial to industry. Hence the emergence of the Industrial Council and increasing recognition of the need for state intervention in key industries such as coal and the railways, where the strength of Labour could be seen at the heart of the economy.(16)

Labour's involvement with the state and its institutions and agencies of control was marginal, as might be expected of a central institution which was itself partisan, maintaining and enhancing the

interests of ruling elements in society, However, this marginality or notion of proper spheres of competence was shared by representatives of both labour and capital. It is based in an attractive theory of shared responsibility and pluralism, a co-partnership of capital and labour. Such theory ignores basic inequalities in the access of each of these to power and wealth and other scarce resources in society. It also neglects the relationship of dependence as between capital and labour. That is, the dependence of capital on labour for its origin and growth.(17)

The result of an acceptance of proper spheres of competence was that arguments for the co-option and election of labour's representatives were based on the need for a voice for labour solely on issues which were seen as proper to labour.(18) Thus, production, distribution and exchange issues were seen to be in the province of employers and state officials. Labour could expect, and in most cases expected, status as expert on a limited range of questions such as industrial relations, working conditions, living standards and wage bargaining.(19)

Such participatory socialism should nevertheless not be suggestive of a lack of class consciousness on the part of men such as Turner, Gee and Hayhurst. Turner in particular, in his newspaper articles, speeches and poems showed quite clearly where his sympathies lay. He openly expressed a loathing for corruption and the exploitation of fellow workers for private gain. For Turner, the electoral success which labour had come to experience seemed to confirm the promise of a gradualist transition and the need to win the confidence of quite varied sections of society as a means to securing fundamental change. At the same time, the nature of the state and the contradictions posed by participation seem not to have concerned him, nor the need

for an alternative structure of control and decision-making. His fear of 'anarchy' in the trade union movement only served to strengthen his belief in the need to win respect in order to win power.(20) As will be seen, the winning of respect and a belief in the proper area of competence for labour were to do little to advance labour's cause during the operation of controls over wool textile production in the war years.

At the outbreak of war, in August,1914, some consternation was felt in the wool textile industry. Given the short duration expected, the immediate concern for employers, was for lost markets. Germany and other states designated as enemy had accounted for much of the export orders of the wool textile industry. Thirty-five per cent of mainly crossbred tops had gone to Germany before the outbreak of war; sixty four per cent of yarn output had been imported by 'enemy states'; in the piece goods trade, Germany had been the largest single European customer.(21)

This situation changed dramatically so that by the end of October, fewer than twenty per cent of the workpeople in firms making returns to the Board of Trade were working short time.(22) Those parts of the industry which took longest to adjust to war time needs were those engaged in spinning worsted for the European trade and especially those firms using mohair wools. This sharp turn round resulted from a number of factors. Firstly, enlistments inevitably took some men out of short time in the industry and automatically involved the many Territorials employed in the mills. Secondly, recruits had, of course, to be clothed in uniform. The 500,000 volunteers called for by Kitchener had been raised by 15th September, when an additional 500,000 were being urged to enlist. Army contracts were immediately increased.

Army orders for serge, khaki and blankets were to absorb the greater part of the productive capacity of the industry and were to stretch it to its limits during the next four years.(23) Thirdly, trade with and within the continent of Europe had been totally disrupted not only because of the break with Germany but also because the textile areas of France and Belgium were occupied by the German army. In addition, Russian production of textiles in Polish mills was also disrupted. By 1915, substantial contracts for French, Serbian and Russian uniform cloth were being placed with West Riding firms.

These changed conditions meant that by December, the returns from mills were showing overtime and night shifts being worked. Again, the increase in working hours was greatest in the woollen areas of the Huddersfield and Heavy Woollen Districts and least in the worsted areas of Bradford, Keighley and Halifax. However, even in these areas about a quarter of the work force were working ten hours overtime a week. The worsted industry was adjusting to khaki production. The situation was variously described as 'brisk' and 'good'.(24) Millions of yards of cloth, flannel, yarn for waistcoat cardigans and woollen drawers were in production, work for the Yorkshire industry and the Nottingham hosiery trade.

During the first months of the war, the Army's traditional method of acquiring supplies through individual competitive tendering to the Contracts Department was retained.(25) This was to lead to friction and strain as the system of centralised buying proved inoperable under 1914 conditions. Speculation spread rapidly and prices rose.(26) Criticisms came from a variety of sources. Accusations that the Army was being deceived into buying poor quality goods at high prices while the civilian trade was booming were answered by, amongst others,

Fred Jowett in the House of Commons.(27) At the same time he was to make the suggestion that spinning and weaving mills should be commandeered by the Government.(28) Turner's opinions tended to vacillate. In October he claimed that the Yorkshire Factory Times had been arguing for government cloth manufacture 'for weeks' and that devotion to the profit motive was causing poor organisation in the trade.(29) Three weeks later, after consultation with government officials then visiting local mills, he seemed uncertain as to whether Government takeover was necessary, '... if the firms were alive to trade requirements'.(30) However, by December, and following Jowett's example, he was again talking about the commandeering of supplies by the Government in order that all cloth should be forced to pass the War Office's strict weight regulations.(31)

The response of Government to chaotic production arrangements and to consequent high prices and delays was piecemeal, yet characteristic when viewed in relation to pre-war policies in trade and industry. Lloyd argues that,

> '... the development of war-time control was ... due almost entirely to the overwhelming force of circumstances and hardly at all to a deliberate policy of state intervention consciously thought out and consistently applied. The conflict between the private interests of individual traders and the general interests of the nation considered as a fighting unit was never resolved by a clear enunciation of general principles, but only gradually and in part, by piecemeal adaptations, and convenient compromises.' (32)

Lloyd's case is based on the Liberal administration's dislike of interference in trade and business matters and the fact that those responsible for production had an even deeper dislike of restrictions on private enterprise and the free market. However, such negative

evaluations may also, contrary to Lloyd's argument, support shared conceptions, shaping actions and constituting a dominant ideological framework. The tendency to put off direct control at any price need not be seen as a faltering laissez-faire liberalism, but rather as an advocacy of the importance of private enterprise and the necessity of maintaining the security of the entrepreneur in the realisation of profit. Lloyd's 'force of circumstances' is the typical perception of the liberal historian and administrator.

Thus the first steps taken by the government which affected the textile industry tended to be measures which either strengthened or supported the part of the owners and employers in industry. Maintaining goodwill, encouraging 'business as usual', restricting interference with private enterprise, were the constant themes. Within days of war being declared, the government had declared a financial moratorium, guaranteeing itself to pay bills on both enemy and neutral countries. Some improvements were made in the administrative procedures of the Army Contracts Department of the War Office, especially following the appointment of U.F. Wintour as Director of Army contracts. The involvement of 'experts' from all stages in production from the buying of raw materials to the manufacture and finishing of the final product was a new and important feature of the government's approach to dealing with industry. In the earliest stages personal dealings rather than formal tenders were adopted, informal pressures, both patriotic and flattering were used to arrange lower prices; contractors were involved directly with a knowledge of Army requirements. These were measures designed to ensure co-operation from businessmen, however, they played an important part, linking businessmen directly into the decision-making process.(33)

During the first two years the War Office appointed two committees which were to lay the basis for later administrative and executive structures. The Wool Advisory Panel was set up to advise the Department on questions relating to wool and the Central Committee on British Wool was to advise on the purchase of domestic wool production. In both cases, 'trade' and 'expert' status were criteria for membership. Indeed, this was to lead to one source of strongly voiced discontent for the smaller merchants and top-makers found that, within a system of control, their 'expertise and capital was redundant. Much later, at a committee meeting in 1918, Norman Rae, a wool merchant, who became notorious in the wool control hierarchy for his persistent criticism of the system, described the process of co-option as he saw it:

> 'They took on men who were our employees; men of military age; an absolute scandal. The bulk of them were men who have never succeeded and never will succeed. They are now working at the War Office and getting all kinds of valuable information from us. After the war they will gain enormously by the private information they have gained at the War Office.' (34)

Businessmen came to be involved in three different, occasionally overlapping, ways. They might be employed as officials in the War Office departments dealing with the trade. They could be invited to serve on the numerous committees which were set up through the next three years. In such cases their involvement served production as well as political functions, since they provided industrial information and indicated representivity. Thirdly, they could, if locally prominent and sympathetic to government policy, become unofficial advisers to members of the Government, helping to compose committees by recommendations and contacts. This pattern was only complete by late 1917, once the Wool Board of Control had emerged.(35)

In the first year of the war, the involvement of labour with the administration of production was minimal.(36) Output was at a maximum while labour and raw materials sufficed. For example, in the Huddersfield, Colne Valley and Holme Valley areas, it was estimated that 250 miles of army cloth a week were coming off 5,000 looms. In other areas, such as Bradford, less able to adapt to the change in trade, blue cloth for troops' training was being produced and cloths made of worsted yarns.(37) The profitability of such levels of production was not lost on labour observers either. A running commentary on profits and dividends was maintained in the local and national labour press.(38) At the war-time TUCs resolutions calling for the collectivisation of certain areas of the economy, public services, banking and insurance, mining and shipping. Nevertheless, calls for the state to 'take over' mines and 'exercise control over' warehouses and granaries could still be accompanied by abeysance to honoured boundaries of responsibility.(39)

The government had the bare bones of a control policy in the Defence of the Realm Act, passed in August 1914. This referred only in the most general terms to powers conferred on the Admiralty and Army Council which would enable the take over of factories and land and the manufacture of goods for military and navel purposes. However, no scheme of costing, pricing or organisation was involved in this Act. In March 1915, the requisition of jute supplies by government officials was carried out swiftly in a matter of hours. A machinery of control was arrived at by appointing a large firm of merchants as government agents in charge of purchase and supervision of the manufacturing process.(40) The example of the jute industry, the management of control through businessmen, was followed successively in other industries such as linen, leather and meat production.

Liberal opinion in government circles,[41] as amongst certain employers, was beginning to move in the direction of an element of control in wool textile production. Two main areas were the objects of particular concern, the supply of raw material and prices of finished goods for military purposes. The question of civilian supplies and their war-time status was never fully resolved. In fact, the relative independence of civilian-directed production was to remain an area of contention within the industry and between employers, government and labour during successive months.

Control over the supply of raw wool was achieved by the purchase of the Domestic and Colonial Wool clips during 1915 and 1916.[42] The machinery of control over the manufacture of wool products was to develop more slowly in response to a more complex process of pressures and interests.

Experience in dealing with a shortage of recruits as well as complaints about the effects of recruiting on the efficiency of the industry had led to the setting up of Manpower and Production Committees in November 1916.[43] Over the same period, committees such as the Wool Trade Advisory Panel were set up to advise on problems which were occurring through the organisation of control and requisition.[44] Another crucial link between business and government had been forged in 1916 with the setting up of the War Department Cloth Office in Bradford.[45] An official war-time historian such as Lloyd felt that such committees were a proof that democracy in industry was a reality, 'The presence of employers and employed on the same Committees created a healthy rivalry in subordinating private interests to urgent national interests'.[46] Both Lloyd and Hammond found consensus, democracy, equal competition and co-operation in the control bodies which were to develop during

the war.

A more accurate analysis however would seem to be enabled by Miliband's notion of 'Imperfect Competition'.(47) Talking about the 'inert power of business' to obstruct by default of action in situations where government is attempting some form of control or redistribution of economic power, he shows how employers can resist change. Employers' superior advantage is thus both actual, in the sense of having a day-to-day control of decision-making in industry, but also ideological and cultural since the major interpreters of events, the media and government agencies of various types tend to favour stability, caution and the maintenance of the status quo in production and economic relationships. This situation which Miliband describes in the 1960s appears in even more clear-cut form in the early decades of this century. The tendency for labour's leaders to seek confirmation of moderate policies when confronted by unfavourable conditions, the divisions within labour's ranks and the greater unanimity of employers is found again and again during the war years. Many employers were still in active opposition to war-time controls in the textile industry, a fact which may have lead observers such as Hammond and Lloyd to have seen the inauguration and survival of bodies such as the Wool Control Board as confirmation of the integrating force of governmental authority at this time.

During 1917 there was to be increasingly amplified criticism of the Wool Trade Advisory Panel. Early in the year, a meeting of manufacturers, merchants, importers, clothiers and Chambers of Commerce and trade associations' representatives had met in Bradford and agreed to urge the creation of a central authority to control all aspects of wool production and manufacture.(48) Following a deputation(49) to

Board to Trade and War Office representatives, a new body was created. The Central Wool Advisory Committee first met on April 12th, 1917, replacing the Wool Advisory Panel. The new committee, chaired by Forster and with Lloyd of the War Office as secretary, comprised representatives of all sections of the industry from merchants and brokers to clothing, hosiery and flannel manufacturers. Members of various government departments were also included, Sykes, Levy, Willey and Goldfinch amongst others from the War Office and four representatives from the Admiralty, Board of Trade and Foreign Office War Trade Department. In all the committee comprised twenty six government officials and twenty three manufacturers, merchants and brokers. Labour's representation was limited to five men. These were Hayhurst, Turner, Hartshorn, Holden and Rushworth, the last three being officials of hosiery and clothing unions.(50)

The lack of balance in the composition of the committee was noted immediately by Jowett, who raised the matter in a question to the Financial Sectetary to the War Office, in a House of Commons debate. Jowett's suggestion was that each section represented by employers, manufacturing, spinning, importing and merchanting should be represented equally by labour. Forster sent a written reply which emphasised that the committee was advisory rather than executive and insisting that it did provide, 'expert advice on every branch of the trade' and that:

> '... the five gentlemen who are connected with the industry from the labour side are fully competent to advise the Department on all questions from the point of view of the workers.' (51)

Forster's defence of the composition of the CWAC shows to what extent the term 'expert' had become synonymous with employer and the way in which labour's proper arena of competence was confined to the workers' side of production.

There was thus a consistent thread in terms of membership, policy and interest in the various committees set up by the government and by the employers themselves. This was a consistency and representivity which labour experienced in only the most limited form during this period.

It has already been argued that in terms of short or long term programmes for change, questions of nationalisation or forms of state control had received very little attention in labour circles before 1917, least of all apparently amongst woollen and worsted workers. However, the question of the control of industry, how to achieve it and what form it should take was to become an issue for debate in 1917. The columns of the Huddersfield Worker were opened to a debate over the issue in April. Following events in Russia, those who advocated a more radical policy for working class organisation were greatly encouraged. At the same time, the message of the Guild movement was beginning to filter through to many trade union branches as its influence and appeal grew. Government circles too were shortly to be exposed to the issues as the first report of the Whitley committee began its passage through the corridors of power. In the Worker, George Thomas as usual set the scene with editorials urging control in the textile industry. His suggestion was for a council representing all grades in the industry which would set about organising production without employers, with mill control immediately under its direction. Managers and other officials would be retained if they were seen to be efficient or necessary, however, preferably a committee of workers should carry out management tasks, subject to the main directing council. Private employers would be eliminated, with a compensation scheme operating only in their lifetimes.(52)

The publication of the Whitley Committee's first report and

its approval by the War Cabinet on 7th June 1917, must have come as something of a relief to the GUTW's leadership. In July, the executive committee of Huddersfield and District had already declared itself in favour of: 'proposals which have for their object the transformation of the present system of industrial control'.(53) The Whitley proposals in fact related almost entirely to the improvement of worker-employer relations in the area of wage bargaining and conditions of employment. No changes were proposed, with the exception of support for profit-sharing schemes, in the organisation of production, management and ownership.

By mid 1917, the employers had not only the machinery but also the unity,(54) with some exceptions, and the representivity to pressure government officials in the direction of greater trade autonomy so far as control was concerned. This solidarity was in no measure replicated for labour whose organisation was divided in industry, region and functional terms and whose policies on control and ownership were still at the nascent stage. Furthermore, representation which labour enjoyed on joint bodies such as the CWAC appears to have been discretionary and certainly minimal in terms of actual mnumbers. It was upon these foundations that the Wool Board of Control, which was to earn so much praise from reconstructionist circles, was to be built.

Throughout the middle months of 1917, attacks by certain employers on the CWAC and government officials engaged in wool control became more and more concerted.(55) Officials were accused of bureaucracy and incompetence, the statistics on which the Priority and Allocation schemes were based were alleged to be faulty. Opposition to the including of labour on the CWAC was strongly expressed. These criticisms enjoyed publicity through the columns of the national and local press,

in particular the Yorkshire Post and Yorkshire Observer eagerly reproduced damning accounts of incorrect estimates, faulty statistics and hold-ups in payment and supplies of materials. The criticisms came in the main from spinners, manufacturers and merchants whose particular interests conflicted with government needs and the control measures. Those who depended largely on the civilian trade and who sought to retain this more profitable area of production, were particularly opposed to control of their activities. Merchants and topmakers found themselves isolated and without the previously crucial price-setting role in a business now controlled by government agents and where the raw material was no longer theirs. Many complained that they would be financially ruined, that capital would 'desert' their businesses. It was all these groups, who, through the WTA and the press were bringing increasing pressure to bear on the government to at least place control of civilian wool textile production in the hands of 'trade experts'. There was also criticism from labour, following the curtailment of hours made by Army Council order of May 1917. The Yorkshire Factory Times questioned whether such measures were necessary when so many army orders were in process and suggested that one way of building up reserves would be to reduce civilian consumption.(56)

Those government officials more closely involved with employers and labour, Goldfinch, Director of Raw Materials at the War Office and Weir, Surveyor General of Supplies,(57) were concerned to strike a balance between the effects of submarine warfare and the need for general economy measures and a reaction from both labour and employers if civilian production were to be ended entirely.(58) Meetings, consultations and negotiations were held throughout the summer months. The WTA were calling for a Central Board of Control nominated by the trade itself and with full executive powers over each stage from raw

wool to finished article. Forster had at the same time promised labour that it should have representation on any newly constituted board. The employers, particularly the commercial and spinning sections, were at this stage, still vehemently opposed to labour having any say in matters relating to private trade:

> 'Employers have no share in the management of the operatives' trade unions ... why should labour representatives have power to interfere with the business arrangements of private traders?'

But other powerful voices were arguing in a contrary direction. Rothermere, for example, would have only been fully satisfied by a complete militarisation of wool production under government direction:

> 'Are the grumbles of three or four hundred manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire to be considered when ... military exigencies require that every ounce of wool in this country should ... from the 1st of January next, be reserved for military purposes.' (59)

The Wool Control Board, when it finally emerged, had equal representation from government, employers and labour, or at least formally so.(60) Based in Bradford, it was to have, in answer to employer pressure, full control of allocating orders between manufacturers of both military and civilian orders once the preparation of the raw materials had been carried out for the government. This control was itself to be subject to Army Council control over the amount of wool to be available for the civilian trade and over the closing of contracts. The three groups were to be nominated by the various bodies, rather than appointed by the government. Nevertheless, some overlapping was predictable. Government representatives included Willey and G.H. Wood, while the chairman of the new body was Charles Sykes.

Although the WTA had not succeeded in their objective of securing

full executive powers through a body representative mainly of merchant and employer interests, its mark lay on the form the new body took and on its dealings.(61) The anti-control manufacturers, spinners and commercial interests in the WTA kept up a constant lobbying of Weir, Sykes and Goldfinch throughout this period. Belief in unfettered private enterprise was the motivation of this group and fears that the suppression of a role for merchant capital would lead to basic change in the industry. For comparison there was the much preferred scheme operated by the Cotton Control Board for the Cotton Industry.(62)

The Wool Control Board was regarded with great enthusiasm in some circles, particularly given that its inception coincided with the high point of Reconstructionist discussion. Hammond, in a memorandum of November 1917,(63) saw the Board as confirming the logic and success of joint participation and the acceptability of such forms of control in industry. In high optimism, he described the Board of Control as having been set up by the War Office, '... to give the industry a constitution'.(64) Hammond passed over features which were to later reveal the Board's inadequacies and fundamental contradictions. He merely noted that, 'The trade union members have not sought representation on committees that deal with purely technical matters'.(65)

Two issues reveal the limitations of war time industrial democracy in the wool textile industry. One, Standard Clothing, shows how far a collectivist provision was able to proceed within the industry and its governing structure. The other, the question of de-control, shows how easily and without real opposition, the employers were able to dismantle even these very limited attempts to introduce some form of social and economic accountability in the industry. Each issue also, in its development, reveals the workings and the types of influence

which accompanied state control as it emerged, throwing light on the ways in which apparently representative bodies could be managed and side-stepped by direct employer-official inter-relations.

The scheme for providing some form of cheap, reliable cloth for the civilian population had been discussed at various times in 1917.(66) Depending on the interest of particular groups, it had come to represent a solution to problems of varying definition. Sykes had proposed a scheme to the CWAC in May. Fearing a fall in the tonnage of raw wool supplies and the possibility of a need to suppress the civilian trade in such a situation, Sykes has proposed 'Double Purpose Clothing'. Such a product would be suitable for both military and civilian use. The scheme was seen as essential in order to prevent large sections of the industry, particularly in Bradford, from becoming idle if civilian production had to be ended. Bradford workers, it was feared, would insist on being kept in full employment, or on full pay. Production which was more flexibly directed could forestall redundancies in the civilian trade while still maintaining war supplies.(67)

By late summer, the question of supplies of raw materials seemed less acute furthermore, all employers were not as enthusiastic as Sykes. What was coming to be known as Standard Cloth was seen as competition for the civilian trade with privately controlled industry through a lower priced cloth. Private traders feared that they might be undercut and that it might beocme impossible at a later date to 'throw off this Socialistic system'. While it was accepted that a temporary agreement among manufacturers as to fixing prices for the civilian trade during the war was necessary, any further control was not wanted.(68)

The Standard Cloth scheme came before the new Board of Control

in October, when labour representatives revived the idea as a measure for curbing profiteering. Agreement was reached between the trade union representatives and manufacturers only by a drastic cutting down of the scheme. Following the inception of the Board of Control and its jurisdiction over supplies it had been decided that the scheme should be voluntary only with no attempt to make the industry as a whole share production. The retail price was held and the whole scheme managed through joint committees of clothiers, retailers and manufacturers. Public funds were not to be used for the scheme, financing being made possible by fixing small levies on production.(69)

Production of Standard Cloth was not a success in any large-scale sense. As soon as the war was over the scheme was ended and although labour representatives attempted to re-introduce the scheme through the post-war Wool Council, they were outvoted. The 1919-1920 slump in retail prices finished off the commercial case for the scheme and it was not revived again until a Second World War made this necessary.(70)

As a test of the Wool Control Board's representivity and innovation, the scheme for Standard Cloth presents an interesting set of indicators. Labour representatives were in no position to force a radical proposal on the industry as a whole and only with the support of government officials and some more far-seeing employers such as Sykes, could the scheme survive, in reduced scope and scale. Even then, the influence of employers and merchants was such that the scheme was doomed, along with all the other wartime measures of control in the industry.

The Wool Control Board's inception was accompanied by demands from employers for assurances from government that control was a

war-time measure only. From only a few months after its first meeting, in December, deputations, articles, letters and statements were being made in preparation for what, it was anticipated, was an inevitable happening, the return of control to employers in the industry.

As Tawney was to argue twenty five years later during the next war, 'de-control, though it dissolved an imposing fabric of organised activity ... was the continuance of an accepted policy, not the revival of it'. Controls introduced during the war had a limited lifetime written into their provisions since in most cases the measures were seen as applicable for the war period only and for a limited period afterwards at most. Thus the onus lay on the controllers to prove their case and to institute further measures. Given the political and industrial climate in which controls had operated, the probability of success was a foregone conclusion.(71)

So far as the employers were concerned, controls were to be relaxed at the earliest opportunity. Employers and merchants argued that although the War Office might continue to obtain goods for Army purposes, all other control functions should be given up to the Board of Trade in order that 'control can be relaxed immediately'. Surplus government stocks of wools, carbonized wools, tops and noils should be made available through re-opened London auctions. Licences might be issued through the Board of Trade should speculation occur. The whole of this 'devolution' could properly be organised through a committee representative of the industry. It was felt that the existing product values were 'artificial' and that, 'the sooner values find a natural level the better'.(72)

Employers had, from early on in 1918, been encouraged in their

expectations regarding relaxation of control by government officials. Assurances had been forthcoming from the very officers engaged in control administration as to a smooth transition to what was hoped would be a return to pre-war trading conditions.(73)

The alternatives in early 1918 were scarcely worked out at all although the Guild movement had acquired a certain degree of support.(74) The newly constituted Labour Party's statement of policy, Labour and the New Social Order was, as Miliband argues,(75) a remarkable step forward; but as a basis for radical change, it was restricted. Miliband describes the programme as affirming, 'piecemeal collectivism' as a means to a State control of privately owned industry. Goodrich argues that a rhetoric of socialist collectivist principles was no indication of the level of commitment to tackling questions of ownership and control. Apart from the miners, few trade unionists appeared to have even considered these issues.(76) There were to be some attempts to develop what were seen as aspects of democracy in war-time organisation of production in some government circles, but men such as Addison at Reconstruction found their efforts doomed by delays in decision taking and the general rush for de-control. The recommendations of the Whitley Committee(77) had enjoyed a mixed reception from trade unionists, textiles were split, with cotton spinners being against and cotton weavers and the GUTW in favour. In late 1918 steps were being taken to transform the Wool Control Board into some form of institution jointly representative of the industry.(78) It had already been agreed that such a body would have to include the commercial sections.(79)

Following negotiations with various concerned bodies, the new Wool Council came to comprise 41 representatives of employer and trade union associations, together with 14 government officials without

voting rights. The joint chairmen were to be Goldfinch and Sykes.(80)

During its early life, the Wool Council saw the last attempts by labour in the industry to exert some influence in the direction of control over prices and output. Goldfinch, as chairman, was able to manage Council proceedings in such a way that de-control was not impeded.(81) When deadlock arose over the question of purchase of the British 1919 wool clip, Goldfinch intervened with a government policy on non-action, which, as labour representatives were only too well aware, closely resembled that of the employers.(82)

Thus ended the industry's attempt at self-government. What Hammond and even Cole saw as 'experiments of vast social value...' were quietly done away with once hostilities formally ceased with Germany.(82) Promises to the employers that control was temporary and for emergency purposes over-ruled any indications which may have been made to labour during heated moments in 1917. As Johnson shows, Reconstruction was seen to have different meanings to different groups as the war came to an end. As far as Cole and other labour interpreters were concerned, 'reconstruction of profiteering' was the main aspect of the 1918-1919 months.

What effects had the experience of control had for labour and employers in the industry? As far as the employers were concerned there were two directly positive developments. Firstly, from their experience in managing control and from their opposition to what were regarded as the excesses of control, a greatly improved level of organisation emerged. The industry's employers acquired a centralised structure of representation and influence which was to stand them in good stead during the vicissitudes of the next two decades. In comparison, with

levels of organisation at the outbreak of war, the employers' position had improved in great measure and at all levels.(84)

Secondly, in simple economic terms, the war and immediate post-war months brought great rewards. Levels of investment in the industry remained low as machinery was run continuously and with little replacement. However, in terms of profits, war had been an undoubted success. The profits of the wool textile industry during the post war period were to attract public attention and scrutiny,(85) but those made during war-time did not go without their share of comment.(86)

As far as labour was concerned, the experience of participating in a government directed scheme of control seems to have produced no radical change in terms of policy or organisation. For men such as Turner and Hayhurst, involvement was taken as a sign of personal and organisational success and seems to have made little difference in attitudes towards the employing side. With a leadership intent on success for moderate policies, few gains could be made for labour. Moreover, the relative boom conditions in the industry and the continued weakness of the union challenge did not provide a climate which might support a flourishing growth of alternative strategies and tactics for the industry.

War time control in the wool textile industry based as it was in an unequal partnership was bound to yield more benefits for capital than for labour in immediate organisational and political terms. However, the very limitations of the experience appear to have served to confirm labour's leaders in their moderation, rather than to stimulate a more radical stance. Turner's later part in the talks with Lord Mond after the General Strike,(87) was a certain development from these experiences.

The lack of any practical proposition, acceptable to the textile unions, for the transformation of the control and ownership of the industry, was, as argued here, another important factor contributing to the junior role which labour played in these events. Thus it can be concluded that although in the structural and political sense labour's powers were limited in a war-time situation, the very containment and integration of labour was facilitated by its organisational forms and ideological interpretations. Thus, the competition, the struggle, was defined not only unequally, but fought over employer-defined territory and with employer-defined problems. Even allowing for the pressures and constraints induced by a war-time economy, the response of labour seem sadly limited in the textile industry. Given this limitation, it would seem clear that, far from yielding fundamental change, the experience of war time control in the textile industry appears to have continued previous tendencies and sustained established relationships. In the area of textile industrial relations the 1914-18 war brought few significant changes and represents no watershed.

Notes

1. This point is explained in Hyman's introduction to Carter L. Goodrich (1975 ed.) op.cit.. See especially pp.xxiv & ff where Hyman briefly refers to the 'ambivalence (his emphasis) of trade unionism in relation to the government of industry'. He refers to the ways in which '... unionism is on the one hand a protest and a defence against the economic and human deprivations imposed on workers by capitalist industry; on the other a means of accommodation to the structure of capitalist industry' (p.xxiv). Goodrich discusses the lines at which trade unions and employers draw the frontier between them. In some cases these have been formally delimited in signed documents, in most cases what he is pointing out is an unstated though understood demarcation of activities. See p.56-62, "The Frontier of Control".

2. See especially, Arthur Marwick The Deluge (1965) and "The Impact of the First World War on British Society" Journal of Contemporary History, Vol III, No 1, (1968); Richard Titmuss "War and Social Policy", (1958) op.cit.; S. Andrzejewski, Military Organisation and Society (1954).

3. Marwick (1968) pp.57-59.

4. Philip Abrams, "The Failure of Social Reform, 1918-1920", Past and Present, No 24, April 1963.

5. See for example, Ralph Miliband, Parliamentary Socialism (1961); John Westergaard and Henrietta Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society (1975).

6. For example: 1918 Education Act; 1920 Extension of Unemployment Insurance to 12 million wage workers; 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act - grants under which ended in 1922; 1918 votes for women over thirty.

7. This is not to ignore the important social, cultural and ideological aspects of mobilisation for total war. These Marwick has chronicled fully, though not perhaps always correctly, detailing innovations and changes which could only have emerged from the experience of war, at home and at the front. What is being argued here is that such changes, whether cultural or administrative, emerged from a given context of class relations and were shaped and determined by these.

8. P.B. Johnson, Land Fit for Heroes: The Planning of Reconstruction, 1916-1919, (1968).

9. Ibid., p.506.

10. Abrams (1963) op.cit., argues that Reconstruction had an ambiguity which enabled both limited innovation and the security of pre-war practice in business, commerce and welfare. Taking the example of housing, he details hesitancy over, and final reversal of, reform policies in the post-war period.

11. Abrams' dated sideswipe at 'distinguished ladies' and their 'feminist

claims', op.cit., p.60, ignores the fact that limited though it was, women of all social strata played a part in war-time defence and production and in so doing were to influence the direction of change over subsequent decades. See A. Marwick, Women at War: 1914-1918 (1977).

12. Abrams (1963) op.cit., p.60.

13. Evidence for the part played by particular sections of the textile industry has been taken from a variety of sources, both secondary and primary. The story of war-time control varies according to the writer. For example, D.M. Zimmern, "The Wool Trade in War Time", The Economic Journal, Vol XXVIII (1918) and "Jason" (J.L. Hammond's pseudonym) Past and Future (1918) writing in a war-time context and at a point when reconstructionist policies were still relatively secure, are highly enthusiastic about the work of the Wool Control Board and the example which this provided for the rest of British industry. E.M.H. Lloyd, Experiments in State Control (1924) and H.L. Gray, War-time Control of Industry (1918) and whoever was responsible for the section on the industry in The Official History of the Ministry of Munitions, 1915-1919 (1922), take a more guarded approach to provide the record of a completed page of history. Events and decisions are recorded to the advantage of government departments. Discussion is chronicled so far as it illuminates the advantages of employer involvement - meanwhile the contribution of labour, limited though this was, is rarely described. Such official and semi-official accounts of control or 'experiments' as Lloyd himself calls them, set the seal on the general style with which war-time control of production has tended to be treated by historians. That is, as episodic and unique, having few shared characteristics with pre-war or post-war situations. This of course accords with the account which employers were anxious to accredit as soon as the end of hostilities drew into view. Goodrich (1975) op.cit. discusses control in industry and surprisingly reaches an uncritical position in his treatment of the Wool and Cotton Control Boards, as Hyman notes (pp.279-280).

14. Goodrich (1975) op.cit. discusses the way in which 'control' had become an accepted part of debate amongst trade unionists at this time, but without much examination of what was implied or required. He quotes Turner at a TUC declaiming typically, 'Why shouldn't they sing at their work?' and comments '... the cheers were more out of pleasure in his personality than from any very definite notion of work that might be worth singing about' (p.48). Debates about control were only too frequently carried out in a similar manner. Nevertheless, Hyman in his introduction to Goodrich carefully points out that: '... talk of workers' control was not simply rhetoric, or the utopian goal of a handful of left-wing activists; it was rooted in significant developments in industrial life' (p.VIII). He goes on to argue that attacks on craft skills and the growth of resistance to authoritarian management meant that the issue of control was a real and living one in some sections of industry, particularly affecting miners and engineers.

15. Attitudes to the state as they had emerged by 1914 tended to fall into four main groupings, varying greatly in size and distribution. Firstly, there were those who would have no truck at all with the

state, placing emphasis and the need for action exclusively in the area of industrial struggle. These were the syndicalists, who played a significant part in industrial action in South Wales amongst the miners and in the Liverpool transport strike of 1911. Tom Mann on his return to England had very much become the symbolic leader of this loose grouping. Secondly, there were the discussants involved in what was to become the National Guilds League in 1915. Seeking an alternative to existing forms of state power and industrial control they looked to forms of organisation based more on craft skills and work groupings. Recent accounts of the origins of the National Guilds league by Margaret Cole (see her "Guild Socialism and the Labour Research Department" in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), (1971) op.cit. and Frank Matthews (see his "The Ladder of Becoming: A.R. Orage, A.J. Penty and the Origins of Guild Socialism in England" in David E. Martin and David Rubinstein (eds.) Ideology and the Labour Movement (1979)) reveal a lively though rather isolated movement in its infancy during the pre-war years, with support from the younger Fabians in the main.

In emergent form and to develop more fully during the war years were those English and Scottish Marxists and radical socialists who sought independent working-class power through destruction of the existing state machine. Such ideas had maintained continuity in organisational terms only in Scotland, through the Socialist Labour Party, formed in 1903. Finally, and numerically the greatest were the mass of labour supporters and socialists who, while vocal and active in opposition to economic inequality and social privilege, involved themselves increasingly in the governing activities of the state. Their aim being to provide a voice for labour in the decision-making process and to win mass support through moral conviction and example rather than through action or exercise of power.

This broad grouping contained many shades of opinion from the Appletons of the GFTU to the less accommodating views of BSP members in certain towns. Their common feature was opposition to privilege and a conviction that inequality should be replaced, but without the theoretical or practical development of alternative structures and institutions. Such men as Turner, Gee and Hayhurst fell well within this category. Bernard Barker in "Anatomy of Reformism: The Social and Political Ideas of the Labour Leadership in Yorkshire", International Review of Social History, Vol XVIII (1973) pt 1, surveys Yorkshire labour leaders and their views during the years up to 1920 and typifies them as reformist and committed to a form of socialist technological determinism which was opposed to private ownership and favoured some form of collective ownership of industry. The article is more detailed in aspects of individual biography than substantial in terms of general comment.

Glimpses of Turner's own conception of a labour path to state power can be obtained from those of his written works and speeches which survive. Pieces from a Yorkshire loom, is a collection of poems in the main, mostly dialect, illustrating aspects of textile workers' life in West Yorkshire. There are also several longer poems which develop his philosophy of life. The lengthy narrative poem "Democracy" describes the evolution of the English class system and its transition through various phases of property ownership. He

outlines the emergence of a voting system based in wealth and the struggles of the early trade unions. It is his account of the turn to electoral participation by workers which so clearly reveals his attitudes to government and his side-stepping of the details of transition to the democratic socialist society which is his goal:

'Slowly it dawned upon their minds to see
That if the workers would themselves be free.
Then freedom must be won by their own aid
And not by laws employing masters made,
Thus came the strife for parliamentary power.
One party said come and share with us in our
Great work. They claimed class party wouldn't do,
Yet all the while were being class led too.
Time after time the workers tried in vain
To win with ballot box and surely gain
Some parliamentary power. Slowly they went,
Meeting the force of profit, interest, rent.
All were against them. Trimming every sail,
And through the workers weakness, workers fail.
The march was slow yet surely, bit by bit,
They struggled on till more and more could sit
And make the laws that guided love and life
To free the workers from perpetual strife.
With 'whigs and Tories' they had long been tied,
And all the while of real life denied.
The aim of most had been to heap up gold,
But now that power was slowly growing cold.
The workers saw that if they meant to be
A nation sturdy, strong and truly free,
They must their share of legislation make,
Their share of state responsibility take ...'

He goes on to describe a future society:

'There will come days of real collective powers.
Land shall be owned by none, but used for all,
Mills shall be run, but not at one man's call...'

From power-sharing to collectivisation, Turner outlines anticipated progress for labour. But, how this final state is to be attained is not made clear from the poem. He talks of workers sharing state power, thus:

'... slowly changed the scene.
They spread their love of freedom round and round.'

In an article published in the Yorkshire Factory Times in late 1915 he emphasised a goal of collectivism in the ownership of the means of production and distribution of 'wealth', but again is vague about the ways in which this might actually operate. Stressing the need for a majority vote as a precondition for socialism, the article states with assurance:

'... the method is a minor detail, easily determined when once the majority has decided that it is necessary to free themselves from a robbing and enslaving system such as now prevails.'

Ben Turner, Pieces from a Yorkshire Loom (1909),

"Democracy", p.75-76; Yorkshire Factory Times, 11.11.15, although unsigned the article bears all the marks of Turner's style.

16. This point is taken up in some detail by Chris Wrigley, David Lloyd George and the British Labour Movement (1976), Chapter 3, "Trade and Industrial Relations".

17. It would be wrong to portray labour as wholly committed to the notion of areas of competence for capital and labour. Labour writing, as seen in the work of men such as Blatchford, Morris, Snowdon, MacDonald, Lansbury and labour's policies as voiced by speakers such as Mann, Tillett, Smillie and so many others, was quite clear on the exploitative and oppressive relationship of capital to labour. And, service on governmental committees did not always prevent sharp observations as to, for example, inequalities between employers and employed in their bases for collective action. As Bowerman, the London compositor and Fabian, questioning West Riding employers at the Industrial Council's enquiry observed:

> 'Of course, employers do their work in the counting-house, but the workmen must do theirs on the pavement; that is the difference between the two conditions, I think?'
>
> Cd 6953, q.8234-8236

18. Some attempts to involve labour in the managment or sharing out of profits of industry are described in Appendix 3. The examples relate to companies in the West Riding involved in textile production.

19. Distinctions drawn in Chapter 6 between disputes of "interest" and disputes of "right" are also material to this drawing of boundaries and allocating of spheres of competence.

20. Turner's fears were expressed in his vote of thanks to the chairman at the 1913 TUC held in Manchester during the Dublin Transport Strike. Annual Report of the TUC, 1913.

21. Increased competition as a result of a United States tariff revision, in force from December 1913 placing raw wool on a free list, had encouraged a depressive tendency in the trade during the immediate post-war months. In August and early September, short time was the norm with worsted being harder hit than wool. Over sixty per cent of the industry's workforce were on short time after the outbreak of war, with half time working ranging from twenty per cent in the woollen districts to thirty per cent in the worsted towns. Departmental Committee on the Textile Trades, Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to Consider the Position of the Textile Trades After the War, Cd 9070, 1918; Board of Trade Labour Gazette, September 1914, Vol XXII, No 9. See chapter 8 for an account of the union's reactions to the first months of war-time working conditions.

22. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, October 1914, Vol XXII, No 10.

23. By 1916 it was being estimated that the Army was requiring 36 times as much cloth, 46 times as much flannel and 76 times as many blankets as in peace time. Figures from "Memorandum on the work

of the Control Board in the Woollen and Worsted Industry", November 1917, in RECO 1, 371. (Johnson (1968) op.cit., attributes this memorandum to J.H. Hammond, who was at this time working for the Ministry of Reconstruction, pp.78-79.)

24. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, December 1914, Vol XXII, No 12

25. Lloyd (1924) op.cit. provides a detailed account of the system of competitive tendering and its inability to cope with war-time demand.

26. Production for a greatly increased military demand brought centralised buying to near collapse. Local army depots were buying at any price in the first few weeks of the war. Prices rose rapidly to exploit the situation. Speculating in Army contracts became a City pre-occupation and buying and selling in socks, jerseys and blankets was attractive business. Delays resulted from the cumbersome administrative machinery of the peace time organisation of the Army Contracts department. Separate departments were responsible for price and quality. This meant that communications between manufacturers and these two sections could take weeks as papers from hundreds of firms passed between the two offices. Ensuing delays led to further alterations in prices since these might be revised during the period in which quotations were being taken up.

27. Jowett, the MP for labour in the wool textile industry, was anxious to protect the industry as a whole from allegations that its products for army use were "thin, flimsy stuff, with cotton warp and shoddy weft". Cloth of this type, he argued in the House of Commons, was not due to any fault of the Government, but had been produced under emergency conditions. Proper organisation for war-time production was necessary to ensure suitable military and civilian standards. Opportunities for profit making on a large scale were not passed by in these first months of the war and responses to the situation were varied. Hansard, Vol LXVIII, 1914, 21.11.14, p.1553, Jowett was replying to Sir Joseph Walton, MP for Barnsley, who had produced a piece of khaki cloth of alleged inferiority during the debate on the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill. See also Yorkshire Factory Times, 10.12.14 for a similar defence of the industry. Employers' criticisms related to inadequacies in the system of supply. Delays in unloading at ports with merchandise standing on the quays, ships waiting out in rivers to enter port followed the government's requisition of berths for warships and their collier and provision boats. Also, traffic had increased in northern ports due to the closing of Southampton and other southern ports. Further delays in transporting goods across the country were leading to problems in the supply of army cloth, it was alleged. Yorkshire Post, 12.1.15, 15.1.15, 16.1.15, 5.2.15.

28. His argument was based on the need for the military and ordinary civilian trade to be put first. He also suggested that the Army should control the raw material as a means to controlling price levels. As far as he was concerned, pricing was a simple matter, very little expert advice being required. At this stage, Jowett's suggestion to the President of the Board of Trade was that the government should take over the manufacture of wool textile goods, in order to:

'... concentrate the combined capacity of combing,

spinning and weaving machinery on the production of the greatest possible quantity of plain serviceable weaving material, composed so far as existing machinery can be suitably adapted, of thick yarn to facilitate rapid production for prompt supply...'

This would fulfil both government and general public needs. He insisted that "the caprices of fashionable persons" were being catered for, thus wasting time and machinery. He called on the Board of Trade to begin negotiations with the colonial suppliers in order to prevent price increases. The reply from the Board of Trade was that such 'drastic steps' were not necessary. Hansard, p.1453, p.1492, Vol LVIII, 1914.

29. Yorkshire Factory Times, 29.10.14.

30. Yorkshire Factory Times, 19.11.14.

31. Yorkshire Factory Times, 10.12.14, reprint of an article in the Daily Citizen, based on an interview with Gee and Turner, who were questioned about allegations of poor khaki cloth. When in the following spring the government was forced to consider legislation enabling the take over of factories where necessary, Turner was welcoming to the measures suggested. While national needs were being sacrificed to private orders and interests then it seemed that, 'Private enterprise ... has failed, and socialism, rude and crude as the efforts are, is helping to save the country from disaster'. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 18.3.15)

Amongst certain sections of the labour movement, demands for a different form of industrial organisation were being more explicitly formulated. In September 1914, a Worker editorial urged the take over of: '... industry after industry to be run for the benefit of the whole community', as a means to preventing unemployment. Worker, 23.1.15.

The one nearby example of outright government control which occurred in these early months was the Government Dyewares scheme. Aniline dyes were imported on a large scale from Germany before the war, domestic production being relatively small. Once the war had begun, textile dyers began to experience shortages and price rises, in addition, there was the danger to the trade of German control of neutral markets. The government therefore proposed to take over three dyeworks, one in Huddersfield, Read Holliday's and two in Manchester. The scheme would involve government investment of a million pounds at four per cent over 25 years. It was to be run by the directors of these firms who would fix prices. Heavy Woollen District Manufacturers were unanimously in support of the scheme at a meeting addressed by Sir Mark Oldroyd, the leading manufacturer in the district. It was felt that the principle of Free Trade had to give way to the need for unity in the national interest. (Yorkshire Post, 10.2.14) Labour observers were less certain about the structure of the scheme. Harris Hoyle of the Colne Valley District felt that it was: '... nationalisation in the wrong fashion. The Government find money for shareholders to establish a bigger factory system for the dyewares...' quoted in Yorkshire Factory Times, 21.1.15. Turner wrote that it was fair, from the point of view of businessmen, but 'We are not very certain they are as

equitable from the workman's point of view'. Yorkshire Factory Times, 18.2.15. He criticised the lack of safeguards for the workpeople employed under the scheme and felt that outright government ownership would have been preferable. Jowett was concerned at the international monopolistic tendencies of the scheme. Rather than accepting the official version of competition for markets and national danger, he saw the establishment of British Dyes Ltd. as "partly the result of arrangements between German and British chemical manufacturers concerning the sale of chemical substances". He saw public interest as the last consideration. (Quoted in Brockway, F., (1946) op.cit., p.149.

32. Lloyd (1924) op.cit., p.260.

33. As Wintour explained:

> '... it is impossible to regulate and organise manufacture on this scale without the assistance of business men expert in their particular trades. Apart from the constant touch maintained with its contractors, the Department has among its salaried officials a large number of men appointed for their technical qualifications... the policy adopted in the great textile, leather and other trades is settled in close consultation with businessmen who serve on committees advising the Department...'
>
> U.F. Wintour, Memorandum on War Office Contracts, Cd 8447 (1917) p.2.

34. One man who almost certainly played a key role, selecting and developing business contacts was Lt.Col. F.V. Willey, of Messrs. Francis Willey and Co., a firm of wool merchants with offices in Bradford and Boston, America. Another key figure was Charles Sykes who was appointed Director of Wool Textile Production, with offices at Bradford. Sykes who began working life at an accountant's office joined the firm of Messrs. John Crowther's and Sons, Milnsbridge, in 1890, as a traveller. He became chairman of the firm in 1937. Following his work as director of wool textile production and as chairman of the Wool Control Board, he was knighted in 1918. From 1918 to 1922 he was Coalition Liberal MP for Huddersfield, losing his seat to an independent Liberal in 1922. He became a baronet in 1921. Sykes was a lifelong liberal and teetotaller and for many years an active member of the Adult School movement. As "T.W." wrote in the obituary column of the Times:

> 'Sir Charles gathered round him a number of men eminent in their respective branches of the woollen and worsted industry and appointed them to seats on a board of control of which he became chairman ... when he requisitioned the entire trade for official purposes, on a costing basis, he met with sturdy opposition from those manufacturers who had concentrated on the more lucrative private trade, but his robust patriotism,, forceful personality, and organising ability soon had at his disposal the whole of the machinery of the trade suitable for the production of the vast

yardage of cloth required by the Government."

(The Times, 20.11.50)

These two men, and others, paid and unpaid, came to represent government policy while at the same time maintaining a smooth elision with established business thinking in Yorkshire's wool trade. Appointments and co-options were not carried through without opposition from both inside and outside the business community. Initially, contacts had been made directly from the War Office. Harry Dawson, a Colonial Importer and Wool Broker, was full of criticism of control as it developed. He claimed that there was 'Representation by business sections but no advice taken. The scheme (was) settled by officials (Fabian doctrinaires -(sic)) ... The idea was to eliminate the middlemen, who in the wool trade is pioneer, expert and financier ... Took our assistants but would not take in principals, the latter not being pliable enough.' Harry Dawson and Norman Rae were both bitterly opposed to control, its organisation and operation, and were to play a part in the management of de-control and 'return to normal' in the immediate months of the post-war period. They then became members of government committees or were recommended for such positions. (Rae and Dawson's accusations were made at the sub-committee of the Select Committee on National Expenditure, 16th July 1918, minutes preserved in MUN 4 1481, part 1, Dawson's statement is in MUN 4 6602.)

35. Jowett was critical of these developments. He argued that the government was

> '... getting certain persons in to give advice, calling them an Advisory Committee, those persons being men in business, and in that very business, it cannot be expected that the suggestions they make will fit the necessities of a time such as that in which we are now living...'
>
> (Hansard, Vol LXXXV, 1916, p.2702)

Instead he suggested a committee of MPs to represent all interests in the wool trade, from grower to consumer of the finished product.

36. See chapter 8 for labour's concerns at this stage in the war.

37. An observer provided a vivid description of the scenes:

> 'The scores of factories along the valleys and the hillsides are ablaze with light from the hundreds of casements, and remains so till morning. The roads are lined with wagons and motor lorries conveying bales of cloth and uniforms marked for delivery at the various military depots of the Allies - from Pimlico, Marseilles, Havre, to Archangel, Antivari, and Cairo, crates of hosiery wools, yarns, and tops, or half-finished materials passing between mills engaged in various processes.'
>
> G.R. Carter, "Clothing the Allies Armies", Economic Journal, Vol XXV, 1915.

38. See for example, Yorkshire Factory Times, 8.10.14, 15.10.14,

29.10.14; Worker, 3.10.14.

39. See resolutions passed at 1915 TUC; Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 1916. Gosling in his 1916 presidential address to the TUC while urging state involvement also insisted:

> 'We workmen do not ask that we should be admitted to any share in what is essentially the employers' own business - that is, in those matters which do not concern us directly in the industry or employment in which we may be engaged. We do not seek to sit on the board of directors, or to interfere with the buying of materials, or with the selling of the product. But in the daily management of the employment in which we spend our working lives, in the atmosphere and under the conditions in which we have to work, in the hours of beginning and ending work, in the conditions of remuneration, and even in the manners and practices of the foreman with whom we have to be in contact, in all these matters we feel that we, as workmen, have a right to a voice - even to an equal voice - with the management itself.'
>
> (Annual Report of TUC, September 1916, p.61)

40. See Lloyd (1924) op.cit., pp.37-38. A 'state of emergency' had to be declared in existence by a Principal Secretary of State, this was presented to a Justice of the Peace who signed a second form instructing the Chief Constable and his men to assist the military in serving requisition orders on the jute stock owners. Requisitioning was only complete after a third form had been signed by a police constable and given to the owners of the goods requisitioned. This complicated procedure derived from a piece of old legislation, since under DORA the government had, as yet, no powers of requisition.

41. There had been a number of moves to regulate the population and its consumption and mobilisation requirements. February 1915, Defence of the Realm (Amendment) Act, (No 2); June 1915, Munitions of War Act; Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act; These had, of course, been preceded by the early control of railways (4.8.14); Purchase of sugar and of wheat and the closing of the Stock Exchange until restricted opening in January 1915. The export of strategic chemicals had also been banned after the first days of August 1914.

42. Purchase of the British wool clip took place in the summer of 1916. Until that time, the supplies of raw wool had been sufficient even for the greatly inflated needs of the military machine. Export restrictions in 1915 had led to the retention of stocks which were not seriously depleted. By 1916, however, there were signs that this blance was shifting. In 1914 and 1915, there had been a drought in Australia which had seriously reduced the number of sheep. In South America, the move from sheep to beef and wheat meant a decline in wool production. Certain countries, notably Japan and USA began to increase their imports. Lloyd's figures show a tenfold increase in US Colonial wool purchases during 1915 and 1916. The evidence for these changes in supply and demand came from a census of the industry from growers to manufacturers,

carried out by the statistical branch of the Raw Materials Section of the War Office. For the first time detailed knowledge of stocks, movements of supplies and the capacity of the industry was available. The first stage was reached with the Order of June 8th 1916 which ended all dealings in British wool. By the autumn of 1916, the machinery for purchasing and distributing the British clip had been set up and was functioning. As with other state ventures, the process of transition from private to state purchase and its operation, was carried out, to a large extent by businessmen, 'experts', 'the ablest men in the trade', as they were variously described. (Lloyd (1924) op.cit., pp.114-117)

43. Two such committees were inaugurated in Bradford, one for worsted and one for wool. The committees were composed of four representatives each from the unions and employers, together with officers from the Recruiting and War Contracts Departments. At Bradford, the chair was taken by the chief Substitution Officer for the district and the secretary was the Local Officer of the Contracts Department. Thus the officials maintained control through taking the crucial roles on the committees and maintained the close links between central government and local industry.

An official memorandum quoted by Lloyd provides a description of the work of the Worsted Man Power Committee. A complete census of the labour, machinery and output was taken. This provided knowledge of the ages and medical descriptions of all men of military age employed in the industry. Using the census the Committee calculated the minimum amount of men needed for each stage of production required to ensure a given weekly output. Each firm was then tested against this set of figures in order to ensure the 'immediate release of all surplus men of military age'. Lists of substitutes were compiled from names of men known to the firms at any time and the unions were involved in transferring men from firms employed on work regarded as non-essential to work regarded as essential, namely government and export orders. The introduction of women from other districts to be employed on government work was also a concern of this committee. The census also provided information as to the equitable distribution of government work and was to help make firms share equally in the less profitable government and export work. (Lloyd (1924) op.cit., pp.272-275)

Nevertheless, Auckland Geddes, director of national service from 1917 to 1919, who with Rothermere, at the Royal Army Clothing Department, Wintour and others, had heard the views of a deputation of employers and trade unionists on the difficulties which conscription was creating for the industry, was not convinced that local involvement was the answer. He felt that recruiting problems were based on the 'wholly erroneous supposition' that local men were better judges of a trade than the Army's own representatives. He further claimed that when military representatives were able to challenge certificates given to those in reserved occupations, a more 'local' and 'democratic' decision could be arrived at. (Minutes of a deputation of representatives of the woollen and worsted industry to the War Office, 12th October 1916, MUN 4 6481, part 2.)

44. The Wool Trade Advisory Panel, set up by the Army Council in the autumn of 1916, was responsible for the selection of sub-committees to advise on problems which were occurring through the organisation

of control and requisition. Its members were 'prominent members of industry', that is employers and not labour representatives. In December, the War Office appointed a number of Wool Distribution Sectional Committees to advise on distribution questions relating to Top-Making, Exports and Imports. Members were drawn from, '... an Advisory panel of names suggested by the trade...'. An additional committee, appointed at the same time, again comprising manufacturers, dealt with the allocation of contracts. Liaison with local manufacturers appears to have been made easier through committees of manufacturers based on individual towns. (N.B. Dearle, Dictionary of Official War-time Organisations (1928) p.317 and p.320, Cd 8447)

45. Pressure from the trade and the increasing complexity of attempting to manage a trade some three hundred miles distant from London had led to the setting up of the War Department Cloth Office in Bradford, during 1916. The Cloth Office, located in the Great Northern Hotel, Bradford, was divided into a number of separate departments, each responsible for different sections of the trade, Wool Distribution, Top-making, Yarn and Cloth. The Office was administered by permanent officials of the War Office Contracts Department, some with industrial knowledge, some without. The various committees already described were supervised from the Cloth Office. Amongst other functions which the Cloth Office experts carried out were the costing of manufacturing processes, the calculation of conversion costs and the introduction of economy measures such as the salvage of old uniforms and the conversion of these into shoddy. Included with the industry's own co-opted members and working at the Cloth Office as a statistician was G.H. Wood, secretary to the Huddersfield manufacturers and spinners associations. Cd 8447 provides a description of the work of the Bradford Cloth Office, pp.15-16.

46. Lloyd (1924) op.cit., p.275.

47. Miliband (1969) op.cit., see especially chapter 6, "Imperfect Competition".

48. Support for this idea has come from the deliberations of a Departmental Committee of the Board of Trade, appointed in April 1916. The committee's brief was to consider the position of the Textile Trades in the world market and to make suggestions as to ways of maintaining the international position of the industry. The committee's members included several men who were well known as manufacturers and merchants in the Yorkshire industry, but included no representatives of labour. Albert Illingworth, MP, who resigned in December 1916 on becoming Post-Master General, Robert Thompson, MP, Theodore Cooke Taylor and Henry Norman Rae, were all members of this committee. Cd.9070, 1918. Reference to the recommendation of the committee is in the Yearbook of the Wool Textile Association, 1918-1920, in MUN 4, 6481, part 2.

49. In March 1917 there had been a deputation of thirty trade organisations to the Board of Trade where they had also met Forster from the War Office. The deputation criticised the Advisory Panel for its ineffectiveness and called for the creation of a body having executive powers. This Forster was unwilling to concede.

50. Formation of the Central Wool Advisory Committee described in the Yearbook of the WTA of the UK, First Annual Report, 1918,

in MUN 4 6481, part 2. Membership of the CWAC is listed in Memorandum, April 1917, in MUN 4, 6481, part 2 and in Cd 8447, p:23.23.

51. Hansard, Vol XCII, 23rd April 1917; p.2062.

52. During the next two months, the movement for control of industry by workers seems to have gained support in Huddersfield and District A council for the Control of Industry by the Working Classes was set up in June 1917. This group drew up a scheme for control, similar to that suggested by Thomas. It aimed to put pressure on trade union officials in the textile industry to call a conference which would then set up a Board of Control for the industry. The committee of this council comprised local members of the BSP mainly textile workers, including Richard Fenwick, a dyer; W. Birch, a finisher; T.Ward, scourer; A. Wadsworth, piecer; J. Raynor, weaver. The secretary, J. Brooke, was a textile worker turned Prudential insurance agent who was actively engaged in promoting ideas of control amongst insurance agents in Huddersfield. In debate with the newly formed council were the representatives of the Guild movement, led by John Schofield, a graduate and manager on the dyeing side of the textile industry. Schofield became for a short period editor of the Worker, in a voluntary capacity, after Thomas had been arrested and detained under the Military Service Act.

In all these debates, the leaders of the textile union were notably silent. The newly formed Council for the Control of Industry produced a circular which the Yorkshire Factory Times reproduced, however, Yarnspinner was not encouraging:

> 'It is a big subject ... and I do not think that it is at all likely that it can be settled in a short time, especially as it seems to me that the prime movers in Huddersfield are themselves having considerable discussion as to the wisdom and practicability of the scheme.'

Worker, 30.6.17, 21.7.17, 4.8.17; copy of the Council's circular in Yorkshire Factory Times, 5.7.17.

53. Yorkshire Factory Times, 26.7.17.

54. A new employer pressure group, the Wool Textile Association of the United Kingdom, was formed, coinciding with the setting up of the CWAC, although its inaugural meeting was not held until late June 1917. The WTA was set up, according to its first annual report to be a:

> '... fully representative central association to act as an authoritative medium of communication between the Government and the wool textile industry of the United Kingdom.'

The arrival of 'state control' had, it seemed, raised problems for the industry which this newly formed industry-based pressure group was interested in solving to its own satisfaction. While accepting the prime importance of production for war purposes, the new body was clear about its long-term policy, that of:

> '... preserving intact, and improving, its complex organisation so that after the war it may have a

fair chance of maintaining and developing that pre-eminent position in the world's commerce which was so firmly established prior to the outbreak of war.'

The trade was apparently concerned that wool control as developed so far had: '... created fears that irreperable injury would be done' to the industry. Yearbook of the WTA in MUN 4 6481, part 2.

55. The main task of the CWAC was to secure adequate supplies of wool, thereby maintaining production for government purposes. To achieve this end, the CWAC suggested three main methods. Firstly, a reduction in hours of work, by twenty per cent from 55½ to 45 was introduced and secondly, a priority scheme for manufacturing was devised. Orders were classified into three categories according to their destination; orders for British and Allied governments, export trade or orders considered to be of national importance and orders for domestic civilian consumption. The third aspect to conserving wool supplies came with the setting up of six District Priority Committees whose task was to ration spinners and manufacturers. Employers with civilian orders were allotted roughly sixty per cent of the amount of wool applied for and protested that this did not allow them to run their machinery for 45 hours in a week. These measures were designed to restrict or control the amounts of wool being used for civilian production. It was in this area of course that the largest profits were being made. Description of the work done by the CWAC is taken from Lloyd (1924) op.cit., pp.151-2. He in turn seems to have relied heavily on an earlier study by H.L. Gray (1918) op.cit.

56. At a meeting in Huddersfield, employers and workers' representatives discussed methods of applying the restrictions. It was decided, unanimously, that mills should run normal hours for four days, with work stopping after five hours on Friday. Some employers were obviously heartened by labour's concern over hours. Robinson, a Bingley manufacturer, President of Bradford Chamber of Commerce and a leading member of the WTA and no advocate of control, wrote to Illingworth in June to express his concern and fear of 'labour troubles' which were, he felt, due to wool control. He went on to suggest the retention of the 55½ hour week until after the textile holidays.

Rothermere, at the Royal Army Clothing Department, also saw a solution to wool supply problems in the curtailment of the civilian trade. Taking up the idea of double purpose cloth, he favoured the manufacture of 'a substitute cloth equally useful for the Army and civilian purposes, but to be held in store by the War Office until it is seen it will not be required by the Army'. The issue of Standard Cloth was to play a larger part in subsequent months. The unions were strongly in favour, since its production ensured employment. However, employers engaged in the civilian trade were largely against it since it constituted a far less profitable product and would extend government control in a hitherto uncontrolled area of production. Rothermere continued to bombard both Weir, the Surveyor General of Supplies and Goldfinch, the Director of Raw Materials, with demands that civilian production be drastically cut or eliminated. In October, he was describing the continued release of wool for the civilian market as 'suicidal' asserting that: "Next to food, clothes are the most important supply of war, even more important than ammunition." Yorkshire

Factory Times, 24.5.17, 31.5.17. For the effects of the shorter hours on wage bargaining see chapter 8; letters from Illingworth and Rothermere in MUN 4 6481, part 2.

57. Andrew Weir, was a Scottish shipowner who had built up a fleet of 52 ships within a few years of buying his first merchant sailing ship at the age of 20. In March 1917, Derby asked him to report on commercial organisation of the supply branches of the army. Weir recommended the appointment of a surveyor-general of supply. This was accepted and he was then appointed to the post. This initially earned him some criticism from civil servants. Knighted in 1918 as the First Baron Inverforth, he was appointed Minister of Munitions in January 1919, remaining there until 1921. (Details from Dictionary of National Biography)

58. At this stage, officials seem to have had a very real concern that workers in the industry, in particular those in Bradford mills whose machinery had not adapted so readily to government production, might take matters into their own hands. There was also the question of 'the intense resistance by the whole trade in case anything approaching the complete suppression of civilian consumption of wool were to be imposed.' Letters from Goldfinch to Weir, in MUN 4 6481, part 2.

In a memo of late August Forster's assurance appears as a promise to labour that it should:

> '... participate substantially in any methods of control decided upon. It is clear that they are entitled to consultation in all matters connected with Government requirements...'

However, the memo goes on to say that

> 'The Department is prepared to leave to the trade decisions as to the extent to which they shall be consulted with regard to the control of civilian work.'
>
> (Memo in MUN 4 6481, part 2)

'Yarnspinner'was of the opinion that rather than their avowed desire to protect the trade, employers were more interested in protecting their profits. In a telegram to Weir, Turner made his position clear:

> 'Must urgently press for Wool Control Board being established as suggested by Mr. Forster in its threefold character delay creates suspicion and threatens trouble.'
>
> (Yorkshire Factory Times, 12.8.17; Telegram in MUN 4 6481, part 2)

59. Yorkshire Post, 10.8.17; Letter from Rothermere to Col. Willey, 2.11.17. In MUN 4 6481, part 4.

60. The employers were represented by three woollen and worsted manufacturers, three spinners and one each from Scotland, the West of England, the hosiery industry, low wool users and blanket and carpet manufacturers and the shoddy trade. The eleven labour men were Hayhurst and Shaw of the ASD and F, Turner and Gee of the GUTW, Lockwood of he the Yeadon and Guisely Factory Workers' Union, Grundy of the National

Union of Woolsorters, Rushworth of the Scottish Dyers, Hartshorn, secretary of the Nottingham and District Hosiery Workers' Trade Union, Spetch of the Bradford Cloth Pressers' Society, Dickinson of the Bradford Overlookers' Society and J.W. Riley of the Yorkshire Managers and Overlookers' Society. Officially, the Board's functions were:

> 'To deal with the control of wool in the spinning and manufacturing stages and to assist in the distribution of government contracts and the rationing of the civilian trade with raw wool.'

The new board as proposed by Forster and as first constituted was unacceptable to the employers since they were still to have no say in the administration and purchase of wool. Following further negotiations in early September, a compromise was reached. A Raw Wool Advisory Committee was agreed to. The functions of this committee were to 'assist in the administration of the purchase and re-sale of wool on National account, and in the preparation of estimates of stocks, prospective supplies and consumption of wool'. In comparison with the Control Board, the Raw Wool Advisory Committee, chaired by Goldfinch, the Director of Raw Materials, had proportionately fewer labour members and included one of the most vociferous and outspoken opponents of control, Norman Rae. A third labour members was represented, but not in his own right, as a member of the Board of Control, and representing that body. A further accession to Bradford employer demands came in November, when Sykes, though remaining under the supervision of Goldfinch managed to get agreement to work involving contracts being transferred from London to Bradford. Details and correspondence in RECO 1,649; MUN 4 6538; MUN 4 6481, part 4.

61. There was not complete unanimity amongst government officials in their attitude to Bradford-centred independence moves. Goldfinch, an official whose job was specifically to maintain a supply of raw materials, was less inclined to tolerate Bradford-centred independence moves. In particular, he opposed the attempt, advocated by Sykes and ultimately adopted by Weir, to contain merchants' criticisms by including them on the Raw Wool Advisory Committee. (Correspondence in MUN 4 6481, part 2.)

62. Here, the War Office played no part, since the government did not purchase the raw material and control was seen primarily as an answer to an industrial rather than a national crisis. The products of the cotton industry, unlike that of wool, were destined almost entirely for civilian use. The Control Board in the cotton industry was smaller than that for wool, with only 16 members. Of these, four were labour representatives and two members only appeared for the Board of Trade. The remaining ten members were representatives of spinners, manufacturers and, an important difference, three representatives of commercial bodies. The chairman of the Cotton Control Board was, as with wool, a leading employer, Sir Herbert Dixon, also chairman of the Fine Cotton Spinners' Federation.

For the wool employers, the attractions of arrangements made for cotton were the freedom of the raw material from government control. Prices were controlled by merchants and determined on a daily basis. Supplies to spinners were only provided under licence of the Control Board. Restrictions over consumption were only provided under licence of the Control Board and were carried out by the limitation

to sixty per cent of spinning machinery working American cotton. Spinners using Egyptian cotton were allowed to use all their spindles but any using over sixty per cent were to pay levies which were to be contributed towards an unemployment fund for workers affected by the restrictions on machinery in the mills spinning American cotton. In cotton weaving, after some disagreements, manufacturers agreed to limit production in such a way as to enable weaving output to match the supply from the spinners. Yorkshire employers, looking at the Lancashire arrangements envied this apparent autonomy and freedom of the industry to operate its own production and unemployment schemes. It was felt that the Board of Trade's handling of the industry as a unit had been altogether lighter and fairer than that of the War Office. In particular, the exclusion of commercial interests from any functioning part of war production, apart from the limited operations of the Raw Wool Advisory Committee, was bitterly resented.

Observers such as Hammond were enthusiastic about the Cotton Control Board and in particular its scheme for supporting the unemployed. The whole industry had, apparently made itself liable to support the 'reserve of labour' through the administration of levies through the unions. Fixed amounts, 25s for a man, 15s for a woman, 12s for full time children and 6s for half timers were paid by the unions, from the levies on employers, to all cotton workers, union members or not. The usually preferred method of work sharing was to give a proportion of each mill's workers a 'holiday' every third week. This had been agreed by committees of employers and the unions. Hammond felt that such a scheme benefitted the health of the workforce. The married woman was better off financially since she did not have to pay out 8s for childcare in the third week. Moreover:

> 'She has been able during the last six months to look after her children one week out of three and to attend to the cleaning of her house. The arrangement has consequently been exceedingly popular with the number of the work-people, and it is possible that this experience may be found at the end of the war, to have broken the habit, nearly a century old, of regarding it as normal and satisfactory that a woman's whole time should be given to the factory.'

Wage advances in the cotton industry appear also to have come under control of the Board, with this more conciliatory approach. When the unions had asked for a wage increase this was arbited by an employer, the Cotton Control Board's chairman, at the unions' own suggestion. Not surprisingly, the increase awarded ten per cent, was somewhat less than the current rate of price increase. However, the unions were prepared to accept this small addition to earnings together with a promise that the unemployment scheme would continue. Hammond's enthusiasm was, he claimed, shared by both sides in the cotton industry itself. He observed that,

> '... it had the confidence of the industry. Lancashire men, employers or workmen, are proud of the scheme, which they feel is particularly their own, and recognise that it has saved the cotton districts from distress and trouble.'

However, all did not pass as smoothly as Hammond observed, by April 1918, the cotton levy scheme had become insolvent, and problems were arising in the industry which were not to be solved by the simple collaboration of labour's leaders with employers' policies. Description of the Cotton Control Board in "Memorandum on the Cotton Control Board", RECO 1, 801, HM 03669. (See Yearbook of the WTA, 1918-1919. In MUN 4 6481, part 2; RECO 1.801, HM 03669; allegations about insolvency were made by Goldfinch at the 15th meeting of the Board of Control, 9.4.18, at which a levy scheme for the Wool industry was debated in MUN 4 6538.)

Hyman in notes to Goodrich (1975) op.cit., discusses the Cotton Control Board more critically. Quoting Hubert D. Henderson, secretary of the Board from 1917 to 1919, and who later wrote up his experiences in The Cotton Control Board (1922) he suggests that employer domination rendered the Board a basically unequal institution. Henderson maintained that the chairman, an employer,

> '... with an employer's outlook and ideas ... (had an) unquestioned assumption of the initiative this meant in effect that the initiative rested with the employers. The operatives' leaders fulfilled essentially the role of a friendly opposition, now pleading for concessions, now issuing warnings, but at no time playing an equal part in the determination of policy.'
>
> (Henderson p.11)

Hyman goes on to quote Henderson further to show that the unemployment levy was used as a means to maintain wages well below living costs. Threats to withdraw the scheme accompanied any attempts to increase wages. An official Tribunal of Inquiry was set up after a spinners' strike in 1918. This found that,

> '... profits made are satisfactory and indeed high ... (but) relatively to the cost of living the operatives are substantially worse off than before the war and by comparison with other trades are bearing a disproportionate share of the burden arising from increased prices.'
>
> (quoted by Henderson, p.63)(Hyman pp.279-280)

63. The two memoranda on the Cotton and Wool Control Boards were, according to Johnson, both written by Hammond, who at the time was at the Ministry of Reconstruction. Certainly the "Memorandum on the Work of the Control Board in the Woollen and Worsted Industry" dated November 1917, and preserved in RECO 1.371 bears a close resemblance to the section on the Board in "Jason" (pseud.) (1918) op.cit. J.L. Hammond was a journalist and writer who joined the civil service in 1907. Possibly his Drighlington (Yorkshire) background and education (Bradford Grammar School) made him more ready to see success in the industry, many of whose leading employers and owners he must have known personally if not by reputation.

64. 'The Control Board in the Woollen and Worsted Trade is perhaps the most striking of all the experiments that have been made during the war. The corporate spirit it has produced, the confidence it has inspired, its success in bringing into their proper perspective important and pressing questions, above all

the example it gives of effective co-operation between employers and workpeople, and the several interests engaged in the trade, are full of encouragement and instruction for those who look along some such lines as these for the improvement of the tone and power of British Industry. Nobody could sit through a meeting of the Board of Control without realising that this scheme is much more than a wartime expedient and that it conveys the most significant lessons on the whole of industrial efficiency and industrial peace.'

Industrial peace, improved employer organisation and increased efficiency in the industry were all seen as having been generated by the Board and likely to flourish under its direction. Hammond saw the Board as a living example of an acceptance of the principle of collective control in the face of ruthless market forces:

> 'Instead of a scramble in which some men might make fortunes and others pass into the bankruptcy court, with work people here working overtime and there walking the streets in hunger and misery, we have an industry regulating its fortunes with a view to the common good. It is recognised that there is something better than economic law as the arbiter of men's fate. The conscious efforts of a set of men to adapt themselves to a crisis in such a way as to check its disturbing consequences mark a step of the first importance in the reconstruction of industry on humane lines.'
>
> RECO 1/371

65. "Jason" (1918) op.cit., p.137. The committees he refers to were the Allocation of Contracts (Central) Advisory Committee, the Export Yarn Rationing Committee, the Spinners Sectional Committee, the Yarn Spinners Committee, Yarn Conversion Costs Committee, the Dyers and Finishers Committees and the Central Advisory Committee on Wool Purchase. These, and in some cases there were sub-committees too, were in fact responsible for crucial questions such as wool purchase and the costing of various processes. 'Technical' these may have appeared to Hammond, but they were undoubtedly areas of interest and relevance to labour. Apart from the Board of Control itself, labour did have representation on a number of committees whose activities came under its general responsibility. These were the already mentioned Raw Wool Advisory Committee, the Top Making Committee, the East Indian and Kindred Wools Committee, the clothing wool section of the Raw Wool Advisory Committee, the joint rationing committee and its seven local rationing committees and the Cotton and Wool Demarcation Committee. In all these case, though labour had representatives, consistently drawn from a small group of men, it was very much in a minority capacity. In most cases, labour had only two seats where employers had between four and eight and official representatives similar numbers. Listed in RECO 1/649/743.

66. Jowett had advocated the ending of production of short, fashion-oriented lengths so that the industry's capacity could be directed towards plain cloths for outer and under garments, serving the needs of soldiers and civilians. He had always been convinced that there was a need for Government control of the industry to prevent the expensive end of the civilian trade from dominating

the price structure of the industry. Pioneer, 9.3.15, quoted in Brockway (1946) op.cit., p.43.

67. Memo from Goldfinch to Weir, 26.7.17 in MUN 4 6481, part 2.

68. Yorkshire Post, 10.8.17.

69. Hosiery, flannel, blankets, woollen and worsted suitings for men and boys and skirt materials for women were to be produced. The cloth and products supplied were made to standard descriptions and were marked on the selvedges in order to make them distinctive. The aim was to produce clothing of limited, though appealing variety, suitable for working people and providing some kind of standard for the trade as a whole. Standard Cloth was produced on the same basis as cloth for military purposes, from raw wool bought at fixed prices from the War Office and with fixed conversion costs for each stage of production. The scheme was popular with labour representatives and with observers such as Hammond, who saw the scheme as yet further evidence of the good work of the Board of Control, in this case looking after the needs of the consumer. However, many manufacturers, as Goldfinch observed, were implacably opposed to such popularly based schemes:

> 'I notice that Shackleton (a prominent Shipley manufacturer and leading member of the WTA) and others continue to pour cold water upon every one of these schemes for helping his own trade, expecting, of course, by this means he will oblige you to release more wool for their private business.'

As far as labour was concerned, the Standard Cloth Scheme was essential both as a war-time and post-war measure since it was anticipated:

> 'When the war has gone by millions of people will want cloth. Five and a half million soldiers will require new suits, and if the the Bradford wool kings have their own way, they will fleece the soldiers in the price of their garments by rushing up the price of wool on the plea that wool shall be free...'

The employers' response was typically that:

> 'The clothing manufacturers can beat these clothes in price, value and style easily under equal and normal conditions... Everything could have been done cheaper if left to the Industry with prices of raw material fixed and a commission paid from top to bottom... The intrinsic value of the article will sooner be arrived at by open competition.'

Lloyd (1924) op.cit., pp.152-154; EXT 1/4 correspondence between Goldfinch and Sykes, 21.12.17, 29.12.17; "Jason" (1918) op.cit., p.138; Yorkshire Post, February 1918, quoting a 'well-known labour leader' - preserved in MUN 4 6538; Dawson's statement to the Select Committee on National Expenditure, 16 July 1918, in MUN 4 6602.

70. Jowett was to advocate a system of barter as a means to supporting

the 60,000 unemployed textile workers in mid 1921. The government should have rationed out its surplus wool at the end of the war, supplied British clothing needs at cost price and then exchanged the surplus for necessities by direct exchange with exporting nations. 'In that way there would have been no plunder for the profiteer. The mills would have been kept going, the workers would have had wages, production would have continued, and the needs of the people would have been met'. Daily Herald, 1.7.21, quoted in Brockway (1946) op.cit., pp.187-8.

71. E.H. Tawney, "The Abolition of Economic Controls, 1918-1921", Economic History Review, Vol XIII (1943) p.12. Johnson (1968) op.cit. describes how the reconstructionists' 'programme' scarcely survived the two months preceding the armistice and argues that what was left had little impact on post-war society or economy.

72. The neo-classical economist spoke through the mouths of Yorkshire spinners and merchants in the form of a policy document of the British Wool Federation:

> "... the market will find a level of prices where intrinsic values are recognised, more quickly under the natural laws of supply, demand and distribution, than by any artificial Government support, and ... the industry will be able to take care of its own interests in this respect."
>
> (British Wool Federation's Scheme for the Transfer of the Wool Industry from State Control to Trade Organisation and Normal Conditions, MUN 4 6481, part 1)

73. A deputation from the employers had met Goldfinch in February to seek assurances about the end of control and had been told by Goldfinch that he and Weir favoured:

> '... very greatly relaxing the control of the wool trade as soon as the necessity for a large military production ceased, and hoped that a very great advance in the direction of the complete abolition of control would take place within the first six months after peace was signed.'

Assurances of this type were exactly what employers hoped to hear. Interference from officials in the working of the trade, together with even the very limited democracy of the Wool Control Board, was anathema to many employers in the wool textile industry. The equivocal position which officials were taking over the question of controls was clearly understood by the employers' mouthpiece, The Yorkshire Post in commenting on the February deputation. It warned readers against: 'Socialistic movements intended to continue control of the wool trade for a long period after peace has been declared'. But pointed out that the officials need not be accused of such tendencies since:

> 'The great majority of these officials are just as anxious as their critics to see the ordinary channels of trading re-opened as soon as possible after the war ... The socialistic influences which call for attention are outside, and not

inside, the Government departments ...'

(Unidentified newspaper cutting, February 8, 18, in MUN 4 7481, part 1; letter from Shackleton of Taylor, Shackleton & Co., Shipley to Goldfinch 14.2.18, EXT 1/4; Yorkshire Post, 8.2.18.

In quite another war and in another country and administration, Jessica Mitford was to experience the bite of employer criticism as she worked for the American Office of Price Administration. This was an agency which operated controls and rationing in 1941. The American press, less muted in its attacks than even the Yorkshire Post, referred to Ms Mitford and he colleagues as 'slide-rule boys' and 'O.P.A. snoopers'. Described in A Fine Old Conflict (1977).

74. Hyman (1975) in his introduction to Goodrich argues that the Guild has 'an influence out of all proportion to its size and social composition' (p.xvi). This was due to the central role which Guild policies assigned to the trade union movement. This gave Guild ideas a broadly based appeal which included the most revolutionary shop stewards as well as more moderate gradualists such as Turner.

It is interesting to note that both Cole and Hammond were to speak at Huddersfield Trades and Labour Council at this time. In November 1917, Cole addressed a meeting on Control. Hammond's invitation was for January 1918.

75. Miliband (1964) op.cit., pp.61&ff

76. See Goodrich (1975) Introduction "The Demand for Control" passim.

77. Discussed in Rodger Charles S.J., The Development of Industrial Relations in Britain, 1911-1939 (1973).

78. Addison, at Reconstruction, was still working hard to extend Whitley-type principles into trade based organisations during 1918. He envisaged the transformation of bodies such as the Cotton and Wool Control Boards into advisory committees, representatives of industries, aiding the Government in Reconstruction tasks. Such committees, known as Interim Industrial Reconstruction Committees varied in composition, some including only employer representatives and others, a minority labour voice. In some industries there was complete refusal on the part of employers to co-operate. The IIRC's were seen as an obstacle to de-control. See Johnson (1968) op.cit., pp.165&ff.

79. Weir had warned Addison in July that any organisation dealing with wool matters would have to have a changed representative structure. The 'official element' would have to be reduced and representation of raw wool interests, that is merchants and brokers, would have to be included. Weir to Addison, 9.7.18, MUN 4 6481, part 4.

80. The 41 trade members included the 22 employer and labour members of the Wool Control Board; 4 members of the British Wool Federation, 8 employers, including brokers, merchants, combers, spinners, 5 delegates from the NAUTT and 2 delegates from the United Garment Workers' Union. In terms of employer and labour representation, the division was 23 to 19. It had been agreed at the October meeting

that labour's share should be increased to include workers from warehousing, woolsorting and combing and that delegates from clothing workers should also be included. This was to be achieved without giving labour a majority or equality on any committee so formed. All sections of the industry were represented, including those who had been most outspoken in their criticisms of the Board of Control. Labour's representatives included the 11 from the Wool Control Board, together with 5 nominees of the NAUTT who comprised not only unions covering the preparatory stages of production, but also a delegate from the GUTW's Wellington District in Somerset, and two garment workers' from Leeds. Papers relating to the establishement of the Wool Council in RECO 1 743, 744.

81. A pressing question in November 1918 was whether or not the government should continue to issue wool and tops at fixed prices. In his opening remarks, at the first meeting, Goldfinch, assured all the delegates that although control might be necessary for another three or four months, while Army needs still predominated, he anticipated relaxation of government influence, by the end of June or July. By then, imports would have improved and the London auctions might be re-opened.

82. It was proposed that auctions should be opened in early April with the sale of Australasian wool. However, it was argued, prices would be stabilised and kept low, by the existence of three alternative sources of supply, government auctions, wools sold at government fixed issue prices, and wool from other sources at prices fixed by unrestricted bargaining. The government could further manage the market by regulating the amounts of Australian and New Zealand wool being auctioned. Turner alleged that employer lobbying had resulted in the government's decision favouring de-control and insisted that labour's dissension be placed on record. (Third meeting of Wool Council 23.1.19, minutes in RECO 1 745).

83. G.D.H. Cole, Chaos and Order in Industry (1920) p.30. Subsequently the proceedings of the Wool Council were to be entirely dominated by unresolved debates about norms for wage adjustment, holidays with pay and apprenticeship schemes. Matters relating to production and control were not to come under consideration during its later lifetime. (See Conclusion.)

84. In 1914, there were no federations of employers' associations, by 1919, there were four, representing various types of undertaking with local associations in every town of the West Riding for each type of process, spinning, combing, waste pulling, fine cloth manufacturing, etc. (Directory of Industrial and other Associations concerned with matters relating to conditions of Employment, 1919, Cmd 328, 1919).

85. Report upon an Investigation into the Prices, Costs and Profits of Yorkshire Tweed Cloths made by a Sub-committee Appointed by the Standing Committee of the Investigation of Prices (Profiteering Acts, 1919 and 1920), 1920, Cmd 858; Profiteering Act Department, 1919: Findings by a Committee Appointed to Inquire into Worsted Yarns, 1920, Cmd 550; Board of Trade Profiteering Act Department file on question to be asked 7.3.21, by Mr. Lunn, MP, of the Board of Trade, on the British Wool Federation's refusal to supply the sub-committee on wool profits of the Central Profiteering Department. File on answer to question to be asked on 26.10.20 by Mr. Allen

Parkinson of the Board of Trade on the position of the sub-committee appointed to investigate Wool Tops, BT 68/70.

86. Until May 24th 1917, when the War Office established full control machinery, opportunities to exploit shortages of tops, yarns and cloth enabled different manufacturers to indulge in a profit explosion. Raw wool and tops prices had increased by over 50 per cent by the time the War Office purchased the wool clip in August 1916. One observer estimated that worsted spinners' net profits on yarn had increased tenfold between July 1914 and January 1916, this was an average figure and concealed even greater profit levels on certain types of spun yarn. Manufacturers, both worsted and woollen, showed similarly large profit levels with excess profits, tax, supertax and income tax making few inroads. Government officials were particularly alarmed at the strong position of spinners and topmakers in the early months of the war, which enabled them to exploit a key position in the trade to increase profits to unprecedented levels. It was to be the worsted spinners who were to come under greatest criticism since their profit increases were so spectacular. Low wages in worsted spinning mills not affected in any dramatic way by wage negotiations, helped maintain expanding profit margins for spinners. Their key role in the manufacturing process enabled costs to be passed on to manufacturers of both military and civilian directed cloth. One observer calculating an expected increase in the price of yarn as 116 per cent found that the actual increase for worsted yarn prices was 295 per cent and concluded: "There is no doubt that spinners have availed themselves of every opportunity for demanding maximum prices". A committee appointed under the 1919 Profiteering Act and comprising employers, Ben Turner, Sidney Webb and Marion Phillips amongst others, found evidence of consistently high profits for spinners. Rejecting pleas from spinners that War Office prices had not increased sufficiently and did not allow a wide enough margin, the committee found the market price to be 'much higher than could be considered to be a fair price'. Worsted spinning prices were perhaps more visible and certainly more dramatic, however, it was clear from the published annual reports of those few public companies in the industry, that woollen manufacturers had also been enjoying higher profits during a period of unprecedented demand for their products. In the first few months of war, until the War Office introduced a close scrutiny of production costs for government work, and until manufacturers came to be compelled to take their share of less profitable production, there was something of a free for all in price terms. War Office costings, administered by officials cut down on this to an extent, although generous allowances for profit margins and changes in the cost of production made these limitations acceptably flexible. This was to be expected when the officials making the judgements were in most cases drawn from the industry itself, or in close association with 'experts' working in the industry. Such intrusions were unwelcome, nevertheless, and criticised unceasingly for their bureaucracy and 'socialistic' tendencies. However, the controls seem to have precented outright profiteering at public expense as well as fostering steady and standard supplies. It was in the, admittedly reduced, area of the civilian trade that the highest profits continued to be made. As Leach, the Bradford manufacturer and socialist observed:

> 'The laws of competition and supply and demand have been turned upside down. Today nobody in the trade ever haggles about prices in the least.

Whatever is demanded finds clients willing to pay.'

Leach, a keen advocate of government control, suggested that in approximate terms soldiers had been clothed at half the rate that civilians had due to the limitations placed on the cost of military orders.

Titus Binns, War Profiteering in the Worsted Trades (1920) ILP pamphlets, New Series No 6; "Memorandum on the position with regard to Wool during 1916", comments on the first draft deleted from abridged copy sent to Australian High Commission, 15.3.16 in MUN 4, 6481, part 2; A.S. Firth, "An Analysis of the Increased Cost of Clothing Materials During the Period July 1914 to October 1916", Economic Journal 1918, p.254; Cmd 550; W. Leach, "Wool and War", Socialist Register, January 1918, p.25.

87. See Conclusion.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WAR TIME COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND CONCILIATION

In previous chapters the pre-war characteristics of industrial relations in the industry were described. Low levels of trade union membership, a tendency towards irregular earning patterns, a marginally conceived role for women in production, wide variations in wages as between occupations and districts and the development of a strong pro-union party amongst certain sections of the employers meant that industry wide norms or minima were scarcely in evidence in the years before the war and had developed through indirect mediations by the official leadership rather than through pressure from rank and file members. Improvements in the union's standing and its visibility as a functioning institution had derived from the positive evaluation of its role by some employers and by the involvement of leading members in aspects of local government during the pre-war years. Many of these features were in general terms enhanced by war-time involvement in production and its organisation.

The position of the union in war-time control of the industry has been described in chapter seven, particularly where inequalities in access to questions of management of production were concerned. In relation to wage bargaining procedures and the development of a wages structure in the industry this chapter will seek to show that war-time changes were restricted to issues relating to 'fact' rather than 'interest'[1] and that this was based upon shared definitions held by employers and trade union leaders in the industry. Although by the end of the war, organisation on both sides had grown both in size and representivity, there were still areas which were largely unchanged. In particular, though increasingly outspoken in their criticism of the union leadership, women were to remain in a position of

inequality, both as earners and as union members. Although large parts of the industry were to come under the control of government officials and although labour was to have a greatly enhanced role due to demand for the industry's products, the basic relationships remained unchanged. Influence within the industry lay firmly within employers' hands while labour made no telling demands nor presented any alternative to existing forms of ownership, control or wage-earning.

War-time wages movements and subsequent negotiations and awards break down into three main phases. The first phase, following the signing of the 'truce' on August 28th 1914 lasted until February 1915. It was characterised by a variety of responses to war-time conditions, tempered by pre-war aspirations and features. The second phase lasted until April 1917 and saw five wages movements. During this period, the union's leadership became increasingly drawn into a government-employer dominated framework of wage settlements and the union's women members found themselves in growing disenchantment with their relative earnings position. The third phase, beginning in April 1917, was characterised by attempts to organise wages movements on an industry-wide basis and was to have mixed results for the GUTW. As this last period wore on, the limited gains of war-time wage bargaining became clear. These were to have implications for the post-war periods of boom and recession in the industry.

Changes in the calculation and definition of increases in earnings during the war years were a product of government and employer-based consensus. In keeping with 'business as usual' but under 'abnormal conditions', there was an expectation and, after March 1915 agreement, that there was to be no alteration to basic wage rates during the period of the war. During

the second phase, war bonus or war grants were negotiated for some groups of workers in the industry, primarily on a flat-rate basis and with implicit reference to pre-war differentials. By April 1917, organised employers, as increased war bonuses were being sought in rapid succession, came to favour the calculation of increases as a percentage of pre-war rates, rather than as amounts in bonus.(2) Nevertheless, there were to be some inroads into established practices. Women workers on piece rates were to gain a form of positive discrimination and there were inevitably to be some adjustments to basic wage rates as percentage-based increases widened the gaps between some earnings groups.

National events also brought about changes in the temper of wages movements and in the wording of ensuing awards. Thus, the move by Askwith, in late 1916, to secure nationwide agreements which culminated in the National Wages Agreement, signed by Askwith and a number of key trade unions(3), laid down the principle of hearings every four months from the beginning of 1917. These were to be held by the Committee on Production and were to decide what changes were necessary. These agreements, covering the engineering, shipbuilding, chemicals, clay, explosives and other industries had the indirect effect, for wool and worsted, of encouraging an industry-wide pattern of negotiations with the expectation of periodic review. For their part, employers had come to appreciate the role of the government conciliator or arbitrator, as those involved entirely in government contract work found that they could officially pass on increases in wages through the costings system.(4)

A further change took effect in 1917 when the wording of agreements was altered, after March, to refer to the increased cost of living.(5) This addition to the wording came largely as a result of labour's presentation and formulation of demands during the preceding months. By January 1st, 1917,

it was estimated that the cost of all items bought by working class families had increased, on average, by 60 per cent.(6) While retail prices showed a steady rate of increase the demand for increased earnings was also constant. The changed wording was thus not only a sign of recognition by the government of the effect of upward retail price movement, but also carried with it the prospect of review and renewal while prices continued to rise.

The third phase of wage demands was also set against a background of uncertainty as to earnings. Shortages and irregularities in the supply of raw materials meant that from mid-1917 onwards, short time and enforced holiday breaks became a feature of the wool textile industry once again.

August 1914-February 1915

The immediate questions concerning the textile unions at the outbreak of war were unemployment in the first few weeks, overtime and nightwork during the ensuing period of war production and allowances for the families of serving men.(7) Turner and Gee took the line, after the first week of the war, that the situation had been forced upon the people, but that a necessary effort in the mills would bring about a swift ending. This meant that issues thrown up by the new conditions presented by the war were those which claimed first consideration; longer term questions concerning wage lists, organisation or the nature of the war in class terms were no longer seen as pressing. The situation had swung from one extreme to another. The rather quiet state of the trade in the weeks before the war, described as only 'moderate'(8), had been succeeded by a more uncertain state of affairs. In August, as many as 60 per cent were unemployed in the woollen trade and almost 65 per cent in worsted.(9) In addition, many were working short time. By September, as the contracts were placed for the army, and enlistments got under way, the trade picked up, even in the worsted sector which was to have greater problems in adapting to the production of khaki, serge and blankets. In October, trade was 'very brisk' with overtime being

worked by more than a quarter of workers in woollen mills[10] and by December, usually a quiet time for the trade, only the least adaptable areas, Bradford and Keighley, were experiencing short time and even here overtime was being worked by sizeable proportions of workers.[11]

Increased earnings during this period, as a result of steady output and overtime were being steadily reduced in real terms as the retail prices of food began moving upwards.[12] Despite this, the number of disputes fell away rapidly during the first few months of the war. All the signs had shown the possibility of even greater industrial conflict in 1914 than in the previous years of virtual open class warfare. In the seven months preceding the truce conditions of the war, the number of conflicts notified nationally had been the highest ever recorded, even exceeding the record reached in 1913.[13]

The general decline in the number of notified disputes did not mean that the conflicts generated by the very procedures of cloth production were not constantly occurring. Conflicts over underpayment were still likely to arise and were in many ways exacerbated by the switch to production for government orders. The involvement of the government as purchaser opened up oppurtunities for the union to enforce standard rates. Thus, a special committee of the Huddersfield District, held at Milnsbridge, passed a resolution in early October, requesting Gee to send to the War Office the names of Colne Valley firms employed on government work, but not paying the 1883 scales for weavers.[14] The change in accustomed production methods, together with the switch to different products led to areas of possible conflict, while employers sought to reduce wages or alter prices to cover lost production in an attempt to redefine actual job costs. At Flush mills, Heckmondwike, in September, women weavers met Gee and Turner when the firm threatened to reduce wages by 25 per cent. The outcome of a meeting between

Gee and the employers was an offer to decrease the reduction to which the weavers agreed.(15) In these first few weeks of war, reductions and cuts in earnings were conceded as part of the general response to panic in the trade. The Huddersfield Worker noted that only a week after the weavers at a local mill had agreed to work overtime at ordinary rates and to take a shilling a cut less than usual, the employers were offering financial support to enlisted men in their employment.(16) Other highly localised conflicts occurred over attempts by employers to adjust prices following the change to army products. The largest mill in Marsden, Bank Bottom, broached the question of piece rates for milners and scourers with the union, through the agency of G.H. Wood. However, these workers were, "not prepared to accept piece rates at any price".(17) Teazers at a Slaithwaite mill found that on army orders the increased amount of shoddy for which they were generally not paid for teazing was cutting down their earnings. In addition, they were expected to load and unload waggons for no extra pay.(18)

These individual problems were replaced by a more general grievance during October and one which appears to have been articulated first of all in the Colne Valley District. Payments for overtime had not, apart from the preparatory and finishing sections, been a general feature of the 1913 agreements. War time production, with its heavy reliance on overtime revealed this omission. In early October, Colne Valley District of the union requested a joint meeting with Huddersfield, in order to put forward an application for an overtime rate for weavers and any other group not included in the 1913 agreements. The amounts suggested were 1½d an hour for piece workers and time and a quarter for workers on ordinary day rates. No overtime was to be worked after 8 pm.(19) The movement began publicly with meetings and discussions in the labour press. Women were attacked as being

both the victims of and the willing partners in a system of overlong and unpaid hours of work. For three months, no overtime was worked by weavers in many Colne Valley mills. Following an offer from the employers which specified lower rates for women and which was rejected on a ballot of members, Askwith was recalled finally and awarded a single rate of 1½d an hour but with an extra hour of overtime included.(20) Elsewhere in the industry, the question of overtime was to be less prominent as an issue. In Dewsbury, though a conference with employers discussed the question, no terms were debated.(21) In Bradford, only 11 per cent of workers covered by Board of Trade returns were working overtime in February.(22) Further, low wages and irregular earnings which were typical in Bradford were unlikely to provide a popular basis for a campaign which sought to limit overtime hours.

The opening months of the war, up to the end of January, saw piecemeal reactions to war-time production conditions. By December, it was clear that the emergency was becoming a condition of life with its own characteristics. The possibility of bringing about some overdue changes at a time when labour's bargaining powers seemed enhanced was certainly being recognised in some quarters. The effects of rising prices for foodstuffs and an increasing dependence on women's lower earning levels were to make the need to revise existing wage rates more pressing and constant. Economic factors and government policy led to the speeding up of the processes whereby wages movements developed from first agitations, through union articulation to conciliation or arbitration with employers. The Munitions of War Act, of June 1915, set statutory limitations on industrial activity and strengthened the ties between local officials and government representatives. Such a 'smoothing out' process had the effect of removing the rank and file from any close involvement with the actual procedures of

wage adjustment at a time when in simple terms their position was greatly improved and strengthened. These contradictions were to have more widespread repercussions on Clydeside and to a lesser extent in Sheffield, where political and economic demands both long and short-term were advaned by sections of the working population acting with a degree of independence which concerned both government and labour's 'official' leadership. In the textile industry of the West Riding, the separation of political and economic issues and their articulation through more moderate leaders meant that rank and file grievances were rarely taken up or consolidated independently. The very structure of the union's government and the processes of interaction between various groups, districts and interests within the union tended to have an isolating effect on the involvement and participation by the mass of the membership, both the men, and more especially, the women.

March 1915 to April 1917

Throughout 1915 and 1916 government involvement in all the stages of production increased, as men were enlisted to fight and as market-based production failed to supply the needs of a war-time economy. Nationally, the Liberal laissez-faire approach of Asquith's first months of war-time premiership gave way firstly to the coalition of Liberals, Unionists, and, from May 1915, the lone Labour representative, Henderson, and then to the War Cabinet of Lloyd George in December 1916. The role of Lloyd George in shaping and executing war time administration has been outlined by historians and commentators writing from widely differing viewpoints. His role would appear to have been central and the manner in which a combination of individualist and collectivist tactics were utilised, unprecedented.

At this stage the possibility was still being entertained of utilising the opportunity of war-time production to strengthen organisation, improve

district wage rates and perhaps even to establish a minimum wage for all textile workers.(23) Moderation and caution were nevertheless also urged:

> '... the Textile Union itself will be prepared to argue matters in a quiet calm and considerate fashion, so as to let new agreements replace the old ones without any dislocation of trade or any disturbance, and reasonable profits to the employers.'(24)

The agreements negotiated in 1913 covering the Heavy Woollen, Leeds, Yeadon, Huddersfield and Colne Valley districts expired on October 1st 1915 and required three months' notice of alteration. Well before this allotted time it was becoming apparent that some fairly substantial change was going to be required. Obvious hardship was being felt by working class families as the cost of living outstripped the first war time earnings. Despite a campaign mounted by members of the War Emergency Workers' National Committee, nationally and locally,(25) the government was still not moving any closer towards controlling the supply or prices of basic foods and fuel. During February, a series of meetings held at a number of large towns, including Bradford and Leeds, passed resolutions protesting at the rise in the cost of foodstuffs and the government's refusal to take measures to deal with increased prices. Under such conditions, the only alternative appeared to be a campaign for increased wages to meet the unprecedented conditions. As a teazer wrote to Harris Hoyle in March, 1915, 'everythink is going up and it takes a working man all is time to carry a house on. I think it is time we had something done for us now.'(26) In other households, the limitations of a wage system based upon the notion of a family wage were becoming only too clear once men enlisted and the lower earnings of women and young people became the basis of the family economy.

The success of the overtime agitation and the gains made in the Colne Valley area were set aside within a few days as Gee and Turner joined with other trade union leaders in the signing of the Treasury Agreement. This was to initiate a period of compromise and short-term concessions in the interest of what was expected to be a war of some months only.(27) 'Yarnspinner' defended the signatories of the agreement since;

> 'He (Yardspinner) was a peace man but if they could save lives by quicker supplies of munitions and equipment of war they must save them for most of the soldiers and sailors were their own class and their own kith and kin.' (28)

Thus while advocating increases of between 15 and 20 per cent, GUTW leaders had at the same time agreed to render strikes illegal and accepted the principle of government intervention in conciliation through compulsory reference to the newly constituted Committee on Production, headed by Askwith as Chief Industrial Commissioner.

On this occasion, resort to a procedure of arbitration was unnecessary. Offers made separately through the various district manufacturers' associations were accepted by meetings of members. Varying increases for men and women were made, with graded amounts according to a week's earnings.(29) There was to be some criticism at the meeting of Huddersfield workers, where the 1s a week bonus for women, corresponding to the lowest or youngest men's award, was greeted by questioning.(30) At this stage the union was also prepared to concede that no increase in wages was to be requested during the War. This was to effectively foreswear members a formal share of what was to be for most employers a profitable exercise.

Bradford was to be the exception so far as the procedures of wage bargaining were to emerge. The percentage-based increase argued for by the GUTW leadership encountered opposition from local members and supporters. The low wages and irregular earnings of many Bradford workers were seen, by

some Bradford critics, as being due in part to the GUTW's lack of drive and policy with regard to establishing a district standard for the trade. In particular, William Leach, a convert of Fred Jowett and later chairman of Bradford City Council's Finance Committee, the socialist employer, made clear his opinions in the columns of the Pioneer.(31) Leach and others were in favour of establishing a district rate with fixed minima, the GUTW demand for a 15 per cent increase was characterised as irrelevant in a town where earnings were so varied and in which union membership at 1500 was so low.(32) The employers' response to the GUTW application was at 5 per cent, 'so paltry that it is hardly worth talking about', according to Turner.(33) Nevertheless, despite public meetings addressed by two Bradford women, Mrs. Hillas and Jessie Cockerline and an unsuccessful attempt to involve Askwith's Department, the Bradford Cloth Manufacturers' Association refused to improve their offer and the increase was to stand at 5 per cent for the next six months. Divisions within the union in Bradford, the union leadership's tendency to disregard and devalue Bradford women workers and a lack of sympathy amongst Bradford employers in general were to play a part in preventing mass organisation amongst Bradford textile workers until a later stage in the war.(34)

Reductions in overtime hours,(35) broken spells of production(36) and a continuing rise in food prices and in certain items of clothing(37) rendered a second demand for an increase in wages inevitable in 1915. Men working nights, willeying and fettling, had been particularly pressing for more money.(38) The agreements reached in late 1915 and signed in January 1916, represented little in the way of improvement for GUTW members,(39) and increases granted retained differential aspects, as between earnings levels and men and women workers. Criticisms were more forcefully expressed on this occasion at Huddersfield, when a motion calling for the employers'

offer to be rejected was to fail, 124 voting in favour and 193 against. In Dewsbury, members regretfully accepted the increases.(40)

The rather muted level of campaigning in the closing months of 1915 may possibly be explained by the fact that the GUTW leadership had become involved in the fight to preserve the principal of voluntary enlistment, as the campaign to introduce conscription was stepped up nationally.(41) Turner in fact was caught in a dilemma, which led him increasingly often to take an industrial rather than a class line, seeking to improve output and at the same time resisting the replacement of male workers by women. Greatly increased costs, either through higher wages or earnings would increase the employers' tendency to replace more expensive men by cheaper women and boys. Moreover, any display of militancy could serve to strengthen the case for conscription. The answer seems to have been a compromise which produced very little in the way of material gains to the workforce.

During 1916, there were to be two wages movements resulting in awards made by Askwith in May and October.(42) The movement which led to agreements being signed in May had been sparked off by a strike of willeyers and fettlers in Colne Valley which had led to open conflict between the union's general executive and Colne Valley District Committee.(43) The union had, with the exception of the campaign on overtime hours and the increase awarded to willeyers and fettlers, been unable to extend any of the debates surrounding earnings into pressure on employers to alter wage levels in the industry. Following the regular involvement of Askwith as conciliator after his signature of the 6th January 1916 award, any such improvements were to become even less likely. Inequalities between districts and groups of workers were not to be remedied by any action on the part of government officials. As Askwith recalled, it was Committee on Production policy to:

> '... build upon the arrangements effected up to the outbreak of war (rather) than to attempt philanthropic reconstruction or embark on unknown contingencies in the middle of the war.'(44)

The position of women workers had in most respects actually deteriorated following successive accretions in war bonus, as increases awarded to men were consistently greater than those given to women. During mid 1916 pressure by women members was such that an increase which would remedy these inequalities was being sought by the GUTW leadership. A demand was formulated which included a 5s bonus for men with 7s for women.(45) The C.I.C.'s response to this campaign was to divide women workers, providing those earning more than 10s a week with 1/6 in war bonus, while those earning below 10s were to have sixpence less. The response to this award and the outcome for Huddersfield women workers is described in detail in Chapter Nine . At this point it is only necessary to emphasise that accumulated dissatisfaction and disappointment were to lead to changes in the proportions gained in future awards.(46)

In an attempt to improve earnings for Bradford, Bingley and Keighley the GUTW made approaches to the employers in November 1916.[47] Strike notices were handed in when the employers refused to discuss the question of a further increase. On February 12, 1917, it was estimated that over 4,000 workpeople were not working.(48) After four days, the War Office called in Watson, the Bradford District Secretary, and Turner, impressing on them the need to end the strike. As the Yorkshire Factory Times explained:

> 'There were many of the weavers on shell cloths, shalloons, and fine serges for gun work, and in the national interests it was deemed advisable to get the matter referred to arbitration.'

Turner and Watson's job involved persuading the Bradford workers to return, pending arbitration. It was considered that a dangerous situation was

developing as workers themselves were visiting mills and urging strike action. Their success in persuading workers to accept arbitration effectively contained grass roots action in Bradford which had involved both men and women workers.(49) Nevertheless, this forward approach had its effect in the composition of the delegation which met Askwith from the two Bradford employers' associations. Gee, Turner and Watson were accompanied, for the first and only time, by four Bradford weavers, a man and three women. The award, issued on 27th February, stipulated a 30 per cent increase on all piece and time rates. This was a considerable improvement on previous additions, but a necessary one in view of the sustained rise in living costs which had taken place during the previous year.(50) The Bradford critics were still not satisfied with this increase and continued to press the case for a district list. In the Pioneer, William Leach castigated Turner, Gee and Watson for their ineffective leadership:

> 'The Time is Now. Having got your list, with or without consultation with the employers proceed at once to put it into force. Tackle first the lowest paid shops. One by one, or two by two, it does not seem to matter. Such places could be brought to their knees in no time. O ye weavers! (and burlers and spinners too). What a chance you have if you only knew it! Will nobody move?'(51)

The second phase of war time negotiations had seen an increasing degree of government involvement at all stages of the process. Representatives of each side were being drawn into the prosecution of a distinctively war-time industrial policy. This was to encourage a tendency towards industry-wide or district-wide agreements, which, although in keeping with official union policy, broke little new ground while government and employers determined standards.(52)

The unions themselves had played a part in advancing the prospect of an industry-wide basis for a pay structure with the applications for increases put forward in January 1917. The GUTW had timed a request for an increase to match one submitted by the Dyers and Finishers, following a 'mutual understanding'.(53) It was to mark a new phase in union relations which was to culminate in the inauguration of the National Association of Unions in the Textile Trades in March 1917.(54) Perhaps the most significant change was the increased militancy of women workers which was to have an effect on negotiations and awards later in 1917.(55)

March 1917 to the end of the war

The third broad phase in war-time wage bargaining was characterised by joint applications made under the umbrella of the National Association of Unions in the Textile Trades, the demand for a war-time wage which would restore the purchasing power of wages to the position existing before July 1914 and an even closer interaction of government and employers as the machinery of control was developed to accommodate employer interest and government concern as to supplies for the Army and Allied governments.(56) At the same time, trade union leaders were drawn into closer co-operation with government and employers through the structure of control and the proliferation of committees and consultatations over a wide range of issues.(57)

In May, the National Association of Unions in the Textile Trades, representing the dyeing and manufacturing wool textile unions of Lancashire, Yorkshire and the north Midlands, made a joint application for a war wage of 65 per cent, made necessary by an estimated 99 per cent increase in the cost of living.(58) Turner's support of the new organisation and the form of the application was less than wholehearted, as described in Chapter Ten , the GUTW felt that, with a predominance of women and young persons it

had special interests to be accommodated.[59] This, together with an unexpected reduction in hours,[60] meant that the final award made by Askwith, though it discriminated in favour of women piece workers, was greeted with anger by textile workers at meetings with their officials.[61] A resolution passed at a mass meeting of textile workers in Huddersfield, convened to hear the details of the award instructed the Executive of the GUTW to apply 'at once' for a 72½ per cent increase all round.[62]

One positive achievement which the NAUTT enabled, as far as wage negotiations were concerned, was to provide backing and weight for the GUTW in its dealings with the newly formed West Riding Spinners' Association, based on Bradford. The spinning employers had consistently resisted attempts to include them in any industry-wide negotiations. However, for the first time a conference between employers and GUTW representatives was organised despite employer scepticism and resistance.[63] Conciliation proceedings before Askwith took place in London. The employers' representatives claimed that increases were unnecessary given the age of many of their employees. Furthermore, they were opposed to the adoption of any but a pre-war basis for war bonus.[64] Askwith's award, an increase of 2s a week, with the conversion of existing bonuses into war wage[65], though it constituted an increase on basic rates, was well below that given to other groups in the industry. In Bradford, 350 spinners and doffers stopped work for a day in protest.

The opportunity to open a debate about the basis for war-time increases in the industry was presented by the preamble to the 8th June agreement. Partly in recognition of a national tendency to adopt wordings reflecting the abnormal conditions produced by the war and partly in recognition of the fact that widespread variations existed in the industry, Askwith had

cancelled all existing war grants and bonuses and was applying the percentage increases to pre-war rates plus increases in actual wage rates, either as additions to basic wages or in overtime payments. This meant that those sections of the industry which had made least progress in augmenting standard rates of pay, that is the manufacturing unions, tended to be penalized. The stronger, dyeing sections which had begun the war with higher basic wages, did rather better.(66)

Despite increases in size and strength(67) and a general atmosphere of disenchantment with the war(68), there is little evidence from any of the wages movements during this third phase of any attempt on the part of the GUTW to initiate any basic change in wages policy as part of any new order of peace time industrial relations. This was despite the fact that the terms of peace and reconstruction were issues in constant debate at all levels of society during these months.(69) Although there were constant references to profit-making and inequalities of sacrifice both in trade union circles and during wage negotiations there would appear to have been little attention paid to more basic issues relating to the nature and organisation of production. As in issues relating to control,(70) official union policy of segregation of activities, a generally low ideological profile in situations external to the union and the retention of concepts of fairness, participation and 'proper' spheres of activity, meant that matters of interest or principle rarely entered the procedures of war-time wage bargaining. The result was that changes which did take place tended to contain or head off any accumulation of criticism of a sectional or rank and file nature.(71)

The newly formed NAUTT was not able to survive the first attempt at a generalised wages movement without breakaways from the ranks and considerable dissension and criticism in its meetings. Attacks on the executive

for its Bradford, finishing bias, appeared to have been upheld by the rather unequal terms of the June 8th agreement. The fact that the manufacturing side had some leeway to make up regarding basic wage rates seemed only to strengthen the arguments of those who felt that separate submissions to the Committee on Production were necessary. After a long debate on the issue of joint or separate applications at the first Annual conference of delegates, a compromise resolution was passed guaranteeing the interests of the association and its individual members' rights. Thus each union, or group of union, was free to pursue its own wages policy according to its own needs, but was to remain in close consultation with the Executive Committee of the NAUTT.(72) The joint movement for textile wages had thus broken down into familiar groups, dyeing and finishing, preparatory and manufacturing, skilled and unskilled, men and women.

The limited nature of war-time wages policy, though disrupted briefly by demands generated during the period of accumulated discontent in mid 1917, continued with awards being made in late 1917 and through 1918. These were increases to war wages and by November 1918 these amounted to 104¾ per cent for time workers, with a maximum of 31s 5d a week, with figures of 83¾ per cent for male piece workers, 89 per cent for female piece workers and 62¾ per cent for blanket raisers.(73)

The percentage-based increases persisted in penalising lowest paid workers(74), the maximum figure set for time workers continued to raise criticism(75) and there appeared to be no remedy for the problem of short time work, which, by early 1918 was again affecting the trade.(76)

There was to be one encouraging feature of the July 1918 negotiations. This arose in part from the furore over the 12½ per cent increase made

independently to skilled time workers by Churchill in mid 1917. The Cabinet was told of 'widespread unrest among the textile workers in the West Riding' and that following the employers' refusal of an increase, 21 days' notice of a dispute had been handed in by the GUTW. The reporter noted:

> 'The women workers especially are in a particularly determined state of mind, and it is thought locally that they will not hesitate to stop work if their demands are refused'.(77)

The April 19th 1918 award had been based on war wage increases of 12½ per cent, however an additional application was to be made in mid 1918 for a 12½ per cent increase on basic wage rates(78), in particular for 'low paid grades of labour'. The Committee on Production's award in this case was to agree to a meeting of interested parties. Subsequently, the awards made on 3rd August 1918 included with a fairly standard bonus increase a report on the industry recognising the low wage rates and advising an agreed revision of basic rates in certain areas and grades. 'Yarnspinner', where he had advised caution earlier in the war(79), now spoke out for the extension of the Huddersfield Weavers' List, appropriate for 'Huddersfield goods', to Bradford and Halifax, with the men's scale applied 'throughout'. Colne Valley prices (for fancy woollens) should be paid for weaving in Leeds, Morley, Wakefield, Dewsbury and Batley. He suggests a minimum of 20s a week for the lowest paid sections in condenser-minding, burling, knotting, mending and winding. A 7d an hour rate for all finishers, warehousemen, fettlers, willeyers and others in preparatory departments should be the rule. However, and at this stage of the war, Turner was still capable of arguing that 'No man, (sic) whatever his lack of grade, should have less than a base rate of 30s a week'.(80) At a public meeting

in Batley market place he answered criticisms of persistent differentials in rates paid to men and women piece workers. Both sections were underpaid, but he expected the situation to be remedied in a few weeks. Talking of a minimum of 'at least £1' for women and of increasing finishers' wages by a penny an hour, he went on:

> 'These are possibilities and practicabilities... because the trade is now so well organised, both from the employers' and the workmen's point of view, that by commonsense reasoning around a table these improvements can be obtained without trouble in the form of strikes or lockouts. We are not going to have either but there must be an improvement in base rates for our people who are paid lower than similar workpeople in other parts.'(81)

Cautious comparisons with sections which had maintained or improved their earnings levels during the war years, together with a compliant relationship with employers, were to bring limited pay-offs beneficial to the lower paid manufacturing sections during the few years of post-war boom. During these years, 1919 to 1920, wages were at last to catch up with the cost of living.(82) In the wool textile industry there were to be three significant changes in wages and conditions during this period.

In February 1919, a change in basic rates, 10 per cent, was finally introduced, though excluding spinners who had a separate increase in April 1919. This was the first alteration in basic rates for many parts of the industry and the first since 1913 for other sections, which had been negotiated rather than enforced. The adoption of a 48 hour week followed in July 1919. During the post-war boom conditions, the restriction in hours of work which had always been a feature of union policy, was gained without struggle or opposition. The third change which took place came when the industry adopted a sliding scale agreement in September 1919. Turner agreed that it 'may not be the best, but it has been

steadying' and claimed that it was independent of other wage increases.(83) The sliding scale related monthly percentage increases for time workers to the index numbers of the cost of living published in the Labour Gazette. Such increases were to have a maximum of 3 shillings for every 10 points. Bowley maintains that this affected only those men earning over 30 shillings a week, a quarter of all workers. The increases were to be applied to basic rates as established before August 1919, though these were raised by an additional 5 per cent in August 1920.(84)

Bowley's study of wages in the industry during this period is still the most detailed, yet remains unsatisfactory in a number of ways. Although his table, based on Labour Gazette figures, reflects the ups and downs of war-time earnings in the industry and shows an increase of over 100 per cent in earnings over the war period, the use of averages conceals more than it reveals about the range of earnings in the industry. Figures produced for a report on wages of weavers at the end of the war, show wide variations in pay, both within and between districts for this key group of workers. In the Huddersfield district, the top quartile of men weavers were earning more than 34 shillings a week, while the corresponding group of highest paid women weavers were earning sums in the region of 28 shillings a week. These were the highest wages for men and women weavers in the industry. In Halifax, Bradford, Morley and Heavy Woollen District, the top quartiles were in the region of 20 to 23 shillings. Keighley, Calder Vale and Apperley Bridge came mid-way between these two extremes. Bowley's average for all workers in the industry thus conceals these variations. For the corresponding period, September 1918, his figure for all weekly earnings is £1.70, which corresponds only to the top rates for weavers. His higher figure is obtained by including skilled men, such as tuners, overlookers and foremen who were earning wages well over the £2

mark by this stage. This was also true for the highest paid grades in woolcombing and dyeing. Within weaving the lowest quartiles also showed variation. For men and women in the Huddersfield District these were 18/2 and 14/7 respectively. In other districts, figures of 10, 11 and 12 shillings were not uncommon.(85)

Thus Bowley's use of Labour Gazette figures does not reflect persisting discrepancies in earnings levels in the industry, as between sexes, processes and skill levels, which were scarcely modified by war time wage bargaining procedures. The application of the sliding scale to these rates, after September 1919, offered no protection to the lower levels, as earnings began a steady fall from the high point reached in May 1920. G.H. Wood estimated that in the period up to mid 1920, employment activity in the industry expanded by over 20 per cent.(86) War time increases in earnings together with the post-war boom in the industry tended to conceal inequalities in wage rates and structural weaknesses until the recession set in and both earnings and employment were severely curtailed.

Methods of increasing wages had varied through the range of British industries, as had the point in time at which the 'war wage' came to be accepted as the new, permanent, wage. Again the ways in which various grades and skills were distinguished in increases varied considerably. In some industries, all grades received the same increases. In others, for example, building and the railways, early differentials favouring the less skilled and lower paid were dropped in later awards. In certain sections of the iron and steel trades the sliding scale method was retained. In cotton, the pre-war system of percentage increases on established lists was never altered. Thus differences emerged as to whether pre-war practice was adhered to, modified or replaced.

As with other industries, wool and worsted earnings had only begun to increase after mid 1915, then only in piecemeal fashion. In 1917, the general tendency to seek uniformity in increases over wider areas was significant, as standard rates for industries and districts were adopted. However, whereas the national movement was in the direction of adopting flat rate increases, in the wool and worsted industry, as we have seen, flat rates were dropped in June 1917. After this point, the percentage system, with cash limits, was retained.

The co-option of leading trade union figures and their co-operation in managing the wages side of war-time production produced few innovations as far as the rank and file workers were concerned. Board of Trade policy, favouring conciliation and district based agreements between representative bodies of employers and trade unions, was continued and strengthened throughout the war period. Confrontation was institutionalised[87] and developed on a number of fronts, but without challenging basic relationships between employers and labour, or disrupting persisting differentials within the occupational structure of the industry. Large sections of the workforce were still considerably under-represented in agreements being forged even during the post-war boom months. While women as individuals had managed to penetrate areas of union government by 1920, as an economic group which was particularly disadvantaged, they had earned little substantial reward from their war-time labours. The neglect of inequalities in terms of age, sex and process meant that the structural weakness of certain groups within the industry's labour market was never tackled by the union with any great success. This was to have profound repercussions for the union's credibility as a representative institution amongst certain sections of the workforce for subsequent decades. As married

women and other less eligible groups were disadvantaged in the late 1920's and 1930's many found union membership less than relevant. Persistent low levels of earnings in some sections of the industry, particularly in spinning and manufacturing at the cheaper end of the market, meant that locally recruited labour left the industry for better prospects, particularly after the Second World War. Without strong union guarantees to improve wage levels, employers were provided with the opportunity to draw on sources of labour outside the British Isles. A pattern of low unionisation and low expectations meant that although such Eastern European and Commonwealth labour was employed in a context of new types of technology, products and workshifts, few benefits accrued to the workforce. It could thus be argued that by tolerating unequal pay and traditions of marginality and by pursuing collaborationist policies in the early decades of this century, the union played its own part in providing the industry with the characteristics of underinvestment, depressed pay and working conditions for which it was known nearly half a century later.

Notes

1. See Ch. 6 for a discussion of these terms.

2. Sykes to Weir 8.5.17, MUN 4 6481, Pt 4.

3. Described in Shackleton's Twelfth Report of proceedings under the Conciliation Act, 1896, and Report on Arbitration under the Munitions of War Acts, General Report, 1914-1918, vol. 1, 185, 1919 (Hereafter Twelfth Report 1919).

4. Sykes to Weir, (8.5.17) 'I think we can safely assume that Sir George Askwith will give the operatives some advance, in which case the contractors who have accepted orders from this Department will undoubtedly make strong demands that their prices should be increased for goods supplied to this Department, as in the recent fixing up of the Conversion Costs, it was not anticipated by the Employers' organisations that any advance in existing rates would be sought until after the middle of the year...

   ... as we are not likely to be able to bring any influence to bear upon Sir George Askwith, we should be prepared to meet the arguments of the manufacturers if we are not willing to concede an advance in prices on existing contracts.'

   In MUN 4 6481, Pt 4. Sykes was at this stage Director of Wool Textile Production and an employer, Weir was Surveyor General of Supplies. See Ch. 7 for a more detailed account of the development of their powers.

5. Until then, increases in wages were known as 'war advances' or 'war bonuses'. After March 1917, the amended official description became, 'war advances, intended to assist in meeting the increased cost of living'. In both cases, the increases were seen as dependent on 'abnormal conditions... prevailing in consequence of the war.' (Twelfth Report 1919, p.35).

6. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, vol. XXV, No. 1, Jan 1917, p.3-4. In his 8.5.17 letter to Weir, Sykes' own estimate of the average advance by war wage or war bonus for textile workers was 30 per cent.

7. While some unions had funds allocated for such an eventuality, others had none. In the low wage industries this was a particular problem since the accumulation of such reserves involved the payment of larger subscriptions. This was a deterrent to union membership. Even for those unions which had reserves in a general fund, the prospects of depleted finances were not welcome. The suggestion was made that cases of poverty ensuing from war-time disruption of trade and industry should properly be referred to the state or to the local distress committees, many of which had members sent from local labour and trade union organisations. The GUTW found itself in the problematic situation of paying benefit to workers who claimed that they were unemployed because of the war, but who were not obliged or able perhaps to prove this. By extending the union's rules to pay a week's wages for every week of 'playing consequent upon the war', the union risked its funds. In addition the suspending of contribution payments by serving members of the union and by those whose wages were lower than the amount allowed for out-of-work pay, meant that revenues were becoming depleted. Thus advocacy of a worker's wage for recruits and adequate support for dependents advanced by trade unionists in trades council meetings and by labour representatives on the newly formed Distress committees was double-edged, showing concern not only for workers and their dependents but also for the unions' financial security. Ideologically the same, these two areas of concern were not always placed equally by union officials. By mid-October, it was only the Bradford District of the GUTW which was finding that many claims were still being made on union funds. There, arrangements were made for a special committee to deal with members in difficulties. This

committee was to refer cases to local organisations engaged in the relief of distress. In Bradford, during the first week in October, 2617 men and women had been in receipt of relief, just over half of these were women and of these over eighty per cent were mill workers. The situation was to remain difficult in Bradford given the dependence of that town's trade on export orders and women's dress goods. In Huddersfield a conference, convened at the Friendly and Trades Club of delegates from all local Trade Unions, resolved to call on the Government to repay at least half the amount paid out by the unions as unemployment benefit due to war conditions. The resolution contrasted government support for unions with the more favourable treatment being provided for bankers and businessmen. It was clearly the opinion of delegates that it was the state's responsibility to support the unemployed, particularly in a situation seen to be of government making. This can also be seen as part of a growing concern to present trade unions as partners and participators in national events rather than the self-interested institutions of a class within a nation. The result of this campaign, conducted locally through trades councils and with pressure at a national level from the War Emergency Workers' National Committee was limited government action to help the unions and the unemployed. Emergency grants, narrow in range and hampered by qualifications were made available to unions paying unemployment benefit as a result of the war. Yorkshire Factory Times, 10.9.14; 17.9.14; Colne Valley District minutes, 12.8.14; 16.8.14. Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.10.14, during the week previous to this 346 men and women in Huddersfield were reported as being out of work by the Local Relief Committee. Of these 205 were men, including only 44 textile workers. Of the 136 women, 82 were textile workers, (Worker 3.10.14); Yorkshire Factory Times 19.11.14; Worker 31.10.14.)

8. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, vol. XXII, no. 7, p.256.

9. Ibid., no. 9, p.322-333.

10. Ibid., no. 10, p.405.

11. Ibid., vol. XXIII, no. 1, Jan. 1915.

12. A weighted index number for 23 articles showed that with 1900 as 100, prices had increased to 111.6 for the period January to 1st August 1914 and again to 127.2 for September to December 1914, ibid., p.4.

13. Ibid.

14. Huddersfield District Minute Books, 11.10.14; Colne Valley District Minute Books, 19.12.14, Marsden committee. See also 'Memoranda' submitted to Askwith, 8.1.15, listing local firms paying below accepted scale. (Copy in NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library.)

15. Yorkshire Factory Times, 24.9.14, 8.10.14.

16. Worker, 19.9.14, 17.9.14. Fear of losing an order had led the weavers into accepting the reductions. A month later the same workers were attempting to restore the old terms and were being criticised by an employers' paper for doing so. As late as June 1915 workers at another mill were to accept a waggonette trip in lieu of war bonus: 'Narkist' in the Yorkshire Factory Times considered them 'fools' for having done so. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 24.6.15)

17. The Colne Valley district's resistance to piece work, as in the union as a whole had become less and less realistic. G.H. Wood of the Huddersfield employers associations had consistently advocated piece work for the industry. He claimed that poor levels of pay and organisation amongst wool textile workers were due to the union leadership's opposition to piece work payment in the industry. The contrast with cotton union organisation and wages, he argued, was clear evidence of the need to accept this method. Of course some sectors of production in the Yorkshire industry had always been piece-work paying;

these were weaving, burling and mending and in some cases, warping too. Here, payment was by the completed piece or part of piece and was an established though scarcely standardised procedure. The occupations which were increasingly to come under pressure to accept payment by piece rather than time worked, were willeying, fettling, scouring, dyeing and finishing. As far as the GUTW was concerned, its opposition was weakened by virtue of the fact that other unions organising dyers and finishers had already accepted the principle of piece work during the years before the outbreak of war. Outside Bradford, and in the woollen and shoddy districts, employer opinion was divided. Thus, J.E. Crowther at Bank Bottom Mills, Marsden, had been pressing for a piecework system for milners and scourers since shortly after the beginning of the war, and for their willeyers since before the war.

The question of piece work was to an extent set aside during the early stages of the war as questions of overtime, war bonus and the reservation of certain occupations arose in turn. However, the issue was revived as part of the Government's attempt to save on labour and labour costs on government contracts, in 1917. Isaac Mitchell of the Board of Trade was sent to Yorkshire to chair a meeting of employers and trade unionists in the industry. His object was to persuade acceptance of piecework onto certain sectors of the wool textile trade. The textile union representatives had made their opposition quite clear at this meeting and subsequently had organised a number of members-only meetings to consider the government's piece-work proposals. An edition of the Yorkshire Factory Times carried an account of the Heavy Woollen District meeting held at Dewsbury Town Hall. According to Turner, who, as usual led the platform

speakers, the government was hoping to introduce piecework into dyeing, milling, scouring and finishing departments. This would speed-up production and enable the dilution of labour to proceed further. Turner and Gee emphasised the executive's opposition to the principle of piecework, but, inevitably pleaded 'events' as necessitating a revision of their previous position. Turner, in his speech, suggested a number of conditions which would have to be observed if the union were to agree to piecework being introduced. These included the collective rather than individual allocation of work, the involvement of all workers in any department in new schemes and the extension of changes to cover the whole of the West Riding. There were additional 'stipulations' including Government backing for a scheme during and after the war and the proviso that all workers involved should be Trade Union members.

These conditions were left to the GUTW executive to obtain and enforce since the final resolution passed by the Dewsbury meeting gave the leadership a free hand in any negotiations over piecework while definite proposals were yet to be made. A ballot vote of members was to precede the introduction of any scheme. Heavy Woollen District employers, or at least those represented at their Chamber of Commerce, discussed the question of piecework in dyeing and finishing departments and rejected the proposed changes. However, 'Yarnspinner' noted that Sir George Askwith was to travel to meet Yorkshire employers, to discuss the matter with the Employers' Association.

Piecework was an inevitable development, both under war-time and more normal industrial conditions. Mills producing khaki and other government standard goods were more likely to be able to move over to some form of uniform system of production and payment. The shortage of skilled and semi-skilled men which followed voluntary

and semi-voluntary enlistment inevitably encouraged employers in the direction of labour-saving schemes. Government piecework proposals were certainly seen in this light by the unions. There is insufficient evidence to gauge the extension of piecework in wool and worsted manufacturing mills during this period. However, it is likely that this means of payment did become more common. This was not only due to employer pressure and the extensive use of such schemes in the dyeing houses of Bradford and mills where the ASD and NSDF had negotiating rights, but may also have been the result of members' own preferences. The action taken by Bank Bottom Willeyers in the immediate pre-war weeks of 1914 does not appear to have been repeated elsewhere during these months.

Although the union retained its opposition to piecework as a principle, it was not in a position to outlaw its introduction, given its organisational weakness and unwillingness to take direct action. The union's opposition was a logical consequence of weakness in workplaces and mills. Representation was still varied in extent. Colne Valley could claim to have the majority of mills unionised, at least so far as men workers were concerned, by 1917, elsewhere such strength was not repeated. Outside Huddersfield and district, and even within it, there were mills which operated no standard rate of prices. Without standard statements, employers were still free to cut labour costs by altering lengths and the prices of 'extras'. The pre-war action of the dyers and Dyeing employers suggested that the introduction of piece-rate based payment systems required greater bargaining strength than possessed by the GUTW. The lack of standard statements and variations in membership between and within districts opened up

the possibility of employers being enabled to introduce piecework proposals tied up with the offer of acceptance of a standard which might not have been subject to negotiation. Worse, piecework proposals might be introduced which bore little or no relationship to any previous system of payment, leaving workers worse rather than better off.

G.H. Wood, The History of Wages in the Cotton Trade during the Past Hundred Years, 1910, p.145; Goodrich (1920) op.cit.; pp.172-3 describes the Dyers' agreement with the Bradford Dyers Association in 1913 which established piece work in the trade on a collective principle. Both collective work and collective payments were determined by joint consent of management and unions.

18. Letters to Harris Hoyle.

19. Colne Valley District minutes 3.10.14; Worker 30.1.15.

20. The Worker attacked:

> 'Narrow-minded persons who have declared that whatever the effect, they would scrape in every shilling now, in readiness for the slack-time coming.'

Such thoughtlessness only benefitted employers and endangered the next generation. Turner speaking during a debate on the subject at the Heavy Woollen District Trades Council argued that women were having to:

> '... stand all day from 5.30 in the morning until 8.30 at night... in the interests of womanhood and motherhood... they should, during the crisis have at least two nights a week, as well as Saturday afternoons, free from overtime.'

Worker 14.11.14, 21.11.14.

Weavers at the three main Marsden mills had ceased working overtime and with full union support. Both men and women had left work at

half past five instead of staying on for the two hours' work expected after the tea-break. The decision to stop working had been taken at a large meeting of Marsden weavers in early December, when it was decided that no more overtime was to be worked after Christmas if the employers continued to refuse to pay the amounts demanded or to limit overtime hours to two hours a night on five nights a week, with no Saturday work. Meetings had been held throughout Colne Valley urging the union officials to obtain some response from the employers. The employers refused any further interview and in one case attempted to break the ranks of the weavers by offering inducements. A notice put up in one weaving shed asked for fifty volunteers for night work who were to be paid ½d an hour extra. Lacking a response, the employer in question then took to threats that army orders would be worked with a shuttle less if action on overtime was taken. The threat was carried out, but, as the Worker pointed out, few employers had ever paid for an extra shuttle, unless it had benefitted them. Other weavers in the Colne Valley followed the action of the Marsden weavers, however, a temporary slackening of the trade in January led to reductions in overtime working. This tended to prevent a more generalised spread of the action.

The first offer made by the employers was put to Marsden and other Colne Valley weavers at meetings during the last week in January. This consisted of overtime rates of 1d an hour up to 8 o'clock and 2d an hour after this. The weavers rejected this, repeating their demand for 1½d an hour extra up to 8 pm and no overtime to be worked after that time. However, in mid-January the Home Office issued regulations governing overtime hours for firms on 75 per cent government work. These were fixed for women and young persons at a maximum

of nine hours a week. The policy of the union leadership seems to have been veering towards an acceptance of the employers' offer, with the condition that limited hours, as per the War Office regulations, be applied to men, as well as to women and young persons. This more moderate tack is evident from the comments of 'Yarnspinner' in the Yorkshire Factory Times. 'Yarnspinner', who was almost certainly Turner, observed that:

> 'whilst the weavers were emphatic for 1½d an hour extra it is safe to assume that they are willing to leave negotiations in the hands of the officials of the union to get as much as they can over a penny per hour the employers conceded...'

Recognising the strong opposition to compulsory overtime, he pointed out the need to guarantee a supply of cloth for soldiers:

> '... the workpeople have got to bend a bit on purpose to get the production required for the clothing of our soldiers and sailors during these hard, horrible times.'

Worker 2.1.15, 30.1.15; Yorkshire Factory Times 28.1.15; Worker 20.2.15; Yorkshire Factory Times 18.2.15; 11.3.15. The Worker, which through its editor, George Thomas, had given active support to the campaign, provided details of the vote in the ballot. Of the 4,400 members of the GUTW who had voted, there had been a majority of 720 in favour of rejecting the employers' offer (13.3.15). Turner had opposed the holding of a ballot but Colne Valley district committee was critical of the way the campaign had been conducted and in particular pointed out that five months had been allowed to elapse from the time the first protests about unpaid overtime had been made. Colne Valley District minutes 24.2.15.

The terms of Askwith's award are detailed in BTLG vol. XXIII, no. 3, p.85.

21. The Heavy Woollen District under the direct and personal control of Ben Turner himself was unlikely to react to the more advanced thinking of the Colne Valley district. Furthermore, as a blanket and shoddy area its production turned over to war-time mass contracting with greater ease and speed than the fine cloth district of Huddersfield and the fancy tweeds produced in Colne Valley. The question of long overtime hours was raised by Heavy Woollen District delegates at a "rather friendly" meeting with representatives of the Heavy Woollen District Manufacturers' Association in mid January in Dewsbury Town Hall. Increased claims for sickness benefit were being made, it was claimed, as a result of long hours being worked. The delegates "asked" that the new Home Office regulations which limited the overtime of women and young persons be applied to adult males too. It was also suggested that ending Saturday afternoon and Sunday night working might improve efficiency. The employers' response, put by Sir Mark Oldroyd, was that the manufacturers' association would circulate its members recommending that these suggestions be taken up, "as far as practicable". Yorkshire Factory Times 21.1.15.

22. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, vol. XXIII, no. 3, March 1915, pp.92-3.

23. Yorkshire Factory Times 14.1.15; 21.1.15.

24. Harris Hoyle speaking at Half Yearly meeting of Colne Valley District, reported in Yorkshire Factory Times 21.1.15.

25. See Royden Harrison, 'The War Emergency Workers' National Committee, 1914-1920', in Briggs and Saville, (1971), op.cit.

26. Letter to Harris Hoyle, 20.3.15.

27. The wording of early war-time agreements reflected this short-term view. See for example the agreement signed on 14th December 1915,

between the GUTW and a number of Huddersfield employers' associations which stated:

> 'These War Grants are to be regarded as War Wages and recognised as due to and dependent on the existence of the abnormal conditions now prevailing in consequence of the War, and neither party shall, before the signing of peace terms, seek to alter this Agreement, except on the ground of material alteration in the cost of living. This arrangement shall thereafter be terminable by three months' notice in writing from either party.' (Copy in NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library)

28. Yorkshire Factory Times 25.3.15. The textile workers' official response had been to suggest the appointment of an Advisory committee composed of union officials from various textile unions, to help the government speed up the output of cloth and smooth problems arising over pressure for wage increases. The Worker's view of this was typically critical, seeing no advantage to the unions in the agreement. Colne Valley district recommended the adoption of the representatives' report on condition that an addition to wages was made to meet the increased cost of living. A special committee of the Huddersfield district was unable to approve the agreement in any way. Worker 27.3.15; Colne Valley District 27.3.15; Huddersfield 31.3.15.

29. The terms involved a shilling extra for all women earning over 10s a week, 6d a week for all persons earning 10s or less, with increases of 1s a week for men earning up to 20 shillings, 2s and 6d for those earning up to 30s and 2s for all those earning between 30s and 40s, calculated on a 55½ hour week. These terms were more or less similarly framed for Huddersfield, Heavy Woollen and Morley Districts. Worker 24.4.15; Yorkshire Factory Times 22.4.15; (copy of the agreement in the NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library) Yorkshire Factory Times 1.4.15; Board of Trade Labour Gazette vol. XXIII, no. 4.

30. Turner's response was to blame poor organisation on the part of women and to suggest that women were less equal since they were not heads of households. Yorkshire Factory Times 22.4.15.

31. According to Fred Jowett, William Leach was the second person he converted to socialism. The two men met when they became business partners in the late 1880's. The two were to remain firm friends and colleagues until their opinions diverged over the role of the Labour Party in the National Government. During the First World War, Leach's column in the Pioneer had been outspokenly anti-war. After the war he became chairman of the City Council Finance Committee and outraged councillors by proposing sea cruises for Bradford children, to improve their knowledge of geography as well as their health. (See Brockway (1946) op.cit.) Another sympathetic Bradford employer was Arthur Priestman, the head of Messrs. Alfred Priestman & Co., Brick Lane Mills, Bradford, Jessie Cockerline's employer and also a member of the ILP. In 1895, he and E.R. Hartley had been elected as representatives for Manningham Ward. Brockway describes him as a Quaker Socialist and quotes Jowett: 'He was so transparently good that others could not help being good in his presence.' His brother, H.B. Priestman, was leader of Bradford Council's Liberal Group. Arthur Priestman died in January 1918. (Obituary in Yorkshire Factory Times 24.1.18; Brockway (1946) op.cit., p.60).

32. Faced with a wide and basically unknown range of wages in Bradford, the executive and leading members of the district committee settled upon a percentage figure as a basis for an increase. This was argued as necessary on the grounds that a percentage application was in line with the application put in for by the dyers and finishers

and for textile workers outside the main towns. The Bradford critics were not only opposed to the percentage principle on the grounds that it was iniquitous, but also because it avoided the task of establishing a local rate. As Jessie Cockerline argued, a fixed price would have the advantage of splitting the employers, since those who paid at higher rates would undoubtedly support it, as they would then be less fearful of undercutting by those paying at lower rates.

In propaganda terms, a standard price list with a fixed method of payment for each class of goods and any extras involved would appeal to workers. Discontent amongst Bradford weavers, both union and non-union was 'blind' Jessie Cockerline argued. Without a firmly defined target nothing would be achieved. The union would never grow unless it had a policy which attracted support:

> 'It is only possible to get concessions from the employing class by demonstrations of the force behind the ultimatum. When I speak of concessions I do not mean temporary war re-adjustments under Government pressure...'

Jessie Cockerline was obviously aware of the opportunities which war brought to workers in a key industry and made clear the practical and propaganda value of a standard price list.

In one article, written for the Yorkshire Factory Times in March 1915, 'Textile Workers' Union. Wanted! A Policy!' she outlined the principal features of such a list. She pointed out that firms differed as to the number of picks which formed the basis of payment. In some cases, an employer would pay by the number of picks to the inch, in other cases by picks to the quarter inch. As well as this the standard and practice of payment for extras varied. Some firms paid

for more than one beam on a loom, others did not. Jessie Cockerline outlined six proposals:

> '(1) The adoption of a standard piece.
> (2) That all payments be on the basis of picks to the inch.
> (3) That a uniform rate of payment be obtained first, for the District and, in the second place, for the whole Industry.
> (4) That extras be standardised.
> (5) That difficulties as to adjustment of prices for bad spinning and, say, such questions as an excessive number of picks to the inch at an appropriate count should be settled between a competent Union official and the employer.
> (6) Equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex.'

Her ultimate goal was an industry-wide scale of payments, this would have the object of bringing Bradford up to the level of the better paying districts and of uniting the union against the employers. Her criticism of the Union's wages-recruiting policy was that to expect members to join and then to adhere to a union on the basis of an unappealing policy was unrealistic. Workers would be attracted by, and employers impressed with a coherent policy strengthened by popular support from amongst the workforce. Pioneer 7.5.15; Yorkshire Factory Times 4.3.15.

33. Yorkshire Factory Times 25.3.15.

34. See Ch. 9 , p.371.

35. Overtime was further restricted in June, following conferences between employers, workers' representatives and factory inspectors in May. The new order specified that there was to be no overtime at all for weaving and only 6 hours a week in other processes in mills where at least 75 per cent of the output was for government or allied orders. BTLG, vol. XXIII, no. 10, p.353.

36. During September and October, the completion of contracts affected the districts differently. Thus while Dewsbury and Batley saw a falling

off in the woollen cloth trade, in the same towns, blanket production for army contracts continued at a fast pace. The Italian government placed a large order for blankets and other army goods in October. In Huddersfield and Colne Valley, production had declined slightly during October. The worsted producing firms in Huddersfield had suffered from shortages in demand since the outbreak of war as the domestic demand for their fine worsteds was small while the export market had virtually ceased. Fine worsteds played only a very small part in army contracts. A report in the Yorkshire Factory Times went so far as to describe the Huddersfield situation as a 'depression' in the worsted trade. Some firms had placed workers on a day to day basis while at others, workers had been suspended altogether. There was even an unfounded rumour circulating which explained the depression as being due to the Government having placed 'huge orders for military cloth' in the United States. In Leeds, in September, women had been drawing unemployment pay from the union. At about a dozen mills in Leeds, women had been discharged whilst elsewhere, the textile trade was doing well. Yorkshire Factory Times 21.10.15; 9.9.15.

37. Prices continued to rise. Between October 1914 and October 1915, the overall increase in retail food prices was 26 per cent, while for the month of September alone, the increase was $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Board of Trade Labour Gazette, vol. XXIII, no. 10, p.353.

38. Yorkshire Factory Times 14.10.15. 'Yarnspinner' suggested the need for moves to be made towards the employers, but made it clear that 'he' was 'not going to encourage strikes on the matter'.

39. The terms of the agreements made on the 14th December and counter-

signed by Askwith on 6th January 1916 stipulated a war grant of 1s a week for all persons earning less than 10s a week, 1s 6d for all male persons earning between 10s and 20s a week, 3s for all male persons earning over 20s a week and 1s 6d for all female persons earning over 10s a week. All based on a week of 55½ hours. (Copy of agreement between GUTW and four employers' associations in Huddersfield Local History Library)

40. Yorkshire Factory Times 23.12.15; 30.12.15; Worker 1.1.16.

Opposition to the terms negotiated for Huddersfield and Colne Valley workers did not end with the vote at the Town Hall. The Colne Valley district committee passed a resolution attacking the clause in the agreement which they alleged, 'practically puts the Members of certain section of the trade outside the power of our Association for negotiating purposes as regards wages etc.' The committee questioned whether they could continue to recruit members under these conditions. These protests were aimed at a clause in the agreement which excluded weavers on piece work from the normal procedures of calculating war bonus. Their war grant was to be based on an average of four weeks' work with interim payments of 3s for women and 6s for men. Since weavers on piece work were not to have their bonus calculated on actual earnings or hours and hours lost during an 'ordinary mill week' were not to be considered as yielding bonus, this category of workers, it was felt, would be at some disadvantage in future wage negotiations. Their bonus had become detached from earnings to an extent which Colne Valley members felt was unacceptable. The effect of such an average might be that of a reduction rather than an increase in earnings. A resolution expressing criticism was forwarded for inclusion on the agenda of the unions' forthcoming General Council. Added to it was a clause deprecating the counter-signature of Askwith (spelled 'Asquith') as:

> '... a regrettable incident, as it gives to the agreement a semi-government aspect, detrimental to the best interests of the workers.'

This last clause reveals a difference in thinking between the union's negotiators and some members. Turner seems to have been convinced that textiles were a munitions of war, when in fact, technically speaking, they were not. His interest in complying with, or at least acquiring, official approval, for the union's public activities seems to have been somewhat at variance with the more aggressive attitudes of the Colne Valley members. The Worker, predictably, was excited by the prospect of conflict between Turner's group and the Colne Valley dissidents, expressing itself in topically military metaphors it confidently predicted:

> 'there will be a battle royal between the field pieces of the Colne Valley and Huddersfield on one side and the heavy artillery of the Heavy Woollen District on the other.'

On the other hand the columns of the Yorkshire Factory Times were unusually reticent about this particular dispute apart from referring obliquely to the resolution as 'strange'. In the final vote at the AGM the Colne Valley delegates were apparently alone in their support of their resolution. However, the irritation and tension remained and was to flare up again on future occasions. Colne Valley District minutes 13.1.16, 27.1.16; Worker 19.2.16; Yorkshire Factory Times 17.2.16; 2.3.16.

41. The latter part of 1915 saw the last stand of those such as Turner who were pledged to fight for the principal of voluntary enlistment. The turn of the year saw renewed activity against conscription, but even here the level of activity and commitment varied. As Clinton shows, the introduction of the Derby scheme was to result in divisions in the movement of opposition to conscription. Some leading trade

unionists, in particular Appleton, advocated that trade union officials should themselves work as recruiting agents. Others, in their branches, or as delegates to other trade union bodies, remained implacably opposed to taking part in any recruiting efforts. Trades Councils which remained in opposition included Huddersfield, while Bradford was divided. Clinton suggests that the division was, in general, between the leadership at the national level, who dropped opposition to conscription, and the local bodies, in particular trades councils, who in most cases remained at least suspicious or active in opposition to conscription. This divide was not so clear cut in the case of Yorkshire textile workers for, in this case, the national figures were also the leaders at local level. Consequently, they tended to bend under pressure from different sources. While a delegate to the Yorkshire Federation of Trdaes Councils, Turner could resolve to:

> 'take such action as is necessary to prevent the passing into law of the Military Service (no. 2) Bill...'

At the same time, as a leading trade union official in a key war-time industry, he found himself increasingly often in situations where he was taking an industrial, rather than a class line, in seeking to improve the output of men and cloth. In December, for example, he was attending meetings with employers and factory inspectors called to settle on a list of reserved occupations. Turner's aim was to extend the list and to exclude women from certain types of work or to ensure that they at least received the same wages as men whom they were replacing. Thus Turner's energies were divided between maintaining output and supporting the voluntary system, while restricting the employment of women. Support for Lord Derby's scheme necessarily

entailed maintaining a supply of unmarried men of military age, while ensuring steady output and restricting women's employment involved protecting the men's right to work in the industry. This proved a somewhat difficult course to steer. See Alan Clinton, The Trade Union Rank and File: Trades Councils in Britain, 1900-40, Manchester University Press, (1977), pp.62-67; Yorkshire Factory Times 11.11.15 and 23.12.15 when a later vote of Bradford Trades and Labour Council showed 19 in favour of assisting, 11 against and 3 as neutral; Yorkshire Factory Times 13.1.16.

42. Askwith's May award ran to type with increases of 1s, 1s 6d and 2s for different groups of men and 1s 6d for all women. Signed 16th May (Copy in Huddersfield Local History Library). The October agreement awarded 1s and 6d to women earning over 10s a week and 1s to women earning less than 10s. Men were to receive 1s and 6d if earning less than 20s a week and 2s if earning over 20s a week. Terms given in Yorkshire Factory Times 2.11.16 and in Twelfth Report (1919). The same agreement was to apply in Morley and Heavy Woollen Districts and was to be negotiated by Yeadon Factory Workers' Union and for Leeds workers by the GUTW.

43. Willeyers and fettlers were among the few groups of workers to improve on basic wage rates during the war years. Once again it was a movement amongst Colne Valley workers which was to set the pace for this particular wages movement and for the more general one which ensued in May 1916. Meetings of willeyers and fettlers, ragshakers and carbonisers had been held in March. Feeling amongst workers and in particular it seems, sections which were mainly of men, were now running high, particularly with regard to basic wages, which were unaltered since 1913. The result was that fettlers in

eight woollen mills in Colne Valley handed in their notices in support of an additional 1d an hour on their existing rate of 6d and a 25 per cent increase all round. The union was informed officially of the decision by the employers' secretary, a fact which can have given little pleasure to Turner and Gee. The employers had, at the same time, contacted Askwith, who himself sent a telegram to Gee asking him and the other officials to use their influence to prevent a strike. The men then 'grudgingly' agreed to suspend their notices for a week, 'on condition that the employers dealt with the demand promptly.' Since no move was made, the fettlers stopped work the following week. The Colne Valley district requested dispute pay for the fettlers and lock-out pay for their other members affected. However, Turner, replying for Gee who was ill, made it clear that no strike pay was to be forthcoming on the grounds that they had not complied with union rules. The fettlers' strike was called off once the union began organising mass meetings for bonus increases, however, the strike achieved its object and the fettlers won their increase of ¼d an hour on basic rates. Worker 15.4.16, 29.4.16.

44. Askwith (1974) op.cit., p.385-6.

45. The Worker for once gave praise where it was due:

> 'It is not without importance that the general executive has acted on the principle of equal reward for men and women. Hitherto it has been slow work inducing even trade union leaders to see that the principle is sound.' (30.9.16)

46. A further wage increase was sought in January 1917, timed to coincide with an application by the Dyers. Despite the fact that for the first and only time a delegation to meet Askwith in London included a woman, differentials were retained and women workers' earnings situation deteriorated still further. This whole period is discussed in some detail in Ch. 9.

47. Spinners, weavers, winders and burlers were named in the first approach to the Bradford Employers' Association in November 1916. The amount of bonus sought was 6s and 6d in a low wage area.

48. Apart from the employers' intransigence there was the problem of separate employers' organisations in Bradford. Two different types of establishment existed on the manufacturing side of the trade, each with its own representative body. Thus two separate sets of negotiations were involved between the union and the Bradford and District Manufacturers' Federation and the union and the Bradford and District Commission Manufacturers' Association. The first of these two associations represented the larger concerns in Bradford, manufacturing purchased raw material and selling the product, cloth. The Commission Manufacturers' Association represented 44 firms operating on a much smaller scale. In many ways such firms were reminiscent of the old 'putting-out' system since they were basically one man, even one room, undertakings manufacturing, on a commission basis, the material of other businesses and concerns. Their claim was, that in proportion to their profits, labour costs represented a far greater outlay, since, unlike the larger manufacturers, they were unable to recoup on product sales. It was the commission employers who resisted the attempt to establish a flat rate bonus payment and who were most vociferously in favour of retaining a uniform percentage bonus system. However, a district standard wage was seen as potentially threatening to both types of manufacturer, since a lower rate might undercut the better paying firms, given that wage rates in Bradford showed wide variation. The commission manufacturers were given to argue that their lower rates had some natural place in the order of things in the town. In a letter to Askwith, urging him to retain a percentage bonus, they suggest

that the flat rate:

> '... is not popular with the weavers who earn the biggest wages but is attractive to those who through a desire of ease or physical weakness, can only earn the lower wages. The natural tendency of employers would be to weed out the less capable or less willing because they could not pay the cost of running the looms...'

Yorkshire Factory Times 8.3.17; LAB 2/467 I.C. 1401.

49. Yorkshire Factory Times 22.2.17.

50. Details in Twelfth Report (1919).

51. Pioneer 27.4.17.

52. Apart from the employment of 'experts' (discussed in Ch. 7) there was also another important link between employers and government departments. G.H. Wood, secretary of the new employers' federation, was employed at the Bradford Cloth Office as a statistical officer.

53. Yorkshire Factory Times 14.12.16; see n. 46 above.

54. Discussed in Ch. 10.

55. See Ch. 9 for a more detailed analysis of these developments.

56. The development of a Board of Control in the industry has been outlined in Ch. 7.

57. For the development of the role of the trade union official see Ch. 10.

58. News of the agitation for increased war wage was filtered through to the cabinet, which was told of 'considerable uneasiness among the textile workers at Bradford', but that the C.I.C. was dealing with this. The Worker found the amount requested by the NAUTT to be 'exceedingly modest'. CAB 24/14 G.T. 832 p.4; Worker 26.5.17.

59. Despite clamorous insistence on the virtues of a unified wages movement during previous months and despite sharp criticism of sectionalism amongst certain societies, Turner seems to have been unprepared for total commitment to the NAUTT at this stage. He warned

readers of the Yorkshire Factory Times that the variety of existing agreements meant that although simultaneous applications should be made:

> '... it would be well for some of the unions to make their own requests, and have their arbitrations, if such a course should be necessary, in a separate way, especially in those organisations which have a large quantity of women members.'

The NAUTT's demand was for 'pre-war standard values of wages' in the form of a 65 per cent or 9s 7d increase on all wages. Notice of dispute was to be given and it was emphasised that no settlement was to be made independently unless the 65 per cent war wage was achieved. The Yorkshire Factory Times in an editorial was still hinting that a measure of independence was necessary for some unions whose:

> 'settlements are different in their aspects relative to both the female section and the youthful section'.

Talking of 'one big organisation', the paper anticipated that this would:

> 'claim the right and will maintain it, not only to put in the new application in their own way, but also to send an intimation to Sir George Askwith'.

Smaller unions were warned not to 'handicap' others with different problems to face. The GUTW was prepared for amalgamation or joint application but presumably on its own terms. Yorkshire Factory Times 3.5.17, 10.5.17.

60. In fact circumstances had changed since the original demand had been made. Gee, writing to Askwith on behalf of the NAUTT referred to a 99 per cent rise in the cost of food and a 65 per cent increase in the general cost of living. He linked these figures to the 'growing

prosperity and record profits' of the employers. The unexpected announcement of short-time measures in woollen and worsted mills only served to strengthen the unions' case. In order to conserve wool supplies, hours were to be reduced from 55½ to 40 a week after May 30 by recommendation of the Joint Priority Committee of the Central Wool Advisory Committee. All work, both Government and private, was affected by the orders, with the proviso of licences enabling longer hours for those firms on urgent Government work. These recommendations once adopted were to have wider implications for the industry as a whole. Government officials were faced with a two-pronged attack through the press and the various trade and labour organisations of the industry. One side of the attack, exclusively employers, blamed "socialism" and government bureaucracy for strangling the industry's natural powers of survival. The other side, a combination of certain leading employers and trade unionists, for diverse reasons, used the crisis to advance the case for greater involvement of their respective bodies in controlling agencies. LAB 2/1024 I.C. 3386; Board of Trade Labour Gazette vol. XXV, no. 6, 1917, p.204; Yorkshire Factory Times 24.5.17.

61. Askwith spent two days in Bradford in conference with unions and employers and left for London with the two sides still in disagreement but with a commitment from all concerned that his ruling would be accepted by all the parties concerned. Some lobbying took place before the final agreement was signed on June 8th 1917. Turner pleaded the case for women piece workers in a telegram to Askwith:

> 'For God's sake don't make a different rate of per cent for low paid piece workers as district (sic) from a day wage percentage make them both alike.'

Askwith querying the telegram, sought information from G.H. Wood at the Cloth Office. Wood in reply reminded Askwith that at the Bradford conference he had put the case for a preferential rate for women piece workers, given their previous rather unequal treatment. Askwith's revised proposal of a 42½ per cent increase on piece work rates for women he found acceptable. The final agreement shows that Turner and the other union leaders also settled for a differential though lower amount, as suggested by G.H. Wood. According to the terms of the agreement, all existing war bonuses and war grants were to be replaced by 50 per cent or up to 15 shillings a week for male and female time workers, 42½ per cent for all female piece workers and 40 per cent for male piece workers. Additional amounts covered workers who sub-contracted, blanket raisers and workers in the Keighley district. Yorkshire Factory Times 7.6.17; LAB 2/1024 I.C. 3386. Copy of agreement in Huddersfield Local History Library and in Twelfth Report.

62. Huddersfield 18.6.17 meeting; 24.6.17 mass meeting, in Huddersfield minutes.

63. The Secretary to the Spinners' Employers, W.A. Turner, wrote to Askwith explaining why he felt that spinners' employees could not be included in any wage agreement to be negotiated. His case originally was that since so many employed in worsted spinning were under 16, they could not be represented by a union. His association did not feel bound to enter into negotiations with the NAUTT and were requesting separate arrangements. The Yorkshire Factory Times noted that 'for the first time in the history of the trade', worsted spinners' representatives and members of the GUTW were meeting to discuss wages. The aim was to discover whether Askwith's recent award could encompass

worsted spinners. The spinning employers quite obviously anticipated an outcome favourable to themselves and were sceptical of any rights of representation the GUTW might claim for the workers. W.A. Turner, in a letter to Askwith, explained that the employers had agreed to a meeting with the GUTW:

> 'although such Union does not represent probably more than 2% of the workpeople employed by the worsted spinners, in the West Riding of Yorkshire...'

He went on to say that a stipulation had been made that any terms which might be agreed at the Conference were to be 'subsequently incorporated in an Award, under your signature'.

Things were not to run so smoothly. Despite a Yorkshire Factory Times report that 'some agreement' had been reached, Askwith's skills as arbitrator were called upon following the inevitable differences which arose after a second conference. In common with certain other employers, the spinners were attempting to enforce an interpretation of the 8th June award which was detrimental to workers' earnings. Actual reductions or only paltry increases were attempted through an insistence that the award referred to a bonus on pre-war wages, not on the current wage rate. Attempts to exclude overtime and night work earnings from bonus calculations were being reported from all parts of the region. The spinners, it seemed, were intending an agreement based on pre-war wages. Their case was that the June 8th award did not:

> '... meet our circumstances, and we think it better to commence "de novo"'.

Conciliation proceedings were fixed for 27th June in London. Notes made by Askwith during the proceedings enable some insight into the case put by both sides. As well as this, the employers' submission makes their position somewhat clearer. Turner, for the

workers, argued for the extension of the general award to worsted spinning, many were adults and increases should proceed as if there were no war, given that wages before the war were low enough. W.A. Turner, taking figures from 48 of the 52 firms in the association, claimed that 39 per cent of the 14,692 workers were under 18. The employers' case was that since the outbreak of war many firms had increased wages independently. This was due both to lack of association on both sides of the industry and to the fact that labour shortages were leading to competition between firms for workers. Given these increases, wages in this section of the industry did not require as much adjustment as in other areas. Furthermore:

> 'the wages already being paid to boys and girls is (sic) considered by some members of the Federation as sufficiently high to have become a very serious menace to the home life and welfare of the children themselves, as evidenced by the serious Police Court comments and Records on Juvenile crime in these districts.'

Yorkshire Factory Times 21.6.17; LAB2/468 I.C. 3751.

64. The spinning employers were opposed to any but a pre-war basis for an increase in earnings on the grounds that should the cost of living revert or decrease, they would be unable to deduct the 'compensating percentages'. The spinning employers were not prepared to accept the possible permanence of any additions to wages since the outbreak of war, tending to view the low pre-war wages in the industry as having some kind of natural quality. They also claimed that because of wide differences existing in the trade, the only 'fair' basis was the pre-war basis. It was fortunate at this stage that no reference was made to trade conditions or ability to pay. It was of course the spinners who were making some of the largest profits out of war-time production. (See Ch. 7)

65. Details in Twelfth Report (1919). Askwith's award specifically allowed for the exclusion of any advances given since 1.5.17 from

calculations for spinners. This was to maintain a distinction between these groups and others in the industry covered by the June 8th 1917 agreement.

Following this agreement, the West Riding Spinners' Federation and the GUTW came to a supplementary agreement laying down the basis of future wage alterations. The prime mover in this was Askwith. Terms in Twelfth Report (1919) and LAB2/468 I.C. 4751.

66. Throughout the war, the Dyers had consistently led the field in wage increases. This was to culminate in March 1918 with the adoption of a sliding scale with 72½ per cent for male time workers and 58¼ per cent for female time workers, tied to a revision on the Board of Trade index figure at three monthly intervals. (Terms described in Turner's submission to Judge Walworth Roberts at the Committee on Production hearing, 17.4.18, p.12 of transcript)

67. See Ch. 10.

68. As Shackleton reported to the Cabinet:

> 'There can be little doubt that much of the early enthusiasm for military service has evaporated and that there is some feeling that the ideals of the war have been forgotten by the governing classes. There is a need for reassuring the country that the ideals of 1914 are still the ideals we are pursuing. It is also no doubt the case that the voluntary system having exhausted most of those who were keen to fight, the later drafts under conscription consist mainly of men averse to doing so.'

A poll of 30,000 affiliated members of Bradford Trades and Labour Council in 1917 showed 15 to 1 favouring peace by negotiations. CAB 24/22 report for 8.8.17; Clinton (1977) op.cit., p.77.

69. See ch. 7.

70. See Ch. 7.

71. Clinton suggests that, for example, the issue of food control had significant repercussions. The fixing of maximum prices in late 1917, together with the setting up of local Food Control Committees with labour membership, gave authority to local and national labour leaders. At the same time, he suggests that such committees had a safety valve effect since an increased role for labour, organising requisitioning and rationing, headed off the accumulation of working class anger. Clinton (1977) op.cit., pp.68-71.

72. Debates in NAUTT minutes.

73. There were awards in October 1917, covering all sections of the industry, including the spinners, in April 1917, again covering manufacturing and spinning, July 1918, weaving and manufacturing, August 1918, spinning and finally the November 1918 agreements established similar percentage increases across the industry. (Details in Twelfth Report 1919)

74. Following the various agreements in the dyeing and finishing trade, wide differentials existed. Quoting a dyeing employers' representative, Turner provided figures of £2.4s.1d as an average dyers' wage, compared with £1.10s.7d a week and £1.7s.5d for woollen and worsted workers respectively. Dyeing wages for February 1918 he quoted as being at £2.15s for time workers, £3.10s for piece workers and £4.10 for pressers. (Turner was speaking at the 17.4.18 Committee on Production hearing, p.12 transcript.)

75. Under the October 1917 award and subsequent awards a maximum was placed on bonus earnings. This limit, standing at 18 shillings under the 31st October agreement, applied to all datal manufacturing workers, spinners and tuners, according to their various agreements. It had never been applied to workers whose wages were controlled by agree-

ments in the Dyeing sections, nor to piece rate workers in manufacturing. The limit was seen as having a penalising effect on top rated workers, especially the more skilled tuners, whose 60 per cent brought them increases over the 18 shillings a week limit. (17.4.18 Committee on Production hearing, p.15-20)

76. A further Army Council order was affecting large sections of workers in the industry. The matter was raised on the Wool Control Board in relation to a levy to cover unemployment. See Ch. 7.

77. The effect of the 12½ per cent bonus paid to skilled time workers on munitions work, had its repercussions in the textile industry, with the executive of the GUTW calling for the same percentage for woollen workers. Shackleton and Askwith had opposed the payment of extra bonus when the War Cabinet had debated the issue during the early autumn of 1917. They feared that the wider effects of special agreements with individual trades or groups of workers might promote a series of demands throughout industry which could not be contained. Both Shackleton and Askwith were arguing for a central wages policy, maintained through arbitration, at a time when the number of tribunals dealing with wages issues was increasing and functions were overlapping. Strikes in December and January led to much disquiet in Cabinet circles as ministers and officials wrestled with the problem of coping with additional claims from skilled workers on both time and piece rates in many industries. Finally the cabinet, after consultations with the Committee on Production and with continued internal dissension, granted a 7½ per cent increase and no more to piece workers. The issue divided the War Cabinet over the question of low pay and excess profits, with Geddes and Churchill favouring a policy which would raise low piece rates, standardise food prices and limit excess profits.

Lloyd George and Chamberlain took employers' counsel and conceded the principle of increasing piece rates all round, without further concessions to the unrest over war profiteering and food prices. Shackleton remained unshaken in his analysis when presenting his report on war-time conciliation in 1918-1919. He criticised the decision to pay the 12½ per cent because it:

> 'failed entirely in its original purpose and merely became an advance of wages which all trades claimed and many secured. Designed in the first place to allay unrest, this disturbance of comparative rates was a principal cause of much labour unrest'.

In the districts of the West Riding, strong pressure had been put on officials to press for the 12½ per cent as well as for increased bonus. Shackleton had insisted in a report to the Cabinet in October 1917 that:

> '... it is necessary to emphasise the importance of maintaining Awards, even if at the expense of a temporary reduction of output... to weaken the standing of Awards is to undermine arbitration altogether.'

The issue is discussed in C. Wrigley, op. cit., Ch XIV.

CAB 24/42 G.T. 3677, 20.2.18; CAB 24/45 G.T. 3910, 13.3.18; CAB 24/27. The Sumner Committee enquiring into the increase in cost of living was to publish its findings in 1918. Taking evidence from budgets completed by 1306 working class households and from 11 witnesses, the committee cautiously accepted that a general average rise in expenditure over the period since June 1914 would be shown as 74 per cent. This figure would probably rise to nearly 80 per cent for the months up to September 1918. Although the Sumner Committee was anxious to emphasise financial benefits of war-time full employment, the Report accepted

that the returns under-represented the unskilled workers. On average, working class families' expenditure on food was calculated as having risen by 90 per cent. Report of the Committee appointed to Enquire into and report upon the actual increase since June 1914, in the Cost of Living to the working classes, Cd 8980, (1918).

78. There had been four such increases during the War. In a letter to Weir, Sykes listed advances in wages 'on account of local circumstances' to worsted spinners, Leeds' willeyers and fettlers, Huddersfield Scribblers' Feeders, night piecers and feeders, night fettlers and willeyers, night millers and scourers, day piecers and boys, youths and women working in jobs previously done by men. (In MUN 4 6481, pt. 4)

79. See his earlier comments in January 1915, above, pp.303-304.

80. Yorkshire Factory Times, 8.8.18. The GUTW submitted particulars relating to the revision of basic rates which though they in general amounted to a 30s wage for men, allowed a 20s minimum for women in some occupations.

81. Yorkshire Factory Times 15.8.18.

82. By modifying his index numbers, A.L. Bowley, Prices and Wages in the United Kingdom, 1914-1918, (1921) finds an evening up of wages with the cost of living. Quoting the Board of Trade Labour Gazette, April 1920, he argued that the average percentage increase for all industries was 120 to 130 per cent on pre-war rates, (quoted p.100).

83. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.174.

84. The Dyers had had a sliding scale in the pre-war years which had been linked to the earnings of the employers' combine. In 1910 this had actually led to a 10 per cent cut in earnings though there was to be

an actual increase in membership of the union over the same period. (Described in Clegg, Fox and Thompson, (1964) op.cit., pp.454-455.)

85. Unpublished document in NUDBTW collection Huddersfield Local History Library.

86. G.H. Wood, 'An examination of some statistics relating to the Wool Textile Industry', Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, vol. 90, pp.282-284.

87. Transcripts of two Committee on Production proceedings, one taking place before Sir David Harrell, on 11th October 1917, the other before Judge Walworth Roberts on 17th April 1918 provide ample evidence of the well-trodden parts played by the 'protagonists'. On one occasion, Turner was to be criticised by Lockwood of the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union for taking part in light-hearted exchanges with G.H. Wood of the Employers' Federation (April 17th 1918 minutes, p.30). At the October 11th negotiations, Turner had been anxious to show that good-feeling was the essence of industrial relations in the wool-textile industry:

> 'They have recognised that we are cranky at times, and cross-grained at times, and at times I have thought they were, but nevertheless, there has been, generally speaking, a right good feeling that each side was not trying to get an advantage over the other, but were trying to defend ourselves against each other but with the best intentions towards the State and trade as a whole.' (p.20 transcript)

(Both transcripts are among the documents in the NUDBTW collection deposited at Huddersfield Local History Library.)

CHAPTER NINE

WOMEN'S RESPONSES TO WAR-TIME PRODUCTION

Although unanimity in the labour movement over the question of women's political rights was not yet attained, the efforts of Turner, Gee and other sympathisers had brought about the official commitment of the Labour Party in 1912 to a franchise reform which included women's right to vote. Years of agitation and action had undoubtedly yielded some degree of change in women's and men's perceptions and understandings of the notion of political and social inequality, although the extent of such a shift is difficult to assess. However, as argued in the previous chapter, changes in political consciousness, amongst leaders or rank and file, did not always lead to similar responses with respect to production. The result was that any movement for women's rights as wage earners trailed far behind the movement for women's political rights and only rarely were the two seen as interdependent. This chapter will seek the extent to which war-time exigencies presented opportunities to even up such a disparity by looking at the union, its women members and the responses of both leaders and women.

Florence Lockwood[1] a Linthwaite mill owner's wife and member of the NUWSS, captures the feeling of suspense and expected change in a description of how she and eight other "active service leaguers" spent August 4th 1914. They had planned a "day for active service" at an outlying village. Since she and her companions could not agree on the question of peace and war, the group stuck to their original intention to "teach the women of their subjection and the crime of it". Their reception among the women of the village was not encouraging, although a tailor's wife who ran the local telephone exchange from her house did buy a pamphlet. Her final encounter was with a group of men

with varying views. To them she replied, as she describes it:

> 'You say woman's place is the home. So we agree it is generally; but now the world is in trouble they will be fetching us for nurses and to help in all sorts of ways.' (2)

As far as Yorkshire working class women were concerned, the call to war service was not to be so immediate, nor perhaps so promising. Initially, along with fellow men workers, they were to experience unemployment during the days before government contracts began to compensate for the cessation of export and other orders. Women's employment was to be slower to pick up than that of men, in some districts. Even by March and April of 1915, there were still twice as many women registered at Labour Exchanges nationally as there were jobs available.(3) In the West Riding, there were differences between towns. Predictably Bradford with its export trade in light worsteds and yarn was hardest hit and took longest to recover and increase output.(4)

Towards the end of September 1914 it was becoming apparent that for wool textiles at least, war time was not to be as totally disruptive as the first few weeks had indicated. Full production was in progress by October and the problem which then began to emerge for most workers was that of expected overtime working and appropriate payments. As far as women workers were concerned there were two aspects to lengthened working hours. Firstly, as with men workers, they sought payments for hours worked in addition to the normal working day.(5) Secondly, there was the question of increased working hours for women and young persons as successive government orders amended Factory Acts, speeding-up production rates by encouraging employers to extend working hours.

War-time production conditions brought with them innovations which were to be resisted by women workers on some occasions.(6) Nevertheless

the opportunity to increase earnings in low waged areas of the industry, the absence of growing numbers of men wage earners and appeals to national interests were to lead to only spasmodic and half-hearted resistance to overtime working. In such a period of uncertainty, the union's leaders were to find it difficult to sound convincing in their opposition to extended earning opportunities.(7) GUTW leaders' emphasis tended to be placed on the harmful physical effects of overtime working amongst women.(8) Efforts too were made, with little apparent success, to encourage workers from the less flourishing Lancashire cotton industry to respond to the demand for labour in the West Riding(9) and so reduce the working day of women in the wool textile industry.

Following the introduction of Government regulations specifying fixed overtime hours in the industry and a successful overtime campaign in Colne Valley and Huddersfield districts in early 1915,(10) the question of hours was to be superceded by that of replacement for enlisted men.(11) In April and May, increasing shortages of men workers were being reported from mills in the industry. At the same time, the War Office was requiring manufacturers to supply lists of fit men of military age whose jobs could be filled by women.(12) Responses to these moves were varied, there were warnings from the Worker and there was cautious support from the Yorkshire Factory Times.(13)

Negotiations between factory inspectors, employers and unions took place in late 1915 and a schedule was worked out which left only 13 occupations reserved exclusively for men and established as essential.(14) There was to be dissension over the question of pay for women replacing men. The GUTW found itself isolated against a combination of dyers' union representatives and employers. Although the GUTW was to consistently advocate equal piece and time rates for women replacing men, it was not

in a position to enforce this as a general principle. The general agreement reached between the employers and unions in February 1916 and which was to stand until after the war, left considerable leeway for local adjustments[15] and was worded in such a way as to give more than adequate protection to men's employment both during and after the war. As Turner had put it, if the military authorities "have the men you cannot have the cloth. You have drained us dry".[16]

Unlike some unions in the industry, the GUTW was not able to accompany resistance to modifications in the list of reserved occupations with enforceable stipulations as to conditions of employment for either sex.[17] The union relied on accepted practice in the industry to exclude or contain women workers and where this was insufficient to guarantee men's jobs under war conditions, made agreements which would return jobs to men once peace had been declared. Piecening was to be an occupation which was to become increasingly open to women under war-time conditions.[18] As conscription was to create a shortage of piecers, the tendency was to increase the number of women in mulegates.[19]

The issue of substitution was never to be as dominant in the wool textile industry as in, for example, engineering. A reserve army of married women and older men with appropriate skills was called back into the mills and this, together with a degree of redeployment amongst younger workers of both sexes and protection of the most skilled jobs, meant that relatively few women were replacing men in the industry by 1918.[20] Within the industry, there were to be varying effects, with a net loss for both sexes in the Bradford area and a large net gain for women only in the Huddersfield area.[21]

The experience of war-time production in wool textile manufacturing

as far as women were concerned was a continuation of some pre-war tendencies within established areas. Where women had been introduced in large numbers into 'new' areas, conditions and controls were such s as to make clear the abnormal nature of such arrangements. This was particularly true of women introduced into piecening and combing on night turn. Generally speaking, women continued to be recruited into the lowest paid sections of the trade, in worsted spinning and weaving in Bradford and into the lower paid sections of Huddersfield's industry. The skilled woman worker, the overlooker or pattern weaver was a rarity.(22)

Turning from a consideration of the impact of the war on women's employment, I will now go on to consider responses to the experience of war-time production amongst women workers. Oral evidence provides a vivid account of daily life as well as descriptions of changed conditions of employment.(23) A woman who began her working life at the age of 13 in 1916 in a woollen mill engaged entirely on government work, describes her normal working day during the First World War. She worked as a clerker to a warper, in the same mill where her mother and aunt were weavers:

> 'My life during the whole of the First World War consisted of getting up at 5 o'clock, having a bit of breakfast, going to work with me mother. The mills didn't start till about half past six ... Me mother wouldn't have let me go up by myself, I had to go with them ... The warpers didn't come till 7 so usually I had to sit at the end of me mother's loom ... And when I'd finished at the mill at 6 o'clock and my warper used to go home ... I used to come across to me mother and have a bit of tea with them ... and then what they did you see when the pieces had to come off the loom when you came to a certain mark you'd done one piece ... (you) used to go to the tuner and say, "will you fetch me piece ..." Well if he hadn't time and he was busy, you and your partner you threw the piece onto the floor. So actually there was always some pieces on the floor and they used to undo one and lay me on it and wrap me up and I could fall hard and fast asleep till they'd finished at 8 o'clock.' (24)

Overtime hours meant a long working day for other young workers:

> 'At one part we had to work till 8 o'clock at night. It were 9 o'clock when I got home - with what we earned you know, with what we earned.'

> 'Fancy a little girl 14 years old working from half past six in the morning to either seven or half past at night. And I used to go home, have a good wash, have a bite of something to eat and go to bed. That was my day in those days, isn't it wicked?' (25)

After work and at weekends there was the question of housework and shopping. Some workers were fortunate enough to have these responsibilities taken care of by other women members of their families. Nevertheless, queuing for food became an accustomed feature of daily life, an additional pressure on workers' families:

> 'You know how work goes round: "They've got some butter at the dairy". Well you would rush up to the dairy, by that time it would be a queue of twenty or thirty. And by the time it came to your turn sometimes: "Sorry no more today". And they would just shut the doors and then you were without ... Sometimes my Granny was out most of the day.'

> 'and then sometimes me mother and auntie used to have to go out queuing at weekends. If me mother went queuing auntie went and did her work (housework) ...' (26)

Some commentators could only point to large earnings afforded by war-time production.(27) Nevertheless, such gains, when set against long working hours and the poor organisation of the supply of necessities, were dearly won. A young worker found that he could earn three times as much money piecening on nights. At 16 he was earning 30 shillings a week, where previously, working days, he had not earned much more than 10 shillings. To him it seemed that such efforts obviously brought mixed benefits, since:

'When I were 18 and I went into th'army I were only half an inch over five foot. And when I came ... on me first leave and with training and exercise and outdoor like I'd grown five inch in seven month. You couldn't credit it ...' (28)

For textile workers the change over to war-time production was not to be simple, nor straightforwardly rewarding. Mills varied considerably. Some went over completely to government contracts, others maintained civilian orders. Contracts too, might vary so that the qualities of khaki spun and woven could determine earnings, as could the differing orders for allied governments. Some complained about the quality of materials:

'It were easy to manage but I mean it was poor stuff and it were very hard on your hands.'

'... That Russian stuff that we did for the Russians ... it were terrible stuff. And it were ... it were camel hair or goat's hair or something. And you know it's like pig wire is goat's hair and it wouldn't spin. And they used to put that much oil in the teazing to stick it together. And it used to cake on the rollers... and we'd to clean rollers every twenty minutes.'

'Well it was poor stuff, I don't know. It wasn't officers' khaki .... it used to break, what we called the ends used to break and it took a lot of ... of doing - keeping up to.' (29)

There was alternatively the compensation that because it was plain, khaki required less supervision:

'I was spinning ... and I could get my creels full of bobbins on both mules and I were on cops all the time and it were army work .... And I could get a newspaper and sit at the end of the mule and them sets would run, they'd run three parts of the day while they were full. And I never picked a single end up...'

'But I mean it were all right to weave because it were simple - there were nothing about it

at all - nothing it's just plain weave and that's all...'

'With khaki and that sort of thing it was easier to do ... because it wasn't as tedious as the civilian cloth.'

'And it were very easy, yes they were a lot easier than the ordinary pieces, because you see those were different colours of weft and warp and you'd to be careful while they were easy going were khaki; they were all khaki were khaki jobs you see, both weft and warp.' (30)

Though requiring less management, such orders brought in less money, counteracting the gains to be made from working longer hours. The price for a particular piece of weaving was determined by the weight of cloth, calculated in picks to the inch and fineness of warp, and by the number of shuttles or colours required. The plainer the cloth, the lower the price, as one khaki weaver found:

'It were worse paid you see, for khaki and you see at weaving where you got a fancy pattern you got so much more on... If you had a fine reed on your got so much more on for that you see. Well you see when you were on khakis and that you didn't get anything extra.' (31)

There is no evidence from these workers that war-time production brought any advancement in skill or status in the mills. Some young women found themselves in what had been considered young men's jobs, piecening. However, this could scarcely be seen as advancement, nor as fundamental change mainly because the changes made involved movement to a less skilled job, or one no further in the skill hierarchy and were confined strictly to the war period.(32) One woman had been a twister but was persuaded to go piecening. She changed her job and remained a piecener, only finally getting to be a weaver when the spinning section

of the mill in which she worked burned down. Another woman refused to go piecening and changed mills to become a weaver. Other workers, although they did not take on men's work, had their normal transition through mill occupations interrupted or altered by the war. One woman was a mender, aged 17 in 1914:

> 'Well a lot of the men were called up or they were volunteering and that meant there were a lot less people - of course there were women and men weavers - but there were a lot of the men gone. That meant the looms were standing idle. It also meant that some of the work was khaki or hospital blue or blankets which didn't need a lot of mending. So it meant there was less work for the mending and they were needing the looms, somebody to attend to the looms and they couldn't get people. So the boss over the weaving shed he tried to persuade several of us to go - leave mending and go and learn to weave and in those days we had a table, what they called a mending table ... And we'd a long form that we sit on and kept our tools in a box. And he'd come and sit on the end of this form and talk and joke with us and try to persuade us to go ... And he promised us that when the war was over and the boys came back we could come back to mending.' (33)

In fact she never did go back to mending. A younger girl found that in her mill she was expected to go to any job as pressure of work and shortage of labour dictated:

> 'You'd to do what you were told. You'd to go help anywhere you see. The men were called up you see and you'd to, well you'd to dodge about a bit, do a bit where you were needed. You'd to go twist a bit or hank winding. I got to hankwinding then.' (34)

Apart from changes in actual jobs, women weavers in particular were expected to cover up for those men who had previously been employed to help them and who had enlisted or been conscripted after 1916. Although in some mills the tuners were asked to lift pieces into the cart for removal to the mending room,(35) or older men were kept on or brought back for this work, in other mills two women together might lift a piece themselves:

'Two of us used to lift it on a cart - you know tuners had a cart and if they were busy - and we could manage two of us to lift it onto a cart. But you couldn't carry it on your own unless they were a very very light one.'

'Oh they did a lot of heavy work did the women in the war - because I used to carry pieces... you see they took you from burling. Burling was nothing to do help in the war. They could get older people to do that you see. And so they put me to what they called the finishing room.' (36)

As well as lifting pieces there was the question of fixing looms. Here again, war time shortages of labour meant that women might be crossing informal boundaries of expertise and sex roles. Once single young tuners began to be conscripted then overlookers from other departments might be expected to help fix looms which were showing the strain of constant production. Women too might find themselves developing skills they had not previously considered or been allowed to consider:

'Some of the old weavers, if it was only a nut or two wanted tightening up they would do it themselves. I've seen me mother do it. And perhaps the shuttle wanted sandpapering if they got a bit rough.' (37)

Despite the contribution made by such workers to the war effort - and it is often that in relation to this factor that women's suffrage was argued for in the final stages and partially gained - these women had little to show industrially for their efforts by the end of the war. Nevertheless it was clear to these workers that their effort was as crucial as any workers on munitions of war:

'We never asked to go to munitions because we were on khaki - weaving for the army you see.'

'We thought we were doing enough when we were weaving the blankets and things you see.' (38)

Changes in day-to-day work experience involved particular types of shifts in consciousness which came increasingly to be expressed in collective responses and pressures. This was inevitably to have an impact on union life as women sought stronger representation and equal earnings status.

Bradford district of the GUTW was to be involved in a bitter struggle with employers during 1915 and was to find itself divided over the issue of wages policy.(39) At the same time it was the only district to attempt to improve the situation of its lowest paid workers and with some success.(40) Bradford district was at this time led by a committee of six, two of whom were women, a Miss Taylor and Hannah Burgess. In addition, Jessie Cockerline was one of the two district auditors. As a result it was not entirely surprising that a resolution, 'That the question of a woman organiser be considered', was put to the AGM of the union from Bradford district.(41) Following discussion and dissension,(42) individual districts were left to decide the matter and ultimately it was to be Huddersfield District which was to make an appointment.(43)

The importance of a woman organiser was to be debated in the columns of the Yorkshire Factory Times. As far as Jessie Cockerline was concerned, the union had neglected face-to-face contact as a recruiting method.(44) The recognition that to retain commitment to an organisation run and dominated by men required some special effort on the part of women represented a more flexible attitude to the needs of different sections of workers.(45) On the other hand, canvassing was criticised as a time-consuming process and one which yielded fewer results than the combination of recruiting with wages movements and similar campaigns of a broader nature.(46)

In Huddersfield, steps were taken to secure an early appointment. At the end of March 1915, the wording of an advertisement for a woman organiser was agreed and forwarded to newspapers for insertion.(47) Despite long-standing rivalries and past antipathies over such matters as half-time working and women's suffrage, the Yorkshire union persistently looked to the cotton unions for recruits when organising capabilities were sought. Hence it is not surprising that of the seven applicants whose details were considered, the two who were to be interviewed came from Lancashire.(48) The two candidates who came before the full committee were Nancy Shimbles of Nelson(49) and Mary Luty of Rawtenstall. It was to be Mary Luty whom the committee chose unanimously to be their woman organiser. Brought up by her mother on her grandfather's moorland farm, she followed her mother into the same mill as a half timer at the age of 11. In 1915 she was thirty, a millworker with no experience of full-time organising work. But having had experience of voluntary work and being as she explains, partly as a result of night school and evening classes with the W.E.A., interested in 'social work of various kinds'(50) the Huddersfield post was apparently one that interested her. It was, as she describes, a 'paid post, where my work was still in connection with the textile trade'.(51)

The advertisement she answered described a job at a wage of 35 shillings a week and stipulated that married women need not apply. Both these qualifications were to lead to argument within the ranks of the GUTW. Jessie Cockerline bitterly attacked the Huddersfield members for offering a wage which was 5 shillings less than that paid to men in the same position, though she supported the exclusion of married women. On the other hand, 'Yarnspinner' defended the lower wage offered and the right of Huddersfield district to exclude married women from consideration.(52)

Mary Luty began work on April 29th 1915 and was to address her first public meeting almost immediately in St. George's Square, Huddersfield on 1st May, a Saturday evening.(53) The District kept her very busy in her work of making recruits for the union. In May and June she addressed over 40 meetings and was involved in the distribution of over 12,000 circulars and handbills. The result was a large increase in district membership and finances.(54) She was undoubtedly a brave woman and on occasion even prepared to face violent opposition at her factory gate meetings, with anti-union workers jumping on the lorry which was her makeshift platform and brandishing and smashing chairs, or trying to drag it off down a sidestreet shouting, "They were not having a meeting there, disgracing the factory and all who worked in it". But although later she was to recall how these meetings for expounding "the principles of Trade Unionism" were organised,(55) she left no account of the women she worked with in Huddersfield nor of the issues which faced them during the war years. During the period of her appointment in Huddersfield there were, nevertheless, to be definite attempts to improve the situation of women workers, though these were to be of varied success. Huddersfield District Committee having appointed their own woman organiser initiated a move to bring to the attention of other unions in the town the need for the formulation of a definite policy in relation to equal pay for women.(56)

The vehicle chosen, the Trades and Labour Council, though it was to have its first ever women delegates in February 1916 when Mary Luty, Edith Rhodes and Mary Thornton of the GUTW were appointed,(57) was to prove slow and cumbersome. Though its production of deliberating bodies was always guaranteed, very little seems to have emerged from ensuing decisions which was of any particular advantage to Huddersfield women workers.(58) Despite the increased involvement of women trade

unionists in the debate concerning women's pay and working conditions, the form which that debate took and its timing meant that issues raised in a war-time context were easily put aside as preparations for peace-time conditions became priority matters. By mid 1917, it was clear that political rights for women in some form were to be enacted. The reward for participation in the war effort was to have a siphoning-off effect, further isolating moves to improve women's rights in production. This was particularly the case while debates about post-war reconstruction remained firmly attached to ideas of work and production which assumed a less eligible and marginal role for women. Issues of control and democratisation of industry were being discussed within and in relation to, institutions and organisations which had scarcely heard the sound of a woman's voice or had at most only begun to consider questions of women's rights and representation.

Within the GUTW there was to be a new attempt to improve organisation amongst women workers. Following discussions at various levels in the Huddersfield District, it was decided to extend Mary Luty's engagement for another twelve months and in May 1916, a form of women's committee similar to the Co-operative Women's Guild was instituted.(59) The new body had no executive powers, being agitational and advisory in function. Its defined aims and objects suggest that its creators, the Huddersfield District Committee, saw its scope as outside work, recruiting and spreading information as to the union's policy as this related to women. In practice the Guild was to develop another area of activity. In relation to the union itself it was to become a strong and vocal pressure group for women members of the union, constantly skirmishing with higher bodies in the organisations.

At its first committee meeting the question of equal war bonus

was raised. This was to be a constant theme throughout 1916, as each wage negotiation failed to meet the demands of women members. A resolution was sent to the District Committee; this was then passed onto the union's General Executive.(60) That there was much sympathy for the women's case at District level was shown by the fact that a decision had been taken earlier to include a woman, Edith Rhodes, in any delegation for the union to meet the employers in subsequent wage negotiations.(61) Attitudes had hardened in 1916 following unsuccessful negotiations in 1915.(62) In that year the union had negotiated two increases in war bonus both of which had proved unpopular with women members.(63)

Long hours of overtime, a rapidly rising cost of living and the knowledge that they as workers were contributing to an ever increasing extent to the war effort,(64) helped to fire women's determination to secure equal remuneration for their efforts. The atmosphere in which employers' offers were to be debated was not improved as, on each occasion, men put terms to gatherings of workers which included increasing numbers of women.

The campaign for equal bonus was maintained through the Guild's normal activities, propaganda meetings for various groups of women workers. Groups of feeders, piecers, weavers and menders were addressed by Mary Luty and other members of the District Committee. During August and September 1916 another bonus negotiation was in progress and Guild members increased their demands on the District to act on behalf of women members. At one stage, the Guild resolved that the union executive should not accept any additional war grant unless it equalised men's and women's bonuses. Guild members were to be angered by the Executive's failure to include a woman in the deputation to meet Askwith and the employers,(65) but were to be outraged when the terms of the agreement

were made known in October 1916.(66) So complete was women's commitment to a fairer share of any forthcoming increase in earnings that Turner was recorded as having stated at the negotiations which followed in June 1917 that the women, 'want more brass and (are) going to have it'.(67)

Askwith's June 1917 award though it went some way towards responding to demands for equal pay by discriminating in favour of women piece workers was to prove unpopular for its distinction between time and piece earnings and for the fact that its issue coincided with a reduction in working hours.(68) The difference in percentages paid to men and women workers was to stay. In mid 1917 as an attempt to reduce earnings differentials between men and women piece workers it seems to have gone some way towards appeasing women workers in the industry. As a principle, it was hard won and continued to provoke opposition and questioning. Officials were still having to defend the difference a year later.(69)

The question of equal wages for equal work was to be debated thoroughly in many sections of industry and was to lead to sharp exchanges in areas where women were being employed in new occupations, or on a large scale replacing men. Though in textiles, as argued here, official attitudes varied, with the GUTW insisting at least on the principle of equal pay, the issue was never to become a matter for open conflict during the war years.

The Women's Guild and the appointment of a woman organiser specifically responsible for women's trade union membership had proved a great success. Such steps were unparalleled in the industry at this time. In January 1917, Mary Luty's appointment had been made indefinite and from February the Guild was finally permitted to organise

its own monthly meetings for women members.[70] Guild meetings reflected a wide range of political interests during 1917 and 1918, often taking a line in opposition to that of the union's General Executive and with the education of members a consistent priority.[71] For reasons which are unclear Mary Luty was to resign unexpectedly in July 1917 to return to Lancashire for work first as a temperance social worker and later as an I.L.P organiser.[72] Both Guild and District sought to fill the gap she had left as quickly as possible. Edith Rhodes was finally appointed the following month. On this occasion, the advertisement was less controversially worded. However, it also revealed an ominous shift towards an administrative role for the woman organiser which possibly anticipated a more passive level of peace-time activity.[73] In its last few months, the Guild was to continue in attacking vein, so much so that Edith Rhodes was to remind members of its purely advisory function in her first Annual Report.[74] Expressions of independence in action and policy were answered by the District giving the Women's Guild, 'the power to organise meetings and carry them out in their own way'.[75]

Successful as this innovation in inner union structure proved, it is obvious that in a situation of inequality such as existed in both industry and union, women's scope for independent action was limited. Thus where the Guild was in disagreement with leadership's action it could merely pass resolutions of no confidence or express criticism. Such were the steps which had been taken in relation to pressure for equal war bonus and representation on wage negotiating delegations, The Guild's ultimate sanction lay in refusing to call its own meetings, as occurred finally, in June 1919, when it appears to have made itself defunct, over the question of the leadership's inaction in relation to a minimum wage for winders.[76] This would appear as a self-defeating

move but indicates just how the system of union government could thwart the interests of those who were considered of minority or marginal standing. The opportunity for engineering more fundamental change within the union and industry's pay and employment structures was thus lost.

A contrasting situation was to emerge in Bradford where, despite more equal representation on the District Committee, women were in a weak bargaining position with the employers. The problems which the GUTW encountered with the various groups of Bradford employers have already been described as have the characteristics of Bradford District of the GUTW.(77) It has been suggested that conflicts between members of the District Committee and members of the union's General Executive were to add to problems faced by GUTW activists in Bradford.(78) One recurring issue was a tendency on the part of some leading GUTW members to refer to Bradford women workers in terms which gave the impression that they were difficult to organise. The criticism of Bradford men trade unionists, though possibly with some truth attached, could only have had indirect appeal to women and implied a need for leadership of, rather than active participation for, women.(79)

The war years were to provide many examples of action taken by Bradford women workers in defence of earnings levels. Thus it was only in Bradford that the union went so far, in January 1917, as to ballot members on the question of strike action. This decision was taken following the refusal of the Bradford Manufacturers' Federation to even negotiate an increase in war bonus for Bradford workers. The groups to be ballotted included weavers, burlers, menders, spinners and drawers. With a membership of only two or three thousand, the union was not in a strong bargaining position. However, this was not

to prove a deterrent to Bradford workers, with ninety per cent voting in favour of a strike, some weavers took unilateral action. Within days of the ballot result becoming known, 30 to 40 workplaces were standing idle as about 4,000 people left work. The War Office called in Gee, Turner and Watson, and negotiations began with employers. The result of this militancy was the addition of 1,000 new members to the union in Bradford in the space of a few weeks and an unusual GUTW delegation to the negotiations. This was to include not only the three officials, but also four workers, a man and three women weavers.(80)

Although at earlier points in the war it seems as if the GUTW leadership was able to contain direct action in Bradford, during 1917 and 1918 there were times when this proved impossible. In July 1917 there was a strike of worsted spinners and doffers, which followed an award.(81) A wages movement initiated immediately the unsatisfactory June award of Askwith became known, was reaching a climax by the autumn. Again, in Bradford and in other centres too, the question of strike action was raised.(82) Perhaps as a result of these increased levels of activity and involvement, the union was to see changes in its hitherto 'problem' district. By 1918, Bradford's GUTW membership had grown to 15,000 and a union room had been opened.(83) In relation to other districts, Bradford's growth was considerably greater and with apparently fewer benefits involved in terms of conditions of employment and union membership.

During 1918 there was to be one issue which was to bring the union leadership into conflict with women in Huddersfield and Bradford. This was the question of the Saturday Stop, instituted in 1917 when a working week of 50 hours had been introduced. The Women's Guild had welcomed this innovation.(84) As far as women workers were concerned,

a shorter working week had obvious attractions. This was particularly the case when domestic work had been made so much more complex as queueing became an established means of buying basic food and as shortages led to more laborious methods of spinning out food and substituting ingredients.

In 1918, a year later, the restrictions on hours were lifted by the Board of Control, on a unanimous vote of both employer and trade union representatives. Bradford women reacted immediately to this. As Yarnspinner described it, they 'considerably jibbed' and 'the textile officials have certainly had a bit of weight on to keep things at all balanced in a peaceful way'. The Women's Guild passed a resolution protesting against the resumption of Saturday morning working and asked the executive to "stop it at those places where they have started". The women in Bradford however, were to force the executive to support a return to 48 hours working. Turner recalled 'They assembled in their thousands in the Textile Hall' and despite opposition from officials, a resolution was passed which protested at the withdrawal of restrictions on Saturday morning working and which requested the Board of Control to rescind its earlier resolution.(85) Although women workers had succeeded in changing union policy on the question of working hours, they were not able to enforce the change they sought to make. Emphasis on outside interference, the need for 'official' leadership, references to the national interest and allegations of headstrong behaviour, helped play down the strength of opposition to the leadership's advocacy of longer working hours with Saturday included.

The Huddersfield Women's Guild provided a safety valve, as much as a useful means for women to influence union policy on matters of direct relevance to them. In Bradford, without such an agency and with

a predominance of women workers, opposition to items of union policy was, as has been shown, less easily contained. A Guild with an advisory role siphoned off opposition into the form of less challenging resolutions. In contrast, women in Bradford were able to exert more direct influence on the District and General Executive committees.

The limited nature of the gains which women were to win during the war years and after is reflected in the disproportionate representation which they retained on governing bodies of the union. Wool textile trade union membership was to increase greatly and was to go on growing until the collpase of the post-war boom in 1921.(86) Despite the fact that women constituted a majority among the membership, they occupied few posts or positions within the union. From District level to the highest committee, women's representation remained decidedly unequal.(87) By the end of 1918, of an executive committee of twenty, only three were women.(88) As far as paid appointments were concerned, only Huddersfield District with Edith Rhodes as an assistant secretary had a woman officer. Keighley was to break new ground in 1919 with the first ever woman District Secretary, Mrs. Todd.(89)

Such an increase in women's representation within the union, though slight, was remarkable in contrast with representation on bodies outside the union. No woman was a delegate to the TUC during the war years, although in 1919 a party which included eight delegates, one of whom was Miss May Turner, and Mrs. Gee and Mrs. Turner, attended the Glasgow TUC.(90) Nor, with the exception of only two occasions, did a woman ever form part of a team in wage negotiations with employers.(91) Proceedings dealing with substitution, wool control, reserving occupations, Manpower, were all conducted without the sound of a woman's voice, despite the fact that such matters depended on, or related directly

to, women's employment.[92]

In the years following the war, membership was to continue increasing and some improvements in women's representation were to follow in most districts of the union.[93] Nevertheless, women's wages were still on average between half and two thirds those of men in the industry.[94] and low levels of participation by women were again to become a familiar subject of discussion.[95]

There were three possible explanations for the lack of fit between growth in numbers and participation by women in these immediate post war years. Firstly, the post-war statistics of unemployment are misleading[96] and it is likely that a greater number of women were out of work than figures show. There were too, particular features of women's demobilisation which helped reinforce the temporary, aberrant image which women's war-time role in production was to acquire. Women were encouraged to defer to returning men by direct suggestion,[97] by the operation of the war-time agreement covering substitution[98] or simply by the effect of exhaustion.[99] The war had done little to alter occupational divisions in women's favour. Those who continued in work tended to stay at or below the point they had reached through war-time work. As a later investigator observed, in the wool industry, 'legislative restrictions had little influence on the employment of women'.[100] In terms of 'new' categories of labour employed on 'new' jobs there had been few changes brought about by war-time production. What was considered the normal state of affairs was resumed fairly rapidly. Thus few changes were brought about or precedents set which provided a basis for a new role for women in production and in consequence, in the union.

A second reason was one which related in part to men as well

as women in the industry. This was the collapse of the boom period for wool textile production in late 1920.(101) As the Depression began in 1921, cuts in wages and unemployment hit both men and women workers in the industry. For women the situation had the added disadvantage that any of the limited gains achieved by and for them in the industry were quickly dissipated as all groups of workers experienced unemployment and short time working.

A third factor which was to seriously weaken the position of women in the union was the GUTW's amalgamation in 1922 with the National Society of Dyers and Finishers and the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union.(102) For women this was to bring few advantages. The Dyers' union, 15,000 in 1920, had only 3,500 women members organised in a separate women's section. Although this segregation was not maintained in the new National Union of Textile Workers, the practice placed an onus on the part of the old GUTW section to maintain or improve women's equality within the union. This was not to be helped by the hiatus in leadership which amalgamation brought about. The older men, Allen Gee and Ben Turner, were to lose their close control. Allen Gee ceased to be General Secretary in 1922 and although Turner remained as the first full-time General President of the amalgamation, he was no longer a district officer and was to become increasingly involved in national issues.(103)

It has been shown in previous chapters that the experience and opportunities presented by war-time production did little to disturb established differentials and practices within the wool textile industry. The introduction of minimum wages, the setting up of trade boards, the increased application of scales for payment of a standard type, the use of the sliding scale in wage fixing, the abolition of

half-time working were all to have their particular effects. However, these were limited by other more enduring inequalities in distributions of wealth and power as between men and women workers. Despite a sharp increase in the importance of women both within the workforce and the union, and the union's own stated commitment to the principles of equal pay and work-sharing, the levels of earnings and access to control in the union itself remained broadly similar. The basic relationships of dependency and marginality underlay the whole range of negotiated issues throughout the war years.

The language of the debate relating to substitution was couched in terms of temporary expediency and women's lesser rights. Even as dependable a champion of the women as Ben Turner, could emphasise men's superior claims as heads of households and was to consistently argue for the deferment of the question of equal pay until after the war.(104) The return to 'normal' proved to be a continuation of a set of informal rules, procedures and terms which were operated throughout the war by employers and trade union leaders who were exclusively men.

Even so, such an evaluation tends to exclude the practical and experiential lessons of war-time production for women workers. There were to be limited results from the activities of the Women's Guild in Huddersfield and the militancy of Bradford women. It would be wrong to discount the inroads which women did make in terms of expressing an independent voice and securing election to a number of union positions. The war years showed that the union could ill afford to ignore its women workers and that, given the opportunity created by shifts in bargaining strength and the determination of women themselves, the union could be pushed in the direction of greater representivity and consequently greater overall strength.

Notes

1. Florence Lockwood was born in Devonport in 1861, the youngest of the six children of a Navy doctor. After training as an art student at the Slade in the 1880s she earned a living by painting for landed gentry, staying at their country houses. In 1901, on a visit to her sister's nursing home at Huddersfield, she met, and in a matter of months, married a local woollen manufacturer, Josiah Lockwood of Black Rock Mills, Linthwaite. She describes the story of her early life and marriage in a book published privately in 1932, An Ordinary Life, 1861-1924. Living in Colne Valley she became active in the Linthwaite Women's Liberal Association and in 1910 was elected a Guardian. After listening to Mrs. Pankhurst in 1907 during the Grayson by-election, she joined the NUWSS. In June 1913, she went to the conference of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance at Budapest. In her pamphlet, World Mending on the First Day of the War (1914) she describes herself as a member of the Active Service League of the NUWSS (Huddersfield Branch).

2. Lockwood (1914) op.cit., p.11.

3. Irene Osgood Andrews and Margaret A. Hobbs, Economic Effects of the World War upon Women and Children in Great Britain (1918), pp.22-28. See chapter 8 for a discussion of unemployment during the first weeks of the war. Charlie Glyde in his paper the Bradford Socialist Vanguard carried continuous attacks on relief agencies in the town, who through the autumn months were providing minimal support for the dependents, wives and children of enlisted men. His criticisms included labour members of the council who were unwilling to castigate '... the Starvation of the Unemployed, their dependents and the Mothers, Wives and Children of Reservists' (October 1914). Glyde, himself a councillor was outspoken in his criticism of 'occupants of motor cars' for the type of advice given to the 'wives of reservists'. This included suggestions to go out to work, to go into lodgings and to sell pictures, pianos and furniture, there were also queries as to "the morality of the applicant before marriage" (November 1914).

4. Bradford's women workers experienced a longer period of uncertainty than other women elsewhere in the industry. In mid October, of the 1,338 women on relief, 1,086 were millworkers. In contrast, almost a month earlier in Huddersfield, much lower numbers were without work, only 44 men and 57 women textile workers were shown as unemployed. In Batley, early orders for blankets and khaki cloth were also to shorten the period of unemployment, nevertheless, the same concern that relief should not go to the undeserving was apparent. In catering for dependent, the position of women workers vis a vis the relief agencies was problematic. The 'victims of industrial distress' required special consideration. Ben Turner, as mayor of the town was called on to answer for the administration of the local fund. The local paper carried information as to what might be bought for 5s a week, the amount allowed for a wife, and reported on a complaint that a woman had been seen to spend 1s3d on ham. However, it was pointed out that this might have been intended for a main meal and not for breakfast. In terms of occupation, burlers and menders, who were all women, took longer

to re-establish employment. Because Army cloth required much less mending, owing to heavy milling, their work was not in such great demand initially. But, by the end of the year it was reported that burlers and menders were either employed in their old jobs or had been 'absorbed' elsewhere in the industry. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.10.14; Worker, 26.9.14; Batley News, 29.8.14, 5.9.14; Board of Trade Labour Gazette, Vol XXIII, No 2, February 1915, p.38-9.)

Responses to unemployment varied. Helen Hillas accused Jessie Cockerline of supporting voluntary war work, putting seamstresses and women tailoring workers out of work. This was a generally held line in the trade union movement. The tendency to discount certain women's suffrage groups for their 'middle-class' nature tended to reappear in the early weeks of the war, when accusations of 'interfering women', the proliferation of women's organisations and general opposition to voluntary work were expressed in the columns of the Yorkshire Factory Times. Such involvement was seen as dangerously pro-war at a time when many labour men and women were still expressing open opposition to participation in the war and when many more felt unable to take part in government recruiting campaigns. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.10.14; Pioneer, 28.8.14 where it is mentioned that Bradford branch of the NUWSS had been organising sewing afternoons at their office; Yorkshire Factory Times, 3.8.14, 22.10.14; the Yorkshire Factory Times condemned Christabel Pankhurst for her speeches, arguing that she was doing harm to the cause for women's votes, 17.9.14.) The GUTW's official responses to early unemployment are discussed in chapter 8.

5. The overtime campaign is discussed in chapter 8.

6. At Flush Mills, Heckmondwike, women weavers walked out rather than accept a twenty five per cent reduction in wages. In November, Bradford women mill workers were protesting at the fact that men were being paid overtime at a rate of time and a half, while they were still being paid at ordinary piece rates. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 24.9.14, 8.10.14, 19.11.14)

7. In early December, the Yorkshire Factory Times carried a broad front page article by 'Rupert', which in fact gave qualified support to overtime. While denouncing the practice as in general being against the principles of trade unionism, in the woollen trade, in war time, it was justifiable:

> 'The average trade unionist realises that the safety of the country is a deciding factor in the case and the voice of criticism is therefore hushed.'
>
> (Yorkshire Factory Times, 3.12.14)

8. A doctor from Batley testified to signs of exhaustion amongst women working overtime. This followed days of 12 to 13 hours of work. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 12.11.14)

9. Reports from Yorkshire showed that 'emergency' overtime was being indulged in by 'female labour' in factories where ' trade unionism has never penetrated'. The lessons were clear. A few weeks later it was reported that women were being carried out fainting from Yorkshire woollen mills where the Factory Acts were being

broken. This, it was alleged, was bad for the future's soldiers and 'It is scarcely necessary to add that not one female worker in fifty of those who are working overtime is in any trade union or organisation, or has ever subscribed to the textile unions...' During these first months there was pressure on women workers to transfer from textile industries which faced slack production to the busier wool textile industry. While some workers from silk and linen did go into wool production, the response from cotton was not as good as had been expected. There were differences which meant that the first effects of the war were mitigated. Women were taking over some men's jobs, the industry did pick up to some extent, few mills closed down entirely, but above all, the Lancashire women found Yorkshire work and conditions unattractive and unsuitable. Accounts filtered back informally, some were published in the Lancashire Labour press, none were favourable. Wages were found to be low and the possibility of increasing earnings made no easier by lack of familiarity with the processes of woollen cloth production. Many Lancashire men and women returned home after a brief trial. Again and again the point was made that weak organisation was the cause of the 'scandalously low' wages for both men and women. In Dewsbury and Morley it was reported that men's wages were fair, but 'the men are organised to a man' while 'the women have not yet had the sense to join the union'. Lancashire women were unwilling to work for lower wages, particularly in an area where accommodation was also more expensive. Above all, the established practice of unequal rates for men and women was a deterrent to better paid, better organised Lancashire women. (Cotton Factory Times, 21.8.14, 16.10.14, 4.12.14; see also a letter to The Nation, 9.1.15, from G.D.H. Cole, headed "The Position of the Cotton Factory Operatives").

10. The overtime campaign had been successful and in particular had demonstrated the GUTW's support for women over the issue of equal payments. See chapter 8.

11. Although from the outset, the government had made clear its intention to replace men by women where necessary, this had occurred on only the smallest scale during 1914. In the early months the tendency was to expand areas where women had traditionally been employed. This of course included wool and worsted production as well as boots and shoes, rations, kit bags, surgical dressings and bandages, amongst other products. The crisis in Asquith's cabinet in May 1915 was followed by exhortations to improve the country's war footing, voiced in a number of quarters. Perhaps one of the most memorable was to be the 'Right to Work' campaign organised by women who had been amongst the most defiant in the suffrage movement of the months leading up to the war. Pressure from such well seasoned activists was to lend weight to officially sponsored moves to ease men out of the factories into the armed forces and to replace these with women where possible.

12. Yorkshire Factory Times, 1.4.15.

13. The Huddersfield Worker was warning against uncontrolled entry of women into the industry. In an April editorial the paper argued that women should not be recruited while men were unemployed and should only be admitted if paid at the same rates as men. This was something which the Worker argued, Yorkshire textile workers had never demanded, so that "half their troubles are a direct

consequence of that". In June, while the Worker was warning of the dangers of low paid women workers being 'stealthily worked into the trade for the specific purpose of weakening the men's resistance', writers in the Yorkshire Factory Times seemed to be taking a more optimistic line. "Narkist" welcomed the rumoured idea of women being employed as overlookers. "Nemo" felt that there need be no fear of women replacing men in some occupations since they could never match a man's output. Women and men should join in strengthening the union in order to eliminate competition. Meanwhile, in the current situation such issues should be left until after the war. (Worker, 17.4.15, 8.5.15; Yorkshire Factory Times, 24.6.15)

14. As things then stood, such men were excluded from attesting. The majority of wool and worsted occupations were thus left unprotected, officially. However, both union leaders and employers were agreed that few occupations outside those traditionally open to women could be further extended to take in women or other groups. Jobs which were considered unsuited to women included rag grinding, rag garnetting and cutting, milling, tentering, woollen spinning, beaming in both woollen and worsted mills. Only card-minding, piecening, warping, weaving, perching, a number of combing operations and twisting-in were considered not to be wholly dependent on male labour. It is interesting to note that almost all these jobs had been becoming more open to women during the pre-war years. Yarnspinner thought that the list of reserved occupations was too restrictive:

> 'It would be wicked to try women in milning places, yet they are not mentioned in the list or reserved occupations. It would be indecent and cruel to put them to be rag grinders and packers, in fact, the only jobs that the women ought to be encouraged to go to are such as mending, knotting, winding, burling and weaving. Even with the war we ought to retain that necessary love for the other sex.'
>
> (See Document entitled "Replacement of Men of Military Age by Women or Other Labour", 29.11.15, copy in NUDBTW collection Huddersfield local history library; Yorkshire Factory Times, 19.11.15)

15. Yorkshire Factory Times, 2.12.15, 9.12.15. The GUTW arrived at a special arrangement with other unions in Dewsbury over the question of introducing women to warping at some mills in that area. Eventually an agreement with employers was reached which satisfied men and employers. It had been feared that by giving women lighter warping jobs, men might find themselves earning less on piece work. Both sides agreed that men would have to be protected from such reductions. The GUTW found itself under fire from the warper's union in organising this particular innovation. The warpers' union organised exclusively amongst men and had resisted the introduction of women before the war. There were to be later incursions by the recruiting authorities and, too, many instances of employers' breaking the agreement made with the unions as to the introduction of women into what were considered men's jobs. Only in the best organised areas could such moves be directly dealt with. In Colne Valley, the branch committee at Marsden took careful note of all women who were replacing men, together with information as to their wages, wages and previous occupation, after mid 1916.

(Yorkshire Factory Times, 23.3.16, 20.4.16).

A final agreement between 14 unions and 7 employers' associations over a number of points relating to substitution, or dilution as it had come to be called, was reached in February 1916. Although this referred specifically to paying women at the same rate of pay in jobs where they were replacing men, in practice there were no comprehensive means to enforce this throughout all sections. The agreement was worded in such a way as to provide more than adequate protection for men's employment and included a maximum period, 13 weeks, after which no woman replacing a man was to be employed once peace had been declared. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 20.1.16, 10.2.16.) The woolcombing sections of the trade had been under increasing pressure to accept women's night work. A united front of employers and government officials hoped to persuade the Woolworkers' Federation to relax a ruling on women's night time employment. The strong position of the woolcombing section of the Federation prevented this extension of working hours until late in 1916. The woolcombers finally gave in, but stipulated terms. Factory inspectors were to be appointed whose special duty would be to check on women's employment in woolcombing sheds at night, mothers of children were to be excluded from night turn and working conditions were to be improved by the addition of meal intervals and the fixing of working temperatures. Yarnspinner condemned the deal as 'purely and simply nightwork' and suggested that had export work been excluded from the list of necessary work then women's night work would not have been called for. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 23.12.15, 27.1.16, 2.3.16, 19.10.16, 26.10.16, 2.11.16) By November 1917, it was estimated that 450 women were working on night combine in Yorkshire, most of these being in Bradford. (Report on Employment in Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield, in RECO 1 801. This was a report completed for the Board of Trade Industrial (War Inquiries) Branch, under Professor S.J. Chapman. Other reports were presented for Birmingham and Teeside.)

At a later stage the district entered prolonged negotiations with the employers concerning the introduction of women into the willeying departments of mills. (Marsden Branch minutes, 17.5.16; Colne Valley District Minutes, 10.5.17, 28.2.18) As conscription began to take full effect during 1916, the unions had found new allies in employers, particularly those with civilian orders, whose male workforce was becoming most severly depleted by conscription. A deputation of employers and union in October 1916 met War Office representatives who included Rothermere, Wintour and Geddes, as well as representatives of the Board of Trade and Home Office. The government's view was that 'give and take' was necessary. The employers' response was that by taking men from reserved occupations in the worsted trade, production was being endangered. Strong arguments were made for the case that women were quite unsuited for certain jobs, these included spinning, tuning, finishing work, beaming, willeying and fettling. Both employers and union representatives appeared adamant on this point. Turner insisted: "Women cannot possibly do these jobs. They all require physical strength besides skill." Apart from increasing women's employment at night, it was felt that no further replacement was possible. Overlookers' representatives complained that at least twenty per cent of their members had been taken from both weaving and spinning at a time when women 'comers-in' were making extra work. (MUN 4 6481, part 2)

17. The only group of workers to take the question of women's employment to the point of strike action, were Bradford's 1500 woolsorters. In November 1916, these men threatened to strike if any more women were taken on without a pledge to reinstate those men who were in military service. However, a conference between the two sides, arranged by the factory inspectorate managed to arrive at mutually acceptable terms. The woolsorters were to lift their customary restriction on output known as 'the stint', while employers guaranteed no price reduction. Work was to be shared out in periods of depression in the trade. No women were to be recruited from any other branch of the textile trade. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 23.11.16, 7.12.16)

In the case of the sorters and the combers, both were key processes in that part of Bradford's industry which was fourishing under war time production conditions. Moreover, both were unions which were, almost exclusively composed of men members. More important still, they had virtually one hundred per cent membership in Bradford. Representatives of the National Society of Woolcombers and Kindred Trades gave evidence to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry. They maintained that women's output had been equal to that of men in the industry. (Mr. Swallow) 'They turn the same output as the men, and in some areas I can prove they turn more out. They are more accustomed to it and are far more superior to the men in the job-in fact the mangers acknowledge it.' (27th Day, C.6).

18. In woollen production piecening, an occupation equivalent to piecing in cotton and usually paid by sub-contracting from men mule-spinners, varied as to whether it was a man, woman or young person's occupation. In Leeds, it had for years been an occupation for women. Wages were amongst the lowest in the industry, being between 10s 6d and 13s a week. Elsewhere, in Morley, Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Colne Valley, it had been a man's occupation, more specifically, a young man's occupation.

19. As far as 'Yarnspinner' was concerned there was no objection, as long as women were paid the same wage as the men they were replacing. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 30.3.14) See oral evidence, pp.361+ff. Joint organisation through the Home Office and Board of Trade, using Labour Exchanges, was to lead to the arrival in Huddersfield and district in early April 1916, of numbers of young women from Scarborough, Harrogate, Bridlington, Hull, Goole, Grimsby and Mansfield, to work in the spinning and finishing sections of Huddersfield and Colne Valley mills. The Worker was sceptical that any actual shortage of men's labour existed and warned of the dangers of introducing women into areas such as piecing and feeding where no fixed rates existed. Variations in wages opened up the possibility of women being used to undercut the highest rates. The paper called for a more efficient organisation, "by campaigning for women workers". (Worker, 8.4.16)

A committee was set up to supervise the introduction of women workers into the areas. Calling itself the Women's War Employment Committee, it was one of 37 such committees operating in various towns in the country during 1916. It was under the central control of an inter-departmental committee on Women's Employment set up by the Home Secretary and the president of the Board of Trade in November 1915. The Huddersfield committee was chaired by the Lord Mayor and comprised trade union representatives, Harris Hoyle, Alf Shaw, G.H. Wood of the employers, with William Crowther,

president of the Manufacturers' Association, Miss Sadler, the Yorkshire Superintendent of Lady Factory Inspectors, and representatives from the local Labour Exchange. The committee's activities included not only the securing of lodgings for the 'immigrants', but also canvassing in the immediate area to persuade married women to return to the industry. The GUTW's representatives were insistent on the agreement between employers and unions being observed and that wages paid to the new workers should equal or be no less than four fifths of those paid to the workers they were replacing. This was seen as a necessary safeguard to 'soldiers' interests. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 13.4.16) Colne Valley District of the GUTW organised a special meeting for Marsden workers so that they could be informed of arrangements being made about this 'new' labour and the 'safeguards' provided in the interests of local operatives. (Colne Valley District minutes, 27.4.16) The 'comers-in' were given a document to sign, drawn up by the employers without consulting the unions or women themselves. The document stipulated a probationary period of two weeks to be followed, if satisfactory, by a six months' engagement. Full wages of 18s 6d plus 1s 6d war bonus, were only to be paid after six weeks' work. Termination could occur, at one week's notice, on the grounds of 'misconduct', inattention to work, sickness or other 'good causes'. Extra payments were to be made to those employed as leading piecer and night and overtime work was to be paid at the going district rate for women. A bonus was payable to any woman at the end of her six months engagement, provided 'she satisfactorily fulfils her engagement'. Nightwork for women was an innovation in the Huddersfield district, but then the terms and conditions of labour for this group of workers were to a large degree unprecedented. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 27.4.15; Worker 6.5.16, 10.6.16) None of these conditions appear to have been objected to by the local unions, suggesting that the strict controls involved were in fact acceptable. Fears that working in spinning departments would terrify the new workers were not borne out. By early June it was reported that the 100 women who had by that time been brought in had become quite used to the machinery.

20. See Table 13 in Appendix 1.

21. See Table 14 in Appendix 1. Figures compiled for a report completed for the Board of Trade in 1917, "Report on Employment in Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield" in RECO 1 801, show that while Bradford experienced a decline in both men's and women's textile occupations, the figure was less than for men in Huddersfield's worsted trade. This is explained by the fact that a large proportion of men in the industry were employed in combing and sorting in Bradford and that despite a relatively high, 47 per cent, enlistment rate, this was maintained primarily as men's employment due to restrictions on women's entry and the probably replacement of the enlisted emen from elsewhere in the industry. The 1917 report accounted for the movement of women out of the industry as being due to low wages prevailing and better war-time employment being available nearby in Bradford's metal trades. The report was highly optimistic as to a return to some kind of stability or even growth in a post-war period, at least so far as Bradford was concerned. The pre-war shortage of women's labour together with war-time migration from the industry and the anticipated effect of an Education Act ending the supply of half-timers, would secure women's situation in the labour market. Woolcombing presented the main problem

since this had been maintained as an area of employment for men. Returning soldiers would possibly be laying claims to men's jobs. In Huddersfield, it was anticipated, there might be problems, even allowing for the possibility of a post-war boom in suitings. In this area, there had been an increase of 44.5 per cent in the numbers of women employed. These 'extra women', it was argued, might not all find employment and 'it seems as it there might be some danger of friction in readjusting the work between men and women'. (p.8) As the report explained, the agreement which had been drawn up between employers and unions, though it guaranteed returning soldiers and sailors their jobs, did not provide for those areas of the industry where there had been equal access by both men and women.

22. It is, of course, true that, given the GUTW's insistence that no woman's wage as a minimum should be less than four fifths the man she replaced and an emphasis on equal pay, women wool textile workers were, during the war years, in a relatively advantageous position. To this extent the situation presented something of a contrast with cotton, where the war proved less profitable and many men and women experienced periods of unemployment and continual periods of short-time working. Here too, despite decades of women's participation in the industry and their substantial membership in the largest cotton unions, there were persistent attempts to prevent or restrict women's employment. In 1915, the mule spinners were advocating the employment of Belgian Boys, the lowering of the school leaving age and a re-definition of young person, rather than admit women as piecers to mule spinners. Though this was finally relaxed, local agreements were drawn up which placed upper limited to women's mobility as mule spinners.

23. The group interviewed in Colne Valley were relatively young at the outbreak of war, the oldest was twenty seven in 1914 and the youngest eleven, giving an average age of 16.76 years.

24. Interview 16.

25. Interviews 5 and 15.

26. Interview 16.

27. For a great many households the war was a time of unprecedented prosperity. Every man and woman capable of working could secure employment, either in the army or in civilian life. The wives of (the) fighting men received separation allowances for themselves and their children which often far exceeded the amounts they had received from their husbands' wages in pre-war days. Moreover, they had complete control of the money they received, and had to provide nothing for the breadwinner. Their children above the allowance age were able to earn three and four times as much as they could have done in peace-time. The result was that, despite rising prices, working class homes wore an air of unaccustomed material comfort.' Irene Clephane, Ourselves (1933) p.114.

28. Interview 12.

29. Interviews 18, 6, 13.

30. Interviews 18, 30, 11, 3.

31. Interview 17.

32. See discussion on p.375 of this chapter.

33. Interview 11.

34. Interview 8. This was also true for boys under military age.

35. At one mill, tuners refused to do this for the women and left work. (See Harris Hoyle's correspondence in NUDBTW collection, Huddersfield Local History Library); interview 4.

36. Interviews19 and 13. Burling consisted of removing knots and lumps from the piece of cloth. As with mending, it was not a task which was required extensively in the high pressure conditions of war-time production.

37. Interview 16.

38. Interviews9 and 2.

39. Discussed in chapter 8.

40. The position of the most underpaid sections of Bradford's workers, women burlers, knotters and menders was emphasised in a movement to have such workers put under a Trades Board. Helen Hillas, herself a burler and a former executive committee member of the GUTW led the public campaign through evening and mill gate meetings. She and Watson urged women to join the union in order to improve their pay and conditions. At one crowded meeting in rooms in the centre of Bradford she spoke about prices in burling and was accompanied by two other burlers who described their poor working conditions and low wages. After an appeal by J.H. Watson, 42 took out membership of the union on the spot, followed by 30 more afterwards. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 1.4.15).

41. The various districts considered the question of a woman organiser as the conference had proposed. The question of adding a salary to district expenditure may have contributed to opinion against a special appointment in some districts. In Bradford, with its small membership and budget, it may have been the case that Mrs. Hillas was expected to take up the post of assistant to G.H. Watson, the District Sectetary, however, she did not accept the offer. Bradford district was to continue to go about the question of recruiting women through the conventional labour channels. A conference of the Trades Council executive and representatives from the GUTW discussed ways of improving organisation amongst Bradford women. It was decided to hold jointly organised meetings and to obtain a list of all wages paid in the district in order to establish a uniform price list for weavers. In addition, a circular was to be sent to every male trade unionist in the district, asking them to encourage women in their families to join the GUTW. There is no record of Heavy Woollen District's decision on the question of a woman organiser. Presumably it was felt that the district had already taken the right type of action on the question of organisation for women. Certainly, when the Executive Committee of Colne Valley District discussed the question of a woman organiser it was recorded that they were "not in favour of a woman organiser for this District as there is not sufficient

work to employ one permanently'. (Pioneer, 21.5.15; Yorkshire Factory Times, 21.1.15, 20.5.15; Pioneer, 7.5.15; Colne Valley District minutes, 27.3.15)

42. Yorkshire Factory Times, 4.3.15; Worker, 13.2.15.

43. Huddersfield had taken steps towards the appointment of a full-time worker in mid 1914, but had gone no further when war was declared (see chapter 5).

44. 'Meetings do not seem to be very efficacious and even when a decent attendance is got, and members result, the members so obtained seem to be mostly more properly products of previous education who came to the meeting expressly to join. Others who are persuaded by a torrent of eloquence are often momentarily impressionable people whose enthusiasm is quickly roused but quite as quickly flags.' 'Private conversation and argument' which could 'be concentrated upon the particular perplexities of the prospective member' would lead to greater levels of attachment and support. An organiser should work on a friendly basis with potential members and canvass within a particular area, using personal knowledge and contacts. These were ideas put forward by Jessie Cockerline in a Yorkshire Factory Times leader article. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.4.15).

45. The recognition that to obtain commitment to an organisation run and dominated by men required some special efforts on the part of women, represents a more flexible attitude to the needs of different sections of workers. At the same time, the fact that women were no less likely to combine than men is implicit. The Yorkshire Factory Times carried an article by Ada Nield Chew during the same period, which put over this point in a forthright manner:

> 'It is a human attribute to combine, to organise; and not a sex attribute. Men do not combine because they are males, but because they are human. Women do not refuse to combine because they are females, but because the human attributes which should be common to both male and female of the human species have been for age-long centuries less developed in women than in man.'
>
> (Yorkshire Factory Times, 29.4.15)

Ada Nield Chew (1870-1945) a tailoress, had been an organiser for the NUWSS, based in Rossendale from 1911 to 1914. She had also worked part time for the Women's Trade Union League. In 1915 she was secretary of Rochdale Suffrage Society. She wrote many articles contributing to the local Labour press in Lancashire as well as national Labour papers. (Details of her life in Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit., p.289)

46. 'Yarnspinner' considered canvassing to be a time-consuming method of recruitment, it was a lengthy process and could only be properly carried out at weekends. The experience of wage grievances and agitations had led to 202 weavers joining in one week. At one mill, 10 women condenser minders had joined after a fettler, a man, had pointed out that it was the union which had enabled them to gain a shilling increas in their wages. 'Yarnspinner' was also of the opinion that districts could vary as to suitability

of method. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 22.4.15)

It is interesting to note that at the Leicester Women's Trade Union Conference in 1925, Turner seems to have been more sympathetic to the idea of personal recruiting methods. He attributed success in recruiting to his union's personal contact as opposed to mass canvassing at mill gates. However, he still argued that districts varied as to suitability of method. (Report of Women's Trade Union Conference, described in Soldon (1978) op.cit., p.121.)

47. Huddersfield minutes, 31.3.15.

48. Watson of the Bradford District had been appointed in a general organising capacity originally, his previous experience having been with the Blackburn Weavers' Union.

49. Not much evidence about Nancy Shimbles survives. She was probably a weaver and was certainly a trade unionist and a member of Clitheroe Suffrage Society (see Liddington and Norris (1978) op.cit., p.292). Mary Luty has left more information about herself in the form of two versions of an autobiography, "My Life has Sparkled" is an unpublished undated manuscript, while Penniless Globetrotter was printed and published by an Accrington firm in 1937. I am indebted to Jill Liddington who told me about these two accounts.

50. Luty (1937) op.cit., p.42.

51. Ibid. In many ways Mary Luty's early life was typical of those of many girls and boys on both sides of the Pennines. Born in 1885, she was brought up in poverty on a moorland farm belonging to her grandfather, experiencing both country and mill life from an early age. Her mother, left a single parent with two children, worked in the mill and was followed by Mary, who began her working life as a half-timer at the age of 11. She describes how the excitement and glamour of mill life quickly wore off once she had become a full-timer at 13. She then began to look for ways to earn her living outside the mill. Again, like many contemporaries, she turned to evening classes, night school and the WEA. She rebelled against a Christian teaching which exhorted her to be content with her station in life. But, she valued the experience which organising at a Wesleyan Sunday School had presented. With great determination to extricate herself from a monotonous employment, she answered 'scores of advertisements'. Luty (n.d.) p.17.

52. 'Yarnspinner' praised Huddersfield District for having:

> '... put the wage at a special figure, being only a shilling or two less than that of the district secretary, Mr. Littlewood.'

On the question of the exclusion of married women, he pointed out that this was a hint to women with children to keep to one job only. A woman with children could not travel freely around the district, he argued. However, while explaining the logic of the Huddersfield position, he made it clear that this was their particular approach and not one necessarily shared by other districts. This equivocation over the question of married women's labour was not good enough for Jessie Cockerline, who replied the following week with an article entitled: "Married Women's Labour: A Blessing or a Curse?"

Other correspondents in the paper supported the exclusion of married women, with greater or less vehemence. At the same time there was additional criticism of the size of the wage offered to the successful applicant. 'Mother of Ten' wrote in to say that married women workers were usurpers who held down men's wages, while 'W.B.' of Bradford criticised 'Yarnspinner' for tolerating their employment. Perhaps the most extreme expression came from the correspondent who asserted that married women were:

> 'an impediment of no inconsiderable significance in the path of progress in the male labour market. They are also as a millstone round the necks of the male workers.'
>
> (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.4.15, 22.4.15, 29.4.15)

Married women's work and the arguments around this issue are discussed in chapter 5.

53. Mary Luty began work on April 29th 1915 and was to address her first public meeting almost immediately in St. George's Square, Huddersfield on 1st May, a Saturday evening. Later, she was to describe her duties as, 'to try and increase the membership of the Union, especially the women workers'. At the meeting she expressed surprise at the poor organisation of Yorkshire women in contrast with Lancashire women. In an interview with the Worker correspondent she put forward the view that poor rates of pay in Yorkshire were due to lack of organisation. She observed that in Yorkshire, workers seemed to fear being known as trade union members, but that this was not true of Lancashire. Luty (n.d.) p.18; Worker, 15.5.15, 22.5.15.

54. Yorkshire Factory Times, 28.7.15. Bradford District were refused her help since her time was quite spoken for in Huddersfield and environs.

55. "A site would be selected near to one of the larger factories, and Hand Bills printed stating time and day of meeting. This was usually during the dinner hour break. I delivered the bills the previous night as the workers were going home. Sometimes quite a crowd would gather and sometimes only a few. It was not often any trouble arose - indifference was more difficult to combat."

    However, in Yorkshire, as she was to discover, there was still openly expressed opposition to the ideas of trade union organisation:

    'Standing outside factory gates sometimes, delivering bills which invited workers to join their appropriate Trade Union, one hear such remarks as the following: 'Fancy paying that 'blighter' just to stand there delivering leaflets while we toil and sweat inside'. Sometimes the language would be even less complimentary and much stronger in blasphemy.'

    Luty (n.d.) p.18.

56. Ben Littlewood, Huddersfield District Secretary of the GUTW, argued that the changed employment situation for women provided the opportunity for joint action on pay and conditions. As he explained, '... the fact that women are now following occupations which before the war were considered exclusively men's occupations, will certainly be creative of a better feeling towards this question

by the organisation concerned.' (Half yearly report, Yorkshire Factory Times, 27.1.16)

57. Mary Luty was immediately to gain an Executive seat, replacing Richard Fenwick of the GUTW.

58. At a special conference convened in order to discuss industrial problems arising from the war, the question of women's work and remuneration was raised. Eighty three delegates, including representatives from local socialist societies, Huddersfield BSP and the Co-operative Women's Guild as well as trade union branches, debated a GUTW motion, put by Charles Whitwam:

> 'That this conference declare in favour of the complete industrial equality of men and women - that is to say, where a woman is doing the same work as a man she should receive the same rates of wages. The conference calls upon the trade union movement to prevent the employers from using women to lower the standard hitherto obtained by organised workers.'

Speaking to his unions' resolution, Whitwam explained that they has "been persistently trying to reduce the disparity between men's and women's wages". Other unions were now also facing this problem, bringing the opportunity for co-operation. He advocated the organisation of women as a priority. Despite its moderate tone and the fact that his words were scarcely an encouragement to women workers, there was opposition from other delegates. In particular, Harry Dawson of the NSD & F and a BSP members, spoke out against any extension of women's employment. It was more important to stop women from entering 'new' areas of employment and to restrict them to work which was suitable. Mary Luty, the only woman to speak and the Tailors' and Tailoresses' delegate both warned against the dangers of failing to organise women. The resolution, despite criticisms was passed unanimously. The conference then, on a motion from the Workers' union delegate, went on to instruct the Trades and Labour Council to organise a committee which was to be responsible for a 'vigorous campaign' amongst unorganised women. It is interesting to note that although the original wording of the resolution carried at least an implicit statement in favour of equal pay for equal work, the concern of those debating seems to have been more for the defence of men's rights over jobs, than to improve the bargaining positions of women.

A few weeks later Mary Luty was to address the Trades and Labour Councils monthly meeting on the question of organising women workers. She criticised those men who were opposed to the organisation of women and once more contrasted the situation of women workers in Lancashire's textile industry. At the same meeting an application for affiliation from the National Federation of Women Workers was debated. This was supported by delegates from the ASE on the grounds that their own organisation had made an agreement with the NFWW allowing that body to recruit women who, as non-skilled, could not be organised by the ASE. Delegates from the Workers' Union were opposed, their organisation already catered for women in engineering. In particular, Jess Townend argued against the organisation of labour based on sex. Although there was some support for the Workers' union's attempt to refer

back the resolution, it was finally passed and the NFWW gained affiliation. The Trades and Labour Council's efforts in relation to the town's women workers had been to call a special meeting of those unions catering for women. These included the GUTW, the NSD & F, the Shop Assistants' Union, the Municipal Employees' the Musicians' Union, the United Garment Makers, the Tailors and Tailoresses and the Brushmakers. Jess Townend, who had opposed the affiliation of the NFWW, was appointed secretary. The established pattern of treating women as a problem for organisation rather than considering the defects of existing organisations was continued. The impetus for concern about women workers had been provided by the expansion of women's employment in various branches of the textile industry as well as in other trades in the town. Once various unions had made and begun to operate agreements with employers as to the conditions for women's employment, interest appeared to wane. Subsequently, issues relating to the control of industry and the government of unions came to dominate not only debates in the Trades and Labour Council, but also the columns of the Worker. In February, 1917, taking inspiration from the Russian Revolution, George Thomas, in one of his last editorials was to warn against frittering away energy on 'side issues' such as the school-leaving age, factory regulations and bonuses. This implied permanence for capitalism at a time when workers' control was the next step. Such a policy, though keen and to the point in its criticism of textile leaders who presented no firm or consistently attacking line when conditions appeared favourable to labour, was formulated in such a way as to exclude women and women's issues from central consideration. (Worker, 15.1.16, 28.1.16, 26.2.16, 14.4.17)

59. On 20th May, at a meeting called for women members of the union and held at the Friendly and Trades Club, the aims and objects of the proposed body were discussed and finally agreed. The objects and functions of the Guild were:

1. That we form a Women's Guild
2. This Guild shall be called the Huddersfield District of the GUTW Women's Guild and shall apply to all females engaged in the textile industry irrespective of age or the particular craft in which they are engaged.
3. To assist in the organisation of women workers by means of:
   (a) Propaganda
   (b) Distribution of literature
   (c) Canvassing for new business, or in any other way the guild shall determine
   (d) To discuss women's wages and working conditions and submit to the District Executive Committee any suggestions

The District was to bear financial costs and the Guild was to be governed by a committee of seven financial members of the union elected at twice yearly intervals. Mary Luty was to act as secretary to the new body. (Guild minutes 2o.5.16)

60. See chapter 8 for a discussion of 1916-17 wages movements in which the Guild was involved.

61. Huddersfield minutes, 17.4.16.

62. The terms of the December 1915 agreements had attracted criticism when they were put to GUTW members at a mass meeting in Huddersfield

Town Hall. Women spoke up, bitterly attacking the separate bonus awards for men and women. An amendment rejecting the terms, unless the women's bonus was brought up to the men's figures was defeated by 193 to 124 votes. Terms in chapter 8, n.39. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 30.12.15).

63. Men's bonus was set at between 1s and 2s an hour in the May agreement, while women of all grades were to get no more than one shilling and sixpence.

64. Women's earnings were more than ever crucial to the family budget. As Turner was to argue at later negotiations:

> '... the young men of 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 who were the backbone of a household as regards its desire to save towards old age and a rainy day, and to pay back the expenditure of keeping them in their earlier years, have all been taken away, and the great bulk of the workmen's homes have no chance of doing the saving that they would have done if their sons of 18, 19 and 20 had been at home.'
>
> (Transcript of October 1917 wage negotiations, p.22)

65. The Guild was to pass a vote of censure on the General Executive:

> 'We pass a vote of Censure on the General Executive Committee for not including women on the delegation for extra war grant, seeing that they were not successful in getting the same war bonuses for women as for men when the previous war grant was given and think the sending of the same delegation very undemocratic.'
>
> (Guild minutes, 27.9.16)

66. Following pressure from the Guild and women members, the union had put in for 7s for women and 5s for men. Askwith's award provided 4s6d for women and 7s for men. The award was 'an insult to the women workers' and a member of the union executive was requested to attend a meeting of women workers in order to explain 'why the women didn't get the same war bonuses as the men'. A handbill advertising the meeting made clear in its form and content the feelings of women members and workers:

> 'All those who are not satisfied with the New War Grant for the Women (their emphasis) come and voice your protest.'

The women's anger was sufficient to ensure that in fact four members of the Union's General Executive provided explanations. Allen Gee, Ben Littlewood, Arthur Shaw and Charles Whitwam all spoke. Although the Yorkshire Factory Times gave a rather cursory account of a 'fairly attended' meeting by 'Huddersfield Ladies', the formal outcome was inevitably a renewed claim for the same bonus as men. The Guild withdrew their vote of censure 'for the present', while declaring that they were 'not satisfied with the explanation'. Huddersfield women continued with their insistence on equal war bonus and were to be further supported following Edith Rhodes' election to the union's executive in February 1917. 'Yarnspinner' still equivocated, pointing out that 'some Huddersfield

women' did not accept the 'theory' that men as heads of households needed extra bonus. He argued:

> 'Equal wage for equal work as regards price lists is very proper, but the war bonus is given, on account of the increased cost of living, to the head of the household ... I know there is no quality of fitness in any of the war bonuses granted, but there certainly must be some attention given to what can be secured and not refuse advances for men simply because the same sums cannot be secured for women.'

'Yarnspinner' was making this point partly in response to a recent resolution passed by the Guild at a special meeting, when they had urged the General Executive to 'ask for a war bonus of 10s for the women like the men have, and go in for it, for women trade unionists only'. The resolution from the Women's Guild was sent for discussion to other districts. Colne Valley preferred to ballot their women members as to whether an equal war bonus should be demanded, or some proportion of the men's increase. (Copy of Bill in Women's Guild minute book; Yorkshire Factory Times, 7.12.16, 11.1.17; Guild minutes, 7.12.16, 5.3.17; Colne Valley District minutes, 8.3.17, the result of the ballot would seem to have been favourable to equal war bonus since Colne Valley District were to support this in a resolution of 12.4.17)

67. Correspondence and notes in LAB/2 1024, I.C.3386. The issue of equal pay had been put over and over again at mill gate meetings organised by collectors. In March a meeting of Huddersfield women was called in order to find out what the feeling was amongst women on the question of an equal war bonus. The meeting was particularly large, with 68 firms represented by 2 women delegates each. A more moderately termed resolution was passed. This called for equal war bonus and asked the Executive to 'use every effort to obtain same, even it if means a fight'. (Huddersfield minutes, 24.3.17; Yorkshire Factory Times, 29.3.17)

68. The award made by Askwith stipulated 40% for all men piece workers, 42.5% for women on piece work and 50% for both men and women time workers. The June 1917 award introduced a system of percentage payments, unifying the basis of all increases in the industry. Such a system inevitably made the possibility of evening up inequalities even more remote. As far as women were concerned, though the new system improved their bonus on piece rates and established equality with men in time working, basic wage rates were left untouched. Thus in October 1917, Turner was still quoting figures of 11s and 12s a week for some burlers and menders and of under 20s for women weavers. (October 1917 proceedings, p.21, transcript)

69. Huddersfield Annual Report, Yorkshire Factory Times, 24.1.18; Speech by Ben Turner, in Batley Market Place, reported in Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.8.18.

70. Huddersfield minutes, 27.1.17, 17.2.17.

71. There was resentment of the official GUTW restrictions which prevented the Guild from affiliating to the NFWW. There had been an attempt to call their own conference of 'organisations catering for women'

on the issue of Peace, again this was refused. The Guild had asked the General Executive to organise a conference of unions in the textile industry to 'discuss ways and means of gaining control and ownership of the woollen and worsted industry'. The Guild had criticised the union's executive for sending representatives to the Western Front in January 1918 and expressed their dislike of the limited scope of the Franchise Bill. In February 1918, the Guild turned down the chance of mnominating a representative to the Textile Industry Central Advisory Committee, 'seeing that it is only formed to perpetuate the old system'. The women called on the union's General Executive to form its own policy as to demobilisation and reconstruction. Speakers at Guild meetings of women members included Richard Fenwick, a member of the union and of the BSP, whose theme at the Second Annual Meeting was the "Need for Women to Organise". Other speakers included women from within the unions' own ranks, Miss Moore from Leeds, Miss Scruton of Bradford, Edith Rhodes of Huddersfield and a Miss Taverner, also from Huddersfield. (Guild minutes, 30.4.17, 31.5.17, 17.1.18, 12.1.18, 14.2.18) The Textile Industry Central Advisory Committee comprised representatives from Lancashire and Nottinghamshire as well as Yorkshire. The workers' side was chaired by Ben Turner and at its sixth meeting in February had discussed employment exchanges and priorities for the disabled, the committed finally resolved, after discussion, that industrial qualification should constitute the deciding factor. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 14.2.18)

72. There is no indication in any of the minutes or newspapers or her own accounts as to why Mary Luty resigned. The only clue is in her published autobiography, when she says of her time in Yorkshire:

> 'Lively times! Organising the workers was no easy task, nor did it always bring about the cherished dreams of those who did the work. Collective bargaining is today recognised by most employers and workers to be the best method for all concerned.'

Perhaps she felt more attracted by a post on her own side of the Pennines, in an occupation which was more obviously social work. For whatever reason, she left the union to work as a 'paid social worker' with a temperance organisation in Manchester. Luty (1937) op.cit., pp.43-44, Yorkshire Factory Times, 11.4.18. Although she says that the job lasted for two years, she had in fact become an organiser for the I.L.P. in April 1918.

> 'My next venture was into politics. I may not have been able to give a first class political speech, but I had first hand knowledge of conditions for working class people. Common sense told me that much could be done to change many things. This was a long time before a Labour Government could really be visualised. Having had some organising experience, and I suppose some other qualifications, I was offered a post as an Organiser for the Independent Labour Party. I met and admired the leaders, particularly women like Mrs. Bruce Glasier, Margaret Bondfield and many others. Again my task was to organise women into the local ILP branches.'
>
> (Luty (n.d.) p.21)

73. The vacant post of woman organiser was advertised locally and nationally in the Manchester Guardian, and the Daily News. The advert which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on August 10th 1917 ran:

> 'Wanted, a full-time woman organiser for the above district, capable of arranging and addressing meetings, etc. Preference given to one capable of typewriting and performing clerical work in the office.'

The emphasis placed on clerical and office skills is revealing of the organisational division of labour as conceived by the union hierarchy. No mention was made of marital status, nor did the proposed appointment arouse the interest which the original one had within the union two years earlier. Seven applications were received, none of them regarded as suitable by the appointing committee. Advertisements were then placed in the Holmfirth Express, the Huddersfield Examiner and the Worker. This time the appointment was for an assistant secretary or organiser, male or female, with at least three years membership in Huddersfield District of the Union. The outcome of these applications was that Edith Rhodes, a weaver, and member of the Huddersfield District Committee was appointed. Huddersfield District minutes, 3.8.17, 9.8.17, 26.8.17. Edith Rhodes' tenure of office was relatively brief, she had returned to mill work by 1920. (Turner (1920) op.cit., p.77)

74. 'It must be remembered that the work of this Committee is more circumscribed and limited than that of the Trade Union as understood. The Guild can recommend certain proposals to the District Executive as desirable, but cannot go further in such matters as wages, hours and conditions, consequently its work is, in the main, confined to winning over the women workers to the Union, and increasing their knowledge of the principles of Trade Unionism.'

She went on to emphasise the importance of education in Trades unionism in order to retain and be able to depend on members. Copy in Guild minutes.

75. Huddersfield minutes, 3.2.18.

76. Guild minutes cease at this point.

77. See chapter 2, p.60.

78. See chapter 8, p.306.

79. 'What keeps Bradford women from being organised is the ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, carelessness and apathy of the men Trade Unionists. They do not give a single bit of help in general to their women folks and until they do Bradford will remain, as far as women are concerned, a poor wage unorganised trade.'

Yorkshire Factory Times, 11.2.15

80. It is also more than likely that such criticisms were aimed at the dyers with whom Turner's union was not on good terms at this stage.

80. 'Yarnspinner' described the role of GUTW officials:

> 'But for the officials of the Textile Union there could have been 15,000 weavers, burlers and menders out in the streets, but they wisely recognised the danger of the situation and used every effort possible to get the workpeople to accept arbitration and not to continue visiting mills and inducing others to leave their work.'
>
> (Yorkshire Factory Times, 15.2.17, 22.2.17, 1.3.17)

These negotiations are discussed in chapter 8.

81. There had been earlier examples of workers themselves taking action in Bradford, confounding both employers and GUTW leaders. In 1915 and 1916, there had been both official and unofficial strike action by weavers over the question of war bonus. Action taken in 1915 had had the backing of the union but in 1916, 200 women weavers had struck for a week at Priestley's, Laisterdyke. 'Yarnspinner' was careful to note that striking without 'the consent of GUTW' had led to the dismissal of three women, without claims of victimisation. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 23.9.15, 18.5.16; Pioneer, 12.5.16)

82. Cabinet circles were particularly concerned that unrest should be persisting even after a slight fall in retail prices. A report, based on a reading of the Yorkshire Factory Times noted that there had been a unanimous decision to hand in notices and that the majority of the workers involved were women. Bradford women in particular had been enheartened by the success of a one day strike of women woolcombers against a Committee of Production award which had been drawn up to apply to men combers only. CAB 24/27, 26.9.17, 3.10.17; Yorkshire Factory Times, 27.9.17, 20.9.17. The women woolcombers were successful, following their return to work, a reference to the Committee on Production led to an alteration in the terms of the agreement so as to include women.

83. Yorkshire Factory Times, 17.1.18. During 1918, GUTW membership had doubled in Bradford and had increased by almost as much in Halifax. (Yorkshire Factory Times 30.1.19)

84. The Guild saw the Saturday Stop as 'a boon to the workers' and urged the Executive Committee of the GUTW to '... absolutely oppose any attempt that may be made to take it away'. Women's Guild minutes, 19.9.17.

85. Turner's case in favour of a 55½ hour week was that this was necessary, both as a means to preserving military output and as a means to protecting workers in the manufacturing sections from further demands by the recruiting authorities. Shorter working hours implied fewer workers were required, whereas longer working hours could be seen as a protection from the demands of the Manpower agencies. Turner argued, as a member of the Control Board, that his union had provided its fair share of recruits:

> 'No union has suffered more severely than the union I happen to be associated with. All its men weavers have been pulled out.'

Whereas:

> 'Some of the smaller unions ... have protected

> their trades to some extent at the expense of the larger and less skilled Trades Unions ... I do not believe it is right for a weaver to be forced into the army any more than it is for an alleged skilled man in the manufacturing, finishing or spinning section of the industry ...'

Turner was at odds with NAUTT policy and resented the fact that members of his own union did not support him over this issue. He accused outsiders of interfering with his union and implied that Bradford women workers had been worked up and supported in their opposition by members of other unions. Eventually, at a later stage after the end of the war, a 48 hour week was eventually agreed to by employers and all unions. However, women workers were forced to yield their Saturday mornings, even at this stage. Despite much resistance, to the point of strike action in some places, the principle of a shorter working day rather than the five day week was established:

> 'Our Union leaders had to point out that they claimed shorter hours for health's sake, that the working day had been too long and that 6am was too unearthly an hour to begin the day's work.'

Yorkshire Factory Times, 20.6.18, 6.6.18, 30.5.18; Turner (1920) op.cit., p.151.

86. See Table 16 in Appendix 1. Soldon gives a figure of 32,000 increase for the GUTW between 1919 and 1921. (Soldon (1977) op.cit., p.104)

87. During the war years there were, in 1915, three women on Bradford District Committee, this number being reduced by Mrs. Hillas' death in December 1916. In the Heavy Woollen District there was one woman, following the 1918 AGM and in Huddersfield between two and three women after 1916. In Colne Valley no woman was elected to the District Committee during the war years, though a Branch of the District established in Marsden in March 1916 had women as four of its nine members during the remaining years of the war.

88. Two were from Bradford, a Miss Burns, and Mrs. Naylor and Miss Moore had been successfully nominated by Heavy Woollen District from its Leeds Branch. Miss Moore had also been GUTW representative on Leeds Trades Council since 1917. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 13.12.17)

89. Women were scarcely encouraged by members of their own union. In February 1918, when discussing the appointment of an organising secretary or agent, 'Yarnspinner' suggested that this be held over until after the war to give both old and young men a chance of selection. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 28.2.18)

90. See photograph in Turner (1920) op.cit., p.186. At the 1920 TUC, of 13 delegates from various districts of the GUTW, five were women, Betsy Haigh of Batley, Mrs. Palframan and Mrs. Parker of Bradford, Mrs. Todd of Keighley and Miss Moore of Leeds. This was obviously to be the high point for women, in 1921, of nine delegates only one, Mrs. Todd, was a woman; in 1922, following amalgamation, there were six men delegates at the TUC.

91. Yorkshire Factory Times, 27.2.16 reports Mrs. Naylor as being a

member of a deputation to Askwith, again in 1917, Bradford working women formed part of a delegation.

92. The National Wool Industrial Council had one woman member, delegated by the GUTW, It is of course axiomatic that women were totally absent from any employers' organisations at this time. If Labour was tardy in yielding to the logic of women's claims, it was light years in advance of capital. Hartley and Ingilby (1976) op.cit., observe

> 'Women, who under the domestic system had played important roles now only held office in wartime or became heads of firms in emergencies. For example Mrs. P.D. Crowther, following the death of her husband took on the chairmanship of Bank Bottom Mills in 1953, and Mrs. E.M. Horsley, a director of her family firm, William Hanson, at Halifax, became secretary after the death of the holder of that office in 1952, and in 1964 the first woman president of a Chamber of Commerce in England.' (p.31)

93. In 1920, there was only one District Committee without a woman member, this was Colne Valley. Halifax and Huddersfield, with committees of 14 and 12 respectively, each had only 1 woman member. On Heavy Woollen District Committee, out of 25 members, four were women and in Bradford, 8 of the 18 District Committee were women. The newest district, Keighley, set up in 1919, by contrast comprised twelve women and one man. Here too was the union's only woman District Officer, Mrs. Todd. On the General Executive, 7 of the 27 delegates were women (From Turner (1920) op.cit.) Yorkshire Factory Times, 4.3.20.

94. A national minimum wage, or basic rate of 17s a week had been established in February 1919. Five years later figures show the same range of earnings as between men and women workers (see Table 17 in Appendix 1).

95. Barbara Drake was to observe in 1920, that: 'the keen desire to conduct their own affairs which animated women in the 'seventies seems ... to have generally vanished'. And, that few women 'except in times of excitement' were attending branch meetings. Writing at this time too, familiar obstacles to improved organisation were cited. The casual employment of married women created problems, as did the 'comparatively little influence exercised by fathers on their daughters, who start work at a later age than in Lancashire'. Drake (1921) op.cit., p.127.

96. The reasons for this relate to the irregular take up of out-of-work donations instituted by the Government. These lasted only 3 months with the possibility of a further 3 month extension, in addition to qualify, daily attendance at an Employment Exchange was required. Registered unemployed may therefore have underestimated the numbers of women involved. Statistics do not show 'how many women would have preferred to remain in industry, had paying and congenial work been available'. (Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey, "The Re-absorption of Women into the Industry after the War" (1942) p.4. Typescript in Cole papers, Nuffield College.)

The union was to take up cases for women members who had encountered

unfavourable decisions from employment exchange officials. In November 1921, Gee defended a woman weaver before the Umpire in London. She had refused to take up a post as a domestic servant forty miles away from her home. Work was so short in Huddersfield that she was only getting one warp a month to weave, Gee's case, that she was a skilled worker who would lose her skill in a new occupation, was accepted on this occasion. (Labour Pioneer and Factory Times, 3.11.21)

97. Turner observed:

> '... consequent upon demobilisation the women's position will be somewhat difficult; but we feel sure that the women will do their very best to tide over this trying period.'
>
> (GUTW Annual Report, 31.12.18)

The Huddersfield Women's Guild played its part in the demobilisation of married women. In April 1919, the women had asked their district committee to consider the question of married women's labour, "... seeing that so many single women are unable to obtain employment". The district committee which, for the first time included a married woman, referred back the Guild's resolution. Whereupon the Guild declared itself unrepentant, 'except ... that a stand ought to be made against overtime for men'. Those women who were already married during or before the war tended to leave as their husbands returned, others continued in work, marrying in the twenties and thirties, if they married at all. They were to return to the mills or other employment at various points depending on family means, husband's health and the willingness of mills to accept married women during the years of depression. Those who continued in work tended to stay at or below the point they had reached through war-time work. The post-war boom meant that the dislocation anticipated at demobilisation tended not to occur. Young men returned to spinning and weaving or younger ones took their places. Women returned to weaving and burling. One woman who had got a loom during the war found that she had to move on at the end of the war when the man whose loom she had been weaving on came back, "and so I hadn't a loom". She had to find work further down the valley as a rover in a worsted spinning mill.

During 1921 there were to be frequent attacks on married women workers as the employment situation repaidly deteriorated. 'Yarnspinner' (Turner) felt it necessary to make his position clear:

> 'I think a married woman has a right to work if she wants, and if she is a regular worker she is entitled to unemployment pay if she is unemployed ... I am one of the old-fashioned sort of people who believe in women being head of the domestic side of the household.'
>
> (Labour Pioneer and Factory Times, 7.8.21)

'When they came back for their looms...' was a familiar point in time for many women who wove through the war years. (Women's Guild minutes, 30.4.19, 28.5.19; Interview 17)

98. See note 16 above.

99. There were of course many reasons why women, particularly those who

had returned to work following appeals from the various authorities, might have been willing to change jobs or leave the industry. Many had replaced men in jobs which were physically demanding and which were carried out in poor conditions, as for example working nights in combing sheds. Those in the manufacturing section had been involved in long hours of work, from perhaps 6 in the morning until 7 or 8 o'clock at night. Weavers found that war-time cloth could be heavier and less easy to cope with than civilian products. Employers were known to have lengthened cuts, reducing earnings and in addition khaki yarn might be of unreliable quality, causing lost time and ends had to be joined. While poor and unrelenting production may have provided one type of incentive forcing the married women at least to consider retirement, there was also the whole language and practice of discussions which tended to make resistance to demobilisation less likely. Nevertheless, war time experience had brought home to many women the words of one of Clemintina Black's informants, '... a shilling I earn is better than two he gives me'. (Evidence to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, Minutes of proceedings, in LAB/5/1, part 11, p.5).

100. Nuffield Survey (1942) p.27.

101. The post-war boom in textile production developed from December 1918. This lasted for some sections of the trade until late 1920. The change from military to civilian production affected parts of the industry differently, with worsted suffering more from shortages of raw materials and a slower pick up in demand. The woollen section was helped immediately by large Army contracts for civilian clothing for demobilising soldiers and for the occupied areas of France and Belgium. (See chapter 7 on post-war profiteering) Information from G.H. Wood, "An Examination of Some Statistics Relating to the Wool Textile Industry", paper read before the Royal Statistical Society, February 15, 1927, in Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Vol XC, part 11, 1927, p.297. In this paper Wood provides a detailed statistical analysis of employment and explains the origins of unrelieved depression covering nearly 25 per cent of the industry by 1927.

102. See discussion of amalgamation in chapter 10.

103. 1922, after a narrow defeat in 1918, saw his eventual election as an MP., for Batley and Morley. He lost this seat in 1924 but was re-elected in 1929 and served until 1931. From 1929 to 1930 he was Parliamentary Secretary for Mines and in 1928 President of the TUC.

104. Yorkshire Factory Times, 22.4.15.

CHAPTER TEN

THE UNION: WAR-TIME CHANGES IN GROWTH, STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Changes in the GUTW's relationships with employers and state bodies have already been discussed, as have the limited gains made by women in the union itself. In this chapter, changes in union government and relationships with other unions will be discussed under the impact of the changed war-time situation. A number of aspects will be considered: the growth in membership, increased scope of activity for full-time officials, dissension within the ranks, changes in internal government and the role of intermediate bodies such as mill committees and, finally, the move towards amalgamation with other unions organising in the industry.

In an earlier chapter, Hyman's notion of a turn towards union membership being based in shifts in perception and aspiration on the part of workers was critically examined.(1) It was suggested that this was partially true, but that increased visibility and scope for the trade union official might also play a part. In the war-time situation, all such factors can be seen in evidence. Rising living costs and uncertain earnings levels provide a generally predisposing context for increasing numbers of workers to look to unions for defence and support. As well, unions must appear to be playing a part in improving earnings and living standards. One effect of successive war-time wage negotiations was a more public and repeated process of demand and offer. Such a set of actions, however, limited and partial in outcome was likely to strengthen an image of the union as an active and rewarding institution. Thus the discussion of earnings levels in sheds and mills and the whole round of public meetings associated with consulting members kept the processes and rewards of membership in a much more

public context than previously. Growth in membership is difficult to estimate, except in the roundest terms. The figures on which TUC delegations were based show an increase from 7140 in 1913 to 41,850 in 1918.(2) This was not evenly spread over the years of the war, nor did the process end with the war. By 1920, when he published his history of the union, Turner claimed a membership of 110,000. During the war, according to the annual figures published by the TUC, membership grew at an increasing rate from 1916 onwards.(3)

GUTW growth seems to have proceeded at a different rate to those of unions in general and to those affiliated to the TUC. It did however, have much new ground to cover and there were, apart from the union's own successful efforts, other predisposing factors which may have encouraged workers in the industry to take out membership, such as changes in conditions of employment in textiles, the rapid rise in the cost of living and the shift in bargaining relationships which derived from wool's importance in the production of munitions of war.

Apart from the more reactive and behaviourist type of explanation, there is also the undeniable fact that a new mood of militancy and a turn to ideas and organisations suggestive of a new era in post war society had begun to be expressed in 1917. Amongst workers and leaders there is evidence of a shared common spirit and vision. This was expressed in more open and confident opposition to the war itself, discussion of the terms of peace, a swifter succession of wage claims, each in turn being received with criticism, open and in some cases successful pressure on non-unionists to join up or leave their employment and a number of events at the national level which provided evidence of an organised and alternative political presence. In this last category should be included the Leeds Convention, the re-drafting

of the Labour Party's constitution and the furore over the Stockholm Peace Conference. All of these provided evidence of and helped reinforce the realities of persisting and fundamental divisions within society. To associate a turn to trade union membership with such a suggested change of mood may seem to stretch a point. However, what seems undeniable is that there was no likelihood of returning to the pre-war Edwardian situation of doubt and uncertainty about the conflicting interests of employers and workers. Sacrifices which labour had made in order to save the nation in factories and as soldiers were to be recognised for their real worth, but this meant no return to pre-war conditions of life and labour.

Apart from added visibility and meaning there was also the increased standing which labour's official institutions had gained through participation in the organisation of war. Labour had had a continuous cabinet presence, its officials were exempt from active war-service and many had served on bodies with a wide range of powers, conferring standing and legitimacy on the institutions which they represented. This participation had broadened the basis of support which unions could hope to draw upon. Thus both radicalisation and increased legitimacy brought rewards of different kinds for union growth and standing. As a part of these tendencies there were also the continuing numbers of women and young persons who were joining in the later war years as their productive role became well established. The unions, too, were in some cases becoming aware of the fact that unless these groups were organised they could not hope to maintain earnings levels for their members. The problem remained however, for these designated marginal groups, while so many union organisers and members continued to see women and young people as threats to established jobs and earnings levels rather than as part of the mainstream

of the labour force.(4)

Apart from the protection of interests at the workplace which union membership might guarantee, there was also the question of union membership as a monetary investment. Paying into a union was clearly seen as a form of social as well as economic insurance. The rewards to be gained from GUTW membership in times of hardship, illness, unemployment or accident must necessarily have been taken into consideration when membership was taken out. Although anxious to emphasise the friendly society role of the smaller, sectional unions, Turner's frequent references to solvency and savings suggest that economic security and viability were issues strongly to the fore with the union's management. Contributions remained at a low level. In 1920 they still ranged from only 3d to 6d a week, despite the increase in wages which had taken place over the previous five years. This was of course itself an attractive feature of union membership and helps to explain its sustained growth throughout the period. Nevertheless, the range of benefits which the GUTW offered was far from being comprehensive, since it excluded sickness and superannuation, and made no mention of maternity.(5) The only concession made to financial members who were ill was that they were eligible for exemption from contributions during sickness.(6)

The growth in membership carried with it the potential for further strength and support since increased revenues enabled an investment in buildings and premises which provided the union with a public image of solid viability. Since the growth in membership was not matched by any growth in official militancy, no costly strikes nor expensive national activities ensued, and thus the profit from subscriptions increased annually. There was of course a variable amount

of out-of-work benefit to be paid, but since short-time was more common than outright unemployment, with work-sharing the union's official policy, and since those unemployed tended to be women and young persons, paying at the lower rates of benefit, compensation was not likely to prove a great drain on union funds. Income from contributions had increased six fold since the pre-war years. The union's balance sheet for 1912 shows five districts contributing less than £2,000. In December 1918, the six districts of the union were sending in contributions exceeding £12,000.(7) With an emphasis on saving, solvency and investment rather than bank deposits, the union's annual and half-yearly reports included details of expansion in building ownership and in the numbers of paid staff. In June 1916, new club rooms for the union were opened in Bradford. By September 1918, the Heavy Woollen District of the Union had opened Textile Halls at Dewsbury and Batley and could claim to have incurred no debts in doing so. As at Bradford, the premises were strictly teetotal. Alf Palin, writing for the Pioneer expressed the opinion that: 'If this is a sample of women's growing influence on the Trade Union movement, I welcome it with both hands'.(8)

As well as growing in size and financial means, war-time activities brought about an increased range of duties for full-time officials in the union. Under pressure of demands from the military and supply authorities, the GUTW developed bureaucratically. Officials took on many roles, some of which, in a pre-war context, would have appeared totally conflicting.

By 1916 Turner's appointments included the presidency of his union, secretary of his District Committee, Mayor of Batley (until the end of 1916), magistrate, county councillor, contributor to the YFT,

chairman of the Federation of Yorkshire Trades Councils, secretary of the Heavy Woollen District Trades Council, member of variety of government committees, Man Power, Substitution, member of the WEWNC labour representative of the local and county military service tribunals. In 1917 he added the presidency of the NAUTT and in late 1916 he became chairman of the General Purposes committee of the TUC. Later too, he was to increase his attendance on government committees through membership of the Wool Control Board. In addition to these posts, Turner was a well known speaker at ILP meetings and a popular exponent of a Christian socialist political line which led to a constant round of speaking engagements both locally and farther afield. In late 1916, Turner described one week's activity:

> 'I had a fairly busy week last week for example, and I know men who did more work than me. I don't grumble. It's better to rub than rust, though a chap can get a bit tired. For example, I had to go to London as one of the deputation to meet the Lord Chancellor on the question of working men magistrates.... I can't say what transpired, as it was private. I left by the 7.15 train on Tuesday morning and got to a county pension meeting and the education meeting at Wakefield... I worked at home in the office until late on Tuesday night after meeting, along with my colleagues, the Dewsbury District Employers' Association on the Man Power Production committee for Textiles. I did three hours' work at home on Wednesday morning for with ten thousand union members there are a lot of details to attend to, and then I went to the conference of Employers' and Union officials at the Great Northern Hotel Bradford. I was there just after ten, and left to be back to Batley after dinner. Attendance at the Town Hall kept me until 5, and then I had several hours at our Dewsbury Union office. On Thursday morning I had to get to London again to attend the Workers' War Emergency meeting.... I left London on Friday morning, met the contractors and architects and officers of the new rooms for our Union at Dewsbury, met the 'Factory Times' man and had a chat with him, and then went to Leeds and spoke to a good body of young women on Labour and Education at Leeds University. I got home to three hours reading before I went to bed. On Saturday morning my clients for advice were numerous, military, tribunal, working and others.... I then went to a conference on the Substitution scheme at the Employers' Association at Huddersfield. After dinner I went and took the chair at a conference at Bradford, then went to Leeds and spoke (for) 25 minutes at the People's Hall on Co-operation and Labour...' (9)

Allen Gee's list of appointments was scarcely any shorter. Though not a public speaker in Turner's fashion, he was committed to attending union meetings at all levels and accompanied Turner on union delegations with employers and government officials. He was a committee member of the GFTU and chairman of Thomson's Co-partnership scheme at Huddersfield. As a county alderman and magistrate he too was a well known figure in West Riding political circles.

If the president and secretary of the union found themselves in a demanding round of committee meetings, trips to London, public engagements, private luncheons and individual problems presented by workers'and soldiers, the life of the district official was no less strenuous during the war years. Moreover, it carried with it none of the glories and advantages which accrued to the leader in the public eye.

Harris Hoyle, Colne Valley district secretary, found himself increasingly stretched. Apart from taking part in an extended number of public commitments connected with wage negotiations, military service and local government, war-time conditions of employment for his members led to a vast increase in the amount of paper work and administration required. Harris Hoyle, as Gee and Turner, had the advantage of help from the women members of his family. Nevertheless, there were to be limits to Ethel Hoyle's commitment. In 1916, she wrote in protest to her father's District Committee:

> '... as some of you are aware I spend a good deal of time helping my father with his work, he had to be at this meeting & the other meeting & one place or another, the consequence is that he is unable to keep up with his books & it is always "Ethel" will you post me this book up and the other book up till I find that I spend most of my time every week helping him; now do you think that I ought to have something for the work that I am requested to do, for if I don't do it he will be unable to keep up to the work & attend all the meetings he has to do lately, hoping you will consider

> the matter.... P.S. We are taking all the Marsden Books & Parcels out by hand since the increased Postal rate and this means a good deal of running about, which means more for boot repairs. And we nearly always arrange for someone to be at home in case anyone calls on Union business..'

The only way in which the union committee felt able to recognise her work was through Harris Hoyle applying for extra remuneration. This he did and was awarded with an increased wage of £2.00 a week and an allowance of 2 shillings a week to cover the expenses of turning his home into an office, until separate premises were found. Unfortunately there is no record of Ethel Hoyle's reaction to this response. The incident provides additional insight into official union attitudes to women's working roles within the union itself.(10)

Colne Valley's increase to Harris Hoyle appears meagre in contrast to the amounts spent on staff and accommodation in other districts. Heavy Woollen, Bradford, and Huddersfield all had their own district offices by 1916, with telephones installed or close by. Huddersfield had two paid officials at this time and Bradford paid extra for secretarial work.

The growth in membership which seems to have gathered momentum after the beginning of 1917 did not take place without the occurrence of division in the union and criticisms of the union's leadership. In addition, there were to be changes in the GUTW's government which were made necessary both because of the union's growth and support for the idea of some form of proportional representation for union Districts within the union's government.

Turner in particular was to come under criticism for a growing detachment from the membership as more time came to be spent in contact

with employers and government officials.(11) There were to be challenges to the authority of negotiators following wages movements in 1917 and 1918,(12) as large meetings of members expressed disappointment in the size of increases negotiated by Turner and Gee. Nevertheless, the old guard maintained its position. The challenges were headed off, opposition was defused before it could accumulate too dangerously. One skill which Turner could rely on and which was never to cease to infuriate his opponents was that of oratory. He could move audiences to tears, talking about his family, his early life and quoting from a pocket edition of the Bible which he carried with him.(13)

Apart from oratory, Turner and Gee could always make use of the columns of the Yorkshire Factory Times should opposition be appearing to make too much headway in some districts.(14) Although it was only at a relatively late point in the war that the paper came to be described as the 'official organ' of the union, it had long provided an opportunity for Turner in particular, using various pseudonyms, to comment on union policies or float ideas. For example, at the 1916 AGM of the union, Colne Valley District unsuccessfully attempted a vote of censure on the union's executive for including an additional clause in a final agrement on wage negotiations and for accepting Askwith's signature. The Yorkshire Factory Times reported the attempt to censure but also carried an item, the appearance of which implied much editorial licence. Its message was clear and Turner's hand in its publication must be assumed. The item consisted of an answer to an anonymous correspondent which, journalistically speaking, was not unusual. However, what was more surprising was that while apologising for being unable to publish an overlong and unsigned article, the editor managed to convey its contents:

> 'Your letter saying how sorry you were to see the wild spirit of some of the Colne Valley delegates, who reckon to be socialists of the most violent type, when attending the Textile Union meeting on Saturday, at Slaithwaite, cannot be published.' (15)

Later in 1916, when Colne Valley again registered its protest against the executive's neglect of members' views during wage negotiations, the Yorkshire Factory Times commented on a 'nasty resolution', which, it alleged, some members of the GUTW in Colne Valley and 'a Socialist paper which is always on the track of the Union', were responsible for. According to the Yorkshire Factory Times, the Colne Valley members were 'protesting against any action being taken until a multitude of mass meetings have been held'.(16)

Some of the most explicit and bitter criticism of the union's leadership was to come from Bradford District during 1915.(17) There were strong differences in opinion between the union's general executive, seeking percentage-based increases for Bradford workers and some of the union's members and supporters, in particular Leach. The critics felt that percentages failed to allow for the wide range of wages paid in Bradford and in particular put no pressure on the lowest paying employers to improve their rates of pay. Leach, writing in the Pioneer, was particularly caustic in his criticism of the GUTW leadership, talking about the union's 'silly fifteen per cents', which were leading to, 'the likelihood of defeat, and I do not think stupid too strong a word to apply to it'.(18) Dissension from within Bradford District was great enough to lead to articles and correspondence in the Yorkshire Factory Times on the issue.(19) The leadership's relations with Bradford workers had never(20) been particularly well developed. Leach was to accuse Turner and Gee of outright discourtesy on one occasion, during the 1915 debates:

> 'The leading officials of the Textile Workers' Union are not courteous to their audiences. Three of the principal

> speakers marched off the platform as soon as they had delivered their speeches. The impression looked for was perhaps that of busy people with overladen engagement lists. The impression created was one of dissatisfaction that a meeting of such real importance should be allowed to clash with any engagement at all.' (21)

Criticisms of GUTW policy in Bradford continued to be voiced in the pages of the Pioneer.(22) Membership in the union increased, as in other districts, contacts with employers were institutionalised in most parts of the trade. Nevertheless, the district remained a problem for the union, not simply because of the tendency to discount the involvement of Bradford women and young people, but also because of the GUTW leadership's rivalry with stronger Bradford unions, in particular the ASD.(23) Although an attempt to further the question of a standard price list for textile workers was made through the Trades and Labour Council, nothing appears to have come of this. Other member societies had their own, more immediate, concerns at this time and without organised participation from amongst weavers and other workers, such indirect methods were hardly likely to generate change.(24)

The leadership of the GUTW in its approach to the situation in Bradford revealed the basic weakness of its policy and organisation. Despite their noted and welcome support for women's rights in the political arena, with few exceptions, women union members and workers had only an indirect relationship with the union's internal workings. Their involvement was less directly sought and defined. In areas where the union had developed some strength and had a degree of control in the work situation, this was largely through the organisation's activities on behalf of its men workers and members. Despite its adherence to an equal pay policy for all workers, in a situation where women predominated, the union seems to have been unwilling to take a creative step in establishing comparable rates of pay in Bradford with

the rest of the industry. In other parts of the West Riding, as was shown in Chapter 6, a crucial factor in the development of a wage bargaining structure was a set of employers together with their organiser, G.H. Wood, who were sympathetic to the idea of improved organisation on both sides of industry. This factor was certainly absent in Bradford, where only two manufacturers, Leach and Priestley, had openly expressed sympathy with the general principles of trade unionism, and the rest appeared either indifferent or hostile. Without some employer encouragement it would appear that the GUTW was unable to make significant progress.

Bradford District's membership was to increase as other Districts of the GUTW increased in size during the war. However, untypically the part played by the union's central offices seems to have been minimal at least so far as the events of early 1915 indicate. The crucial factors seem to have related more to the position of Bradford workers in their industry, that is one of improved bargaining strength, and of a general mood of disinclination to continue along the old lines. These factors seem more likely to be able to account for the turn to union membership than any active change in the union's role within the industrial structure of the city.

The conclusion to be derived from this is that any criticism of Bradford workers, which the executive of the GUTW were so frequently to make, seems inapplicable. Not only, as shown earlier, were other groups of workers, both men and women, better organised and with established minima and standards of payment, but without, possibly despite, the union's central leadership, workers in Bradford did turn to the GUTW from amongst weavers and spinners in the town. It is of course possible that the very airing of disputes between members of

the District committee and the executive of the union attracted and retained members. In addition, Helen Hillas and Jessie Cockerline, who maintained a persistent level of commitment, could draw on other organisations such as the ILP and its paper, the Pioneer, to publicise and mobilise for their own policies and activities.

Relations between the GUTW executive and another district, Colne Valley, reveal additional areas of dissent and conflict. Membership here had increased during the war years, as in other districts.(25) Colne Valley retained its particular characteristics of independence and a tendency towards self-determination. The president, Sam Eastwood, had worked through Tom Mann and Victor Grayson's elections and was a well-known valley socialist.(26) He and his committee were keen watch-dogs of executive committee decisions. Scarcely a wage negotiation passed without criticism from the Colne Valley district committee. Frequently the criticisms centred on the lack of consultation with districts and memberships, which, it was alleged, was a characteristic of negotiations with employers. In January 1916, there was much criticism of the executive's addition of a clause in an agreement signed with the employers which had not been submitted to a vote by members. In addition, the signature of Askwith was regarded as unacceptable, suggesting official interference in an internal industrial matter.(27) Again, in September 1916, the Colne Valley executive made public, through the columns of the Worker its dislike of the Union executive's acceptance of arbitration.(28)

During 1917, both Colne Valley and Huddersfield Districts passed resolutions opposing the distinction which Askwith introduced between time and piece workers, and were active in urging the Executive forward into renewed wage negotiations. So great was the opposition

to the June 1917 agreement, that Gee himself was invited to a special meeting of members at the Co-op Hall, Slaithwaite, to explain the executive's actions at the conciliation proceedings. One resolution attacking the award was passed, as was another instructing the executive to give notice of an application for an immediate increase to 72 per cent on time and piece rates.(29)

From the tone of Colne Valley's own reports, published half-yearly, it is clear that responsibility for the war and textile workers' situations was perceived as being with the ruling elements in society. Nor were post-war goals seen as anything less than basic societal change. With quotations from William Morris decorating recruiting leaflets and a direct and bold style,(30) the Colne Valley committee's message seems to have contrasted with that of the union's leadership. Turner, though a consistent supporter of work-sharing, and outspoken in his attacks on war-time profits in the textile industry, was an indeterminate advocate of fundamental social and economic change. In January, 1918 he spoke of being able to: ... 'attain peace and bring freedom by constitutional means and by developing Trades Unionism and Labour representation', and asserted, 'We want no revolution in Great Britain'.(31)

During 1917, responses to the first Russian Revolution and the convening of the Leeds' Soviet were also to show up the points of divergence between the GUTW leadership and Colne Valley. Colne Valley District committee saw these events as foreshadowing an essential and basic restructuring of society:

> 'The Capitalists have been piling up profits at an enormous rate. They have tasted blood, and will not readily release their hold; they are already well advanced in their operations for a full exploitation of the workers when peace-time comes. It is our business to frustrate their intentions....'

> '.... We have no desire to go back to pre-war conditions, we want something better, a good deal better. We want the shorter hours, work took up a good deal too much time; we want more money, not just sufficient to keep us fit (for working); we want to procure homes, not hovels, more leisure (and pleasure), better health and happier lives; we do not want our lads thrown on the scrap when they come home, or the present operatives put on the unemployed list; there is work for all, and shorter hours is a better remedy than discharging operatives; and the wealth is there to pay for the shorter hours, it is in the hands of the few now, we must transfer it to the hands of the many. These are no Utopian dreams, they are within the region of practical politics, and can be accomplished in the making of the new world, if only the workers will unite. Yours is the power now and in the future. Awake from your slumbers for the Day has come'.

Turner's response was more muted. He acclaimed the spirit of the conference for supporting:

> '... revolution, not a bloody or insane revolution, but a change in Government, a change in the constitution, a change in the character of the governors in favor of a workingman's Government...' (33)

Nevertheless he was concerned about the tone of some of the speeches and felt that the 'steadying power' of older and more cautious people was necessary.(34)

Apart from challenges to the GUTW leadership from the Colne Valley executive there is some evidence that the valley as a whole retained some of the unbowing spirit for which it had become renowned in pre-war days. Turner, while part of the official party accompanying the King and Queen on their visit to textile centres in late May 1918, noted a difference in atmosphere in comparison with other areas:

> 'I was not struck with the enthusiasm of the crowd as much in Colne Valley, as it seemed to be of a far quieter sort that it was in the Heavy Woollen District. I do not think it is a question of royalty or non-royalty as much as the solid silence of the people concerned. One Yorkshire characteristic is 'saying little and thinking a lot'. I think that would apply to the Marsden crowd. There was some cheering, and there was a bit of singing, but it was not as boisterous as I have seen it on some occasions in Colne Valley, say in the Victor Grayson or Tom Mann days.' (35)

War time growth in size and the enlarged scope of activity for officials occasioned two areas of internal change for the GUTW. Innovation in the structure of union government and the development of mill committees were both aspects of the need to link the growing membership to increasingly distant leading officers. At the outbreak of war, the union was run by an executive committee meeting fortnightly and comprising thirteen delegates nominated from those elected onto District Committees of the union. This thirteen included the three posts of President, Treasurer and Secretary. Each district repeated this structure so that the union's government took the form of an interlocked body of elected delegates from district to executive level. In practice, the chief officers were returned unopposed over the decades. Ben Turner and Allen Gee had been president and secretary respectively for well over thirty years. Each year, until 1917, district committees nominated candidates for the union's executive committee. These could receive votes from the union's entire membership. The result was that better known members of the union's various districts were elected. It also proved to be a lengthy and expensive method, since each member had to receive a ballot form in December, to be returned by the following February. Forms were often lost before they were due to be collected. It was estimated that only thirty per cent of members actually returned their completed forms. Districts tried to encourage a higher return by paying collectors a certain amount for every 100 or so voting papers collected. This carried with it certain obvious problems. Not only did members in some areas have incomplete knowledge of delegates elsewhere, it was possible for influence to be brought to bear on voting which could cut across the formally democratic structure of union government.(36)

At the 1917 AGM, following a suggestion from Turner's own

district, the decision to adopt a form of proportional representation was adopted. Henceforth, districts were to select and vote for Executive candidates on the basis of one for every 2000 members or part thereof. This was to lead, in 1918, to an enlarged executive, but a more representative one. By this time the GUTW had considerably extended its influence and organisation. Within the five existing districts of Bradford, Heavy Woollen, Huddersfield and Colne Valley, new branches were set up and members were coming forward at mills where the union had never previously known members to join. Branches had been formed by districts at Morley, Leeds, Ravensthorpe, Marsden, Golcar, Spen Valley and other parts of the county. Later in 1917, Barnsley branch was opened and Halifax district was reporting on the formation of new branches.(37)

Such new levels of enthusiasm and activity might have been expected to have altered the balance of power within the union away from the old guard, Turner, Gee, Hudson, Watson, Sam Seed of Halifax and Benjamin Turner of Ravensthorpe. However, there is little evidence that this was the case. The executive elected in 1918 was dominated by Heavy Woollen District representatives as this district had grown to be the largest in the union. Huddersfield and Bradford each sent three, Colne Valley and Halifax two. The main change was that for the first time there were two women, Mrs. Naylor and Miss Burns from Bradford. Apart from representation on the executive, there were few opportunities for independence over policy or action at lower levels in the union. The executive had, by rule, close control over union affairs. Strike action and contacts with other organisations were sanctioned by the general secretary. When, as in the case of the Colne Valley willeyers and fettlers' strike of May 1916, the district initiated support for strikers, there was reprimand and over-ruling

for the district committee.(38)

As membership grew in the years immediately preceding the war and at a rapidly increasing rate during the war, the role of collector became more crucial and at the same time insufficient for the union's organisation. A growth in union membership did however mean that whole sections of some mills were now organised and could demand action and attention when this was required. Issues such as the oppressive and authoritarian behaviour of overlookers, the imposition of extras such as the loading and unloading of waggons, arrangements over pay and ultimately the position of persistent non-unionists were presented by groups of weavers, willeyers, spinners and others and dealt with through district officers.

Such mill committees, as grew in number during the war, present little or no evidence of independent or oppositional activity at this time. There were occasions when what was considered to be ill-advised action was taken by groups of workers, and this seems to have been more typically found in Bradford, where control from the upper levels of the union seems to have been lighter. A decision not to work on a Saturday, or to opt out of a Friday night shift might be taken quickly and on a show of hands. This might be reversed by the intercession of union officials, or smoothed over to the satisfaction of employers, once contact had been made by the management with the district official. There does not, however, appear to have been any consistency in these swift, reactive decisions. Once the district had been called in, the possibility of spreading action from one mill to another seems to have been restricted.

There had been occasions when the existence of independent

unofficial rank and file activity was hinted at.(39) In Huddersfield the local BSP members continued to advocate more radical policies within the union's ranks. In particular 'R.F. Wick' who wrote lengthy articles for the Worker(40) attacked the GUTW leaders for their isolation and devotion to issues of an immediate short-term nature. Despite these attempts at exposure, no sustained alternative organisation seems to have emerged. In 1916, when delays over negotiations with employers over war bonus led to open criticism of GUTW officials, the development of an unofficial rank and file movement seemed a possibility. However, a year later, when another wages award received a stormy reception in Huddersfield, a Worker editorial castigated the members rather than the officials for the meagre terms secured:

> 'The popular course in circumstances such as the present is to condemn the union officials, but it is to be hoped that the textile workers will not waste time on this. If anyone is to be kicked let the workers kick themselves. They have been content to let the officials decide the policy of the unions as best they could'... (41)

Membership had grown, experience had broadened, but levels of involvement appear remarkably unchanged. There had already been criticisms of the union's lack of spiritual appeal at an earlier stage in the war,(42) but by 1918, even one of the union's leading district officials was expressing unease at the quality of members' participation.(43)

One way in which the GUTW could hope to consolidate its position at the level of the work-place and to pre-empt the possibility of uncontrolled action by the membership in the expected post-war period of industrial and military demobilisation, was by actively supporting the development of mill committees. It was here that collectors could play a crucial role.

In 1916 and 1917, districts of the union called collectors' conferences at which the importance of mill committees was emphasised. The identification of persistent non-unionists was followed up with visits from collectors and district committee members, at their homes, with the aim of establishing mill committees based on trade union membership. At least this was the practice adopted in a 'strong' district like Colne Valley. The setting-up of mill committees became a key point in union activity during 1917 as emphasis was placed on the need for recruiting the non-unionist, speed and efficiency of communication and a basis for training members in union matters and procedures.(44)

The Whitley report published in 1917, stimulated further discussion and spurred the GUTW leaders into formulating more precisely what type of shop floor organisation they considered was required for textile members. Turner equivocated. He accepted the legitimation conferred by Whitley:

> 'We are still hoping to see our members making special efforts to establish shop committees, with shop stewards. Under the Government's scheme this is now approved, and we have urged it for years, but now the Whitley Committee recommend it. (45)

At other times, taking up NAUTT policy, he distinguished between joint committees for social and welfare matters and shop committees of union members only which would deal with wages and other such issues.(46)

It has already been shown how the union's central leadership distanced itself from attempts to commit the union to a policy of workers' control in the industry.(47) Similarly the enthusiastic adoption of the Whitley proposals enabled a distancing from and controlling of any tendencies towards separate organisation amongst rank and file members of the union. Undoubtedly, the development of

a structure of democratic involvement of members, based on mill committees, was a positive innovation and only helped to strengthen the union in its struggles with employers. Nevertheless, Turner's equally enthusiastic espousal of the proposals for an Industrial Council in the industry and his advocacy of close contacts with employers[48] were to weaken the development of this new venture in union democracy. Although individual mill committees were often able to establish an extensive level of control over members and infringements of established pay and conditions of employment, the union was never to develop any broad-based counter-balancing structure of locally based organisations.[49]

There was one other area of activity which was to undergo change during the war years. This was the move towards federation amongst textile unions. The union's relations with other unions in the textile industry have already been touched on. Schemes of payment and industrial relations such as those developed by the ASD clearly affected the type of demand put forward on occasion by the GUTW.[50] As recruitment came to be established on a general basis, relations with unions catering for the same occupations occasionally broke down.[51] The awareness of other unions' success in building their organisations and strengthening control over wages and prices acted as a constant reminder to the GUTW of their own weakness and lack of progress in this respect.

Representatives of the industry's various unions were co-delegates on local and county organisations. Apart from the trades councils which now existed in most towns and localities, there were two larger bodies representative of workers in general and the industry in particular. The Yorkshire Federation of Trades councils, formed in 1893, brought the Bradford-based unions of the Dyers, Combers,

Sorters and others into co-operation of a fairly indirect type with the GUTW and other unions and societies based on Yeadon, Huddersfield, Saddleworth, Skipton and further afield. The Yorkshire Textile Workers' Federation to which neither of the Dyers' Unions was affiliated and which was set up in 1894, included combers, sorters, Leeds Willeyers and Fettlers, Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union, the GUTW, pressers, wool packers and blanket raisers. Existing precariously through the pre-war years, the Federation seems to have collapsed by 1916.(52) Both these Federations tended to concentrate their energies in debate and resolution passing activities. Comment on, or opposition to, various matters, such as the 1902 Education Act, the '12 o'clock Saturday stop' agitation, half-time employment, increased militarism, occupied the time of these bodies. Turner was secretary of both federations for over twenty years. However, the very universalism of these bodies contributed to their lack of effectiveness industrially and politically. Passing resolutions proved no substitute for action and unity was often bought at the cost of rendering commitments vague and general in scope.(53)

This uneasy alliance of conflict and competition was the subject of comment by various committees within the GUTW. Turner was only too well aware of the successes of the mightier federation, the United Textile Factory Workers' Association, a virtual workers' parliament of the cotton trade. Although again universalist in its policies, it was at least comprehensively democratic in its structure and organised to the extent of producing a powerful political machine for the cotton unions. Yorkshire's Federation of Textil Workers remained a negligible attempt at emulation.

Apart from working federations amongst unions catering for

differing groups there were, in the years before the war, three federations of unions catering for broadly similar groups of workers, dyers, pressers and tuners. Two of these were Bradford-based.(54) Such federations prevented the growth of Turner's Federation of Textile Workers. As we have seen, the Dyers were not affiliated and the Federation of Power Loom Tuners were not willing, when invited, to consider joining, feeling that priority needed to be given to their own scheme.(55) During the war, trade-based federations continued to be set up. The Bradford and District Woolworkers' Federation was formed in April 1915, followed the next month by the setting up of the United Garment Workers.(56)

Despite these varied other groupings, the movement towards federation in the textile trade generally was developing under various influences and continued to do so after the outbreak of war.

Differing types of influence are, as usual, apparent from resolutions passed at union meetings. In some cases, the creation of schemes for joint action were advocated, in others, outright amalgamation.(57) Working agreements or schemes for joint action with other textile unions tended mainly to be set up for demarcation purposes, as to areas of recruitment and negotiating strength, preventing overlapping and ensuring joint action in trade disputes. Amalgamation tended to be viewed rather differently, its advocates appearing to have varied perspectives. A resolution passed at a Huddersfield members' meeting in January 1910, advocated amalgamation: '... in order to be able to fight the workers battle with better effect than at present'. As far as the Huddersfield District Committee were concerned, advocacy of amalgamation was seen as a feature of bargaining strength and a means to attracting membership in competition with other unions. In 1914,

the District voted to place an advertisement in the Worker which stressed that the Textile Union was the only union in the trade which stood for amalgamation and which accepted all Textile workers as members.(58)

In general policy terms, the union policy favoured amalgamation as an ultimate goal, the means to its attainment were not so generally agreed within the union. After hearing Gee's explanation of working agreements, Huddersfield D.C. rejected the idea, favouring amalgamation as an alternative policy.(59) In contrast, Colne Valley D.C. left the executive a free hand in the drawing up of working agreements and took no very strong line on the subject of amalgamation. In 1913, the district viewed both strategies equally as a means to, 'dealing more effectively with Trade matters or wages movement'.(60)

During 1915, an attempt was made by Huddersfield District Committee, through the local Trades and Labour Council, to initiate a plan for the amalgamation of textile unions. Although this was to achieve very little in the way of concrete change(61) it provided a climate of general support for the idea which was to lead, in September 1915, to the GUTW's open espousal of amalgamation and the mandating of the union's executive to approach other unions on this question.(62)

Relations between the powerful Bradford-based ASD and the GUTW required improvement if any industry-wide move towards amalgamation was to succeed. During 1915, there had been friction over the question of substituting women in non-starred trades.(63) There were, too, organisational and industrial differences which made amalgamation between the GUTW and the ASD problematic. In particular, the former

union's commitment to a universalist policy which included, formally at least, an equal participation by women, did not find favour with a union whose membership almost exclusively comprised men.

During 1916, an issue was to arise which was to unite the textile unions in opposition to the government and which was to provide the basis for the development of an organisation representative of labour in the industry. Government proposals to extend the provisions of the 1911 Insurance Act to cover all workers engaged in munitions production were to be successfully resisted, principally through joint action by the main unions involved.(64) On this occasion, trade union opposition was endorsed by the employers. Beveridge recalled that:

> 'At a Conference in Bradford I found myself congratulated satirically on having united the whole woollen trade as never before — in opposition to me and all my works!' (65)

Conferences held in 1916 with employers and Board of Trade officials together with a pledge of help from the TUC's Parliamentary Committee(66) led to full exemption for the industry being granted in October, though with conditions being stipulated for the operation of union-based schemes.(67)

The organisation which had evolved in opposition to the state insurance scheme was perpetuated in October 1916 when an executive committee was established with Turner as President and Hayhurst as Secretary, to be convened in the event of an emergency and to draft rules for the perpetuation of an organisation which would resemble the United Textile Factory Workers' Association of the cotton textile industry.(68) Despite a strong commitment to union principles and defence by the main movers, the scope of the emergent organisation was largely defined in war-time terms. Thus the conference went on to pass a resolution demanding that the foreign wheat supply commission

be enlarged in size to include labour representatives and in powers to be able to deal with the supply and prices of home grown wheat. As an organisation it would appear to have been conceived as having a solely pressure group role and within that role as securing participation and representation for labour in the industry. It was the unions' response to increased employer consolidation and organisation.(69)

Hayhurst's position as secretary provides an indication of the moving force and inspiration behind the new association. Turner in his comments was guardedly supportive in the weeks leading up to the public appearance of the new association. Once the aims and objects were announced, he made open criticisms of its policy and intent. Secession by the GUTW was unlikely. His lack of enthusiasm may partly have been due to the fact that, once again, it was not his organisation which had initiated joint action by unions in the textile trade. Moreover, in neither Huddersfield nor Bradford was the GUTW able to take a strong leading position in any movement for reasons of its own weakness and other unions' relative strength. In the Heavy Woollen District where Turner enjoyed unrivalled prominence as a labour leader there was no basis for initiating industry-wide association.(70)

Hayhurst drafted and submitted rules which were sent to the various unions involved. The scope of the new organisation as defined in the rules which finally emerged showed it to be conceived of as an association in defence of conditions, for the improvement of earnings, as a watchdog over legislation affecting workers in the industry and to provide financial help from funds raised by an annual levy of two shillings per 100 members, where this was required.(71)

'Yarnspinner' had specific criticisms to make. He considered

that the association's aims were too 'negative' and argued for a more positive commitment to organisation, trade solidarity and amalgamation. He had specific goals for the industry in mind when he added the aims of a shorter working day, the abolition of short-time and night work and the promotion of legislation in the interests of textile workers.(72)

The rules and objects of the new Association were ratified at a conference of delegates on March 17th, 1917. Despite strong argument in favour of including amalgamation as an object of the new body, this was excluded. Its first action was to be the initiation of a campaign for an increase in 'war wage'. The very wide representation of organisations, delegates were present from nearly fifty unions(73), including those of the Leicester hosiery workers, meant that amalgamation had become a less feasible target. Its effective scope of action was increasingly being defined in trade rather than labour terms. That is, moves and responses were being determined by the immediate concerns of the industry during war-time rather than the longer terms interests of the work force. Hence the reactive, defensive nature of the aims and objects of the new body and its caution in its first steps.

Hayhurst and Turner were increasingly being drawn together through the processes of government management of the industry. At meetings with officials, whether Board of Trade, War Office or in substitution committees, it was these two men, accompanied with a limited selection of others, who were consistently consulted, occasionally dined and increasingly co-opted as designated labour leaders in the industry.(74) This involvement with government and employer representatives in the developing institutions of control prevented overt fission in the new National Association of Unions in

the Textile Trades. As this body came to be seen as representing labour in the eyes of government and employers, Turner and his organisation found themselves tied, willy nilly, to it. This was to further limit the union in many ways and to increase the divide between members and leaders.

One of the new organisation's first actions was to undertake a campaign for a 65 per cent increase on pre-war rates of pay in May 1917. Each organisation was to approach its respective employers' organisation with this demand but no individual settlements were to be entered into without the approval of the NAUTT executive committee.

The events surrounding this wages movement are described in Chapter 8, 'War Time wage bargaining'. Turner's concern at Bradford dyeing domination of the NAUTT, plus the coincidence of a percentage base claim with the imposition of short time working were to render this first attempt at joint action unpopular with certain NAUTT delegates.

Ultimately he and Gee were to be successful in preventing NAUTT control of wages movements, arguing that the GUTW had the right to special treatment:

> 'Smaller unions will make a mistake if they try to handicap a union differently fixed to themselves and who cannot fall in with the notions promulgated by the numerous smaller sections that have not the same difficulties with which to contend, or the same class arrangements and bargains that one of the larger unions has.' (75)

Turner and Gee's insistence on independence within the new association led to the stipulation of reference back to the E.C. of the NAUTT of any impending negotiations or settlements being amended. Societies were instead to consult with the E.C. of the NAUTT as to the most

suitable methods appropriate to each case. On matters which related to bargaining strengths and members' interests as workers and wage earners, there were obviously many deep points of difference and conflict between the affiliated union. However, on matters of a broader nature there was apparent unanimity. Questions of short-time working, work-sharing, the need to ensure representation for labour on government committees, the protection of workers from further incursions by substitution officers and tribunals and opposition to the Commission of Inquiry into Industrial Unrest brought a united stand from the association.(77)

During 1917 there were to be continuous complaints from GUTW delegates on the NAUTT as to its lack of progress towards amalgamation and unrepresentativeness in its sponsored bodies and delegations.(78) Nevertheless the NAUTT was to develop and remain in the industry as a labour pressure group rather than as an active force for change in the basic procedures and relationships within the labour side. Joint wages movements were restricted to the timing of applications rather than the standardising of claims, rates or increases. Perhaps the NAUTT's main role was in providing a wool textile trade union 'panel', an official leadership for cooperating with government. Individually, the unions had developed relations with separate employers' associations and these were still maintained throughout the war. It was participation in control and the management of labour for war-production purposes which helped maintain the NAUTT as an integrated and coherent organisation for the unions in the industry. In retrospect this was of course, the way in which some chose to explain the inception of the association. Walter Bateson, the ASD's official historian, later wrote that the NAUTT:

> '... proved very useful in co-ordinating the efforts of the textile unions as a whole, and equipping the various

> representatives of the Whitley Industrial Councils with material to put the case of any and every section of the textile manufacturing, dyeing and finishing trades...'(79)

From its war-time role, the NAUTT continued in importance as a means to securing some acceptance for labour in the period of reconstruction and the post-war dismantling of control and the machinery of participation.

The pressure group within the NAUTT which still hoped to use the organisation to achieve amalgamation had managed to secure the appointment of a committee to discuss the question in early 1918. This comprised Lockwood, Gee, Mackinder of the Wool, Top and Noil Warehousemen, Titterington of the Stuff and Woollen Warehousemen and Hayhurst as secretary. Turner saw the committee's existence as a means to squashing suggestions that the officials were against amalgamation, opposing the rank and file;

> 'I am certain as I am here that these proposals for amalgamation originated in the minds of permanent officials, although it may look as if the permanent officials would lose their jobs by it' (80)

After a number of meetings, the committee recommended the circulation of a draft report drawn up by Hayhurst as secretary. The preferred scheme covered amalgamation for Trades purposes only and envisaged benefit paid centrally for unemployment, lock-out and strikes. All other types of benefit would be covered by the individual society within the amalgamation. There were still many problems involved in textile unions' amalgamation apart from inter-town rivalries and the guarding of permanent appointments. Contributions ranged from 1½d to 2/6d a week, the financial assets of societies differed, as did their attitudes to such assets. Unions varied as to their investment policies. Unemployment and the incidence of disputes varied too. Perhaps the largest problem for the GUTW was the fact that they alone appeared to be aware of the special issue arising from the situation

of women in the industry. For Turner, this set them apart from other unions in a number of ways. The report, recognising these disparities, placed great emphasis on the role of a Central Authority with permanent officials exercising firm control over all the groups involved.(81)

While these principles were being drawn up, the GUTW, NSD and F and the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' union were taking the first steps which were to bring about their amalgamation in 1922. Hayhurst died in 1919 and the gulf between his younger successors and the older men was one fact which prevented amalgamation taking in further groups at this time and for a period afterwards. As Turner had predicted,(82) and had perhaps guaranteed, amalgamation was more likely to succeed in piecemeal fashion, among small groups of unions. Even with the amalgamation which was to form the National Union of Textile Workers in 1922, there were several problems to be overcome. The GUTW paid a more restricted range of benefit than the NSD&F. Only out-of-work, dispute and victim pay were provided. In contrast the NSD&F paid sickness and ran a superannuation fund, on a restricted basis. A further difference existed between the two societies in terms of eligibility for rates of benefit. While the GUTW made no distinction on grounds of sex or age as to access to different types of benefit, the NSD&F operated rules which excluded women not only from the superannuation scheme but also from sickness benefit.(83) Harry Dawson recalled Arthus Shaw's fears about amalgamation and that he himself had argued that Gee and Turner's age militated against prolonged domination of any amalgamation. The ASD were not to amalgamate until 1936 following a disastrous period for the industry. The woolcombers, after deliberating, finally decided to go into the NUGMW, presumably preferring a measure of independence within a broader based and non-textile organisation.(84)

This chapter has concentrated on changes in organisational behaviour and structure in the GUTW during the war. Growth in size and influence within the industry brought mixed rewards for members while basic relationships and practices remained unaffected. The union's system of internal government changed as did its relationship with other unions in the industry. Nevertheless there were still tendencies which limited the scope of such changes. The incorporation of leading members of the GUTW brought about a greater gulf than had previously existed between officials and members; a lack of intermediate structures, in particular the weak development of work-based organisations kept members' involvement loose and lacking in commitment beyond the financial; the movement towards amalgamation became defused by considerations of participation and representation, which though of importance, brought about few changes so far as wages and conditions were concerned. These last issues were still dependent upon local levels of organisation for any change or remedy.

Quite obviously there were changes in strength and bargaining procedures. Membership was no longer simply a personal matter when whole sections of some mills could claim to be unionised.(85) Levels of militancy had been preserved at district level throughout the war years. Thus the two examples of attempts in Huddersfield to bring about broad-based organisations in the industry may not have changed existing relationships to any great extent, but they did preserve tendencies to seek support and strength from within the body of the labour movement. This was to be called upon again during the Councils of Action period of 1920 and in the General Strike.

The GUTW emerged from the war increased in size, financial assets and reputation. Within the industry it was able to take its

place as an equal, or more with other unions. Internally, however, there had been few changes. Inequalities in sex and rank remained. The commitment of members was seen as problematic and the distance between leaders and members, men and women, within the union, meant that the organisation which developed in the war years was not to survive the defeats which the twenties were to bring, without loss of membership and bargaining strength.

The development of the GUTW had at times been a matter of response to employer moves and occasional initiative. Its leaders clearly relied upon a reputation for industrial responsibility and the ability to control the rank and file. Such a relationship was to be tested after 1921 as employers insisted successfully on wage cuts and members responded with decreasing compliance. As a formal organisation, the GUTW had developed considerably through war-time activities. As a means to defending and improving conditions of work and levels of earning, it still had far to go. Membership might increase as perceptions and aspirations altered or as the union appeared, through the actions of its officers, to be more visible and effective. In practice, membership still retained the characteristics of low commitment and expectation. While leaders consistently under-estimated or despaired of the trade union consciousness of a majority of workers in the industry, the cohesion of the organisation in any active or effective sense remained problematic.

Notes

1. See Chapter 2, pp.62+ff for a discussion of pre-war union growth and development.

2. Figures published in Annual Reports of the T.U.C. See Appendix 7.

3. Turner (1920) op.cit., p.189.

4. See discussion in ch. 5.

5. See p.431 below.

6. The GUTW's own Approved Society, one amongst many friendly societies from which members could draw support, was showing signs of growth and increased investment during the war. In 1918 it had 5000 members and was even confident enough to take on married women if they were employed in the industry and were members of the union. The independent stance which the union had taken on the question of insurance (discussed later in this chapter) was to do no harm to membership figures. The most rapid increase in membership would seem to coincide with the period during which this issue was debated. Referring to the effects of the 1911 Act on union membership when giving evidence to the 1913 Enquiry into Industrial Agreements, Turner remarked: 'We have made a thousand new members these last five weeks'. (30.5.18 YFT; Cd. 6953, q.6952). The rules of the Approved Society entitled an insured member to a number of benefits, medical, sanatorium, sickness, disablement and maternity. (Rules of the GUTW Approved Society). During 1917, the greatest amount had been paid out as sick benefit to men. This was followed by £325 paid in disablement benefit to men. The lowest sum, £44, had been paid out as disablement benefit to married women.

7. Balance sheets, 31.12.12, 31.12.18 (TUC Library).

8. Turner and many of the Heavy Woollen District committee were long-standing supporters of the teetotal cause. Turner in particular had welcomed war-time legislation which had restricted drinking hours. Towards the end of 1918, plans were well under way for greatly extended union headquarters in Huddersfield and for the appointment of extra clerical and organisational staff. (Yorkshire Factory Times 1.4.15, 15.6.15; Pioneer 2.6.16; Yorkshire Factory Times 15.6.16, 8.8.17, 16.8.17, 28.12.17, 7.3.18, 8.8.18, 5.9.18; Turner (1920) op.cit., p.117.

9. Yorkshire Factory Times, 7.12.16.

10. Harris Hoyle's own application for extra expenses contains an eloquent account of his increased duties as a union official during the war years:

> '... it is now quite impossible for one person to follow it (i.e. the work) up as closely as it has been done in the past, and give the same attention to individual cases that I have been used to doing. The posting up of contributions is now a serious business and of weekly occurance, the Cash Book & Ledger work has increased of course in proportion, whilst the correspondence and clerical work has grown considerably, and

the individual cases are increasing daily; the getting away each week of the collectors book is now somewhat of a business as there are invariably a number of transfers and new members to deal with, in addition to questions and enquiries by the collectors with reference to various matters, the increased postal rates has also brought along a certain amount of extra work as many books are now taken back by ourselves to save expenses, and if we were not receiving the cordial support of a number of the collectors this could not be carried on as economically as it is at present. Then there is the increased numbers of permanent meetings, Mondays and Thursdays are now fixtures for meetings every week. Two Wednesdays per month, and the two Saturdays per month are also permanently engaged on Trade Union work. In addition to these, there are a number of other meetings (special) and meetings of workpeople constantly occurring. As persons are now calling almost every day for information or giving reports etc. we seldom leave the house unoccupied so that they may leave messages or get information, thus minimising as far as possible waste journeys of the Members. My house is consequently more in the nature of an office than a living place and we have had to make other arrangements to enable us to have a certain amount of private accommodation. This entails a certain amount of additional expenses in the form of extra coal & lighting and you will be able to form your own opinion of what this means especially if you estimate what it would cost to furnish an office and pay the current expenses in rent rates fuel lighting & cleaning'...

(letters included with Colne Valley District minutes)

Turner had five daughters who could be called upon to help. In 1907, when Gee travelled to Minneapolis as a fraternal delegate to the AF of L, it had been his daughter who took over some of his duties in his absence. In contrast, his son had been found a place on the staff of the Ashton Reporter, John Andrew's newspaper.

11. See Worker, 18.11.16. In early 1915, Harris Hoyle's half-yearly report to Colne Valley members included a pointed attack on those who have 'approached a step or so nearer the pile of carpet' and outlined three types of leadership to be avoided. These included those who separated themselves off from the rank and file through overbearing manners, those who exploited friendships with employers and the sneaks who had crept into positions of power without possessing necessary skills or proficiency. None of these may have been intended as sketches of Turner, no names were mentioned, but the attack is interesting for its display of rank and file insecurities. (Yorkshire Factory Times, 21.1.15)

12. See ch. 8 outlining principal wage negotiations.

13. Oratory was not enough to convince some of the union's Bradford critics of his skills of leadership. During the campaign for increased earnings and standard price lists for Bradford weavers, in 1915, Leach who was of course an employer himself was to criticise leading GUTW officers for their lack of information about Bradford conditions:

'... not one of the union's officials had taken any steps

> at all whereby the audience might become acquainted with the facts of a very powerful case which the weavers of this district have for an improvement of their conditions... I want to express my dismay that intelligent men can possibly expect to win a hard and difficult fight on poetical references to employers "swimming in gold"'.

Some of Turner's more radical critics felt that his skills of oratory were not only misguided but misplaced:

> 'He will tear a passion to tatters over the struggle to add a couple of shillings to the miserable income of an old age pensioner; he will fight like a zealot for an amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act; he will fling off a column of eloquence about the pensions of disabled soldiers — all very creditable things if we accept capitalism as the normal and permanent system of society.'

Pioneer 30.4.15; Worker 12.8.16. Ben Richardson, who worked in the HWD office of the GUTW, provided his personal recollections of Turner's oratorical skills.

14. See discussion of Yorkshire Factory Times in Ch. 2.

15. Yorkshire Factory Times 2.3.16.

16. Yorkshire Factory Times 28.9.16.

17. See Ch. 8.

18. Pioneer 30.4.15.

19. Jessie Cockerline was to have a number of front-page articles published in early 1915.

20. See ch. 5 for a discussion of this point in relation to women workers.

21. Pioneer 30.4.15.

22. See April and May 1915 especially.

23. Leach was full of praise for Hayhurst of the Dyers and Palin of the Tramwaymen's union:

> 'I have seen something of the work of thoroughly competent Trade Union officials and loved and admired them for it. I have watched Hayhurst conducting with grim determination and enormous knowledge of every factor of his case and winning the fight for a great army of dyers. I have seen him doing the same for another army of woolcombers. Nobody ever tripped him with an obscure fact or figure... I have seen Palin pull what looks like a lost cause out of the fire of a hostile committee by the sheer completeness of his knowledge of it and the power it gave him to dispel error'. (Pioneer 30.4.15)

In 1918 the GUTW was to accuse the Dyers and other Bradford unions of interfering when Bradford women protested about the end of the

Saturday stop. See ch. 9.

24. The union's Bradford District asked the Trades and Labour Council for help and this was agreed to — a number of committee meetings were organised for the purpose of gathering information on price lists and advancing comparisons. (Jessie Cockerline, 'The Weavers' Wage List', Yorkshire Factory Times 10.2.16.)

25. Figures for District growth are hard to come by since all that is available are the round figures published in the YFT. Certainly from a figure of about 2000 at the beginning of the war, Colne Valley's membership was nearer 10,000 by the closing months. During that time, separate branches had been opened at Golcar and Marsden.

26. He was selected as an agent to Wilfred Whiteley the Labour Candidate for Colne Valley in the 1918 election. (Yorkshire Factory Times 5.9.18. See also C. Pearce: 'An Interview with Wilfred Whiteley', in Society for the Study of Labour History, Bulletin no.18, 1969.)

27. See ch. 8. on war-time wage negotiations.

28. On being reprimanded for its use of the Worker, the District Committee resolved: 'so far as sending their resolution to the Press is concerned, they fail to see any difference between individual members and a committee forwarding matter to the Public Press unless it be that the committee is more entitled to supply information than irresponsible members.' (Colne Valley District minutes 28.9.16) Colne Valley District of the GUTW operated in a somewhat isolated way, sending no delegate to Huddersfield Trades and Labour Council. It had declined persistent attempts to rejoin, objecting to the fact that it was obliged to pay a 1d fee for each member if this was to be used to support labour representation in Huddersfield. (Yorkshire Factory Times 5.2.04; Colne Valley minutes 31.1.14)

29. Minutes of the Special General Meeting, in Colne Valley District minutes, 30.6.17.

30. 'And there shall be told of a Country/a land in the Midst of the sea/and folk shall call it England/in the days that are going to be.' The leaflet ran: 'Who goes overboard in Troubled times? The Non-Unionists. Why? Because — they are outside the Harbour of Trade Unionism. Come Inside! Don't be a ratter — be a squatter in the Trade Union Camp You will see They will Be Your Firm Friend Right to the End. Success is Sure.' (Issued in June 1915)

31. Yorkshire Factory Times 20.1.18.

32. Included with Colne Valley District minutes 28.7.17.

33. Yorkshire Factory Times 7.6.17.

34. ... 'I think the movement wants the full co-operation and steadying power of some of the old forces of labour. That may be a bit of swank, but I am one of those people who believe in the steadying force and believe at times I can add a bit of steadying power.' Yorkshire Factory Times 2.8.17.
Turner's fears were generated by a clash of appointments. He was unable to attend a District Conference of the Provisional Committee

set up to continue the work of the Leeds Convention as this coincided with the half-yearly meeting of GUTW members at Dewsbury. A quite contrasting impression of the proceedings at the June Convention in Leeds was provided by 'B.E.B.'s' report circulated to the War Cabinet. Noting that Mrs. Swanwick, Roden Buxton, Marion Phillips, Mary MacArthur, Arthur MacManus and other 'well-known rebels and pro Germans' were present, he went on to describe W.C. Anderson as being 'quite reckless' in his revolutionary speech. Other speakers were identified as 'a perfect fanatic' and 'bitter and violent'. 'Report on the Russian Revolution Conference at Leeds', in CAB 24/16, G.T.1049. In fact, Turner's fears were not to be realised. Philip Snowden and others managed to damp down the more independent minded tendencies present at the Leeds Convention and in the post convention period. There was thus no challenge to existing labour organisations from what was apparently intended by some as a soviet-type grouping with more outspoken revolutionary aims. See Stephen White: 'Soviets in Britain: The Leeds Convention of 1917', International Review of Social History, Vol.xix, 1974.

35. Yorkshire Factory Times 6.6.18. A military history of the period shows the extent to which, deservedly or not, Colne Valley's reputation for non-co-operation with the authorities was established. In a chapter describing the raising of the Territorial Battalions of the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, H.R. Milnes wrote: 'The great wave of socialism which resulted in the return of Mr. Victor Grayson for the Colne Valley Parliamentary Division was then at its height, and though in the fight for freedom now in progress, Mr. Grayson has been numbered amongst the wounded, his teachings in those early days did not help those who were engaged in the task of gaining recruits.' Eventually, 'By a series of lantern lectures, illustrative of camp life, by mill gate meetings, and in a variety of ways' a battalion, referred to as 'Victor Grayson's own', was formed. In J.J. Fisher: History of the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, 1917, p.125.

36. Thus in the 1916 executive elections, 'Yarnspinner' reviewed the candidates in a manner clearly calculated to influence voting. The Huddersfield candidates were described in distinctly ambivalent tones. Richard Fenwick, a BSP member, was 'the philosophic-minded democrat and Parliamentary candidate of some sort for that borough'. Miss Rhodes had been 'a keen critic of everything the executive have done in connection with war bonus'. He concluded, 'I cannot prophesy who will win, but I think most of the old ones stand a good chance'. In fact, Miss Rhodes was elected, one of two women put forward by Huddersfield, Fenwick was not, but Edward Auty of Morley, a Turner nominee, described as 'one of the younger and newer men' gained a place on the 1917 executive committee. Yorkshire Factory Times 14.12.16, 31.1.17.

37. The union further amended its rules in 1919 when the proportion of members to executive committee delegates was changed to 4000 in order to maintain the executive at a manageable size.

38. Letter to H. Hoyle 30.4.16 from Gee and Turner. (In letters to H. Hoyle deposited with NUDBTW collection at Huddersfield local history library.)

39. Worker 29.4.16, 11.11.16, 18.11.16.

40. 'R.F. Wick' was almost certainly Richard Fenwick, BSP member and

member of the Huddersfield District Committee of the GUTW.

41. Worker 16.6.17.

42. See Ch. 9.

43. Despite the tremendous increase in membership, some officers were concerned about the actual solidity which sheer numbers represented. Ben Littlewood, Huddersfield District Secretary commented in his 46th half-yearly report:

> ... all these (new members) cannot be counted as Trade Unionists, for it is one thing to be a member of a Trade Union, another thing altogether to be a Trade Unionist. (Yorkshire Factory Times 24.1.18.)

44. Yorkshire Factory Times 18.1.17; 26.7.17; Colne Valley District minutes, 16.12.16, Collectors' Conferences 15.3.17, 1.8.17; Huddersfield minutes, 3.11.17.

45. Yorkshire Factory Times 10.1.18, Heavy Woollen District Annual Report.

46. Yorkshire Factory Times 4.4.18.

47. See Ch. 7 on the issue of control in the industry.

48. Discussed in more detail in ch. 7.

49. In Huddersfield and Colne Valley an attempt was made to direct enthusiasm for workshop control away from notions of participation and representation and towards a union dominated structure of interlocking mill committees. Following out-of-door meetings in late 1918 between textile union representatives in these districts a Textile Workers' Shop committee Council was established. It had fairly limited aims, being concerned to encourage the formation of mill committees to act on minimum wages, shorter hours, improve working conditions and secure 'a greater measure of control in the industry'. In many ways it constituted a continuous development from the attempts in 1915 to secure a working agreement between local textile unions, though the structures envisaged and the programme outlined, represented a considerable advance. At the same time, given the hope of the previous two years and the bitter criticisms of both employers and leaders which had been voiced, its targets and language seem moderate. This may have been due to its broad composition, joint secretaries were Ben Littlewood of the GUTW and Boothroyd, secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, with Harris Hoyle as President. Delegates to an executive meeting in September had been sent from the GUTW, Huddersfield and Colne Valley Districts, the Dyers and Finishers, Colne Valley, Holmfirth and women's sections, the Healders and Twisters, the Cloth Pressers and the Warpers' Associations. Uncertainty as to powers, finances and constitution dogged the new body. In many ways it presented the form of a purely textile Trades Council. Its powers and brief were too general to permit of practical success and there is no evidence that it survived to have much effect on the GUTW or its members. Yorkshire Factory Times 17.10.18; Correspondence and notices in Box 5, NUDBTW records, Huddersfield Local History Library. It is possible to see in these attempts, first at amalgamation, then at independent action, organised amongst trade unions at a local level, the basis for what was to become the Councils of Action

which Clinton (1977) op.cit., p.121) sees as 'a continuous thread' running up to the General Strike. To this extent, and despite 'success' in terms of real achievement, local committees of trade unionists maintained continuous organisation of a flexible and varied type in some West Riding towns, throughout the war years.

50. In the immediate pre-war period, the movement amongst dyers which led to the 1913 agreement came to involve the GUTW in negotiations since it could claim to be organising dyers and finishers in the Huddersfield area. The Dyers' agreement with the BDA in 1913, establishing piece work in the trade, involved a collective principle. Both collective work and collective payments were determined by joint consent of management and unions. (See Goodrich (1920) op.cit., pp.172-3)

51. In Huddersfield and Colne Valley, competition for dyers and finishers was with the NSD&F which organised mainly in commission houses. At first the union, formed in 1857 and known originally as the Huddersfield, Bradford and Barnsley Dyers' and Finishers', confined its activities to the finishing end of the trade dyeing houses. After 1912, their recruiting was extended to finishers and menders in manufacturing. It was here that the competition between the union and the GUTW developed. (Information from Arthur Dawson) See also Ch.2 for a discussion of the GUTW's relations with craft unions.

52. In 1910, affiliated societies numbered 8, representing 6370 trade unionists, but by 1916, Turner was admitting, 'it now sleepeth...' (Report on Trade Unions 1908-10, Cd 6109, 1912; Yorkshire Factory Times 6.7.16.)

53. See for example the debate about what to do in the event of the introduction of conscription which took place at a meeting of the Yorkshire Federation of Trades Councils in December 1915. Calls for drastic action by Bradford, Hull, and Huddersfield delegates were successfully resisted by the chairman, Walter Barber who had put a resolution, supported by Turner, stating 'emphatic opposition' to any form of conscription. Amendments were rejected in deference to the need for unity on the issue. The Federation was committed to calling up another conference should conscription be introduced. Yorkshire Factory Times 9.12.15.

54. The three federations were the National Federation of Bleachers, Dyers and Kindred Trades, formed in 1896, which by 1910, comprised 6 unions representing 19,137 workers; the Leeds and Huddersfield Federated Cloth Pressers, formed in 1906 from 5 unions, representing 4226 workers in 1910 (Cd 6109); the Federation of Yorkshire Power Tuners, formed in 1911-12 from the Power Loom Tuners associations of Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds. (Minutes of Huddersfield Power Loom Tuners) Turner describes the Federation's formation in May 1915. This may have been the occasion of its extension to include the Leeds, Halifax and Keighley societies (Yorkshire Factory Times 27.5.15) The Huddersfield Tuners were also affiliated to the Yorkshire Overlookers' Federation. this was an association of Overlookers' Societies, and not a Federation of similar bodies.

55. Huddersfield Power Loom Tuners' minutes — 25.11.11.

56. The Bradford and District Woolworkers' Federation was formed from the National Union of Machine Woolcombers, the Wool, Top and Noil Warehousemen's Society and the Bradford Woolsorters' Society. The

aims and objects of the new Federation were not only the strengthening of trade unionism through closer unity and joint action, but also the definition of the 'line of demarcation' between them. All three unions were strongly organised with the majority of workers in each trade in membership. Mackinder, Secretary of the Wool, Top and Noil Warehousemen's Society, claimed that they were so strong that they could stop Bradford's trade if necessary. However, another declared aim of the new body was to outlaw unofficial disputes in the industry. (Yorkshire Factory Times 8.4.15.) The Garment Workers' Federation was formed from the Amalgamated Union of Clothiers' Operatives, the London Society of Tailors and Tailoresses, the London Jewish Tailor and Tailoresses, the London and Provincial Clothiers' Cutters and the Waterproof Garment Makers' Up (Yorkshire Factory Times 3.6.15.)

57. Colne Valley District minutes, 19.3.10; Huddersfield 29.1.10.

58. Huddersfield minutes 7.4.13.

59. Huddersfield minutes 19.1.12, 27.1.12.

60. Colne Valley District minutes 5.8.11, 7.4.13, 1.2.13.
Friction between the two main unions organising textile workers in the Huddersfield area, the NSD&F and the GUTW may have occasioned the inserting of this particular appeal. Harry Dawson remembered bitter rivalry between the NSD and F and the GUTW in Colne Valley, especially after 1912. He claimed to have stopped a GUTW open-air meeting at Slaithwaite and suggested that the very success of the younger men in the Dyers' union, gaining a more favourable agreement in 1912, led to Turner and Gee's interest in setting up working agreements establishing demarcation and consequent negotiating rights.
Friction between the two unions in Colne Valley persisted into the war years. In mid 1915, executive committees of the two unions' districts met to discuss the organisation of dyers and finishers in the valley. A working agreement was finally signed, its clauses stressed the need for joint action in organisation and policy and placed great stress on the problem of non-union workers in the valley. (Information from Harry Dawson; Colne Valley District minutes 29.5.15, 10.7.15; Worker 26.6.15.)

61. The GUTW's delegate to the Trades and Labour Council expressed regret at:

> ... 'the number of unions catering for the workers in the Textile trade; and (requested) the committee to invite all such organisations affiliated and otherwise to a conference to be organised as early as possible to discuss the advisability of amalgamation.'

Richard Fenwick proposed the resolution at the next meeting of the Trades and Labour council and it was adopted unanimously. The following week a meeting was called at the Friendly and Trades Club which was attended by between 50 and 60 representatives of Huddersfield unions. These included the District Committees of the GUTW at both Huddersfield and Colne Valley, the Huddersfield Branch of the NSD and F, the Warehousemen's union, the Warpers' Union, the Healders and Twisters, the Power Loom Tuners, Managers and Overlookers and the Cloth Pressers. According to the Worker, the woolcombers who were engaged in amalgamation elsewhere were the only union which did not send a delegate. Fenwick put the main resolution,

which had again been formulated by the Huddersfield GUTW District Committee. The idea that a committee be set up to organise a future conference on the subject of amalgamation was amended in order to speed up the process. The conference chose instead to elect a committee which would at once begin to work on an outline working agreement as a means to amalgamation. Harris Hoyle spoke firmly in favour of amalgamation and for unity, answering some delegates fears that the task might be made impossible due to the existence of so many different scales and types of benefit in existence. The committee appointed included a chairman from the Overlookers and a representative from the Dyers and Finishers as secretary. The remainder comprised representatives from each society present. The Worker was enthusiastic, stressing the need for such local arrangements given that so many of the union branches were part of national unions. It did however, accept that amalgamation presented definite problems. The craft unions were strong and sectional as were some of the 'industrial unions'. Furthermore there were financial problems and the individual position of existing officials to be considered. What began propitiously as a firm basis for amalgamation seemed to be losing its impetus towards the latter part of 1915. The August conference was followed by a conference of committees of Textile unions in the Friendly and Trades Club at Huddersfield in early December. The committee appointed at the previous conference made its report suggesting that a working agreement to ensure solidarity and joint action be set up as a preliminary to amalgamation. Each union executive was to be asked its attitude to amalgamation and, if agreement was reached, a further small committee was to be appointed to look at the rules and regulations of each society in order to discover some common basis of operation. Turner, rightly perhaps, saw this as becoming a move towards federation rather than amalgamation, though with the latter being kept as a long term end. It was beginning to look as though the goal of amalgamation was not as easy to attain as had been hoped. Two unions which did amalgamate at this time were the National Society of Machine Woolcombers and the Bradford and District Card Grinders and Jobbers' Association. The new body of 8,000 workers in the Bradford area, the National Amalgamated Society of Woolcombers and Kindred Trades, was the product of twelve years' negotiations. Even so, the two unions were to keep their funds separate until December 31st 1920, and were only to be treated as one after that date. Huddersfield minutes 2.7.15; Worker 21.8.15; 11.12.15; Yorkshire Factory Times 11.11.15.

62. Turner was cautiously supportive of Huddersfield action. At the time the first steps were being taken by the Huddersfield GUTW D.C. a Yorkshire Factory Times editorial was calling for union amalgamation as a means to countering an imminent employer amalgamation. The Yorkshire Factory Times urged the coming together of a wide range of textile unions, including the ASD, the woolcombers and woolsorters, the NSD and F, the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' union, the Carpet Weavers' union and a number of small craft unions. This emphasis on a more centralised basis for unity was again reflected in a suggestion made by 'Yarnspinner' that a national rather than a local movement was called for at this stage. Jessie Cockerline too had her piece to say on amalgamation when she wrote an article urging the 'Amalgamatin of the Federation of Yorkshire Textile Unions'. She coupled her support for the movement with an attack on Bradford Overlookers' societies for their restricted friendly society role, their backwardness in policy, their lack of militancy and the age of their leaders. Yorkshire Factory Times 15.7.15, 5.8.15.

63. See discussion of substitution in ch. 9. There were also profound disagreements over attitudes to the war which led to, 'some little estrangement' between Hayhurst and Turner (Yorkshire Factory Times 19.6.19.)

64. By 1916, unemployment was not being seen in terms of war-time constraints, but as a possible feature of a post-war economy. Beveridge recalled that he was asked in spring 1916 to prepare plans for dealing with post-war unemployment. The solution adopted was to extend the provisions of the 1911 Insurance Act to cover all workers engaged in munitions production. For wool textiles, this presented two immediate problems. Firstly, the status of the industry as a provider of munitions of war was not in all respects agreed. Secondly, and more importantly for the unions, such an extended provision still covered only certain sections of the industry. Workers employed on non-government or civilian work would not be included. The first problem was solved by a Ministry of Munitions order which extended the Munitions Act to the woollen industry. The second problem was not to be so simply resolved. Trade union opposition was vehement. Although as a principle, state provision for the unemployed was seen as 'socialistic', the divisions within the industry which the extension of the Act would create were seen as unwelcome. Moreover, the 2½d a week levied against each claimant as the Trade Union share of the costs, was seen as an additional imposition when extra book-keeping would obviously be involved. The unions were to pay 2½d, the employers 2½d and the government 6d. Lord Beveridge, Power and Influence, 1953, p.136; Yorkshire Factory Times 17.8.16, 31.8.16. It is interesting to know that in connection with the original Act in 1911, it was thought that amalgamation was encouraged by the need to comply with or match State provisions. (Cd 6953, q.6953)

65. Beveridge (1953) op.cit., p.136. His explanation was that: 'The employers and workpeople engrossed in prosperity could not look beyond their noses', in The War and Insurance, quoted in Beveridge (1953) op.cit., p.136. The matter was not of course so simple. Employer opposition was orchestrated by manufacturers opposed to trades unionism and who were opposed to state 'interference' in industry and welfare. Trade union opposition, was, as shown above, quite differently founded. Neither was particularly encouraged by the way in which the extension of the Act was brought about. Consultations had been omitted and, at the conference in Bradford which Beveridge remembered, his own behaviour was critically observed by the unions to the disadvantage of his reputation. Beveridge and Pretyman, for the Board of Trade, were seen as 'discourteous' as they whispered to each other while the working people's representatives put their case. Yorkshire Factory Times 7.9.16.

66. Report of T.U.C. 1916, pp.337 & ff.

67. The unions were to support any unemployed members to the same extent as was provided under the Act and employers in blanket-making and hosiery were to guarantee work-sharing.

68. Yorkshire Factory Times 19.10.16. An emergency executive committee of the 'United Textile Unions of Yorkshire' at a subsequent meeting resolved to obtain the rules of the Lancashire Workers' organisation, 'with a view to securing some such organisation for Yorkshire'. (Yorkshire Factory Times 2.11.16)

69. The employers had formed a Federation of District Associations in May 1916. This comprised the Bradford and District Manufacturers' Federation, the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association, the Huddersfield and District Yarn Spinners' Association, the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association, the Leeds and District Woollen and Worsted Manufacturers' Association, the Morley and District Woollen and Worsted Manufacturers' Association and the Yeadon and Guiseley Manufacturers' Association. The Secretary of the newly formed body, the Woollen and Worsted Trades Federation, was G.H. Wood (Toller Lane Document).

70. Turner's lukewarm support for the new Association was echoed in the Districts of his own union. Huddersfield's reaction to the proposals was that:

> ... the whole scheme is an attempt to postpone the question of amalgamation, and consequently... (we) ask the General Executive Committee to refer the matter back, and suggest to the promoters that a conference be held to discuss the question of amalgamation.

Huddersfield minutes 19.1.17.

71. NAUTT minutes 17.3.17.

72. Yorkshire Factory Times 18.1.17.

73. The Balance Sheet for the first half year shows 12 Bradford unions, the GUTW, General Workers' Union, 4 Huddersfield societies, 1 Halifax Society, 5 Leeds based societies, 2 Lancashire societies, and a number of other Yorkshire unions and societies. The two largest contributors were the GUTW and ASD, each paying about £20 in subscriptions, the next biggest, with subscriptions of £10 and £8 respectively were the NSD&F and the Woolcombers. The majority of affiliated societies were paying less than £2, with at least 14 of these paying 10 shillings or less.

74. Gee, Turner and Hayhurst were amongst the first recipients of a new order, the O.B.E., 'in recognition of services rendered in connection with the war'. (Yorkshire Factory Times 30.8.17) Turner was criticised for accepting. He later described the award as being 'for services rendered to our union'. (Turner (1930) op.cit., p.272)

75. Yorkshire Factory Times 10.5.17.

76. See NAUTT minutes.

77. One matter reveals voting strength in the NAUTT at this time. This was the question of labour exchanges. The ASD had consistently opposed these new bodies. Turner and Gee took a different line. One of the NAUTT's first steps had been to dissociate itself entirely from the work of the Advisory committees which were set up in 1917 to investigate the whole question of displaced, unemployed and disabled labour. 'Yarnspinner' expressed regret at the NAUTT's decision. It is interesting to note however that by December, opinions were changing, the balance of power was shifting and when Lockwood of the Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union put a resolution to the NAUTT's first AGM rescinding the earlier

attitude, this was accepted by 56 votes to 39. (NAUTT minutes)

78. Some GUTW executive committee members, Harris Hoyle and Arthur Shaw, favoured withdrawing from the association since by rule and deed it was not committed to amalgamation. At the half-yearly delegate meeting of the GUTW, held at Dewsbury, a strongly worded resolution was passed, urging a reform in the constitution of the NAUTT to accommodate the goal of amalgamation. This was followed in the autumn at the NAUTT's first AGM by an attempt to amend its constitution to include the setting up of a committee to draft rules and take the necessary steps for immediate amalgamation. Despite a 'long and healthy discussion', the GUTW amendment was lost. Verity, a Bradford delegate of the ASD spoke against amalgamation. GUTW members also seem to have felt that the new Association's composition was resulting in the formation of delegations which were unrepresentative of their interests. This last issue is not easily unravelled unless the leadership's longstanding antipathy to certain Bradford organisations is taken into account. 'Yarnspinner' alleged that there was no representation for the manufacturing section on the 'Wool Control Committee'. However, his criticisms seem misplaced since, of the eleven men finally deputed to the Wool Control Board, nine were from the West Riding and at least three of these could have been described as manufacturing in terms of their members' employment. These were Gee, Lockwood and Turner himself. Of the other six, two were dyers, Hayhurst and Shaw, three were overlookers and the remaining two were from the woolsorters and stuffpressers societies. What may have been the real problem so far as 'manufacturing' was concerned was that of the nine West Riding unions delegated, five were from Bradford. Looking at the voting for candidates for the NAUTT's new executive, in December 1917, a certain pattern emerges. The figures show that in terms of membership and voting strength, Bradford did dominate the organisation. Of the ten largest affiliated union, all having over 1800 members, 7 were Bradford based or had a substantial Bradford membership. The remaining 4 were the GUTW, Yeadon and Guiseley Factory Workers' Union, the National Union of General Workers (sic). The executive committee was elected almost entirely from the ten biggest unions, only one, the Yorkshire Managers' and Overlookers', not managing to secure election. The result was that the NAUTT appeared to be controlled by large organisations based in Bradford. To the extent that size and a Bradford base seemed associated, Turner and the GUTW did appear to be isolated, it was this which seems to have been at the root of his concern. Yorkshire Factory Times 13.12.17, 6.9.17; NAUTT minutes; RECO 1 649.

79. Bateson (1928) op.cit., p.124.

80. Yorkshire Factory Times 30.5.18.

81. 'Amalgamation of Societies in the Textile Trade', submitted to General Executive, 17.9.18. (Copy in NUDBTW collection Huddersfield Local History Library).

82. Yorkshire Factory Times 30.5.18.

83. Partial alteration of Rules of the NSDF and Textile Workers (n.d.) (Copy in NUDBTW collection Huddersfield Local History Library)

84. Information from Harry Dawson. Arthur Shaw was to be General Secretary of the Amalgamation in 1936.

85. In 1919 there was a ballot of union members which resulted in a 16 to 1 vote in favour of action on the 'non-union issue'. Altogether 53,000 members cast votes. (Yorkshire Factory Times 6.11.19)

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages two main areas of trade union activity have been considered. These are the involvement of women and relations with employers. Both, it was argued in the Introduction, highlight two crucial issues, the marginalisation of women in production outside the home and the acceptance of proper spheres of competence for labour and capital.

The analysis began with a consideration of the ways in which union organisation was developing in pre-war years in the West Riding wool textile industry. It was suggested that although women and young people had come to occupy a slight majority position in the industry by the 1900s that in practice this had not had quite the extensive effect suggested by some trade union leaders who claimed that there had been a lowering of wages and growing exclusion of men from some jobs. Thus although women were being introduced into 'new' occupations, for example piecening in woollen spinning, warping and increasingly in woollen weaving, there were well observed distinctions which acted to segregate women away from the most highly skilled and supervisory work. Similarly, it was certainly the case that where women were taken on as employees, in any increasing proportion there was a tendency for a lower average wage to be paid for a particular occupation. However, taking the example of Huddersfield wages, it was argued that even through the worst period of recession, differentials were retained between men's and women's earnings. In addition, in an occupation such as woollen weaving, where equal wages were a formal possibility, there was an established practice which guaranteed earnings for men which were ten per cent higher than those of women.

In contrast with the claim that the presence of women, particularly in the worsted areas of Bradford and Halifax, presented problems for trade unionists, were the facts that women had been foremost in struggles which had initiated organisation in some parts of the industry. In addition, despite an apparent equality in numbers in membership of the union, in some districts, women's representation at higher levels in the union's government remained minimal. Before 1914, women in wool textile production experienced marginalising policies, either in terms of open criticism of the married woman worker, or in terms of a neglect of standard prices in those sections of the industry in which they were employed. The result was that in contrast with cotton no firm basis for a mass membership existed for women at this time. The language and practice of union membership tended to be oriented more around the working roles of men employed in the industry. In particular, it was argued in Chapter Four that a domestic role for women with its implications for wage-earning status tended to be reinforced by a practice of home-based collection of subscriptions. A weak industrial policy, with a failure to establish minimum or equal wages and a certain ambivalence towards the woman worker contrasted strangely with the advanced position which GUTW leaders such as Turner and Gee held in relation to women's suffrage. Thus even the most sympathetic and advanced trade union thinking on the subject of women's political rights demonstrated its very limitations in practice. A tendency to implicitly or explicitly maintain boundaries between civil and economic rights served to marginalise women in production and in trade union membership.

The experience of war-time production as far as women in the wool textile workforce were concerned, was almost exclusively one of increased hours and higher earnings, but with no encroaching on established

divisions, except in respect of occupations which women had begun to obtain entry into in pre-war years. Again, a union policy of equal earnings where women were replacing men and a yielding to pressure from women members for greater representation and influence on policy matters was compromised. Despite the opportunities presented by war-time production in a key industry, wage demands were kept within pre-war norms almost entirely and attempts to break new ground were deferred. An agreement made between the GUTW and employers was, moreover to guarantee enlisted men employment in the period of demobilisation. The result was that even when the post-war boom ended in late 1920, women's earnings were still considerably less than those of men in the industry though they had shown some improvement. G.H. Wood, using 1924 figures, shows that overall in spinning and manufacturing, women's earnings as a percentage of men's were 62 per cent and 57 per cent respectively. By 1925, when depression had set in, more women than men were out of work, or were working less than four days a week.(1) As far as representation within the union and related bodies were concerned, women only made limited inroads during the war years and although, by 1920, unprecedented levels of representivity had been achieved, amalgamation was not to enable this trend to continue.

So far as relations with employers were concerned, there was a similar continuity with pre-war developments. A lack of standard prices and collective agreements in the industry had been partially relieved in the three years immediately before the war, to a certain degree as a response to increased levels of militancy in certain districts, notably Huddersfield and Colne Valley. At the same time, shared perspectives of trade union leaders and employers' representatives, paid officials and mediators in both cases, were also leading to a fixed pattern of collective agreements and conciliation. Under war-time

conditions of control, these procedures were further developed and elaborated. Such a system not only operated according to principles which fixed time intervals between claims, but maintained earnings differentials with few exceptions, as between men and women and districts of the industry. Furthermore, procedures of negotiation and initiation of policy became increasingly the province of officials, as rank and file involvement tended to be neglected. Although after the end of the war, progress towards establishing basic rates in the industry, the introduction of a sliding scale, a 48 hour week, and the official encouragement of mill committees, signified an element of change, there was not to be any extension of control over production by labour in the industry. Conditions which were to be subject to negotiation remained firmly within the established definitions of labour's proper concern with the result that as the recession bit in 1921, workers were to take direct cuts in wages. The Wool Control Board, though hailed by some observers as an exercise in democracy, was in reality, an employer-dominated executive. Even the post-war reforms which were passed by its successor, the Wool and Allied Trades Industrial Control, were scarcely to survive intact. There were to be attempts by the union side, initially through the Wool Control Board and subsequently through the Wool Industrial Council, to extend areas of control over issues which related, if only marginally to the control of production, these were all to fail. Support for the unemployed and a Standard Clothing Scheme had been debated during the closing months of the war. During the years of the Industrial Council's existence, the question of holidays with pay, action on training and redundancy and an apprenticeship scheme were variously discussed, yet none of these issues was pursued with success. The Wool Industrial Council was to collapse in West Yorkshire following the union's refusal to accept a wage reduction recommended by the 1929 Macmillan Court of Enquiry.(2)

The largely unrepresentative and compromised structures which developed from debates over the Whitley Report[3] were unlikely to encroach on the territorial claims of capital. In terms of spirit and personnel, bodies such as the Wool Industrial Council, were fundamentally institutions of the more enlightened employers and more conciliatory trade unionists. During the post war years, despite the failures of the Industrial Council in the Wool Industry, support for conciliation and compromise was to come from both sides in the industry. For Turner this was to culminate in the conferences with employers led by Sir Alfred Mond in 1928.[4]

The GUTW, from the pre-war years, through the experience of war-time production and after was to provide repeated examples in policy and practice of the acceptance of boundaries of action and competence. It has been argued here that for a trade union the two most crucial frontiers are those between men and women and between labour and capital. Clearly the frontiers between labour and capital were partly the product of particular industrial and political conditions. Similarly, the sexual division of labour was a necessary part of the capitalist economy. Since trade unions were themselves too part of such conditions and a product of such an economy, there were inevitable limitations set to the scope of their actions and ability to effect change. Thus the frontiers were the expression of general differences and inequalities as well as being the creation of a trade union. In the case described, the GUTW played its part in recognising and defining frontiers in such a way as to confine areas of struggle to zones acceptable to dominant groupings, that is employers and men workers. Thus the ability of a union to effect change is clearly limited by a complicit acknowledgement of boundaries of control and interest.

Existing and conventional histories of trade unionism, even when

written by Marxists, have tended to ignore these contradictions. Although the betrayals and compromises of trade unions leaders have been chronicled, for example the events of 1926, of 1931, the rule of men such as Citrine, Thomas, MacDonald and others who followed, the implications for varied sections of the workforce have not always been considered. Nor, have the points of convergence, both ideological and organisation, with employers and owners of production always been traced, particularly as these changed against a changing backdrop of opportunities.

More crucial for completeness and implications is the neglect of women in most accounts of trade unionism. This is not simply a question of the exclusion from systematic consideration of half the general population and a majority of the workforce in some industries. Such a neglect is striking enough in terms of scale alone. What is more important is the implication of this neglect for the explanation of trade union development, structure and consciousness. The absence of women from official, documentary-based accounts of trade unionism requires explanation rather than acceptance. What has been argued for here is an account which sees through the smokescreen of 'apathy' or 'indifference' thrown up by so many commentators as an explanation of women's role. Thus an attempt has been made not only to fill in the historical record, by giving fuller weight to the contribution of women workers and women trade union members in the development of a union, the GUTW. In addition, the effects of a marginalisation of women in production have been shown to extend to determining relationships between men and women as workers and as trade union members. It has been argued here that a lesser role in production outside the home, if accepted and not contested, can be seen to have the effect of a less equal claim to wage-earning status and positions of power within the union. Further, that this can still

be the result even when leading members of a union, the GUTW, supported the struggle for women's civil rights, as Ben Turner and Allen Gee did in the years immediately before the outbreak of war.

This is not a simplistic conspiracy-based explanation of sexual divisions, but one which takes into account the implicit structurings of a production system which, though it formally throws members of a family into competition with one another in the labour market, at the same time maintains the means whereby some members, women and girls, have had less than equal access to waged work. It is in the light of these relationships that a union's development and structure and the experience of its members should be explained. The points of resistance to and participation in a system of sexual and economic inequality indicate the ability and, indeed, willingness, of the members of a trade union to alter relationships with women and employers.

The ideas which have been examined here have sought to reintegrate women, the union, employers and the state by examining these in interaction over a number of years and through changed conditions of production and activity. By showing continuities in policy, domination, marginalisation and maintenance of frontiers, despite changes in scale, visibility and institutional development, the most basic and enduring inequalities can be demonstrated to have a direct bearing on groups of workers in general and on women in particular as recipients of the effects of a dual inequality determined by sex and class.

Notes

1. For estimates of men's and women's earnings in Autumn 1924 see Table 17 in Appendix I. In January 1925, 15.7 per cent of men and women in the West Riding Wool Textile industry were unemployed. Women were however affected to a relatively greater extent, with an unemployment figure of 17.8 per cent and with more women than men working short time. See Wood (1927) op.cit., p.287.

2. According to Charles (1973) op.cit., the Wool and Allied Industrial Council was doomed to failure because neither employers nor employees could agree on norms for the adjustment of wages:

> "(employers) still regarded wages as adjustable to meet the demands of trade, (employees) ... thought only in terms of at least maintaining, preferably increasing money wages and would not accept any reduction..." (p.184)

In 1925 the employers had attempted to enforce a wage reduction of 10 per cent through the Industrial Council. Prolonged negotiations, one session lasted 27 hours, were to no avail and a three week lock-out ensued. An independent court under Harold Macmillan found against the employers but recommended no increase. When in 1929 a Court of Enquiry recommended a reduction, a lock out followed in 1930 and a strike in 1931. The Industrial Council collapsed after this, with only a small council in the West Country surviving and being reformed in 1939. (See Charles (1973) op.cit. and Turner (1930) op.cit., pp.119-121)

3. See chapter 7.

4. Although Turner as chairman of the TUC in 1928 automatically shared the management of these conferences with the leader of the employers' side, Mond, his interest in conciliation was already well-established. His sympathy for a form of industrial pluralism has already been traced. His active pursuance of the Mond group would appear to have begun earlier, in 1918. In March of that year, he had been foremost amongst a group of trade union leaders who had advocated a conference of employers and the General Council of the TUC. Margaret Bondfield recalled that the General Council could not agree on this matter and the 'Turner-Mond' conference was to be delayed for ten years. Turner was to advocate a joint council of textile unions, employers and consumers as a pressure group for the industry at the union's A.G.M. in 1926. His account of the 'Burlington Arcade Conference' is enthusiastic. He praised the documents finally signed by both sides, 'let passion and prejudice disappear and all righteous folks in the T.U. world will agree they are landmarks in our industrial world'. He clearly dissociated himself from critics such as A.J. Cook, 'There was one speech, which was expected, which the employers wisely ignored'. On the employers' side there were also continuities. Foremost amongst the Mond group was F.V. Willey who had been controller of wool supplies in 1916. Willey, a Bradford wool merchant (see note above) was critical of employers who only considered profits, publicly attacked employers for a lack of industrial leadership and called for a new industrial relations spirit. (Bondfield (1951) op.cit., pp.171-2; Turner (1930) op.cit., pp.145-51; Charles (1973) op.cit.)

APPENDIX I

Table 1

	1870		1912		Percentage Limited Liability
	No.of Firms	Limited Liability	No.of Firms	Limited Liability	
Finishers	108	2	40	8	20
Dyers	134	0	124	58	46.8
Merchants	518	3	337	19	5.6
Woollen manufacturers	1572	2	439	153	34.8
Worsted spinners/ manufacturers	278	1	184	36	19.5
Worsted spinners	131	0	204	54	26.4
Worsted manufacturers	270	1	237	48	20.2
Worsted combers	33	0	53	15	28.7
Worsted top makers	19	0	20	2	10

(Table in Sigsworth and Blackman in Aldcroft (ed.)(1968) op.cit., p.152.)

Table 2 - Numbers employed in woollen and worsted factories, estimated,separately, for the whole of the United Kingdom

Year	Wool				Worsted			
	Men	Women	Total	Women as % of total	Men	Women	Total	Women as % of total
1839	33259	21520	54779	39	8693	22939	31632	72
1862	49754	37229	86983	42	31501	54562	86063	63
1874	68288	69748	138036	50	57050	85047	142097	59
1878	66443	72980	139423	52	49713	81212	130925	62
1885	69277	74748	144025	51	55325	82905	138230	59
1890	72292	80940	153232	52	59251	89073	148324	60
1898	58080	67650	125730	54	48127	82568	130695	63
1921*	68057	71101	139158	51	47130	73404	120534	60

*Census figure: all other figures based on official returns from textile factories.

Figures from Survey of Textile Industries, Committee on Industry and Trade (1928), p.272.

Table 3 - Average earnings for a full week's work for operatives in the Huddersfield and District woollen and worsted industry (in shillings)

	1872	1880	1892-3	1901	1906
Teazers & Fettlers	18	22	21	21/6	23/6
Scribbers' feeders	9	11/6	12/6	13/6	14/6
Weavers - men	23	26	24	26	26
women	17	18	15/6	16/6	19/6
Warpers - men	-	27	24	25/6	28
women	-	16/6	16/6	17	17/6
Dyers	20	22	22	22	23/2
Menders & Burlers	10/6	12/3	12/6	15	16/6

Figures taken from a table in G.H. Wood's "Wage Notes", Vol B383 to B637

Table 4 - Earnings figures for men and women in the Yorkshire woollen and worsted industries (in shillings and pence)

	Yorkshire	Huddersfield	Leeds	Dewsbury	Bradford
All men	26/3	27/1	28/9	26/6	25/0
All women	13/4	16/5	13/6	14/10	12/1

Figures from Board of Trade, Enquiry into Earnings and Hours (1909) Cd 4545

Table 5 - Women's earnings as percentage of men's at the median
(medians: 26s 7d for men, 13s 4d for women)

	1906
Paper and printing	36.1
Textiles	56.75
Metals, engineering	37.9
Clothing	44.8
Average	42.9

Figures from Guy Routh, Occupation and Pay in Great Britain, 1906-14, (1965) p.57 and 59.

Table 6 - Men's and women's wages in skilled textile occupations, 1906*

	Men £		Women £
Cotton spinners	107	Ring spinners (cotton)	39
Worsted spinners	74	Reelers, winders, beamers, warpers (cotton)	39
Cotton weavers	65	Weavers (cotton)	50**
Wool-worsted weavers	65	Winders, reelers, warpers (wool)	37
Average for all men's occupations	96	Weavers (wool & worsted)	39
		Average for all women's occupations	39

**Highest for all women earning groups

*These figures relate to the U.K. woollen and worsted industry

Compiled from Tables in Routh (1965) op.cit., pp.86-89

Table 7 - Average weekly earnings for girls, boys, women and men in the wool and cotton industries

	Girls - under 18	Boys - under 20	Women - over 18	Men - over 20
Cotton	10/1	11/6	18/8	29/6
Wool & Worsted	8/4	8/10	13/10	26/10

Table 8 - Weekly earnings of women in various textile trades, grouped in amounts

	Under 10/-	10-15/-	15-20/-	20/- plus	Average hourly rates
Cotton	3.0	20.9	35.4	40.7	4.0d
Woollen & Worsted	10.7	55.6	24.7	9.0	3.0
Silk	38.9	47.8	11.4	1.9	2.5
Flock & Shoddy	10.9	75.9	12.8	0.4	2.6
Bleaching, Dyeing, etc.	27.0	51.6	15.6	5.8	2.7
Velvet and Fustian	47.1	41.7	6.8	4.4	2.3

Tables 7 and 8 taken from L.W. Papworth and D. Zimmern, Clothing and Textile Trades (1912)

Table 9 - Grouped totals of men's earnings in the woollen and worsted industry

Amounts	Percentages
Under 12s	0.3
12s and under 15s	1.5
15s and under 20s	13.4
20s and under 25s	31.6
25s and under 30s	20.6
30s and under 35s	19.7
35s and under 39s	6.5
40s and over	6.4

Table 10 - Average net full-time earnings for wool and worsted workers (in shillings and pence)

	Huddersfield	Leeds	Dewsbury & Batley	Halifax	Bradford	Keighley
Men over 20	27.4	29.2	27.2	26.0	27.2	26.2
Lads & boys (under 20)	11.1	10.3	11.0	8.0	7.7	8.9
Women over 18	17.1	13.9	15.0	12.4	12.7	13.6
Girls (under 18)	9.7	8.11	9.9	7.9	7.10	8.11

Tables 9 and 10, figures from Cd 4545 (1909)

Table 11 - Men and women worsted and wool textile workers: numbers in West Riding town. (figures from 1911 census)

	Men	Women	Total	Women as % of total
Huddersfield	8641	8085	16726	48
Dewsbury	4255	4827	9082	53
Bradford	19415	29621	49036	60
Halifax	3982	7876	11858	66
Leeds	4805	8358	13161	63

Table 12 - Proportions of married women employed in textile production in West Yorkshire towns

	% of all women workers	% of all workers
Halifax	14.1	9.3
Huddersfield	14.5	7.0
Dewsbury	20.9	11.1
Bradford	20.8	12.5

Figures in Tables 10, 11, 12 from 1911 Census

Table 13 - Women's War-time Employment, Increase, Decrease and Substitution

	Estimated number of women employed in July 1914	Increase or Decrease in Number of women employed since July 1914			Estimated number of women directly replacing men in April 1918
		April 1916	April 1917	April 1918	
Woollen	65,000	+8,400	+9,400	+9,100	6,800
Worsted	85,000	+2,300	-300	-3,600	2,800
Total cotton	415,000	-2,500	-10,400	-48,800	31,000
Total clothing	612,000	+12,800	-44,700	-37,000	46,000
Total building	7,000	+6,200	+11,700	+20,300	+11,900
Total metal trades	170,000	+149,200	+295,300	+385,000	215,000
Total chemicals	40,000	+34,300	+66,000	+63,000	31,000
Paper and printing	147,500	-700	-5,100	-4,000	21,000
All industries, including Government establishments	2,178,660	+299,100	+635,700	+783,300	722,100

Report of the Board of Trade on the Increased Employment of Women During the War in the United Kingdom, Figures taken from Table VII (Cd 9164, 1919)

Table 14 - Percentage Increase or Decrease in Numbers of Men and Women in July, 17 Employed Compared with July 1914

	Men	Women	Total
Bradford	- 15.3	- 3.1	- 8.1
Halifax	- 14.0	+ 7.6	+ 0.7
Huddersfield - worsted	- 30.0	+ 4.5.	- 12.8
woollen	- 12.0	+ 44.5	+ 14.8

Figures from an unpublished Board of Trade "Report on Employment" in RECO 1 801.

Table 15 - Female Members of Trade Unions

	1914	1918	Percentage of all Trade Unionists	Percentage of all Female Workers
Miners	140	10,000	1.0	8.3
Textiles - cotton	210,272	260,000	64.6	74.3
- wool	7,695	53,000	57.6	30.5*
Tailoring	11,353	88,000	78.0	54.0
Boot and Shoe	10,915	28,000	30.8	41.2
Printing	8,285	39,000	27.5	27.3
Pottery	1,804	20,000	60.6	59.0
Distributive Unions	18,357	62,000	41.9	7.6
Food and Tobacco	3,317	7,000	15.8	28.9
General Labour Unions (includes munitions)	23,534	216,000	19.6	-
Total (with others not listed above)	357,956	1,086,000	17.0	19.9

* The low figure for women trade unionists as a percentage of "all female workers" almost certainly derives from a calculation based on all women in the industry - i.e. including Scotland and West of England.

In Drake (1921) op.cit.

Table 16 - Percentage Increases in Union Membership 1914-1918

Year	GUTW (1914 n=12,950)	All unions (1914 n=4,145,000)	TUC affiliated (1914 n=2,682,357)
1915	15.8	5.0	6.0
1916	1.8	6.0	7.9
1917	39.2	18.0	47.0*
1918	96.8	18.0	16.0
1914/18	223.0	157.0	196.0

*During this period there was a rapid increase in TUC affiliations.

Table 17 - Average Earnings per Head per Week and the Mean Wage per Annum in 1924 for Men and Women

Section and District	Average Weekly Wage per Head			Average wage per annum
	Male s.	Female s.	Total s.	s.
Wool sorting and combing	65.00	30.08	63.28	157.64
Wool combing	54.48	29.24	47.80	129.94
Worsted spinning				
Bradford	46.52	28.06	34.56	86.08
Keighley	45.08	28.76	36.50	85.17
Halifax	42.60	27.94	32.60	79.36
Leeds	46.50	30.44	35.30	83.37
Worsted manufacturing				
Bradford	56.48	32.32	39.52	99.73
Commission Manufacturers	53.92	34.28	37.88	76.70
Keighley	59.58	33.02	39.58	95.91
Halifax	59.56	31.88	37.54	96.50
Huddersfield	52.28	32.90	39.28	100.75
Woollen manufacturing				
Heavy woollen	58.74	29.58	43.48	105.17
Huddersfield	61.60	38.50	50.34	121.97
Huddersfield yarn spinners	55.14	30.40	48.50	119.76
Yeadon and Guiseley	67.24	33.22	49.96	118.30

Figures from Wood (1927) op.cit., Appendix III, pp.316-17.

APPENDIX 2

Societies and Unions in the West Riding Textile Industry

	Registered/ formed	Existing 1914	Existing 1918	1915 TUC affiliated
Bradford and District Power loom Overlookers' Society	1844	*	*	
Leeds and District Willeyers and Fettlers	1871	*	*	
Huddersfield Power loom Tuners' Society	1861 (amalgamated with Dewsbury tuners)	*	*	
Halifax Power Loom Overlookers	1866	*	*	
Yorkshire Twisters and Drawers-in Trade and Friendly Society	1866	*	*	
Leeds and Morley Power loom Overlookers' Society	1866 (dissolved ?1907)			
National Union of Woolsorters	1889	*	*	*
Bradford and District Machine Woolcombers	1890	*	*	*
Yeadon and Guiseley District Fettlers	1890 (dissolved 1893)			
General Union of Textile Workers	1881	*	*	*
Bradford and District Warp Dressers' Association	1887	*	*	
Halifax and District Warp Dressers' Association	1887	*	*	
Yeadon, Guiseley and District Factory Workers' Association	1887	*	*	
Skipton and District Warp Dressers' Association	1891	*	*	
Yorkshire Blanket Raisers' Association	1895	*	*	
Huddersfield Healders and Twisters' Trades and Friendly Association	1896	*	*	
Huddersfield Warehousemen	1875	*	*	
Bradford Pressers	1876 (not after 1907?)			

Leeds, Halifax and Bradford Stuff Pressers	1880	*	*	
Bradford Stuff Makers Up	1843	*	*	
Huddersfield and District Cloth Pressers	1872	*	*	
Amalgamated Stuff and Woollen Warehousemen	1894	*	*	*
Union of Weftmen Piece Takers-in and Textile Daymen	?	*		
Yorkshire Managers and Overlookers	?	*	*	
Leeds Power loom Overlookers Mutual Improvement Society	?	*	*	
Saddleworth Weavers and Woollen Textile Workers' Association	1894	*	*	
Huddersfield, Bradford and Barnsley Dyers (later National Association of Dyers and Finishers)	1851	*	*	*
Amalgamated Society of Dyers, Bleachers and Kindred Trades	1878	*	*	*
Bradford and District Wool, Top and Noil Warehousemen	1899	*	*	
Bradford Woolsorters' Society	1838	*	*	
Leeds Cloth Pressers	1864	*	*	
Huddersfield and District Warpers	1907	*	*	
Huddersfield and District Scribbling Overlookers	?		*	
Keighley and District Power loom Overlookers	1908 (split from Halifax)		*	
Bradford and District (No. 2) Overlookers and Managers (amalgamated in 1911 with Bradford and District Overlookers' Provident Society to form the Bradford and District Managers' and Overlookers' Society)	1883			

APPENDIX 3

Some pre-war examples of co-partnership schemes in the West Riding wool textile industry

The few examples of partnership schemes which were flourishing in the pre-war period tended to enjoy only a mixed reputation with labour. Bristow[1] argues, that profit-sharing was an attempt by employers, mainly, to replace class consciousness with 'enterprise consciousness'. In the period of labour unrest before the war, its popularity grew amongst employers. In 1912, 297 M.P.'s signed a memorandum to Asquith, then Prime Minister, requesting a Royal Commission on co-partnership. Between 1865 and 1929 when the number of schemes was greatest, 635 were implemented. Prominent industrialists such as Mond, Armstrong, Lever and Rowntree were amongst those who supported the idea and movement. Within the woollen industry of the West Riding there were two long-lived schemes which, though very different in structure and intent, attempted to involve the workforce in the fortunes of the enterprise. Both were profit-sharing, though only one could reasonably be described as co-partnership. In general, schemes varied in their attitudes towards trade unions. Many were specifically anti-union in intent.

The scheme adopted by J.T. and J. Taylor of Batley in 1892,[2] was typical in many ways of employer thinking on the subject of worker participation. By 1896, when the firm became a limited company, the scheme, under the control of Theodore Cooke Taylor, had been extended to cover all personnel. After all expenses had been met and interest on capital paid, the surplus was to be divided between capital and labour. The basis of payment was that each pound of wage and each

pound of nominal capital was to receive the same percentage. In the case of payment on wages, the amount was known as the 'bonus'. Certain limitations as to age and service were involved in calculations of the amount due. Payments were generally speaking made as shares in the company, not in cash. Trade union membership while not opposed, was not encouraged by T.C. Taylor. In 1912, those warpers who had taken part in an official dispute were not taken back into the firm and their shares were frozen.

In contrast, the co-partnership scheme of Wm. Thomson and Sons of Huddersfield was based not only on profit-sharing, but in a degree of power sharing too. Taylor, not an advocate of a workers' say in management, was critical of Thomson's scheme. The co-partnership firm run by George Thomson in Huddersfield had the support of the textile union, which has 'several thousand pounds invested or on loan in the concern',(3) by 1914. All but two of the directors were members of the GUTW, including George Thomson himself. The majority of the workforce were also members. Allen Gee, the union's general secretary, had been a director of the firm since the scheme had been introduced and later became chairman.

George Thomson had entered his father's cloth merchant's warehouse and had begun manufacturing woollen cloth in about 1860 in partnership with his father. A leading member of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute, of the Huddersfield Liberal Association and twice Mayor of the town, he had come to hear of John Ruskin's work and later became a friend of the writer. In 1909, he had been elected Master of the Guild of St. George which had been founded by Ruskin in 1871. He became a keen advocate of Co-operation and was president of the Co-operative Congress in 1895. His scheme differed greatly from T.C. Taylor's in

that from the beginning, in 1886, when the family business at Deighton was transformed into co-partnership, the workers were not only shareholders, but also voters at the annual and half yearly meetings which were held in the company's warehouse. Directors could, and were, elected from amongst the workforce itself. In addition to the Textile union, the Trades Council and a number of local co-operative societies were also shareholders. The profit-sharing side of the scheme was fulfilled through the division of profits at the end of the year. Half the profits went to labour and half went to 'purchases and special purposes'.(4) Under normal conditions and during most years, the profits allowed for a payment of 5 per cent. George Thomson and his family supplied the loan capital, which, according to the constitution could only be paid out if the interest remained unpaid for two consecutive years. This was later to lead to criticism from the local BSP paper the Worker. Noting the thousands of pounds invested in the concern by the Textile union, it asked why the private shareholders had not been bought out and the capitalist eliminated. It concluded, 'Co-partnership is a fraud'.(5)

Thomson's firm was a great deal smaller than that of T.C. Taylors, employing in the region of only 100 to 140 persons, where Taylor employed six times that number.(6) This perhaps helped to maintain the loyalty which the scheme received from amongst its members. In lean years, shareholders had attempted to return their dividends,(7) however, these were not accepted by the management.

In addition to ideals of co-partnership and profit-sharing, Thomson, unlike Taylor, had attempted to put into practice Ruskinian ideas of production and labour. In mixing these with turn of the century issues concerning methods of pay and women's work, Thomson's mill must have

appeared a curious anomaly in the Huddersfield business community. These were, however, the very features which the Textile union's leadership held dear. Six years after the inception of the scheme, a fund for the sick and elderly had been started. This provided for the compulsory retirement of women at fifty five and for men at seventy years of age, with a pension. Sick benefits, relating to amount of wage earned and a death grant for the family of a deceased worker were also included. In addition, 1893 saw the introduction of an eight hour day and fixed weekly wage for all.(8) This latter was at the time unusual in the textile industry where there was notorious inconsistency in the weekly amounts paid to workers.

Two other characteristics of the scheme are worth mentioning. Firstly, Thomson's aim to produce nothing but cloth made of pure wool. According to Turner, 'Not an ounce of shoddy ever goes into the place'.(9) It is not recorded whether the principle was upheld in the war years, when production turned to khaki. The other major differentiating characteristic lay in the composition of the workforce. No married women were employed at Thomson's as a matter of principle. Interviewed by the Westminster Gazette in 1894, Thomson explained that:

> '... we object to married women working in the mill. We think it altogether wrong that wives and mothers should leave their homes and children to come to the mills.' (10)

Similarly, half-timers were not employed. Under war-time conditions this meant that the places of men on military service were kept open and their wages, less army pay, were fully made up.(11) Thomson's mill actually looked different to others in the industry, as a journalist observer noted:

> 'Crossing over to the weaving room ... there appeared a greater proportion of men employed to women, as things go today, in the woollen mills, and ... there were no young children.'

Gee explained to the journalist that:

> '... while other firms had replaced men wholesale by women at lower wages, they had very largely resisted the innovation.' (12)

There were other Yorkshire examples of co-partnership, co-operation and profit-sharing at this time. There was, for example, the scheme worked out by the Bradford Dyers' Association in 1912, after a period of poor labour relations and affecting 3,600 out of the 9,000 employed.[13] What is interesting about the Thomson firm is that it was in the manufacturing side of the textile industry and the extent to which the union was involved. Quite certainly, the scheme represented something of an ideal to leading members of the union and helps shed some light on their attitudes towards industrial democracy and the roles of men and women workers in the productive system.

Notes

1. Bristow, E., "Profit Sharing and Labour Unrest", in Brown, K., Essays in Anti-labour History, (1974).

2. Described in Pollard, S.,and Turner, R., "Profit-sharing and Autocracy: The case of J.T. and J. Taylor of Batley, Woollen Manufacturers, 1892-1966", in Business History, Vol XVIII, No 1, 1976.

3. Yorkshire Factory Times, 28.1.15, Report of the Annual Meeting of Wm. Thomson and Sons Ltd., Huddersfield. The yearly statement of accounts of the Heavy Woollen District of the Textile Union, from December 20, 1915 to December 18, 1916, shows that the district had a £1,500 loan with W. Thomson's and £10.00 in shares. (Statement in Ben Turner's scrapbook, deposited in Huddersfield Local History Library.)

4. "An Interesting Industrial Experiment: An interview with its founder", Pamphlet reprinted from the Westminster Gazette, March 2, 1894.

5. Huddersfield Worker, 10.7.15.

6. Pollard and Turner, (1976) op.cit., p.5.

7. "An Ideal Co-partnership" Ben Turner, reprinted from the Sunday Chronicle, 7.3.09.

8. "Twenty-one years' Co-partnership of William Thomson and Sons Ltd., Huddersfield", (1908). These and other previously mentioned pamphlets are to be found among the papers of George Thomson, in Huddersfield Local History Library Archive.

9. "An Ideal Co-partnership" (1909) op.cit.

10. "An Interesting Industrial Experiment" (1894) op.cit.

11. Yorkshire Factory Times, 27.1.16, Thomson and Son's 29th Annual Report.

12. "An Interesting Industrial Experiment" (1894) op.cit.

13. Described in Bristow, op.cit. At Reuben Gaunt and Sons. Limited, Springfield Mills, Farsley, a form of industrial democracy had been in operation since 1907. The firm had been run by a Board of Directors since becoming a limited liability company in 1896. The Institute Committee formed in 1907, later absorbed into the Welfare Committee, consisted of 12 members nominated and elected by the workers and 4 members nominated and elected by the Directors and departmental heads. It was concerned mainly with discussing conditions of work. In 1909 a Factory council was formed, appointed by the Board of Directors and consisting of two directors and 7 heads of departments. The functions of the Factory council were to draw up operable principles of management. It was found that there was some reluctance to talk freely, consequently meetings of workers were held. In January 1917, a works committee

was formed to solve problems of representivity and communication. Each department elected three representatives to go forward to the works committee. While the workers were free to elect whoever they wished, emphasis was placed on the need for workers with length and continuity of service to be elected. The committees were elected for 18 months and discussed wages, overtime and conditions. Emphasis was placed on the need for a good working atmosphere as a means to producing a better quality product, in this case, yarn. (Described in a Ministry of Labour Industrial Report, No 2, March 1918.)

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN THIS MILL

(As agreed upon between the Huddersfield & District Yarn Spinners' Association and the General Union of Weavers & Textile Workers).

1. No **child** or **young person** can be employed here without having first produced a certificate of age or other qualification for work. Such certificate must be presented in the office.

2. **One week's notice** will be given and required in the case of any operative being dismissed from, or leaving, this mill, such notice to be given at the end of the day on which wages are made up. In case of wilful neglect of duty or gross misconduct, an operative will render himself or herself liable to instant dismissal. This rule shall not apply to night workers.

Any person absenting himself or herself from work without previously having received permission to do so, or being able to satisfy his or her employer of the existence of a good reason for his or her inability to attend, will be liable to instant dismissal. In case of sickness, notice of the person's inability to attend must be sent as soon as possible.

3. All workpeople must be in their respective places at the proper time for starting work. Each person will be expected to take all reasonable care of machinery placed in his or her care, and be held responsible for work passing through his or her hands, and will be answerable for damage thereto arising from carelessness or wilful neglect.

4. Hours of employment as posted in the Abstract.

5. **Smoking** on these premises is strictly forbidden. Anyone breaking this rule will be liable to instant dismissal.

6. All persons employed in these works must conform to the list of holidays posted.

7. All persons working in these mills are hereby cautioned against cleaning any part of the machinery whilst in motion, a practice which is attended with danger and is strictly forbidden.

8. Young persons, that is everybody under 18 years of age, and all females, are forbidden to do any kind of work during meal hours.

9. Workpeople must remain at their work, and not crowd the landings or staircases before closing or meal times.

10. Any gas needed must be lighted by the foremen only, and with a covered lamp. Matches must not in any case be used, or naked lights.

In the event of any operative feeling aggrieved at his or her instant dismissal, or in the event of any operative leaving without giving the notice here agreed upon, the respective parties may bring the matter before their respective Associations, who, unless a settlement is mutually arrived at between the secretaries and the parties concerned, shall require the appointment within seven days of a Joint Committee of the two Associations for consideration and determination of the matter. This Joint Committee shall have full powers of settlement, and any settlement arrived by it shall be final and binding. Neither Association shall support or uphold any member in violation or repudiation of any decision of the Joint Committee.

SIGNED,

GEORGE WOOD,
Secretary, Huddersfield & District Yarn Spinners' Association.

April 1st, 1908.

ALLEN GEE,
Secretary, General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers.

Notice of Terms of Contract under the Truck Act, 1896.—Any person employed in this Factory who wilfully or negligently damages or causes injury to the work or other property of the Employers is liable to a deduction from wages of a sum which does not exceed the damage or loss occasioned to the Employers by his or her act or omission, and is fair and reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

THE ABOVE RULES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

SIGNED,

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APPENDIX 5

Agreement for regulating the Wages and other conditions of Labour for OPERATIVES employed in WOOLLEN AND WORSTED MANUFACTURE in the Huddersfield District.

GENERAL.

1. This Agreement shall come into force for and from the first full pay after acceptance, and, subject to the exceptions named in Clause 12, shall remain in force until October 1st, 1915, and shall be subject to three months' notice in writing, to expire at that date or any time after, of any alteration desired by any party to it.

2. The wages paid to any worker who is infirm, or otherwise incompetent, shall be left to private adjustment between the employer and such worker.

3. Should any dispute arise between any employer and any class or classes of operatives as to the proper interpretation of the terms of this Agreement, or as to the rate of wages payable under it, such dispute shall be submitted by the employer or operatives concerned to a Joint Committee of the Association of which the employer is a member and of the Trade Union for settlement, and the decision of that Committee shall be binding on both employer and workers.

4. In the payment for overtime each day shall stand by itself, but no operative shall be entitled to claim overtime rates on a day when he loses time of his own accord until such lost time has been made up.

5. Wages paid to workpeople on the night shift shall be the same as for day labour, except that if a man employed on the day-shift is transferred to the night shift at the employer's instance he shall not be considered to have left his day employment, but shall be paid ½d. per hour above his ordinary day rate during such time as he is employed on the night shift, and on the termination of such employment his day job shall be restored to him.

DYEING, MILLING, AND SCOURING.

6. Men on arriving at 22 years of age shall receive their standard or scheduled rate.

7. Dyers' labourers shall be paid at the rate of 6¼d. per hour.

8. Millers, Scourers, Whizzers, and Wringers shall be paid at the rate of 6d. per hour

9. Overtime shall be paid at the rate of time-and-a-quarter from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., and at the rate of time-and-a-half after 7 p.m.

10. Productive work shall cease in Dyeing, Milling, and Scouring one half-hour before the end of the normal week on Saturday noon. Where Drying operations, or, in emergency, warehouse operations, are worked on Saturday after the end of the normal factory week, overtime rates shall be paid at the rate of time-and-a-half. Drying operations shall cease not later than 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

11. The employers undertake to take the initiative in suggesting that the General Union of Textile Workers shall be represented at any negotiations which may be commenced with the National Society of Dyers and Finishers for the compilation of a schedule of minimum rates for the Finishing Department, and that failing such representation the employers will form with the General Union a similar Joint Committee for such purpose.

12. Clauses 6 to 11 of this Agreement shall be subject to three months' notice in writing of any alteration desired in them by either party to them.

CARDING AND SPINNING DEPARTMENTS.

13. Willeyers, Fettlers, Rag Packers, Rag Shakers, and Carbonisers shall be paid at the rate of 6d. per hour per week of 55½ hours, and overtime shall be paid for at the rate of 1d. per hour on ordinary rates for the first 2½ hours, and 2d. per hour afterwards. Time worked between 12 noon or 12-30 p.m. on Saturdays and 6 a.m. on Mondays shall be paid at the rate of 2d. per hour on ordinary rates.

The overtime rates here specified shall also apply to time workers named in Clauses 15, 16, 17, 22 and 23 herein.

14. Willeyers and Fettlers on piece-work shall receive an advance of 5% on their present rates.

15. Spinners on day rates, at present rated at 27s. or less per week of 55½ hours, shall receive an advance of 1s. per week, and those rated at more than 27s. per week, and less than 28s. per week of 55½ hours, shall receive such advance as will make their rates 28s. per week of 55½ hours.

16. Odd-men, including garnet machine tenters, shall receive an advance of 10%.

17. Advances shall be given to Rag Feeders.

18. Advances shall be given to Scribblers' Feeders and Piecers employed on night shift.

19. It shall be left to individual firms to settle advances under Clauses 17 and 18 with their work-people.

FIREMEN, GREASERS, AND UNDER-ENGINEMEN.

20. Firemen, Greasers, and Under-Enginemen, at present in receipt of 26s. per week or less, shall be advanced by 1s. per week, and those in receipt of more than 26s., and less than 27s., shall be advanced by such sum as will make their rate 27s. per week.

WEAVERS.

21. Joint Committees shall be formed of representatives of the Trade Union and of the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association, in the one case, and of the Trade Union and of the Woollen Manufacturers and Spinners' Association, in the other case, for the purpose of compiling scales for payment for weaving by a pick clock or counter. The employers undertake that such scales shall be an advance on the 1883 Women's Scales for women, with a percentage addition for men (similar to the existing practice). In the meantime an advance of 2½% shall be paid on all existing rates for men, and 2½% for women weavers on goods with woollen in the warp.

22. Pattern Weavers, employed on time-work and rated at less than 27s. per week of 55½ hours, shall receive an advance of 1s. per week, and Pattern Weavers employed on piece-work by the members of the Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association, shall receive an advance of 2½% on their existing rates.

23. Weft men on time rates, and at present rated at 24s. or less per week of 55½ hours, shall receive an advance of 1s. per week, and those rated at more than 24s. per week and less than 25s. per week of 55½ hours, shall receive such advance as will make their wages equal to 25s. per week of 55½ hours.

24. No operative in receipt of a rate of wages higher than those named in this Agreement shall suffer any reduction or other disadvantage thereby.

Date of acceptance of this Agreement, November 5th, 1913.

Signed,

On behalf of the Huddersfield and District Woollen Manufacturers and Spinners' Association,

WM. CROWTHER, President.
GEORGE H. WOOD, Secretary.

On behalf of the Fine Cloth Manufacturers' Association,

A. VICKERMAN PRIESTLEY, President.
CHARLES H. KAYE, Vice-President.
W. H. HUGHES, Secretary.

On behalf of the Huddersfield and District Yarn Spinners' Association,

JOHN W. LAWTON, President.
GEORGE H. WOOD, Secretary.

On behalf of the General Union of Textile Workers,

BEN TURNER, President.
HARRIS HOYLE.
FRED PYKE.
HAROLD FALLAS.
WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON.
BENJN. LITTLEWOOD.
ALLEN GEE, Secretary.

APPENDIX 6

Yorkshire Factory Times. 22nd April.1909.

Sweating in Yorkshire Textile Mills.
An open letter to the Textile Workers of the West Riding.

My Friends,

Will you be offended,I wonder, or will you take it in good part,if I point out to you a few patent facts about yoursleves, and the condition of labour in the trade you a few patent facts about yourselves, and the condition of labour in the trade you work in ? I am not one of you, and you may think it impertinence that an outsider should make even obvious suggestions as to what you should do. But onlookers often see most of the game - they can at least see both sides if they keep their eyes open - and I can claim some personal knowledge of the staple industry of the West Riding, even if I don't work in it.

First,take consideration of the state of your organisation. Is it strong? Is it efficient? Like the immortal curate's egg it is - in parts. But the parts are small. The dyers have managed to make their Unions strong,with the result that whatever happens they cannot be ignored when employers are ordering things as they want them. Even a powerful trust finds it advantageous to consult with and negotiate with, and come to a collective agreement with the Trade Unions. Twenty-six shillings may not be a princely wage for 54 hours work, but it is a living wage, and the dyers would not be receiving it if they had not a strong combination. The wool sorters,too, have by dint of long struggling and guerilla warfare, managed to get their wages up to something approaching a skilled man's normal wage,but there's much left yet to be done, and a minimum wage of 8d. per hour for 50 hours,applicable to all the trade, is still a long way ahead. Those and one or two more are the good things which the Trade Unionists in the textile trade can point to as work done. How many are there which want doing?

I cannot answer this question, but I can tell you of some things which badly need to be done. The first is the abolition of half-time labour. Some people will tell you it cannot be done; many of you will trot out the old arguments that you went into the mill as half-timers and are none the worse for it, which is tommy-rot, for you are; that the half-timers wage is often a great consideration to the widowed mother, or the sweated father, and that it is necessary to start young if work is to be learnt. In reply to that,I unhesitatingly say that it can be abolished (Huddersfield has done it), and that the industry which depends on the life-blood of little children for its wages and profits is not worth having. Far better for it to be blown off the face of the earth than remain here. I admit the difficulty where the bread-winner of the family is taken from it, but then the support of those who are left is the concern of the community which will benefit by the wealth the little ones will produce when they get older, and the community should not shirk its responsibilities. No, let us demand that the half-time system as we know it at present be abolished. A better one is half-time at technical schools and half time learning a skilled occupation in the mill, after the seventh standard has been passed, and the mind and body have been cultivated and trained, will do, certainly, but the present one, dying, I am glad to say, but too slowly,' should come to its end at once.

There are worse evils than this, however. A few weeks ago there was issued from the press a Government publication of high authority,called "Earnings and Hours Enquiry 1: Textile Trades in 1906". This Blue-book consists of a report on wages in the textile trade, founded on thousands of returns taken direct from

the employers' wage books. Of course, it is possible that some employers did not tell the truth, and put their wages either too high or too low, but as they were required to state the wages separately of each individual operative they employed, I have little doubt that the averages when these thousands of statements were all worked up together would be reliable. At any rate it is put forward on Government authority, and we expect the Government officials with nothing else to do to be sure of their facts. Well, what do we find in this blue-book? All the statements are given, first for those who worked bare full time, and second for all, including those who worked either short time or overtime. Now, in a busy year like 1906, when trade was good, there was both overtime and shortime, and it is safe to say that on the whole, if we take these in we shall refer to the conditions which are better than average - better, that is, than in a year of just ordinary trade. It is years since there was less shorttime than during the recent boom time. The report defines a man as a male of 20 years and up, and a woman as a female of 18 years and up. Not every male earns a man's wage at 20 nor every female a woman's wage at 18, but on the whole these wages fairly represent the time when a worker earns as much as he or she ever will earn unless some other trade is gone into. What then does the report say? It says that out of 31,000 men, 800 earn under 14s. a week, 800 more earn between 12s and 15s, and 4,600 earn between 15s and 20s. Think of it, 5,200, or about one in five men earn less than a pound a week, and over 2,000 more earn between 20s. and 24s. a week. 7,300 men earn less than the 21s. necessary, according to Mr.Chas.Booth, Mr.B.S.Rowntree and other great sociologists, for a bare subsistence. Some of these will be oldish lads learning the trade, and some old men kept on by a kindly employer at a 'hospital job', but mainly they are wool washers, combers, piecers (not many), stuff weavers and general labourers. Some of them, too are willeyers, but not in the three large woollen districts. This is bad enough but there are 8,000 women earning less than 10s. a week and over 21,000 earning less than 12s. a week. Over 40 per cent have less than 12s. a week, grown women! and most of them will never earn more unless something is done. Now, one thing is quite certain, that a woman earning less than 12s. a week doesn't get enough wage to feed her and clothe her thoroughly and efficiently. Do you know what a parasite is? My dictionary says it is an animal which lives on, and at the expense,of other animals. This,however, is not the only kind of parasite. There are industries that live on, and at the expense of, other industries, and any industry that does not pay its workers enough to live on decently, feed, clothe, and house them properly and efficiently is a parasite. It is living at the expense of other industries. Every woman who does not earn enough to live on properly, is either not living decently, and in that case the industry that employs her is a parasite preying on the whole community, or she does, and in that case it is at the expense of somebody employed in another industry and the industry that employs her is a parasite on the industry which employs the one who subsidises her. I am not going to say that the textile trade is parasitic, but some of it is, and that is the evil. Put bluntly, there is sweating going on,and it wants abolishing. Have you realised that? There are over 2,000 women worsted spinners in Bradford earning 9s9d. a week - the best paid getting ,perhaps 12s, mostly 11s, and the worst paid 8s. and 9s. Are they sweated? Is this parasitism? In Keighley, on the same work, the average is 11s. and the best paid get upwards of 12s.6d. If Keighley employers can afford to pay this and compete on the open market cannot Bradford employers pay it? Besides, I dare wager that the Keighley employers find it pays them best. Political economists have a phrase called "The Economy of High Wages" and it means that the lowest paid labour is not necessarily the cheapest, nor the best paid necessarily the dearest.

Well,what is to be done? I'll tell you what I think ought to be done. I think the best ages paid ought to be the standard, and a crusade ought to be started by your leaders and taken up with might and main by the rank and file to get this done. Every able-bodied man ought to have not less than a pound or a guinea a week, and every able-bodied woman ought to have 12s. If he or she is on piece work, then the scales ought to be such that more, not less, than this ought to be earned.

Can it be done? It can if you will it. Taking all the 7,000 odd women employed in Huddersfield, they earn on an average 16s.5d. a week short time and full time, taken together. Taking only those working full time, the average is 17s.1d. while in the whole of Yorkshire otherwise it is about 13s.6d. I'll give you some of the figures, Dewsbury and Batley averaged 15s., Leeds 13s.9d. Halifax 12s.4d.,Bradford 12s.7d.,Keighley 13s.6d.,and other miscellaneous Yorkshire districts 12s.1d. Even in the Huddersfield District, there are about 850 women averaging under 12s. a week, and except the winders on time wages, who are usually not all able-bodied, those are practically all employed in worsted spinning. Now worsted spinning is like rag grinding in the cotton trade, and in that trade in Lancashire the average is about 15s. a week. If Lancashire can pay a living wage,Yorkshire can. The employers will say that the work women do in worsted spinning is only worth 9s. or 10s. a week, in comparison with what they do in ring spinning in Lancashire. Well, what if it is? Do you know what this means? It means that they have been able to get such a supply of low priced labour that they haven't had to worry about making it efficient labour. That's their look out. If the spinner isn't worth more because she minds such a small number of spindles, let them demand better labour, give her more spindles, and pay her for it. "But",they will reply, "She can't mind more". Perhaps not at present, but let them improve the self-acting motions and make the machine more efficient and then she can. Make flesh and blood dearer and the employer will have to be efficient in his machinery and organisation, or go under. The same thing applies to other branches of the trade. Why does a weaver in Bradford earn only 13s.10d. and,when she works full time, at Leeds 14s. At Dewsbury and Batley 15s.4d., while in Huddersfield she would earn 19s.6d. Why does a scribblers feeder earn 14s.3d. in Huddersfield and only 13s. elsewhere? I'll tell you, simply because you are not combined- simply because you do not enforce the best conditions on all employees alike. Employees are not in business for philanthropy, they are in it for profit, and they only pay just what wages workers will take. Even the best employers cannot pay more than their competitors if they want to keep out of the bankcruptcy court. Do you know, then, what I think you ought to do? It is this. Take the Huddersfield wages conditions and make all the employers elsewhere pay them. A pretty wholesale demand eh? Well it can be done. Of course, there are little matters which want putting straight in the Huddersfield District, so add to your demands not less than 12s. a week for our able-bodied woman, and 21s. a week for our able-bodied man, with exceptions (which would do no harm) for the aged, and make these wages the lowest to be paid anywhere in the West Riding.

How can this be done? First, join your Trade Union. It is shameful the way you neglect this simple duty to your fellows and yourselves. I know that the 7,300 men with less than a guinea a week and the 21,000 women with less than 12s. a week cannot pay Union contributions without something else going short, but it's a good investment,if only for the out-of-work pay. One thing is certain, if you aren't organised you won't get my modest programme carried out. Then when you are in it, tell your leaders over and over again, in good plain Yorkshire,that the programme for the Union must be to abolish sweating. In the meantime do one thing

yourselves, and that is, keep your children at school until they are at full time age. There are 2,300 boys and 2,500 girls working half-time in the trade, earning 3s.8d. a week. I know 3.8d. means nearly the little one's food, and that this is a consideration where there are too many to keep on little wages. But those wages are so little because the children go to the mill. They keep your own wages down,because employers won't pay a full-grown lass 10s.or 12s. if he can get two little ones for 3s.8d. each, or 7s.4d. the two. Second, don't marry unless your man is going to earn enough to keep you at home, at any rate after baby comes, and then stay at home so as not to keep down the wages of the unmarried ones. It's no use a mother competing to keep down the wages of her daughter, is it? And, its not fair to the wee bairn to leave it without a mother's milk and a mother's care all day. Lots of babies die because the mother has to go to the mill, and as long as mothers put up with low wages, so long will they have to go to the mill. Last, and not least, it's not fair to the Huddersfield women who average 17s.a week for workers in other districts to compete with them on wages of 12s. and 13s. a week. As to weaving, surely to work in Bradford, Leeds, Halifax and Dewsbury and Batley for 14s. and 15s. a week is not fair to Huddersfield women weavers at 19s.6d. , and men weavers at 26s.6d. nor to the Huddersfield employers who pay these wages.

I hope I've made myself understood. I've spoken plainly, but plain speaking pays best where wrong is done, and to work for less than keeps the body well and healthy is to do wrong to yourselves, to those you compete against, who earn more, and what is worst of all to the w hole community, who in the long run have to pay the cost.

Believe me to be sincerely your friend,

A WELL WISHER.

APPENDIX 7

GUTW Membership Figures

Year	TUC Annual Report	Board of Trade	
		Men	Women
1892	5780	4700	
1893	5000	4000	
1894	2600	4000	
1895	3030	3000	
1896	2658	2775	
1897	2500	2300	
1898	3100	2300	
1899	2650	2123	
1900	2534	1814	
1901	1300	1000	568
1902	2360	1200	900
1903	3060	800	960
1904	2830	900	631
1905	3350	900	734
1906	2700	2000	1905
1907	6020	2200	2000
1908	4150	2500	1850
1909	3819	2000	1500
1910	3990	2535	2000
1911	5300		
1912	5710		
1913	7140		
1914	12950		
1915	15000		
1916	15268		
1917	21260		
1918	41850		
1919	63828		
1920	90996		
1921	32560		

APPENDIX 8

Question Sheet

I Family

1. Respondent's name, age, date of birth, marital status and date of marriage.

2. What was your father's job? Where did he work? Was he always in that job? Were there changes? When were these, before or after marriage, while the children were growing? Do you know why he changed his job? Did he ever do any casual work to earn extra money? Do you remember him being out of work when you were young?

3. What was your mother's job before she married? Did she work after she married? Where did she work? Did she change jobs? Do you know why this was?

4. Where did your mother and father come from?

II Childhood

1. Where did you live as a child? Establish moves through to getting married-

2. What sort of house or houses would these be?
   - how many rooms?
   - was there a garden?
   - was it in a row?
   - was there a yard - was it shared?
   - what was the kitchen like?
   Brothers and sisters - family size - spacing - range of ages.

3. Did you help at home? What were your tasks? Did your brothers and sisters have tasks? What were these?

4. Did your mother work when you were young?
   If yes - what was her job?
   If not at home - who looked after you?
   Did your mother do paid work at home like washing, baking or mending clothes?

5. Was your mother an easy person to talk to? Was she an affectionate person?
   Same for father - repeat question.
   Could you take worries to either of them? Was there anyone else in your family you could talk to easily?

6. Did your parents rent the house?
   If yes - who was the landlord - private or mill owned?

7. When you were a child did you ever have the feeling that your parents were struggling to make ends meet? Did you have spending

money? Was it given you? Did you have to earn it? How could you earn it? Did you ever go on holiday? What amusements did you have as a family? - walks, picnics, singsongs, concerts, etc.

8. Did your parents go to the church or the chapel? What was its name and which denomination? Were they active members - did they help as well as go to services? As a child how often would you go on a Sunday?

9. When you were young were any of your brothers and sisters already in work? What were their jobs? Where did they work?

III School

1. What school did you go to? Establish any changes until 13.

2. Did you like school? What did you like about it? What things did you not like?

3. What sort of things did the teachers emphasise? Punctuality, manners, tidiness, ways of speaking?

4. What did your parents think of education?

5. Did you have a chance to stay on at school after 13?
If no - would you have liked to have done?
If yes - why did you not?

6. When did you leave, how old were you? Did you take the exam to work half time? Did you pass first time?

7. Before you left school did the teachers talk to you about going into work? What sort of things did they say to you?

8. Did you have a group of friends at school? Did you hope to find jobs together with them?

9. How long was it between leaving school and starting work?

10. Was there any talk of your not going into the mill?

IV Into Work

(This section for twister, winders, burlers, half timers, etc. If not in one of these 'junior' jobs then proceed straight from 1 to the next section.)

1. What was your first job?
If not mill - how did you get it? and then follow through job history to first mill job - (then unless winder or twister, etc. go straight to section V).
If mill - did you start half-time? What was this like? Hours, wages, etc.
How did you get this job?

If through parents - why would they go there?
If sister/relative - where did they work in that mill?

2. What were your hours? Did you have paid holidays? How long was the mill shut down for?

3. Where you worked were there many of your schoolmates there with you? How did you find mill-life after school?

4. Had you ever seen the inside of a mill before starting work? taking lunches in, etc.

5. What did you do in your first job? Were you taught? Who taught you? Did you work with your sister, mother, cousin, friend, etc.?

6. What were your wages at first? Did you ever get any extra from the older workers for being a fast worker? eg. bringing coppins, keeping weavers supplied, etc.

7. Did you think you were paid enough?

8. If you wanted an increase - who would you go to?

9. What were the bosses like? Were they strict with you little ones when you started?

10. Do you remember playing games, tricks, having fun while you were at work?

11. Can you remeber the day you took home your first wage? Who was it given to? How much did you have for yourself? Who decided that?

V Work

1. (For twisters, burlers, winders, etc.)
What was your next job? How old were you when you changed? How did you get it? Did you feel this was a step up to being an adult worker? Did anyone teach you this job? Did you pay them for teaching you? How were wages arranged while you learned?

2. What were your hours then? What was your wage? Did you have paid holidays yet? Were you on a piece rate?

3. What happened if you had bad work in? Who could you complain to? Could you share it out? Do you remember losing money through bad work? What happened? Did anyone at home tell you what to do if work? What happened? Did anyone at home tell you what to do if things went wrong at work? What did they tell you? Did your workmates help too?

4. Do you remember competition at work? Competition for high wages - for good materials? Did everyone just get on with what they had to do?

5. When you got a bit older did you still give your wages to your mother first? How much did you get back? When did you start buying your own clothes or paying for your own amusements?

6. Who else was earning and living at home at that time? Did they give all their wages up too? How much did they have for themselves - did they keep it - or would they be given it back by your mother?
Did your father give all his wages to your mother - or did he give her a certain amount to manage on?

7. Did you make good friends at work? What sort of ages would the people be that you worked with? Would some jobs be kept for the oldest women? Did you ever have parties at work? What would these be for? What would you do?

8. If anyone at work was in some kind of trouble, could they talk it over with friends, get advice, e.g. getting married, expecting a baby, finding other jobs, etc.?

9. Did you work with a partner? How long would partnerships last? How was the wage worked out if you worked with a partner?

10. When you got older did you ever teach younger workers what to do? How would this affect your wage? Did you get any extra from the boss or the pupil to make up any drop in your wage?

11. What were the overlookers like? Did they use bad language? When would this happen? Do you ever remember anyone objecting? Do you remember a woman overlooker? If yes- how would she get this job?

12. Do you remember any favourites? How did people get to be favourites?

13. Can you describe the system of giving orders where you worked? Who gave out work? Who paid you your wages, who kept discipline, etc.? What did you call them - Mr. or first name, etc.

14. Did you ever work alongside or with a man? Would you be going the same job as him? Did you earn the same money? If not - who do you think you earned different amounts? Did you ever think this was unfair?

15. Some people say that workpeople used to be very keen on differences between the various jobs in the mills. Could you say which were thought to be the better jobs and which were the less popular? Where would you put your job in this? Did you like it better than most others - why was this?

16. Did you wear clogs to work? Did you wear a hat or a shawl? Who wore clogs to work? What jobs would they do?

17. Do you think millworkers like you belonged to any special class in the community? Where would millworkers like you come? Who would be less well-off and who would be considered superior? e.g. labourers, teachers, shopkeepers, ministers, vicars, etc.

18. If there were poorer people - why do you think they would be poor? What jobs would they do? Would there be big families to feed?

19. Did you ever meet the owner of the mill? What did you call him? Sir, Mr., etc. Did he often come into the mill? Did you feel he took an interest in the workers? Where did he live? Did he

provide any special treats for the workers?

20. Were there any favourite places to work at? Were some mills known to be the ones to avoid? What would these be like? Did you prefer to work at one place rather than another - what were the things that you preferred about this place?

21. Did you ever hear of anyone brought to work from outside the area by agents for the mill? Mills often sent out men seeking families of girls - especially in the mining area - did you ever hear of this?

22. Can you remember any rules where you worked? Where was this? What were the rules? Could you go to the toilet when you wanted to or did you have to ask? Who did you ask? What happened if you didn't feel well at work? If you were late in the morning were you ever locked out - how long for?

23. Were there fines at work? What for? Who did the fining?

24. Where did you eat your lunch? At home or at work? Was there a canteen or a restroom? Did you eat at your work place? Could you cook food or heat water? Did you have to pay for this? What sort of food would you eat for your dinner?

25. Do you remember any accidents at work? If they were little - what happened? If they were more serious - what happened?

26. Would you ever have considered going into service? Did you know anyone of your age in service? There must have been some houses near where you lived where servants were kept - where would these girls have come from if they weren't local?

VI The Union

1. Were you a member of a union?
If no - why did you not join?
If yes - what was its name? How old were you when you joined? Who asked you to join? Can you remember how much you paid each week? Did you pay it out of your wage or out of the money you kept back? Who did you give the money to? Who were the collectors? Did you ever do any job for the union?

2. Do you remember going to any meetings in your area or in Huddersfield? Were there ever any meetings outside the factory where you worked? When would these be?

3. Do you remember these names, Turner, Gee, Hoyle, Eastwood, Littlewood, Snowden, Mann, Grayson.

4. Were there any strikes or stoppages while you were at work? When were these?

5. If you had a complaint about bad work or any unpleasantness from an overlooker could you go to the union for help?
If yes - what would they do?
If no - why do you think this was?

6. Were any members of your family in a union - which union/s would these be? Do you remember talking about unions and such things at home?

7. Why do you think people joined unions in those days?

8. Wages and conditions have never been very good in textiles - why do you think this is?

VII The War

1. Do you remember the 1914-18 war starting - were you at work then? Where was that?

2. Do you remember if there were any changes at the mill following this?

3. Did you change your job in the mill after the outbreak of war? If yes - what to? Was it a man's job? What was it like? Were there older and younger men working with you? How did you get on with them?
If no - were you asked to change your job? Why did you not? Did you take on any extra tasks, eg. oiling looms, carrying pieces, etc.?

4. Did you ever think of going into munitions industries? They were supposed to make good money in that work during the war.

5. Did you work on khaki and government orders? Was the work very much different? How was it different? Could you make more money on war work? Did you ever talk about the government orders? Do you think people got to know which mills were getting contracts and which were not?

6. What were your wages during the war? Was this an improvement?

7. Do you remember your home life during the war being very different than before the war? Why was this - if it was? Do you think other families would be worse off - those with mostly sons for instance?

8. Do you remember the men leaving the mills for the army? Can you remember anyone being made/asked to leave? Did you ever have parties for them when they left? Who took their jobs?

9. Did many come from outside to work in the mills? Scarborough girls, Barnsley girls, cotton workers from Lancashire? What jobs did they do? Where did they live?

10. At the end of the war, what happened to your job? Was there short time? What about the men who had left to fight and who came back - did they get their jobs back? What about the war wages- were they kept up?

VIII Social Life

1. After work and at weekends what would you do in your spare time? - evening classes, concerts, picnics, bicycle rides, church activities, trips to Huddersfield, etc. Who would you do this with?

2. Were you still expected to help at home when you got in from work? What would you do? What did your brothers and sisters do?

3. Boys and girls often walked in the streets in the evenings, can you remember doing this? Where would you go? Was it always the same way? Were there different walks? What would these be? How would you decide which walk to go on? What would you do on a walk? Did your parents approve of this?

4. Did you go out with friends you made at work? Would these be girls or boys or both? Did your parents know your friends?

5. Did you ever go on holidays? Where to, how long for, with whom? Where would you stay?

IX Husband and Married Life (If married before 1918)

1. How did you meet your husband?

2. When was he born? Where was he born?

3. What was his job? Where did he work? What was his wage when you were first married?

4. What did your parents think of him when you first took him home?

5. How long were you courting?

6. When you had decided to get married were you allowed to save more of your wages towards a home of your own or did you still give most of your money to your mother? Were you able to save at all? Did you manage to buy much stuff before you were married?

7. Where was your first home? Was it rented? How big was it? What sort of a place - garden, kitchen, outside toilet, etc.? How many rooms?

8. Did you carry on working after you were married?

9. When were your children born? Establish age, spacing, etc.

10. What was it like when you had your first baby? Did you know what to expect?
If no - why do you think this was?
If yes - who had told you, mother, sister, workmates, etc.

11. When you were going to have your baby did you stop working - how long before? Afterwards did you go back to work?

If no - did you ever go back to work? When was this? Did you go back to the same job? Did you work at home for money? Could you manage on your husband's wage? Did he do any extra work, overtime, etc.? Did you have an allotment or grow your own vegetables?
If yes - went straight back to work - Who looked after your baby? How did you find someone? How much did you pay them?

12. When you were ill, who helped you in the house?

13. Did neighbours drop in for a chat and a cup of tea during the day? Was it a friendly area to live in?

14. After you were married what changes were they in your social life? Who did you see most of? Did you have your own friends? Did you usually go out together with other couples?

15. What sort of lives and jobs did you hope for for your children?

16. If you compare your life with what you know of your mother's when she was younger, working and bringing up a family would you say your life was easier or harder than hers? What differences were there?

APPENDIX 9

The Colne Valley Interviewees

Interview

1. Miss A., aged 17 in 1914, Father* worked on waterworks; eighth of nine children; employed as a twister; union member.

2. Mrs. B., aged 22 in 1914, Father cotton spinner; third of three children - two older brothers; employed as a woollen weaver. Never joined union.

3. Mrs. B., aged 14 in 1914, Father a teazer and feeder; second of five children; employed as piecer, then weaver; union member

4. Mrs. B., aged 16 in 1914, Father a dyer, mother a weaver; eldest of four children; employed as a weaver; union member.

5. Miss B., aged 27 in 1914, Father a quarry foreman; youngest of ten children; employed as a weaver; union member.

6. Mr. B., aged 13 in 1914, Father a cloth presser; second of four children; worked as woollen spinner; union member.

7. Mrs. H., aged 23 in 1914, Father a miner and labourer; eldest of six children - four sisters; had been doffer in worsted spinning mill, at home with baby in war, married in 1914; never joined union.

8. Mrs. H., aged 15 in 1914, Father a labourer, d.1912, mother worked in cotton mill; older of two sisters; employed as hankwinder; joined union after war.

9. Mrs. H., aged 17 in 1914, Father died when young, motherr woollen weaver; younger of two sisters; employed as weaver; joined union.

10. Mrs. H., aged 19 in 1914, Father teacher/smallholding owner/shopkeeper, mother domestic servant/shopkeeper; older of two sisters; joined union.

11. Mrs. L., aged 17 in 1914, Father road surveyor, left home; sixth of seven children; mender then weaver; joined union before war.

12. Mr. L., aged 15 in 1914, Father labourer/smallholding owner; second of seven children; piecer then weaver; joined union before war.

13. Miss M., aged 14 in 1914, Parent shopkeepers; third of three sisters; burler; may have joined union in war.

14. Mrs. O., aged 26 in 1914, Father glassblower/ill, mother untrained midwife; rover in worsted spinning mill; second of ten children - five sisters; married in 1909; not a union members.

15. Mrs. Q., aged 15 in 1914, Father foreman wool washer; rover in spinning mill then hankwinder; fourth of six girls; not a union member.

16. Mrs. T., aged 11 in 1914, Father driver for haulage firm, mother a weaver; clerker to a warper; only child; joined union after war.

17. Miss V., aged 13 in 1914, Father a weaver; weaver in woollen mill; sixth of nine children - five older brothers; joined union.

18. Mrs. W., aged 14 in 1914, Parents separated; hankwinder; oldest of three girls; joined union.

19. Miss W., aged 13 in 1914, Father a weaver; youngest of six children; weaver; joined union.

20. Mrs. T., 18 in 1914, Father weaver, d.1900; twister in worsted spinning mill; youngest of four girls; not a union member.

21. Mrs. L., 13 in 1914, Father miner/retired with miners' disease; fifth of six girls; worked in cotton mill; not a textile union member.

*Father's occupation only is given where the mother did not work in the worker's lifetime.

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