

North East Group
for the Study of
LABOUR HISTORY

BULLETIN No. 3

October 1969

NORTH EAST GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

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OCTOBER 1969

Committee of the Group :

Chairman Professor E. Allen (University of Durham)
Vice - Chairman S. Chaplin
Secretaries J.F. Clarke (Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic)
 A. Potts (- do -)
Treasurer T.P. MacDermott (W.E.A.)

E. Barnett
D. Bythell (University of Durham)
D.J. Rowe. (University of Newcastle upon Tyne)

Bulletin editors : J.F. Clarke
 D.J. Rowe

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THE NORTH EAST GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

Name The name of the group shall be the North East Group for the Study of Labour History.

- Objects
- a) To bring together those interested in research into labour history in the north east.
 - b) To encourage and help organize such research.
 - c) To assist in the preservation of existing records.
 - d) To organize support for these aims by such means as seminars, lectures, bibliographical guides etc.

Membership Membership shall be open to all those actively interested in the aims of the Group.

Subscriptions The annual subscription shall be 5/- per individual or institution. This shall fall due on 1st January each year.

Officers and Committee

The business of the Group shall be conducted by a Committee composed of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and two ordinary members. The committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members. The committee and officers shall be elected at the annual general meeting.

Finance All money raised by or on behalf of the Group shall be applied to further the above objects. An audited account shall be presented to the annual general meeting.

Enquiries concerning the Group should be sent to the Secretary, J.F. Clarke, Department of Humanities, Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, 1 Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST.

Annual Report for 1968

The activities of the Group for 1968 are set out below:-

Committee.

At the annual general meeting the committee as follows was re-elected:

Chairman	Prof. E. Allen (University of Durham)
Vice-Chairman	A. Potts
Treasurer	T.P. MacDermott
Secretary	J.F. Clarke C. Barnett D. Bythell D. Rowe

The committee decided at its meeting on 3rd October to invite Mr Sid Chaplin to join them.

The committee has met 4 times, on 29 March, 4 June, 3 October, 4 December.

Group Meetings.

The following meetings were held:-

- 9th Feb. J.F. Clarke on "Labour in Shipbuilding on the North East Coast 1850-1900" at the Rutherford College of Technology, attendance 25.
- 18th May. Half day School at Van Mildert College, University of Durham
Prof. S. Pollard on "The Trade Union Response to the Economic Crisis in 1931" and Mr Sidney Hills - "A Trade Unionist in 1930's" attendance 29.
- 8th Nov. Professor E. Allen on "The Regional Problem in Retrospect" at the Rutherford College of Technology attendance 20.

The committee wishes to express its thanks to Rutherford College of Technology and to the Universities of Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bulletin.

A second issue of our Bulletin was issued at the end of October. The number of orders from Universities and other educational institutions and libraries is now 42. This includes University of California and the National University of Australia and other overseas orders.

Membership.

28 individual paid subscriptions and two from trade unions. At each of our meetings there are usually a number of non-members.

Preservation of Labour Records.

In accordance with our policy of preserving records Mr Potts prevented the destruction of a local preacher's library.

Tape-recordings.

As reported in the Bulletin two recordings have been made directly on the group's initiative Sir Will Lawther and Mr Charles Stirling (boilermaker at Consett iron company). Mr J. Adamson, one of our members, has also been very active in this field.

Centenary of 1871 strike.

Active steps are in hand for the preparation of a commemorative study of the 1871 nine-hours strike.

Financial Statement.

<u>INCOME</u>	£	s	d	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£	s	d
Subscriptions	8	10	6	Durham Day School	10	10	0
Bulletin Sales	6	10	10	Northumberland Record	1	0	0
Durham Day School	10	2	6	Office			
Subscription A.S.W.		7	6	Secretary Expenses:			
				Recording Tape	1	5	6
				Bulletin paper	3	18	9
				Postage, Stationery		17	2
				Bulletin sales postage	1	2	4
				Bank and cheque book		4	2
				Commission		6	2
					19	4	1
				Balance for 1968	6	7	3
					£25	11	4
				Deficit from 1967 paid	3	6	11
				BALANCE IN HAND	£3	0	4

T.P. MacDermott
Hon. Treasurer.

Programme for 1969/70.

- 28 November 1969 at Rutherford College of Technology, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne.
7.30 p.m.: D.W. LINDSAY, Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, on 'Frederick Maurice - the meaning of Socialism to the Christian Socialists'.
- 13 February 1970 in South Shields - venue later.
JOHN FOSTER, University of Strathclyde, on 'South Shields working class politics 1800-1850'
- May 1970 at University of Durham
afternoon school W.R. SNAITH, Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, on 'The date to be announced. Contraction of the Durham Coalfield in 1950's'.
- Further speakers will be arranged for this meeting.
- A MEETING WILL ALSO BE ARRANGED AT TEESIDE - details later.

The Regional Problem in Retrospect

This title needs an explanation. By itself it could be misleading. It could be taken to refer to the regional problem considered in some abstract sense: even if it is taken in a specific sense, to refer to a particular definable region such as the North East Coast part of the Northern Region of England and Wales, as indeed is the intention here, it could still be expected that its examination would include several aspects, such as the political, the economic, the aesthetic, the sociological. They would be too wide: it is the intention here to consider simply the economic aspects of the regional problem of the North East Coast, though it will be recognised that a number of sociological consequences follow from the economic anatomy with which material circumstance and man have, together, endowed the region.

It has been said that the regional problem of the North East Coast is shown up starkly in the figures of male employment and the main industrial categories to which they belong. It has also been said that the North East Coast is full of the relics of carboniferous capitalism: and finally, to see the problem in opposing terms, it has been said that it is the absence of a large mining sector which has allowed Southern England to escape what seems to be the most difficult sort of regional adjustment to changing circumstances.

Though some of the detail may elude their terms these three statements provide an apt appraisal of the position of the North East. They miss out, for example, the great build-up of armament manufacture which, over a certain range of time - the 1850's to the end of World War I - affected shipbuilding and marine engineering in some of their aspects: they miss out the consequences of the development of the Parsons Steam Turbine: and they do less than justice to the specialism built up on the Tyne in the construction, repair and modification of oil tankers. But, these developments apart, the three statements provide a remarkably complete coverage of the position of the North East Coast, both in its great days of growth, 1850 to 1919, say, as well as in its days of secular decline, from 1920 to the present time.

The foundation of its economic position may be seen in the extent of its coalfield in relation to its three main rivers and the easy access to markets which they provided both before and even after the coming of the railways. Its coal deposits are not only extensive but the classes of coal of which they are made up have been significant in relation to profitable marketability. The coals of the great Northern Coalfield can be classed as (1) household coal, (2) steam coal, (3) gas coal, (4) coking coal. Its coking coals, of great merit in the production of iron and steel, have been described as amongst the best, if not indeed the best, in Western Europe. Its gas coals have served not only the gas-making plants of its own region but, by reason of the facility with which they could be carried coast wise to the London area, the gas making concerns of South East England as well. Its steam coals have served not only its own growing steam-based manufacturing and transport structure but, through the development of a world-wide bunkering trade, the needs of a great part of the world's shipping in the great days between sail and oil. The all-time peak output of coal in the Northumberland and Durham field was in 1913, when approximately 56 million tons of coal were produced, not far removed from about one fifth of all the coal produced in that year in the United Kingdom. Nearly half the annual new tonnage of United Kingdom merchant shipping came, in those days, from North East shipyards: the proportion of repair work was greater still: warships were built

not only for this country but also for countries as widely separate as South America and Japan. The naval battles between Japan and Russia in the early part of this century were followed, it has been said, with as much interest on the Tyne as in the countries which were fighting them, for leading units of both battle-fleets were Tyne-built. With the eventual unqualified acceptance of the Parsons turbine for warship and merchant use alike, as well as in power stations on land, and with the highly prestigious commuting of the Atlantic by the *Mauretania* it might seem that both accolade and profit had been added to the North East. But the products and activities through which both were gained proved vulnerable to the attacks of competition elsewhere geographically and every where, so to say, technologically. Coal deposits were competitively exploited in other places. Oil, electricity, water power, became the instruments of technological competition. The inter-war years, until 1935 at any rate, were years of general disarmament and abstention from large scale naval building. The activity which had provided more than mere bread and butter to the people of the region went into a secular decline and the process has not been halted even yet.

The position can perhaps best be summarised statistically. First, consider the totals of the insured population of the North East Coast in 1923 and 1938 and the concentration on five basic industrial groups which, with one exception, all experienced contraction over the period, two of them in a most severe degree.

	North East Coast			
	Insured Persons		1923 - 1938	
	1923	1938	Percentages 1923 - 1938	
	000's			
Mining & Quarrying	251	179	36	24
Engineering	76	74	11	10
Shipbuilding & Repairing	62	46	9	5
Metal Industries	53	45	8	6
Chemical & Allied Trades	14	23	2	3
FIVE BASIC GROUPS	457	359	59	48
TOTAL INSURED				
POPULATION	702	743	100	100

This is a process of contraction which, on the whole, has continued to the present time, for the underlying forces making for secular contraction in the old traditional growth activities of the region still persist. They may be seen, of course, in their starkest form in the figures of pit closures and mining redundancies of the last dozen years or so.

Second, consider the relation between natural increase, as based on the figures of recorded births and deaths, and actual increase in County Durham in the two periods 1851-1881 and 1881-1921 respectively. This relation is based upon a discussion of these matters in the book "Industrial Tyneside" by Dr. Henry A. Mess in 1928. His comparison can be reduced to these terms:

(a) 1851/1881 Co. Durham

Natural Increase	360,000	persons
Actual Increase	512,000	persons
Thus excess:-	152,000	persons

(b) 1881/1921 Co. Durham

Natural Increase	760,000	persons
Actual Increase	611,000	persons
Thus deficiency	149,000	persons

allow for war deaths abroad 23,000 persons
loss by outward migration 126,000 persons

It can also be shown that Northumberland had lost by net outward migration by 1921. Dr. Mess made the comment "the figures seem to indicate that whereas formerly industry was expanding more rapidly than the natural growth of population, of recent years the natural growth of population has been more rapid than the growth of industry." This book by Dr. Mess was published in 1928: his last Census data were those of 1921: the lines of the regional problem of the North East Coast appeared early. Dr. Mess also made the comment that while there had been "an exodus, mainly of skilled men, it has not been on a sufficient scale to ease the situation appreciably. Tyneside has been piling up a population for which adequate employment is scarcely likely to be forthcoming". It may be wondered whether this is a wholly acceptable appraisal of the position. It has been noted that when regional unemployment declines the proportion of unskilled persons remaining unemployed increases. It may well be that the retention of skilled men is a means to the employment of unskilled men. If so, an increased rate of exodus of skilled persons might well have intensified the problem of finding employment for those left behind.

Clearly the North East Coast has had, over the years, an unduly high proportion of the country's shrinking employments and an unduly low proportion of its expanding employments. Why should this be so? In the old days of regional growth business-men concentrated, rightly, it may be thought, on the activities which held out the promise of greater relative return on capital invested. In the days of secular decline business-men in the region have been fighting a continuing rearguard action against competitive forces of increasing power. Their energies have been wholly engaged in the fight: their financial resources have been either inextricably involved in the existing activities or dissipated by losses: they have not had spare financial resources for innovation and diversification and their beleaguered financial position has made them unattractive to possible lenders of funds. Business-men elsewhere, with freer and more ample resources, possibly with business ideas they were keen to promote, tended either to consider the North East as too remote as a possible location for a business venture or, more likely, they did not consider it at all. Official policy, through the Distribution of Industry Acts, under which powerful inducements can now be offered to persuade businessmen to locate their establishments in the North East, has been late both in finding a settled formula and an appropriate level of inducement. The process of new industrial development and regional diversification has been slow and long drawn out. An examination of the regional problem recently published by the North East Planning Council has the title "The Challenge of the Changing North": it is not unfair comment upon the situation to say that the trouble has been that the North has not changed fast enough.

(The above paper was read by Professor E. Allen at the Group's meeting at Rutherford College of Technology on 8 November 1968.)

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRADE UNIONS 1867-69.

At the Group meeting on 24 January 1969, Mr C.G. Hanson of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne read a paper on 'The Royal Commission on Trade Unions - 1867-69', at Rutherford College of Technology. Mr Hanson related the great significance of this commission, under Sir William Erle, at a time when the trade unions were entering a period of rapid growth - the period of 'take-off' and pointed out that all the leading trade unionists of the period were interested and gave evidence in person. The reports of the commission were followed by legislation which is still largely the basis of the law. In contrast to recent commissions, e.g. the Donovan, which seek to find a consensus view, in the Erle Commission the majority report was hostile but there was the important minority report, which was sympathetic and became the basis for later action.

The traditionally accepted view of the trade unions of this period, as presented by the Webbs will need some revision, and existing explanations of the setting up of the Commission are inadequate; the outrages at Sheffield had reached a peak in 1859 and were declining by 1867. As Mr Hanson explained the time was ripe and public opinion was ready for such an inquiry. Leading trade unionists such as Applegarth had lobbied for the Commission and did not necessarily view it as a threat to trade unionism. Politically artizans were becoming important, and this factor rather than the trade cycle or the Hornby v Close case was the major reason for the setting up of the Commission.

The presence of Thomas Hughes and Frederick Harrison on the Commission was very important. Both probably helped the trade unionists in the preparation of their evidence. Frederick Harrison, (George Potter was active in securing his membership of the Commission), was as Mr Hanson pointed out probably the key man. Harrison was a keen positivist and saw the prospect of a new social era through the trade unions. How far were the New Model unions as presented to the Commission either new or typical of the whole trade union movement at this time was questioned by Mr Hanson. It was pointed out that there were earlier societies with rule books similar to the A.S.E. e.g. 'The Old Mechanics'. The two streams of revolutionary inspiration and craft ideals were always present. While the A.S.E. did have generous welfare benefits, which their high subscription of 1/- a week required, this was never more than a secondary function. It is very doubtful that they had degenerated into merely insurance societies as is frequently suggested. Even Applegarth stated firmly "ours is a trade society".

Evidence at the Commission by actuaries was most critical of the benefits offered by the trade unions and indeed the figures would suggest that these criticisms were valid and that a crisis did not occur because of the massive growth in membership. There were also the occasions when trade unions such as the Ironfounders only avoided bankruptcy by special levies on members at work in periods of deep or prolonged trade depression.

In the discussion which followed points were made in defence of a number of the generally accepted points of analysis as offered by the Webbs and particular attention was drawn to the difference between the willingness to destroy the trade union movement and the ability to do so. The change represented by national societies after 1851 and in particular the role of the paid full-time official were also stressed.

The meeting expressed its appreciation of the excellent discussion paper presented by Mr Hanson.

The following is a summary of the paper read by Mr. R. Moore, the University of Durham, at the Group's half-day school, on Methodism and the Working Classes in Durham, on 17th May, 1969.

Social historians and sociologists considering the effects of religion on society seem to have concentrated on studies limited to single effects or to single courses of events. Thus we have simple statements and simple theories about the influence of Methodism: That it saved England from revolution (Lecky¹); that it was diversionary dope for the proletariat (Thompson²); that it was fundamentally important in the rise of the Trade Union and Labour movement (Wearmouth³).

These notions refer to the effects of Methodism in one generation. Lecky and Thompson write at the most general level, Wearmouth catalogues the lives of the Methodist saints. None of them more than sketch in why Methodism had whatever effects it did have, none of their work is based on or validated by detailed studies of actual situations in which Methodists interact with others. None of them studies the long-term effects of Methodism.

This broad criticism may be put in the form of four comments on Wearmouth:

- (1) Wearmouth gives life histories of important political figures who were Methodists. He does not distinguish between active and nominal Methodists. Nor does he examine the careers of non-Methodists who started their life in the chapels but who were either expelled, or left.
- (2) Trade Union and Labour leadership may have arisen from the ranks of Methodism for at least three reasons:
 - (i) The ideas that Methodism imparted to the believer either inspired him to direct action in "the world" (or to make the point sociologically, Methodism is a form of inner worldly asceticism) or at least indirectly aroused general concern with social issues.
 - (ii) Methodism gave the working man skills which he could use in developing an industrial or political movement - especially skills in committee work and public speaking.
 - (iii) Methodism provided an organisational basis for a political movement either in the formal network of Societies, and local preachers or in the type of solidary community produced by common religious affiliation.

In sum, Methodism could have provided ideological equipment and personal commitment, leadership skills or an organisational base.

- (3) Wearmouth does not discuss the Methodist Trade Union and Labour leadership in contrast with other patterns of leadership available. An obvious question would concern their view of means legitimate to a given goal - how did Methodist leaders view the strike? Or the goals themselves; did the leaders believe they were pursuing class war, bargaining in a market, or collaborating with their employers in building a new society? Each of these questions could be asked of Methodists and non-Methodists, if differences were observed the problem of relating the differences to Methodism would then remain - clearly defined.

Footnotes. 1. W.E.H. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century (1902) Vol.III, pp.144-146.
2. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (1963)
3. R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850 (1937).

- (4) There is little detailed consideration by Wearmouth of the lives of the sons of the Methodists. His work suggests very strongly that Methodists were upwardly socially mobile; what was the extent of this mobility, what were its consequences for the community in general and the work begun by the previous generation in Trade Unions and Parties, in particular?

My attempts to throw some light on these broad issues have involved me in a detailed study of a small area of mid-west Durham, comprising four villages. The study covers the period from the opening of the pits in the late 1860's through to the present day (all pits are now closed).

The influence of Methodism can be shown to be high both in terms of overall adherence to the various Methodist churches and the occupation of key leadership roles in the local community by Methodists.

Methodism made its initial impact in "wild west" villages, the regenerate Methodist was a respectable man, able to give account of his conversion in a very practical manner. The Methodist was also upwardly socially mobile, or at least had aspirations for the upward mobility of his sons and daughters.

In social outlook the Methodist was very individualistic, believing that social ills could be cured by individual regeneration. This was highly compatible with late nineteenth century Liberalism. The political and trade union leaders were all Liberals in the area under study.

Liberalism also linked the Methodists with the owners, who were Liberals and social reformers. The owners too were "respectable" non-Conformists with whom the Methodists could, to a degree identify. This identification was reinforced by the owners' and managers' exercise of patronage in the villages, they were particularly generous to the chapels and temperance organisations, but especially to the chapels.

Work on such papers and sermons as have survived from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century show that the social, and to some extent the political outlook of the Methodists can be related in a very direct way to their religious beliefs. Respectability, reformism, individualism, moderation and a sense of the dignity of man are typically Methodist characteristics.

For this reason, among others, they rejected the radicalism of the socialists who emerged amongst the Primitive Methodists in one of the villages. There were deep conflicts between the old Liberals and the socialists, which largely resulted in the loss of the radicals to Methodism. The socialists who survived politically to the post First World War I years were mainly absorbed by the Labour party, which was itself by then manned by men brought up in the Liberal rather than socialist tradition.

The younger Methodists did not see the traditional Methodist social response to the world around as altogether relevant. They were not living in the sort of society to which the particular expression of Methodist ethics was in large part a response. Younger Methodists also were leaving the area as they became upwardly socially mobile and moved into white collar, minor professional or non-mining jobs.

Thus the Methodist hegemony was eroded, there were fewer Methodists, their attitude to "the world" became more ambiguous - perhaps as a result of the very real reforms achieved by their fathers. There are indications also that the Methodists lacked the social and ideological facilities to cope with the class conflict situation typified by the 1926 coal dispute, which contrasted strongly with the old relations they had known with the

owners. This may have resulted in the Methodists being discredited in the eyes of the non-Methodist miners, and their decline from leadership accelerated - but this conclusion is tentative only.

In conclusion we should note four points:

- (1) At no point in the discussion of Methodism has it been necessary to distinguish the unique contribution of Methodist beliefs viz-a-viz, other non-conformist denominations. Methodism was there, it was the village religion. But it was there as dissenting Protestantism with consequences not dictated by John Wesley, Jabez Bunting, the Methodist Conference or Methodist theology. Its content was shaped by a people who to this day are quite ignorant of anything unique to Methodism. They stress only ethical differences and a different form of worship when they mention the Church of England. Some say that if Anglican-Methodist union comes they will join the Baptists, they say this with no sense of the change of historical tradition involved.
- (2) Methodism is an ethical religion, it offers a new life and a new human dignity through personal regeneration. The social ethics of Methodism whilst motivating, enabling and qualifying men to tackle social problems does not equip them to pursue realistic solutions to them in all situations.
- (3) That whilst it may be true to say that the radical Methodists owed nothing intellectually to Methodism we might suggest that the study of the Bible - to which they explicitly referred their socialism - was something they learnt in the Methodist church. So was the self discipline, sobriety and commitment which is so vital to a new political movement. Perhaps they also owed some of their initial motivation to Methodism also.
- (4) Simple religious explanations of complex social and political behaviour are inadequate. I have conducted research into a number of historical situations which are explicable only in terms of a specific concatenation of ideas and social circumstances. The development of these situations and the whole history of the chapels is explained in terms of the unforeseen and unintended consequences of prior courses of action, and attitudes, in both chapel and village.

My own sociological curiosity is rapidly coming to rest in terms of giving an account of what happened, the theoretical issues raised by the empirical work so far completed are enough for some time to come. But I would suggest that my work indicates further research that might usefully be undertaken by social historians. It is mainly comparative work; firstly in larger pit villages, then perhaps on the east coast of Durham where Methodists were not so numerically strong. Perhaps also we need work in other coalfields - if there be any - where pitmen were never at all religious.

Footnote. This paper was based on work at present in progress, financed by the Social Science Research Council.

Robert Moore
University of Durham.

CHARTISM IN NORTHEASTERN ENGLAND

Northeastern Chartism has long deserved serious study but for the most part it has been neglected. This regrettable omission is all the more puzzling because historians have long recognized the importance of the area in the total national movement. They frequently describe Newcastle as one of the most militant centers of Chartism. They have included accounts of individual leaders or the more sensational meetings of the area in all the standard narratives. Asa Briggs specifically noted the significance of Newcastle in his Chartist Studies (p.2) but then did not include it among his local studies.

Closer examination of the Chartism of the district can be very rewarding. Here I take Northeast to include the counties of Northumberland and Durham as well as a few places on the margins, such as Middlesbrough, which fell within their influence. The movement in the district has a number of features which distinguish it from other areas. First of all, Chartism was regional in the Northeast rather than belonging to a single city. The dispersal of coal mining over a large area of the two counties, along with iron working, textiles and other village industries, accounted for this. Consequently, northeastern Chartists engaged in continual missionary work to assimilate the outlying workers to organizations based on Newcastle and Sunderland. They were so successful that Newcastle drew in persons from both sides of the Tyne and spread its influence as far north as the Scottish border, while Sunderland united the men from the valley of the Wear to the valley of the Tees. The organizations in these two cities, although different in leadership and emphasis, in turn usually sought to cooperate with one another in seeking the common object. One of their weaknesses, however, was an inability to establish a lasting united association for the two counties.

The economy of the Northeast, in addition, differed from many areas in which Chartism flourished. It was a very mixed economy based in part on long established communities in which no single factor predominated and in part on newly developed communities to serve the needs of coal mining or transportation. It combined elements of the thrusting new industrialism such as coal, railways and chemicals with old and well organized trades such as iron working, shipbuilding, glassmaking and the building trades and decaying crafts such as hand weaving of linen and woolen cloth and carpet making. This mixture made for a more complex movement than in areas of a single predominant industry. Also economic fluctuations in the region did not follow the same pattern as the rest of the country. The coal, shipbuilding, and railway boom which began about 1835 extended beyond the depression of the late 1830's to which Chartism elsewhere is usually attributed. Similar conditions of distress do not appear in the Northeast until 1841 or 1842 and then not as severely as elsewhere. (for discussion of this see R.C. O Matthews, A Study in Trade Cycle History Cambridge, 1954). Hence, the northeastern movement cannot be explained solely in terms of economic deprivation.

The rich and old Radical tradition of the Northeast is another striking feature of the region. The advocacy of reform by leadership at all levels of society for decades in the past provided a fund of issues and experience in agitation from which the Chartists could borrow. Beginning with Wilkite activity and Whig aristocrat's statements in the late eighteenth century and carrying on down through the great Peterloo demonstration and the Reform Bill

meetings of 1832; northeastern people had lived in an atmosphere of political reform and protest which the Chartists merely continued.

The luxuriance of this reforming climate blurred the class character of the movement. Although throughout its history local Chartism was predominantly working class in initiative and spirit, it always had support and some key leadership from people who were not manual workers. In its early stages several local Reform Bill Radicals played major roles and although leadership changed as Chartism moved through its various stages, it never lost its middle class relationships. Later as the various strands which had knit together to form Chartism unraveled after 1839, former Chartists moved easily into other groups which preserved middle-working class Radical associations, including such interesting ancillary movements as David Urquhart's foreign policy movement.

Finally Chartism in the Northeast stands out because of its durability. In many respects its most important and interesting life was over after the summer of 1839, but both the Newcastle and Sunderland associations struggled to keep going. Leadership changed almost totally and after 1843 Sunderland subsided as the center of Durham Chartism, but an organized movement survived in the district and it experienced revivals on several occasions in the years that followed. It lingered longest in Newcastle where an organized group can be traced until 1861 before it finally disappeared from view.

Because of its integral relationship to earlier agitation and its longevity, an understanding of Chartism in the Northeast requires discussion of a longer time span than the commonly used period from 1837 to 1848. Northeastern experience offers considerable support for Edward Thompson's statement, "There is a sense in which the Chartist movement commenced, not in 1836 with the promulgation of the 'Six Points', but at the moment when the Reform Bill received the Royal Assent." (The Making of the English Working Class (New York, 1964), p.826). Efforts to establish an autonomous working class political movement separate from predominant middle class leadership began immediately after the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832. These attempts floundered for lack of leadership and program during the next several years, but took on renewed vitality during the spring of 1837. The following summer Augustus Hardin Beaumont appeared in Newcastle as a Radical candidate at the general election following Victoria's accession and he remained to catalyze the forces of the Newcastle district and to bring them into contact with similar forces in Sunderland. Most important he founded a newspaper, the Northern Liberator, which gave the regional movement a voice. Beaumont left in January 1838 and died soon after, but the newspaper and the spirit he left survived him.

Newcastle and Sunderland adopted the National Petition in June 1838 when John Collins of Birmingham brought it to the district after introducing it in Glasgow. Subsequently Newcastle revived the Northern Political Union of Reform Bill fame, and Sunderland formed the Durham County Charter Association. Together they proselyted the area from the Tees to the Tweed and as far west as the Pennines. The Durham leadership, which had an early association with Lovett's London Working Men's Association, was the more moderate of the two, while Newcastle took its inspiration from O'Connor, O'Brien, Harney, Thomas Ainge Devyr as well as home grown militants. During the winter and spring of 1838-39 the Northern Political Union was deeply divided over the question of using armed force to achieve the objectives of the Charter and explored the rationale of violence or its threat both publicly and privately. Yet

despite two street incidents in Newcastle during July, no serious violence occurred at the time of general holiday in August and the strike itself was a failure.

The failure of summer 1839 and the arrest of many leaders weakened the movement severely but it struggled to survive through remodeled organization and redefined programs. It explored a variety of morally and educationally beneficent activities and opened cooperative stores. Also Chartists began to drift back into association with middle class reform groups. It began the re-establishment of the pre-Chartist middle-working class alliance which Chartist militancy had overshadowed in 1838-39 and the process of reunion continued through the rest of the history of northeastern Chartism until it was completed with the formation of Joseph Cowen's Northern Reform Union in 1858. Meanwhile in the early 1840's the older Chartist leadership became almost totally replaced with new faces.

In the period that followed the Newcastle and Sunderland organizations increasingly diverged from one another. They cooperated in the face of worsening economic conditions of 1841 and 1842 and they both supported the renewed Petition campaign, but they had begun to break apart by the time the Petition was presented. As Feargus O'Connor increasingly came to dominate the surviving Chartist movement, Newcastle fell more fully under his influence and accepted his direction in the local movement. Sunderland, on the other hand, under the leadership of James Williams and George Binns maintained more independence from O'Connor and later became attracted to the Complete Suffrage Movement. This led to an open break with O'Connor and the National Charter Association and the Sunderland organization fell into abeyance after early 1843. Hence Durham Chartism found its chief base in the communities of the south and west of the county. In both Newcastle and Durham the main interest in the movement through the middle 1840's centered on the Land Plan. Interest revived with the new Petition movement in late 1847, but, as in 1842, the movement showed more growth and vigor for a short period after the rejection of the Petition than it did before. By the end of 1849 this had burnt itself out and Chartism had become reduced to a diehard fragment chiefly in Newcastle.

The movement kept alive during the 1850's through the efforts of a group of persistently loyal followers. Its main activities were innocuous, involving social and educational work and the maintenance of the Chartist meeting rooms. Local groups took up issues as Ernest Jones appealed for their support, as in the case of the Preston Lockout in 1853 and the Labour Parliament and Mass Movement in 1854. Interest ebbed and flowed outside Newcastle, including among the coal miners of southwest Durham, but nowhere else maintained the same continuity of interest. Vitality of political activity now lay not with Chartism but in other groups where middle class cooperation gave more hope of success and ultimately the remaining Chartists moved in this direction too. Joseph Cowen's Northern Reform Union in 1858 provided the bridge to bring the last of them back into association. The Chartists lingered on as a fragment of their former past, celebrating their annual Christmas tea and maintaining the Newcastle reading room largely through the sacrifice and devotion of one member, but in 1861 when their premises were taken away the group finally was extinguished.

Bibliography for Northeastern Chartism

In addition to the generally well known memoirs and accounts of the Chartist movement as a whole, the following are some of the sources specifically useful for study of the local movement.

A. Manuscript Sources: As with most Chartism, manuscript material for the Northeast is scanty and for the most part lies on the periphery of the movement. I have found useful material in the following collections:

Francis Place Manuscripts, British Museum.

Home Office Papers, Public Record Office.

John Buddle Papers, North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering, Newcastle upon Tyne.

3rd Earl Grey Papers, The Prior's Kitchen, Durham.

Duke of Northumberland Papers, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland.

David Urquhart Papers, Balliol College, Oxford.

Joseph Cowen Papers, Newcastle Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Ernest Jones Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

These need to be supplemented by pamphlet, newscutting, and other ephemeral material of which the Newcastle Central and Sunderland Public Libraries have excellent collections.

B. Newspapers: Newspapers constitute the richest source for northeastern Chartism and must form the core of any study. Not only can the student rely on the Chartist and Radical Press, including the excellent Northern Liberator, but also the local press is particularly full and varied.

Chartist and Radical Papers:

Northern Liberator

Northern Star

People's Paper

London News

Local Press:

Durham Advertiser

Durham Chronicle

Gateshead Observer

Newcastle Chronicle

Newcastle Daily Chronicle

Newcastle Weekly Chronicle

Newcastle Courant

Cabinet Newspaper

Newcastle Press

Newcastle Standard

Newcastle Journal

Northern Tribune

Port of Tyne Pilot

Sunderland Beacon

Sunderland and Durham Gazette

Sunderland Herald

Tyne Mercury

C. Local Social and Economic Conditions: The Northeast still lacks a thorough social and economic history of the region. Hence the student of political and social movements in the area must construct a picture as best he can from a variety of sources. Parliamentary Papers on topics connected with the district supply valuable information. The Newcastle Central and Sunderland Public Libraries both have excellent local collections and for Newcastle there is a Local Catalogue of Material Concerning Newcastle and Northumberland (Newcastle, 1932) which provides a guide to much of the local history holdings. The British Association met in Newcastle in 1839 and 1863 and the Annual Reports contain reports of local conditions. In addition, the 1863 meeting prompted the publication of:

Robert Welford, ed., A History of the Trade and Manufactures of the Tyne, Wear, and Tees . . . (Newcastle 1863).

W.G. Armstrong, et al, The Industrial Resources of the District of the Three Northern Rivers, the Tyne, Wear, and Tees. . . (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1864)

Other material on local conditions can be found in:

Matthias Dunn, A Historical, Geological and Descriptive View of the Coal Trade. . . (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1844).

R.L. Galloway, Annals of Coal Mining and the Coal Trade (London, 1898).
_____, A History of Coal Mining in Great Britain (London, 1882).

P.E.H. Hair, The Social History of the British Coalminers, 1800-1845
(Unpublished D.Phil. thesis submitted at Oxford University, 1955).

S. Middlebrook, Newcastle upon Tyne, its Growth and Achievement
(Newcastle upon Tyne, 1950).

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George B. Hodgson, The Borough of South Shields (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1903).

Taylor Potts, Sunderland, A History of the Town, Port, Trade and Commerce (Sunderland, 1892).

J.W. House, North Eastern England: Population Movements and the Landscape since the Early 19th Century (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1959).

Newcastle Chronicle, Inquiry into the Condition of the Poor of Newcastle (Newcastle, 1850).

W.H. Maehl

University of Oklahoma.

(The following document was issued by leaders of the
Durham Chartists in 1839).

TO THE
M I D D L E - C L A S S E S
OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

GENTLEMEN

WE Address you in the Language of Brotherhood probably for the last Time - up to the very last Moment you have shut your Senses to Reason, but now that the last Moment for moral Appeal has arrived perhaps you will listen to this last Appeal of the People.

With a folly that will be the Wonder of future Ages you have placed a blind Confidence in the Whig Aristocracy - you have surrendered into their Hands your "right of Thought" - and any Decree that they please to send forth you look upon it as if it were a Decree from on high.

And now let us ask you a few Questions touching the Claims which this Aristocracy has upon your Respect and Confidence. Reflect upon those Questions and answer them like rational Men.

Are you and your Posterity not Mortgaged to pay the Boroughmongers' Debt? - Are you not compelled to pay, on an Average, three times the proper Value for Bread, Meat, Wine, Spirits, Teas, and everything you consume, in order to support the Jew Swindlers and a perfumed, insolent, idle Aristocracy?

Are you not shut out from the manly Sports and Recreations which once were the Health and Pride of Englishmen? If, after your six Months' Confinement in the Ware and Counting-house, you wish for a day's Sport over the Lake or Mountain, are you not told that the Fish, the Fowl, and the Wild Animal, all must be preserved for my Lord's Use and Amusement, and if you persist to assert your natural Right over them are you not punished with Fine and Imprisonment?

Will the Aristocracy associate with you - will they endure an Alliance by Marriage, with what they impudently denominate your base blood? Do they not, in one Word, despise and oppress you as much as they despise and oppress the Working-men, the only Difference being that you are able, and it would appear willing, to bear the Yoke, whilst we are unable, and, thank God, neither are we willing to bear it?

Is not the Money plundered from the People and spent in the Debauch of the Court, or the Profligacy of the Continent - is this Money, we ask, not virtually abstracted from your Trade and Profits? Would we carry away our Money to squander it on the Dancers, Gamesters, and Prostitutes of the Continental Cities, or would we lay it out at Home in Food, Clothing, and other necessary Articles, to the great Benefit of domestic Trade and Manufactures?

We entreat you, not for our sakes, but for your own, not for the sake of our Families, but for the sake of your own Wives and Children, to take up these Questions like Men, and calmly and rationally discuss their truth or falsehood. Discussed they must be now, either physically or morally - one way or the other - even if you are content to remain quiescent Slaves you will be permitted to remain so no longer.

But then comes your Bugbear - "If you, the Working-men, had Power in your Hands there would be no security for Life or Property.

One Fact you will yourselves admit is worth ten thousand Arguments - if these Facts do not convince you, to talk of reasoning any longer is altogether out of the Question.

Look to America - in the mercantile States of that Republic all Power is in the Hands of the People - their will is Law; and is the Manufacturer less safe in his Business - the Trader less secure of his Property - than in England? Why, the very fault of American Society is the over Encouragement and Importance that is given to its Trade.

Look, too, to Switzerland, whose Laws must receive the Sanction of the whole Male Population, assembled in Arms, from 16 Years of Age upwards. Where is the Country on the Face of the Earth can boast of more Security for Life and Property - more absence of Crime more positive Virtues than are to be found in the Mountains, Vales, and Cities of Switzerland. Look at the soothing Tranquility of these Democratic Countries, and contrast them with murderous Anarchy, that even at this Moment desolates Aristocratic Spain.

Dear are our Families to us - dear our humble Homes - our Feelings are as human as your own - and if compelled to take the Field in Vindication of our sacred Rights we shall do so with Hearts yearning for our helpless Families, whom many of us must never see again; to this alternative we are driven by a dire and uncontrollable Necessity - we are not "Men of Blood."

But Blood is on the Land; it falls without a Record - Hecatombs - upwards 100,000 Souls - are yearly sacrificed to Famine and a broken Heart - the old, the helpless, the unresisting Die and no Man writes their Epitaph.

If you be not as blind, as hardened of Heart as ever Pharoah was of old you must perceive that a mighty, a thorough Radical Change must now very speedily take place in the Constitution of Society in these Islands - a Change which it is not your Power to avert, though it is in your Power to give it a peaceful Character.

Do you call the Courage of the People in question? - Why, even the Tory Times acknowledges that "contempt of Death is natural to every Errand-boy in England."

But it is not a Question of Courage we are discussing now, it is a Question of Necessity! watch your own Child as with Tears it implores for a Morsel - see the Eye of your own Wife or Sister grow dim with Famine - feel Hunger tearing your own Vitals - then hear the Appeal of a Starving People answered by the Death Shot of the Plunderers, thus leaving no Alternative but to submit to Death by Famine or Sword, or to rise in the MAJESTY of our MANHOOD, and by the Power of our Right Arms vindicate our right to live and enjoy the Fruits of our Industry and Skill.

You had the Power to avert this terrible Alternative - you have it for ONE MOMENT longer - let that Moment pass, and you are done for ever. It is your intense and BLIND Selfishness that is rendering almost inevitable a Civil Convulsion. This Fact will be remembered in the Day of Trial. You have not been with us, and therefore you are against us. Should the People (and it were folly to doubt it,) succeed, they will owe you no gratitude - should they fall, you will be involved in their ruin. You will then learn how Wealth is produced and Trade flourishes under the Patronage of Idlers by Birth and Plunderers by Profession.

On the other Hand, should the People of England be put down -supposing, for a Moment, the Impossibility - what then? Why, to use the Words of more than one Whig Journal, they will "DISPERSE IN A MILLION OF INCENDIARIES," your Warehouses - your Homes - will be given to the Flames, and one black Ruin will overwhelm England!

Are you prepared for this? If you are content to be trampled and spat upon by the Aristocracy - if you have no pity for your Brothers and Sisters in the humbler Walks of Life - if you feel not for the Myriads who annually perish of Cold and Hunger - still ask yourselves, are you prepared to see your own Homes in a Blaze - your Property given to the Flames, and no Insurance to redeem it; yourselves, perhaps your Wives and Children shrieking to midnight Outlaws for that Mercy which in the Day of your Power you denied them.

Praying that God, who endowed you with common Sense and human Feelings, will free your Minds from Prejudice and dispose you to do your Duty in this terrible Crisis,

We remain, your (if not your own fault) sincere friends,

THE COUNCIL OF THE DURHAM COUNTY CHARTER ASSOCIATION.

Labour History of the Railways in Durham and Northumberland
to 1900: an introduction to sources and bibliography

The following notes and booklist have been compiled in an attempt to identify the manuscript and printed sources for the study of labour history on the railways in the context of the North East. Despite the extensive literature on railway history generally and an already formidable amount on trade unions and labour conditions in particular, there does appear to be both a need and scope for useful research into conditions in the North East. Many of the books mentioned in the bibliography are written from the national standpoint and indicate the areas where further evidence is needed, while the list of parliamentary papers and manuscripts suggest some of the sources which could be more thoroughly explored.

Growth of Railways

Railway development appears to divide broadly into the periods before and after about 1870-5. The earlier years from 1825 were the formative period of the promotion of companies, construction of lines, amalgamations, and generally of expansion of main lines to cover the whole of the country. After 1875 there was comparatively little new building of main lines (with the exception of the Great Central Railway) and the railway companies concentrated on extending their lines and services within their own territories.

The growth of railways in the first fifty years progressed by fits and starts. Periods of trade improvement encouraged investment in railways, particularly in the years 1835-6, 1845-7 and 1865-6. In 1845-7, for instance over £231 millions were invested in 576 companies with the intention of building 8,731 miles of line. Many ventures in these "railway mania" years were highly speculative and each boom was followed by a financial collapse during which the companies which survived were forced into policies of retrenchment. Economies were made partly at the expense of the railwaymen so that it is not surprising that trade union activity was high and many labour disputes occurred in the years 1837-8, 1848-50 and 1866-7.

Numbers of Railwaymen in Durham and Northumberland

The following table gives the numbers of railwaymen as recorded in the Census returns from 1851 to 1911.

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Railway officials, clerks, Engine drivers, stokers, Guards, signalmen, Porters and others employed in railway traffic	1,526	3,153	4,867	7,955	11,348	15,663	17,412
Railway labourers, including contractors platelayers, navvies, etc.	2,194	3,440	3,299	3,107	3,663	4,374	4,483
Total:	3,720	6,593	8,166	11,062	15,009	20,037	21,895

Broadly speaking, there were two or three railwaymen and labourers in Durham for every one in Northumberland. By way of comparison, figures quoted for the total number of railway company staff in Britain in various years were: 1847 - 47,218; 1860 - 127,450; 1873 - 274,535; and 1914-17 - 650,000.

The figures are insignificant in size if compared with employment in coalmining, engineering, shipbuilding and agriculture but, because of the

complex organisation necessary to control scattered operational units involving numerous grades of skilled and unskilled workers and the requirements of a varied commercial and public transport service, the railways developed their own peculiar labour problems. The figures of railway labourers are given separately since until at least 1870 these were mostly contractors' labourers and it is only in the 1901 and 1911 Censuses that the labourers were identified as company employees. The history of the navvies in the North East, incidentally, is still to be written. Another point to remember is that by about 1875 the North Eastern Railway (N.E.R.) had already absorbed most of the other operating companies in the region and was effectively the only railway employer in the two counties, with the notable exception of the North British Railway with its foothold in Northumberland. Since the N.E.R. also operated extensively in Yorkshire and further south, working conditions in Durham and Northumberland were largely determined by company policy affecting the whole staff which in 1880, for instance, numbered 30,000.

Discipline

In the early years the railway companies had little difficulty in controlling their staff. The railways offered security, reasonable pay, and good prospects of promotion, footplatemen being particularly in demand from 1830 - 50. A personal relationship between management and men was often developed in the smaller companies and loyalty continued to be a moderately strong element in discipline until weakened by amalgamations, retrenchment policies and competition for jobs. Loyalty was also secured by fines, railway tied cottages, uniforms and sundry bonuses and perquisites. The earliest example of a fine on an engine driver, which the writer has so far discovered, is the fine of 2/- imposed on John Bell, driver of 'Puffing Billy' in 1818, probably for carrying passengers, another similar fine in 1822 specifically mentioning this offence. The natural human fear of dismissal or reduction of wage was another stimulus while strikers could also be summoned for breach of contracts. "The company have no difficulty in keeping their servants in order: they are fined twice then dismissed", testified a Stockton & Darlington Railway director to an 1839 inquiry. The report of the same inquiry recommended that in the interests of public safety "a system of exact discipline should be encouraged and powers given to the directors to uphold their authority".

The need to ensure public safety, later to be emphasised in many reports on the high accident rates among railway employees, became one of the strongest factors in the case for reduction of hours of work and improvement of conditions. Examples of railway men overburdened with duties and working excessively long hours appear in the early reports. Tomlinson quotes a case of a Newcastle to Carlisle Railway engineman working a 12 hours day seven days a week. Unreasonable shift hours were the cause of a trimmers' and teamers' strike at Tyne Dock in 1874 when the men were refused their request to cease work on Saturdays at 4 p.m., instead of midnight, and to resume on Mondays at 6 a.m., instead of at 3 a.m. Tomlinson mildly remarks that this change "could not have been made without inconvenience to the coal owners and to their customers: for the detention of steamers in the Dock meant an interruption in the regular supply of fuel to the London gas-works and delay in the return of waggons to the Collieries". In the event the strike was broken by the immediate transfer of men from Darlington.

Wages

At first railwaymen were relatively well paid; but after the 1870's

they gradually lost ground so that "over the years 1886-1906 railwaymen's weekly rates increased by only 5% compared with increases of 18% in the building industry, 23% in cotton manufacturing, and 26% in engineering. The average weekly rate of railwaymen at 24/7d. was lower than the rate for each authority listed in the Board of Trade Survey of 1906-7" (Bagwell). Examples of weekly rates in 1840 are:

	(Bagwell)	(Tomlinson)
Engine driver	33/- to 45/-	24/- to 30/-
Fireman	22/- to 35/-	15/- to 18/-
Switchmen, pointsmen	22/1 average	17/- to 22/-
Porters	18/7 average	17/- to 22/-
Guards	-	24/- to 32/6
Platelayers	-	18/-

Only careful research and analysis of statistics would establish whether such figures are average or, indeed, if it is reasonable to seek an average since it is possible that rates varied from Company to company and from district to district. It is also worth remembering that railway staffs included associated transport services including, in one award in 1890, such men as rolleymen, varmen, foddermen, loftmen, fodder choppers, stablemen; porters, checkers, traversers, chockers and grain warehousemen.

Trade Unions and Strikes

The earliest form of railwaymen's combination was in friendly societies for insurance benefits, such as the Locomotive Steam Engine and Firemen's Friendly Society founded in 1839. Trade Union activity for better conditions took place in the periods of retrenchment following trade or financial setbacks: claims, equally, were more readily met in times of prosperity. The first unions were the Railway Clerks' Association (1865) and the Railway Guards, Signalmen & Firemen's United Society (1866). This last Society persuaded its branches to petition their companies separately for a basic 10 hours week and several companies acceded to the demands. The N.E.R. at first resisted but then, when threatened with a strike in March 1867, agreed to terms including the 10 hours day. A misunderstanding on the interpretation of other terms of the agreement, however, led to a strike of some 1,050 men. The Society could offer no real support and before long the Company was able to break the strike by operating services with replacement footplatemen, all but about 25 men losing their jobs, despite their humble submission to the Company (see appendix). The Engine Drivers and Firemen's United Society failed to survive this setback. The most powerful Union, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (A.S.R.S.), was founded in 1871, the General Railway Workers Union in 1889 and the two amalgamated in the National Union of Railwaymen in 1913. The Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen was formed in 1889. The fortunes of these Unions are recorded in their respective histories.

The North East membership played a prominent part in the history of the A.S.R.S., the activities of William Foreman in seeking to improve conditions at Gateshead in 1882-3 bringing the Union many recruits. In 1889, the N.E.R. men adopted the "Darlington programme" for a 10 hours day, overtime at time and a quarter and Sunday working at time and a half, and their leaders, all A.S.R.S. men, succeeded in their presentation of the men's demands. In December of the same year men at Gateshead Goods station demanded, under threat of strike, a 9 hours day and on this occasion the Company and the A.S.R.S., representing the men, agreed to arbitration, the dispute being

referred to Dr. R. Spence Watson. These were two occasions in which the N.E.R. by admitting the presence of A.S.R.S. officials to represent the men, recognised the principle of "collective bargaining". Tomlinson recites at length the evidence of the Company's general manager, A.Kaye Butterworth, to the Committee on the Conciliation Scheme of 1907 in which he rehearsed other instances in 1849, 1874 and 1888 of the Company allowing Union Officials to represent the men in order to illustrate the Company's realistic approach to labour problems. Thus, when the Railway Companies and the A.S.R.S. were finally persuaded to agree in 1907 to the appointment of Conciliation Boards to settle disputes without recourse to strike action, the N.E.R. was specifically exempted from the Scheme on the grounds that "unlike other Companies, they had agreed to recognise the A.S.R.S. as a medium for negotiation between themselves and their men."

Note on manuscript sources

The basic documentary sources for labour history on the railways are the records of the former Railway companies among the British Transport Historical Records kept at York (for North of England Companies) and at Edinburgh (for Scottish Companies). The scope of these records is well described by E.H. Fowkes (see booklist) and for the following details of records of particular interest to labour historians the writer is obliged to W.J. Macdonald, archivist at York. 'The railway records are arranged by companies and in an overall classification scheme. Class 15 is allocated to staff records comprising mainly pay lists, circular letters of instructions, punishment and commendation books. Class 23, Accountants records, includes station traffic returns with costs and earnings of stations and staff employed. Class 8, correspondence and relevant papers is also worth examination. Apart from these Company records, there is also a general group of records, mostly 20th century, classified as Labour and Staff matters, including national pay awards, conditions of employment, and Railway Staff conferences.'

Apart from local newspapers (in Newcastle Library and elsewhere), there are virtually no local primary sources available in Durham and Northumberland, although both the Durham and Northumberland Record Offices contain various useful papers of general railway interest, mostly in family and estate archives. The Newcastle and Darlington Libraries, the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineering in Neville Street, Newcastle and the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle also have useful material.

The Northumberland Record Office holds papers of two early Railway engineers, Robert Nicholson and J.F. Tone. These relate to the construction of the Blyth and Tyne, Border Counties, Border Union, Hawick and Carlisle and other railways elsewhere which they engineered, as well as miscellaneous papers relating to railways in the two counties. They also include papers in two disputes, one c.1842-5, between The Great Northern Railway and Paxton over a contract for building a section of line near Northallerton, and the other c.1866, between the Border Counties and Hutchinson concerning the building of the Border Counties line.

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Appendix

Petition of North Eastern Railway Company footplaten for reinstatement after strike, 1867.

"To the honourable board of directors of the Stockton and Darlington Section of the North Eastern Railway" it reads:

"We pray you to entertain the humble petition of your humble servants the engine drivers and firemen lately on your section. We have surrendered ourselves to William Bouch, esquire, and are now at his disposal. We had no quarrel with our employers; the course we took was to support the North Eastern men. We were betrayed into a false position and have acknowledged our error already. There were circumstances in the case we were not made acquainted with. We repent of what we have done and promise the act shall never be repeated. 'To err is human, to forgive is divine.' We cast ourselves entirely on thy mercy. Hoping you will manifest towards us a true chivalrous spirit and have compassion on a fallen foe. And in proportion to your magnanimity, benevolence and humanity on the present occasion, will be our devotion, fidelity and obedience in the future. We petition you, gentlemen, to be so kind, so forgiving and condescending as to pay the money standing to our account. You will be aware, gentlemen, that most of the money was earned in the storm and tempest, whilst exposed to the howling wind and pelting snow.

"P.S. Some of the families are now on the point of starvation. We hope, gentlemen, you will favour us with the money standing to our account. It is now sixteen weeks since we received any from you. And your humble servants will ever pray, etc."

Quoted in Bagwell : The Railwaymen p.42 .

R.M. Gard
Northumberland County Record Office.

National Labour Federation

The following is the only known original record of the National Labour Federation, an early example of a union for unskilled workers.¹ The Federation was formed in November 1886 and held its first public meeting on 22 December 1886² and its first delegate meeting on 1 April 1887, from which date it seems to have been functioning fully. The Federation drew its membership from the area of Tyneside and South-east Northumberland and the Newcastle Courant stated that there were also branches in Yorkshire, although there is no evidence to support this statement. There is no reference to the Federation in the Webbs' History of Trade Unionism, although references to it in their collected papers suggest that it was started with help from Newcastle members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and that it had the sympathetic support of E.R. Pease, the Darlington Quaker and later secretary of the Fabian Society.

Two years after its formation another unskilled workers' union, the Tyneside and General Labourers' Union (later called the National Amalgamated Union of Labour) was established. The unions seem to have co-existed for some time but by 1892 records show that the Federation was in serious decline and its fellow union was taking over as the major local organizer of the unskilled workers.

T.P. MacDermott

Workers' Educational Association

NATIONAL LABOUR FEDERATION

THE

SECOND QUARTERLY REPORT

of the branches, including the

GENERAL OFFICE ACCOUNTS,

From July 1st to September 30th 1887

GENERAL OFFICE, 40, GREY STREET,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE 3

FELLOW MEMBERS,

This, our Second Report is more complete than the first, and will give the members more information as to the position of the Federation.

It will be seen that our membership is somewhat less than in the June report, the cause being:- A great number of workmen joined out of enthusiasm at our public meetings, but when the first impulse of unity had passed, neglected to contribute any further to the Funds. We have still, according to the reports sent in - and reckoning the Branches who have neglected sending reports, at the number returned in June - some 2,500 members on the Book; and did everyone display the energy of the promoters, we would soon have that strong Federation of Labour which every worker, who has thought over his

1. The original of this material is in Newcastle City Archives.
2. Report in Newcastle Courant, 1 April 1887.
3. The addition of the following tables follows the original. Where there are errors the column is marked with an asterisk.

social position, must desire; and without which, a very large majority of the masses have no protection from the oppression and tyranny of their employers.

We must urge our members to attend regularly the Branch meetings, and make them the channels through which to ventilate any grievance to which they may be subjected, and thereby obtain the counsel and assistance of their fellow members. Never forget, our aim is to support and assist each other in case of need, and by doing so, we not only help ourselves but win others to the cause.

There are good prospects of improved trade, and with that improvement let us hope that the Federation will strengthen in number, and that every member will do his utmost to realize that hope.

Our total income during the quarter has been £68 12/11, in which is included £2 7/7½ for Pamphlets, "Plea for Federation." For details we must refer to reports for Branches &c. Our present financial position is:-

Balance in hands of Branches,	£12 5s. 9d.
" " Gen.Treas., in June,	£15 7s. 1d.
Receipts from Branches up to Sept. 30th,	£66 5s. 3½d.
" Sale of Pamphlets,	£ 2 7s. 7½d.
	<hr/>
	£96 5s. 9d.
Less expenditure at General Office,	£24 13s. 9d.
	<hr/>
Leaving to the credit of the Federation, Membership, 2,241.	£71 12s. 0d.

I remain, Fellow Members, yours truly,

J.B. FOGGON.

BRANCH INCOME.

BRANCHES	Member-ship	Contribu-tions			Manage-ment			Rules.		Cards.		Balance last Quarter		Total In-come				
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
Bedlington	86	3	15	8				0	14	0	23	0	11	9	4	11	0	
Boldon	166	5	5	2	0	4	5	0	17	0	05	2	8	0	7	19	7	
Blaydon	33	1	13	3	0	4	10	0	04	0	03	0	17	6	2	16	2	
Burradon	22	1	0	10	0	3	2	0	22	0	110	...			1	8	0	
Byker	No	Report										...						
Cramlington	11	0	8	6	0	1	6	0	17	0	11	...			0	12	8	
Delaval, Benwell	No	Report										...						
Felling	No	Report										...						
Gateshead	No	Report										...						
Elswick	No	Report										...						
Harton Green Lane	80	2	13	1½	0	9	4	0	03	0	01	1	9	3½	4	12	1	
Hebburn	44	1	10	11	0	4	6	0	15	0	02	0	13	8	2	10	8	
Holystone	116	4	17	10	0	10	4	0	18	0	35	1	1	10	6	15	1	
High Walker	45	1	16	4	...	...	...	...	...	0	08	0	11	8	2	8	3
Jarrow	220	2	10	0	0	13	10	...	...	0	011	2	9	5	5	14	2
Low Walker	No	Report										...						
Lemington	104	7	16	6	0	13	8	0	12	...	...	...			8	11	4
Newcastle, Central	115	2	18	1	0	10	0	0	01	0	07	1	5	5	4	14	2	
Scotswood	64	1	11	8	0	1	0	...	...	...	...	1	9	6	3	2	2
Swalwell	58	1	6	8	0	2	8	0	03	0	03	1	19	0	4	8	0	
Tynemouth	No	Report										...						
Willington Quay	No	Report										...						
West Holywell	35	1	10	0	0	2	4	0	20	0	20	...			1	16	4	
		*41	4	6½	4	1	7	0	13	0	13	6	14	17	0½	62	0	6

BRANCH EXPENDITURE

BRANCHES	Stationery			Stamps &c			Room Rents			Other Expenses			Balance in Hand			Remitted to Gen. Treas.			Total		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Bedlington	0	0	2	0	0	5½	0	6	0	0	4	4½	4	0	0	4	11	0	
Boldon	0	0	6	0	1	4	0	7	6	0	2	0	2	8	3	5	0	0	7	19	7
Blaydon	0	0	4	0	7	0	0	9	2	1	19	8	2	16	2	
Burradon	0	0	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7	6	1	80	...			
Byker	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cramlington	...	No	Report	0	1	1	0	2	5	0	9	7	...	0	12	1		
Delaval, Benwell	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Felling	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Gateshead	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Elswick	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Harton Green Lane	0	0	3	0	0	10½	0	3	0	1	7	11½	3	0	0	4	12	1
Hebburn	0	0	3	1	10	5	1	0	0	2	10	8	
Holystone	0	2	9	0	3	0	0	4	7	6	4	9	6	15	1
High Walker	0	16	3	1	12	0	2	8	3	
Jarrow	1	10	0	0	10	6	1	13	8	2	0	0	5	14	2	
Low Walker	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lemington	0	0	6	0	3	6	0	4	4	4	3	0	4	0	0	8	11	4
Newcastle, Central	0	14	2	4	0	0	4	14	2	
Scotswood	0	2	0	0	10	8	2	9	6	3	2	2	
Swalwell	0	5	0	1	3	10	3	0	0	4	8	10	
Tynemouth	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Willington Quay	...	No	Report	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
West Holywell	0	2	0	0	2	6	0	2	0	0	9	10	1	0	0	1	16	4
	0	0	11	0	12	1	3	1	6	*1	6	10	16	5	9	40	13	5	62	0	6*

GENERAL OFFICE ACCOUNT

INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
B.W. Hall	0	2	4	Office Rent	3	2	6
Bedlington	4	0	0	Office Utensils	0	1	0
Boldon	5	0	0	Secretary's Salary	5	0	0
Blaydon	1	19	8	Expenses of Delegation to Stockton and Middlesbro, Train Fares	7	6	
Burradon	1	7	6	Rent of Halls	2	1	0
Byker	2	0	0	Handbills and Advertising	12	0	
Delaval, Benwell	1	7	3	Postage, Carriage of Books, Secretary's Train Fare, &c.	1	13	6
Gateshead 2nd	1	14	7½	Poor Rate	0	9	7
Harton Green Lane	3	0	0	Contribution Cards, 5000	5	18	6
Hebburn	1	0	0	Messrs. Wheatley & Co. for Books, Stationery, Branch Seals, Printing &c.	4	1	6
Hebburn Colliery	4	7	5	Lower Central Hall Rent	0	15	0
Holystone	6	4	9	Mr. Bartlett, Bill Posting	0	2	6
High Walker	1	12	0	Balance in hand	56	18	7½
Jarrow	2	0	0				
Low Walker	2	0	0				
Lemington	4	0	0				
Newcastle, Central	4	0	0				
Scotswood	2	9	6				
Swalwell	3	0	0				
Tynemouth	1	0	0				
Willington Quay	12	0	0				
West Holywell	1	0	0				
New Benwell	1	0	3				
Balance	15	7	1				
	£81	12	4½		*£81	12	4½

THE PAPERS OF HENRY HAVELOCK ROBSON (1858-1929) - DURHAM COLLIERY ENGINEMAN

Henry Havelock Robson was born at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1858, and started work at the age of ten as apprentice to a Newcastle carrier. His employer's business failed in 1878 and Robson worked at Armstrong's Yards on Tyneside for a year before taking up a job as an engineman at New Herrington Colliery in County Durham. He worked at this colliery until December 1904 when he was dismissed "as one man was been done away with in consequence of putting a drift through from the Hutton Seam to the Maadlin". He worked for short spells at Thornaby and Wheatley Hill collieries and in July 1907 took a job as a crane-driver at Palmers of Jarrow. Robson returned to the Durham Coalfield in December 1910 as an engineman at the Margaret Pit and left in August 1913 to take a job on the hauling engine at the Dorothea Colliery, where he worked until his retirement in February 1923.

H.H. Robson was secretary of the Newbottle branch of the Durham Colliery Enginemen's Association for twenty years and served several terms on the Association's Executive Committee. He kept a record of certain incidents in his working life, such as changes of job, earnings, union activities, and accidents at his place of work. These events he set down in three notebooks which have been preserved by his daughter, Mrs. M.A. McGovern of Houghton-le-Spring, who allowed me to examine them on behalf of the N.E. Labour History Group. The entries are not regular enough to be termed a diary, yet they do contain some interesting information, and perhaps the most valuable section is that devoted to the Durham Coal Lock-out of 1892. In his notes on the dispute Robson inevitably goes over the same ground covered by R. Page Arnot in his history of the miners, but in addition Robson describes some local incidents and makes some comments of his own on the progress of the dispute. This, then, is a contemporary account of the lock-out written by a branch secretary of one of the unions involved in the dispute.

A. Potts.

H.H. Robson's account of the Durham Coal Dispute 1892.

14 Fenton Terrace, Herrington.

14 March 1892

Items of interest occuring during the present strike against a reduction in wages of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$. The original demand of the masters was for 10% reduction but that was modified to an immediate $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ or 5% off now and the other 5% on the first of May. After a considerable amount of balloting in which the miners returned very large majorities against any reduction whatever.

The first batch of ballot papers that were issued the men refused because it did not give them an opportunity of firmly refusing any reduction. The next batch was issued with the result as follows dated Durham 10th February 1892. The total number of financial members of the four sections comprising the Federation Board is 64,311

Two thirds of this number is 42,874

Votes cast for strike 40,468

A deficit of two-thirds 2,406

The result of the ballot taken on 10th February 1892 and announced on 4th March 1892 was as follows.

	Acceptance of 7½% reduction	Acceptance of TWO 5% reductions	Strike	Federation Board to have full power	Not voted
Miners	842	1,045	36,899	9,627	7,568
Mechanics	32	43	1,660	1,161	773
Enginemen	7	3	708	755	203
Cokemen	45	62	1,201	1,413	324
Totals	926	1,153	40,468	12,956	8,868

On Saturday 27 February 1892 the masters gave the whole of the men and boys in and about the mines in the whole of the collieries in Durham their notices with the exception of Enginemen to expire on Saturday 12 March 1892. The Enginemen were so incensed at the action of the masters which we considered was a direct attempt to break the Federation Board into sections, that they gave their notices in, in the majority of cases, on the Monday 29th February. Herrington, Dorothea and the Margaret Pits notices were not given in until 1st March which was caused by 5 of the Dolly and Peggy men refusing to give in their notices, Drummond, Robson, Charlton, Parkin and Thompson. But the 4 former have ceased to work today and at the Dolly there is Lawton and Kirbey not in the society but Lawton has also refused to work. Arthur Kirbey had nearly all his window panes broken for working.

26th March 1892

There never was known in the history of the country such a stoppage of work particularly in the mining industry. 12th March 1892 will be remembered as the date on which nearly 4/5ths of the coal producers of England laid down their tools, the Midlands for a fortnight's holiday to restrict the output and clear the markets of the surplus stock and Durham against a reduction 21st March 1892 - the majority of the collieries under the National Federation of Miners (of which neither Northumberland nor Durham are members nor represented) which embrace all the Midland collieries numbering nearly 400,000 members started today, after standing one week. The rest are expected to start on 28th March. They have fixed a levy of 6d per week to support the Durham miners, cokemen, mechanics and enginemen at present on strike. We are very busy at present holding meetings in various districts. Hetton, Haswell and today at the Lambton Arms, Chester-le-St. We held a large branch meeting last night at which there was between 70 and 80 members to consider a circular from the 4 committees requesting the matter in dispute (i.e. 7½% reduction) to be left in their hands to settle. And I believe the feeling of the county both miners and enginemen are inclined to favour the circular though in my mind we should fight to the bitter end against the reduction.

Rate of wages	Winding	3/11 + 35/- = 5/38 hrs
	Underground	4/6 + 35/- = 6/1.75. 11 hrs.
	Bank Pumping	3/11 + 35/- = 15/3 12 hrs.

Bankmen 10 hrs per shift at weekends.
Underground overtime 8 hrs per shift and week-ends, 10 hrs per shift money is unaltered.

9th April 1892.

We have paid the first out of work or strike pay of 5/- each member which took £24 - 5s to pay our branch of 97 financial members. The county was balloted on 28th and 30th March 1892 to get the feeling of the county with respecting the leaving the present dispute in the hands of the Federation Board with the following result. Of course it would take two-thirds majority to carry it.

For Federation Board	18,412
Continue the strike	31,383

15th April 1892

On 6th April the masters issued a manifesto setting forth their claim for a reduction (by Mr. Guthrie masters' agent) but according to his own figures we think he has entirely failed to make out his case. His statement (Guthrie's) is as follows. The average price paid for coal in April, May and June 1889 was 4s - 10.47d. Then prices rose until the quarter ending 30th September 1890 when the price of coal was at its highest (via) 7s - 5.62d. We got our last advance of 5% on the first of January 1891 which made us 30% above 1887 or 35% above the 1879 basis. But the above advance in coal prices is equal to 53%. Now in February 1892 the prices had declined to 6s - 3.31d or 1s - 2.31d below 30th September 1890 which is equal to 19% below 1890 prices but then 53% - 19% = 34% then where is the justice of the masters demands. The above is the exact figures published by the newspapers and copied by me from the Newcastle Daily Leader. Old R. Lawson went to work on Wednesday evening he said he had got a letter from Mr. Lishman asking him to go. But I am very glad to say that after working 2 shifts at firing at the New Pit his sons were able to point out to him and convince him that he was making a great mistake in going in and at a pit where he had no business, that he refused to go again.

4th May 1892

We have received support from our Association 24/- and from outside subscriptions 3/6d making 27/6 each member. The Miners up till this date have received 15/- per member. Mechanics have received 13/- up to this day.

Undated entry

On 7th May 1892 (Saturday) the miners held a council meeting at Durham for to receive suggestions from the various lodges, of which there is at least 470 and the result of that meeting of miners the Federation Board took in hands to settle the dispute without even on that occasion asking the other three sections permission or their opinion on the matter, but I think the F.B. took it for granted that because the other 3 sections had previously voted the power into the hands of the R.B. the same would have been done

again if the miners suggestions had been sent back to the county.

After some correspondence between the F.B. and Mr. Guthrie the owners secretary Friday 13th May was fixed upon as the day of meeting.

The ballots returned 30th April 1892. Previous to the above council meeting lodge ballots had been taken with respect to the non-associated colliers returning to work. Now none of these collieries had ever been asked for a reduction in wages, and in most of these collieries the masters wished the men to return to work at the old rate and offered to give the men a guarantee that their wages would not be interfered with for various lengths of time from 3 pays up to 6 months and even 12 months. The following resolution was ballotted upon by the 4 sections:

"That we, the United Committees of the four sections comprising the Federation Board, having in view the increased demand of the Owners, and of the fact that there is a growing feeling at some of the Non-Associated Collieries to go to work, and that some of them have gone to work; we consider it advisable to take a vote of the Lodges, as to whether these Collieries should work or not, at the old terms, it being understood that this should not apply to Collieries that are part of firms where the rest of the mines are in the Owners' Association.

The four Secretaries be instructed to draw up the necessary statement and form".

The result of the voting was an almost unanimous vote for them to return to work, on the old terms, but the masters refused to start the pits now unless they get a reduction and the united committees held a meeting on 18th May and resolved to let, or advise, the non-associated collieries to start work and submit to a $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ reduction without ever consulting the county. The F.B. are about bested and are prepared to advise or submit to anything to get this strike settled, and in my opinion they have entirely failed to show their worth and maintain the position which they till now held in the estimation of both masters and men.

On Friday 13th May the F.B. met the masters' wages committee at Newcastle and they had the whole of the 4 committees at the Coal Trade Hall. The first offer that was made was 5% reduction by the F.B. which was refused by the masters. The next offer was increased to $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ over which there was a long discussion the masters asking the F.B. to withdraw on two occasions to allow them to consider the question, the last time the F.B. withdrew it was between 30 and 40 minutes before they were asked in again which shows that they had not been unanimous in their opinion but eventually they refused to accept the $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ reduction.

The Federation Board sent the above to the and asked for a Lodge vote upon the questions of accepting the $13\frac{1}{2}\%$ reduction, or strike, or other suggestions. Newbottle voted for strike but suggested that the F.B. go back to the masters with the offer of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ but not to increase the offer.

Two or three days after we received another circular from the F.B. stating that the result of the suggestions was that a large majority of Lodges were in favour of increasing the offer to 10% (which a large number of members doubt) and asked for another Lodge vote giving them power to offer 10%. They got that power and went back to the masters on 21st May 1892 and offered the 10% reduction which was refused by the masters after some discussion. This thoroughly incensed the F.B. and they issued one of the best circulars issued during this strike. The meeting was the quickest that we have known. The Lodge votes were not returned until the Saturday morning, and when the F.B. telegraphed to arrange for a meeting, the masters Secretary replied that they were waiting to meet them then. But the 10% offered by the F.B.

was refused as the masters' committee evidently had no power to settle except at 13½% reduction as the three months was not up. The F.B. pointed out to the masters that it was the wage committee and not the F.B. that has not power to settle and that it was clearly shown that the tables were turned upon the masters that instead of the F.B. been mere message carriers, the term was most applicable to the masters' wage committee.

On the last week in May the Bishop of Durham opened negotiations with the masters and the F.B. with a view of getting them together and endeavouring to come to some settlement. With that view he addressed letters to both parties requesting them to try to arrange to meet him at his residence Auckland Castle. A meeting was arranged for Monday 30th May. The meeting took place and the F.B. agreed to accept 10% reduction but there was some minor details that could not be settled i.e. the restarting of all the men and the removing of blacklegs etc. W.O. Wood of South Hetton was the bitterest antagonist because he had some blackleg enginemen that he did not want to remove. There is 2 or 3 other places similarly situated.

Strike ended Friday 3 June 1892.

H.H. Robson notes: "The Durham Miners etc. Conciliation Board Rules were accepted by the four committees with 18 representatives on each side on this the 5th December 1894" and he includes a copy of the rules affecting colliery enginemen which are re-produced below.

DURHAM COAL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION.

JOINT COMMITTEE RULES.

ENGINEMEN.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Formation of Committee. | 1. The Joint Committee to be composed of six members of the Owners' Association and six members of the Workmen's Association, and a Chairman to be chosen annually by the Owners' Association and the Federation Board. |
| Meetings. | 2. The meetings of the Joint Committee to be held at such places as may be fixed upon as being most generally convenient ; and to be held at such times as may be approved by the Chairman. |
| Representatives. | 3. In any case brought before the Joint Committee, the owners may be represented by one or more of their agents, and the workmen by any of the Enginemen employed upon the colliery from which the case is sent. |
| Powers of Committee. | 4. The Joint Committee shall have full power to refer to arbitration, or otherwise settle all questions (except such as may be termed county questions, or which may affect the general trade) relating to wages, compensation for alteration in practices of working, and all questions or disputes of any other description which may arise from time to time at any particular |

colliery, between the owner of such colliery and his workmen, and which shall be referred to the consideration of the Committee by either of the parties concerned, and the decision of the Committee shall be final and binding upon all parties.

Alteration of Practices.

5. In the event of any alteration in the manner or system of working, in accordance with county arrangements, no stoppage of work shall occur pending the decision, by agreement or arbitration (to be afterwards confirmed by the Joint Committee), of any question as to readjustment of wage, or other question arising out of the altered mode of working. The decision shall date from the commencement of such alteration.

Counter-claims

6. All applications by one party for advances or reductions shall entitle the other side to open out the question of the prices paid to the same class of workmen throughout the whole of the colliery, provided that not less than seven clear days before the hearing by Joint Committee, a statement of any counter-claim intended to be made, together with the average wages of not less than three pays, or the datal wages shall be handed to the manager, or, as the case may be, to the workmen of the colliery.

Objections to hearing of cases.

7. If any objection is to be raised to the hearing of any case, not less than seven clear days (or of any counter-claim four clear days) before the hearing by Joint Committee, a notice of such objection shall be handed to the manager, or, as the case may be, to the workmen of the colliery; or if the cause of objection arises within such seven days or four days, then at any time previous to such meeting.

Averages to be supplied nine days before hearing.

8. No request for alteration of prices or of datal wages shall be entertained unless the average wages for not less than three pays or the datal wages paid to such workmen have been supplied, at least nine clear days before the hearing by Joint Committee.

County average.

9. No change shall be made in the prices and wages paid to any class of workmen for altered practices or conditions of working, unless it be clearly shown that their average daily wage is reduced or increased thereby below or above the average daily wage of their class throughout the county of Durham.

Pits laid idle.

10. If a colliery is laid idle by the owners or workmen, on account of any dispute between them, no claim by the offending party shall be considered until after work has been resumed.

Previous decisions.

11. No request shall be considered if the party making the application is proved not to be carrying out any previous decision of the Joint Committee, or award.

Back money.

12. In the event of any payment of back money being awarded, the Chairman of the Joint Committee shall decide upon the period for which such payment shall be made.

- Date of alterations. 13. Unless otherwise arranged, all decisions shall take effect from the beginning of the next pay after the date of the decision or of the award.
- Re-hearing. 14. Any case can be reconsidered after the lapse of twelve weeks from the date of its being last heard, or from the date of an award.
- Order of cases. 15. When both owners and workmen have cases for consideration the cases of each shall be considered alternately, and a circular, specifying the cases to be heard by the Joint Committee at any meeting, shall be sent to each member of the Committee at least fourteen days before such meeting; and it shall not be competent for the Committee to discuss any other matter than shall be specified in such circular, unless the parties concerned agree to any very urgent case being heard, and both sides of the Committee concur.
- Fourteen days' notice. 16. In any case referred to arbitration each party shall appoint a disinterested arbitrator within twenty-one days of the date of the reference; and if within the said twenty-one days either of the parties fail to appoint an arbitrator, the arbitrator appointed shall ask the Chairman of the Joint Committee to authorise him to hear and determine the matter referred, and make an award, which shall be binding on both parties.
- Urgent cases. 17. If, in any case referred to arbitration, the arbitrators fail to agree as to the appointment of an umpire, the Chairman of the Joint Committee shall make the selection of an umpire.
- Appointment of Arbitrators. 18. All questions at any meeting of the Joint Committee shall, in the event of dissent, be determined by a majority in number of members to be ascertained by a show of hands, and the declaration of the Chairman as to the result of any such show of hands shall be final. In case of an equality of votes between the owners' and the men's representatives, the Chairman shall give his decision on the question at issue.
- Appointment of Umpire.
- Voting.

For the Durham Coal Owners' Association,
REGINALD GUTHRIE,
Secretary.

For the Durham County Enginemen's Association
W.H. LAMBTON,
Secretary.

May 26th, 1893.

H.H. Robson also kept a record of his annual earnings 1893-1904 which were as follows:

Year	Gross Pay	Deductions (unspecified)	Take-Home Pay
1893	£83 - 18 - 0	£1 - 7 - 1	£82 - 10 - 11
1894	83 - 16 - 5	1 - 5 - 7	82 - 10 - 10
1895	81 - 15 - 0	1 - 8 - 4	80 - 6 - 8
1896	79 - 1 - 10	1 - 5 - 6	77 - 16 - 4
1897	76 - 8 - 9	1 - 6 - 9	75 - 2 - 0
1898	87 - 8 - 6	1 - 5 - 9	86 - 2 - 9
1899	85 - 7 - 11	1 - 11 - 9	83 - 16 - 2
1900	99 - 8 - 11	1 - 15 - 7	97 - 13 - 4
1901	111 - 5 - 11	1 - 13 - 8	109 - 12 - 3
1902	98 - 10 - 2	1 - 12 - 10	96 - 17 - 4
1903	96 - 14 - 8	1 - 14 - 5	95 - 0 - 3
1904	87 - 5 - 7	1 - 13 - 10	85 - 11 - 9

The General Strike in the North East;

a Bibliographical Sketch

The General Strike was without doubt one of the turning points in the development of the British labour movement between the wars. If there had been any doubt before 1926 that it was a moderate constitutionalist movement there was certainly none after. The General Strike was the epitaph on the headstone of industrial militancy. The massive and persistent unemployment of the remainder of the inter-war years was quiescently accepted. Had the General Strike ended in a victory for the trade unions and not a calamitous defeat - and even the maintenance of the status quo in respect of the wages and hours of miners would have been a victory - then the history of the 1930's might have been different. The history of the General Strike has not been re-written since the pioneer work of the American historian, W.H. Crook, was published in 1931. Controversy still attends any discussion on the interpretation of the nine days but the actual facts of the dispute over the country as a whole are generally agreed. One of the sturdiest pillars of this orthodoxy is the oft-expressed admiration for the spontaneous organisational flair exhibited by trade unionists at district and branch level all over Britain. Incredibly no serious local study of this phenomenon was attempted anywhere before the 1960's. In this decade, work has begun in Scotland, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, and the West Riding of Yorkshire under the auspices of the History Group of the British Communist Party, and a Ph.D. thesis has been written on the strike in the North East. These efforts should provide fresh information and by stimulating interviews with persons who recall or participated in what were dramatic events, may assist in the preservation of something of the spirit of those times, that elusive reality which few historians ever capture.

The North East, Northumberland, Durham and Teeside, is a well defined area as was recognised by the Conservative Government in 1925 when they created it, under the title of Northern Division, as one of the ten areas into which the country was divided for the purpose of organising essential services in an emergency. The local historian coming unsullied by previous knowledge to the problem of the General Strike in this area would almost certainly go initially to the Proceedings and Minutes of the Durham and Northumberland Miners' Associations, then separate unions in the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. For the General Strike, however, these bound volumes are singularly unhelpful. There are several reasons for this of which the most crucial is probably the fact that the strike lasted only nine days which did not give the parent Associations time to formulate any wide ranging central strike organisation. All the work, such as it was, in what was early days in a miners' stoppage, was done at branch level and at that level few written records, in the form of lodge minute books, will have survived the last forty-odd years.

None of the other major trade unions in the region have retained any complete record of the workings of their strike committees or Councils of Action, which we know were hurriedly set up in those early May days. However a small, black, nine-penny exercise book, with pencilled entries has been preserved by a long serving Darlington trade union official. This was the minute book of the five-man strong Rota Committees established by the Joint Transport Strike Committee in the town, dominated by railwaymen, to maintain a twenty-four hour service and dealing with hour-by-hour questions of picketing, permits and communications with strikers in other parts.

This book provides a fascinating picture of the excitement, immediacy and some of the problems which strike committees everywhere must have faced, and of course it possesses immense local interest. A xerox copy of its contents may be examined in the University Library at Hull.

Of the other trade unions, only the Typographical Association and the Transport and General Workers' Union have any documents which are of significance to the historian of the General Strike. The Executive Committee Minute Book of the Newcastle Branch of the former union contains references to the aftermath of the strike, including some examples of printing firms who victimised workers and set up non-union shops. It also provides a snippet of workers opposition to the idea of a general strike after the event. The Northern Area Committee Minutes and Reports of the Transport and General Workers also throw light on the problems associated with returning to work.

The only other piece of unpublished trade union material resident in the North East consists of a few notes made by Ebby Edwards during the nine days which his daughter has kept. Copies of these are in the possession of Mr. Sid Chaplin and the University Library at Hull. For additional trade union material an excursion outside the two northern counties has to be undertaken, to London, where the T.U.C. has its own General Strike Collection. The various telegrams, letters, reports and bulletins which have to be sifted through contain several references to activities in the North East during the General Strike though again not elucidating in detail the role of the strike committees as much as the historian would like. While in London the Proceedings and Reports of the National Union of Railwaymen and the National Union of Seamen can be looked at, the former documenting statistically the decline in N.U.R. membership in the North East after the strike, the latter exhibiting a somewhat grisly image of the persecution of several members of the union who went on strike in defiance of the official union policy.

The remainder of the unpublished material only concerns the trade unions indirectly and sees the strike through the eyes of opponents. This is obviously important in that it provides some insight into the activities of the Government's emergency services organisation. The opening up of the Cabinet and Departmental papers has released, inter alia, the minutes of the Cabinet Supply and Transport Committee which sat throughout each day of the dispute and which was the recipient of reports from representatives throughout the country. There are several references to the Northern Division. Also available are the Information Bulletins and Situation Reports put together by various Government departments from day to day while the strike lasted (and in fact continuing until the end of the coal stoppage). These bulletins provide, in the main, a snapshot picture of strike incidents and can be usefully compared with the local press. Their brevity tantalises.

Leaving London and returning north a call at the York Record Office of British Rail will produce a General Strike file kept by the northern section of the L.N.E.R. It is rather thin, but again is useful for the picture it paints of the difficulties experienced by some employees - this time at a carriage and wagon works - in regaining work when the strike was called off.

The records of local authorities, all of whom were roped in by the Government to help maintain essential services, give some indication of the activities of local anti-strike forces. The Minutes and Proceedings of the

Newcastle City Council are especially full and interesting and the Watch Committee minutes describe in considerable detail the way in which the police organised to combat the strike.

The County Archives Office at Durham is the repository for a large amount of material on the coal industry, most of which has been deposited by the National Coal Board and has yet to be seriously examined by historians. The Archives are also the home of the Dillon papers, a collection of correspondence between the Marquis of Londonderry and his agent which spans the period of the General Strike. Both Dillon and his employer were involved in establishing a local branch of the private strike breaking or volunteer registering body, the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies, O.M.S., about which detail has been singularly lacking. Moreover Dillon wrote a series of letters to the Marquis during the dispute which are a cynical, almost detached, record of the strike through the eyes of a prominent member of the local middle class whose confidence in order reasserting itself never wavered.

Newspapers are obviously an important source for the historian of the twentieth century. This commonplace is true for local as well as national editions. In the 1920's there were numerous morning, evening and weekend newspapers in the North East. The weeklies are not very helpful so far as the General Strike is concerned because the printers' participation in the dispute brought the production of most of them to a standstill. The Auckland Chronicle and the Blaydon Courier provide two illustrations of this. Moreover, once they had resumed publication, little reference was made to the nine days, save the odd report of a prosecution for infringement of the emergency regulations.

The daily newspapers are more valuable and the three major morning newspapers in the area, the Northern Echo, Newcastle Chronicle and Newcastle Journal, all brought out strike editions. The production of the papers was handicapped considerably by the stoppage in the printing trades. Managerial and reporting staff managed to bring out papers but this inevitably meant that news collecting suffered. In addition local trade unionists considered that the papers were being produced by blackleg labour. As a result, no strike committee representative worth his salt would talk to any newspapermen. The activities of strike committees therefore, is rarely commented upon in the three daily newspapers. Perhaps it is as well to issue a word of warning about using the twentieth century press as an historical source. Both the Chronicle and the Journal were hard line conservative newspapers, big C and little c. They opposed labour throughout the twenties and one has only to read the editorials to discover how bitter this opposition could become. Their politics undoubtedly invaded their news coverage as well as their editorial opinion. The Northern Echo, a supporter of the Liberal Party, appears to aim at higher standards of objectivity. In any event, the local press is a vital source, warts and all.

The strikers had their own press in the form of single or double sheet duplicated bulletins. There may have been several of these in the North East but only two appear to have survived. The Newcastle Workers' Chronicle was the mouthpiece of the Newcastle Trades Council or perhaps more accurately, the Joint Strike Committee. No complete set exists. The same is true of the Northern Light, published by the Council of Action set up in the Chopwell district of North West Durham. Both bulletins were morale boosters rather than disseminators of news per se. The International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam has a collection of strike bulletins which includes some copies of the Workers' Chronicle and the Northern Light and

the Institute has a xeroxing service.

The British national press contains references to specific incidents during the nine days in the North East such as the Cramlington train derailment and it may be instructive to compare their coverage with that given by local newspapers. The Morning Post did print a series of articles on Chopwell, the "Reddest Village" in England, in June 1926 but these throw at least as much light on the Morning Post as on County Durham as will be appreciated when it is noted that Newcastle was described as the landing place of the Russian invasion.

Finally the June 1926 edition of The Northerner, the magazine produced by the students at Armstrong College, Newcastle, comments interestingly on student attitudes to and activities in the strike, although the keynote appears to be one of confusion.

One of the gaps in our knowledge of the General Strike concerns the effect which it had on individual industries and particular companies within industries. This is perhaps not very surprising. The strike period itself was short and the fact that most of the staples were already victims of depression makes it difficult to isolate the impact of the strike on such industries. If individual firms had retained detailed records, for example listing the total number of their employees who went out on strike, then obviously the difficulties referred to would be mitigated considerably. Unfortunately most companies appear not to have kept anything relevant to the strike period. The one exception is Dorman Long and Company Ltd. whose Thirty-seventh Ordinary General Meeting and Annual Report contains enough material to make the historian wish that such reports were more numerous. In particular leading engineering firms might have been able to present historians with details as to how the so-called second line of workers responded to their strike call on 11th May.

If the major companies of the north east provide the historian of the General Strike with but scant material, the area's Trades Councils are similarly unproductive. None of their records have survived, save for the Forty-eighth Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Middlesbrough Trades and Labour Council which is included in the T.U.C.'s General Strike collection. It is a fascinating glimpse, but only a glimpse, of the problems facing a central strike committee and the improvisation necessary to solve them. In a pamphlet dealing with the development of the Newcastle Trades Council published in 1932, the General Strike receives the briefest of mentions.

Of the contemporary articles and pamphlets which are still obtainable, undoubtedly the most important is the Account of the Proceedings of the Northumberland and Durham General Council Joint Strike Committee, prepared by its secretary, C.R. Flynn, in typescript duplicated form soon after the strike ended. Much of it was reproduced in an article by R. Page Arnot in Labour Monthly Vol. VIII No.6, June 1926, and in Arnot's history of the Miners' Federation, The Miners. Vol. II. Years of Struggle (1953); pamphlet number 22 produced by the History Group of the British Communist Party, The General Strike in the North East (1961) is based almost entirely upon it. This is not the place to discuss in detail the merits of this document which gives an account of some of the central problems which faced the ambitious multi-union strike committee with headquarters in Burt Hall

which, it was hoped, would co-ordinate union activities throughout the two counties. It includes a passage drawn from the actual minutes of the Strike Committee. The complete minutes are lost and believed to be destroyed. Together with the Cabinet Supply and Transport Committee material and volume 196 of the Parliamentary Debates series, the Account of the Proceedings provide the raw material for building up a picture of what happened in Newcastle as the Government emergency organisation was confronted by trade unionists keen to run essential services themselves. In his book, The General Strike (1957) Julian Symons attempted to answer this question; he was not very successful because he leaned too uncritically on the local press. To be fair it remains something of a puzzle.

To complete this rapid survey of the essentially local material, mention must be made of a series of articles in the magazine Plebs, volume XVIII, July to October 1926, which refer to the North East on occasion. It would be less than a comprehensive survey, however, if some mention were not made of those general histories of the period which are not only essential background for anyone interested in the General Strike, but also contain fragments on Northumbria. The Trades Councils in the General Strike by Emile Burns (1926) examines Middlesbrough and Stockton. A Workers' History of the Great Strike (1927), compiled jointly by J.F. Horrabin, R.W. Postgate and Ellen Wilkinson, also comments on happenings north of the Tees. L.J. MacFarlane's The British Communist Party: its origins and development to 1929 (1966) shows that Party membership in the North East increased immediately after the strike but was back to normal twelve months later. A. Bullock, The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, Vol.I (1960) and C.L. Mowat, Britain between the Wars 1918-1940 (1959) are of course, with Crook, the basic beginning.

In conclusion it should be stressed that although a Ph.D. has been written on the subject of the General Strike in the North East, the subject is by no means closed. The author of the thesis interviewed and corresponded with a good many trade unionists and others who took part in or recalled the events of 1926. But it is more than likely that others still have valuable untapped knowledge. Moreover, not every miners' lodge in the area was contacted and it may be that vital documents lie hidden in some cupboard. Similarly local industries may not have yielded up all their relevant data. The other local studies currently being undertaken should place our knowledge of the General Strike in the North East in a clearer perspective, and when co-ordinated all should produce the most satisfactory work yet on the Nine Days.

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Publications by Working Class Organisations
in the North East during the General Strike

Dr. Mason has kindly donated a set of photo copies of publications he collected during his research. This set will be deposited in the local history section of the Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, in the near future. It is possible that originals of these copies and further issues are still available in the region and if so the Group would very much like to see these in order that they may be copied to build up as complete a set as possible.

The following brief guide to Dr. Mason's collection was prepared by Mr. R.P. Grace of the Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic.

- The Northern Light No.1, Wednesday, 5 May 1926
Issued by Blaydon and Chopwell District Council of Action
As with the following editions, foolscap, 2-4 pages of typescript with hand drawn banner.
Main contents: strike organization; use of soldiers.
- do- No.3, n.d.
As No.1. plus Ryton
Contents: mainly re police, particularly the feeling that they favour the employers; reports of violence against police and blacklegs.
- do- n.d.
No information on issuing body.
Content: police actions; statement from General Council of T.U.C. "There is no Constitutional Crisis."
- do- n.d.
As no.3. plus Spen
Content: final statement re the use of the general strike in future; difficulties caused by police action.
- do- n.d.
Issuing body not given
Content: Gateshead trial; anti-police feeling; treachery of General Council.
- do- n.d.
Issuing body not given
Content: "Thoughts on the present discontents"; analysis of reasons for failure.
- The Workers Chronicle 5 May 1926
Newcastle upon Tyne Trades Council of Action
Foolscap, typescript, from 1 to 4 pages.
Content: Organization of strike; police intimidation.
- do- No.3, n.d.
Content: permits; local Communist Party statement on control of food supply; appeal from Newcastle board of Guardians.
- do- 6 May 1926, no.1.(?)
Content: Slogan re friendly relations with armed forces.
- do- 7 May 1926, no.4.
Content: story on joint action.

The Workers Chronicle 8 May 1926, no.6, evening edn.

Content: picketing as main weapon; General Council message denying that negotiations to end the strike had commenced; call on the Co-operatives to commit themselves; clashes with police.

-do-

9 May 1926, no.7

Content: brutality of Newcastle police; accusation that Co-operatives were lukewarm to the strikers' cause.

-do-

n.d., no.8.

Content: police brutality; repeat of story in no.7.

-do-

10 May 1926, no.9.

Content: world war a "fight for markets and sources of raw material"; reports of raids on Communist Party H.Q.; arrests in connexion with police baton charges; Newcastle Trades Council of Action to appoint a propagandist for the youth; call for solidarity and mass picketing, following arrest of Will. Lawther.

-do-

Monday, 10 May 1926, No.10, evening edn.

Content: mass picketing as main weapon; brutality of Birtley police.

-do-

11 May 1926, no.11.

Content: article by A. Geddes exhorting remembrance of promises made by the robber classes to the soldiers in 1914; story from Glasgow on power of mass picketing; embargo on milk removed; story on police brutality.

-do-

11 May 1926, no.12

Content: article by W. Brain of Foundry Workers that this is not a revolutionary assault on the Constitution yet; all permits withdrawn; law on peaceful picketing; instruction "to cultivate a friendly atmosphere with the troops"; formation of a defence corps of reliable trade unionists; shots fired at picket at Consett; General Council calls off strike.

-do-

14 May 1926, no.14.

Content: "Our answer to the traitors" - betrayal of working class interests; A.Geddes "Force T.U.C. to continue the Strike or quit". Whole issue on theme of keeping strike going.

The Midgie

22 May 1926, No.2.

Communist Group at New Hartley colliery, Blyth
4 pages, foolscap.

Content: betrayal by T.U.C. leaders, call for international unity among trade unions; A.Geddes on the need to recruit more unionists and expel those who have capitulated to the employers; whole working class united in the struggle, except the Co-operatives.

The Workers' Searchlight 30 May 1926, no.1.

Spennings and Chopwell Reds
Foolscap.

Content: The Searchlight aimed at spreading disaffection; items from The Midgie and Workers' Chronicle; Co-op Central Strike Fund.

The Northern Searchlight 27 June 1926, no.5.

Spennings and Chopwell Reds.

Foolscap; four pages.

Content: Criticism of leadership; Blaydon co-op failed to join strike; release of imprisoned strikers; propaganda journey to Weardale.

The British Worker 11 May 1926, no.1, Newcastle edn.

General Council, T.U.C.

Printed.

Content: reply to Baldwin broadcast; no idea of civil war behind the strike; no challenge to the Constitution; strikers v police football match; suppression by B.B.C. and most newspapers of a message from the Church; appeal to teachers to support the workers.

-do-

15 May 1926, no.5. Newcastle edn.

Content: Baldwin's proposals on coal; terms for re-starting the railways - trade unions admit to being in the wrong; similar for building trades; General Council statement on ending strike; Bolton Guardians' decision to give one week's relief to miners, who would then be liable to prosecution under Vagrancy Act.

Strike Bulletin

4 May 1926

Spennings and District Trades and Labour Council (22, Marx Terrace, Chopwell)

Printed - crown poster size

Content: report on calling of strike; organization; appeal for order - trade unionists hindered by organizations such as O.M.S. should not resort to violence but report to strike authorities; peaceful picketing.

National General Strike 12 May 1926, 5 p.m.

Northumberland and Durham General Council Joint Strike Committee to all Councils of Action and Strike Committees. Printed Sheet.

Content: on calling off the Strike - though unprepared the working classes had fought the capitalists to a stand-still in nine days.