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VIEWS FROM WITHIN: REFLECTIONS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE WORK OF TWO BRITISH WORKING-CLASS WRITERS OF THE 1930s.

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ABSTRACT

VIEWS FROM WITHIN: REFLECTIONS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE WORK OF TWO BRITISH WORKING-CLASS WRITERS OF THE 1930s.

The argument of the thesis centres around the notion of 'views from within'. It is an examination which states that the essential difference underlying Lewis Jones' and Walter Greenwood's writing is based upon their personal histories. The two writers are considered from the viewpoint that the contrast in their attitude to the subject of their work is the result of diverging reactions to their experiences. While the authors were born into generally comparable working-class communities, their disparate responses the events of their lives affected their perceptions of the economic, social and, more importantly, the political situation in British society. By exploring the writing of Greenwood and Jones during the 1930s, both from within the context of their communities and their lives, it is established that their differing perspectives on the world are evident in the work they produced at this time. When compared to Greenwood, Jones, as a militant Communist with the strength of his convictions, offers a contrary attitude to the events of the Depression. While Greenwood professed to be an 'enthusiastic' Labour supporter, his perspective on the contemporary issues of British society is ambivalent and riddled with contradiction.

The resulting discussion has three distinct stages. Initially, the framework of the argument is laid out, involving a literary / historiographical structure which uses
the novels as a primary source. The second stage attempts to develop a sense of the individual behind the writing by creating a biographical narrative for each man. Here, the two are examined from within the context of their respective environments and their accumulated experiences. The final chapter seeks to analyse the work of Greenwood and Jones from a comparative viewpoint. Enlisting a thematic appraisal, several areas of their writing are examined and two scenes from their central novels are contrasted. Thus, by closely investigating the creative output of Jones and Greenwood, it has been revealed that their dissimilar viewpoints on the 1930s are captured throughout their work. It is also shown that the difference between them is primarily political - while Jones struggled to change the world, Greenwood merely wanted to alter his life.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"James went a journey with the goat's new compass And he reached the end of his brick".1

WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG.

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INTRODUCTION

VIEWS FROM WITHIN: REFLECTIONS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE WORK OF TWO BRITISH WORKING-CLASS WRITERS OF THE 1930s.

From the heart of the Welsh valleys came the writings of a man inseparably linked with a people in conflict with their times. His name was Lewis Jones. A hundred and fifty miles to the north-east, a Salford author, Walter Greenwood, depicted the bleak, poverty-stricken existence of life in the slums. The two men were born within six years of one another and grew up in similar adverse conditions, dictated by the nature of their respective working-class communities. Yet their lives ended in notably different directions. While Jones' experiences led him to a powerful affirmation of the need to struggle for change via his steadfast commitment to radical Leftist politics, Walter Greenwood's focus was ambiguous. The Salford man's life influences resulted in an underlying conflict of interests between his intended future - to escape from the slums - and his socialist beliefs. Both men chose to write about the problems they encountered within their separate environments, responding to the same issues and ills of society in the 1930s. The thesis argues that, prompted by divergent reactions, which were based upon their experiences, Jones and Greenwood reveal dissimilar attitudes to their subject matter and to the wider concerns of
the decade. Their writing thus presents two contrasting perspectives on the past.

Apprehending the past is the primary intention of most historians. This study seeks to do so by examining how Walter Greenwood and Lewis Jones comprehended their own lives and times, through an exploration of their writing. While the aim is to discover why the two authors wrote as they did, it is also imperative to identify the methods employed to interpret their work. The process involved is, without elaborating further at this stage, an attempt to understand the past through the form of the novel. Enclosing the argument within an interdisciplinary framework - regarding all texts as narratives which are constructed within a recognisable period in history - allows a literary / historiographical approach, using novels as a primary source.

It is the intention of the discussion to establish that the writings of Greenwood and Jones are more reflections of their experiences than works of imagination. This approach does not ignore or undermine the fictional nature of their writing, however. By placing their novels and related written material firmly within the context of their social, political and economic backgrounds, both at the level of the individual and of the communities from which they came, the object is to examine the reflections of their experiences as they reveal themselves in their writing. The secondary aspect of the process is to determine how these experiences influenced and moulded their direction and the aims which they gave their novels. Using the concept of narrativity and methods derived from an interpretation of oral history,¹ the work of Greenwood and Jones will be analysed in terms of how they made sense of their worlds and the diverse perspectives they present on the contemporary situation. It will be shown that they utilised their experiences for different reasons and for contrasting ends; their responses to

the then current circumstances were directed by their divergent motivations and these were, in turn, dominated by their personal history.

The central focus of the discussion is to understand the writing of the two men by establishing it within the environment in which it was created. The novels of the two authors will be regarded as the products not only of two distinctive communities, but also of two identifiable areas, those of South Wales and Northern England. Likewise their work provides a marginalised interpretation of the 1930s - from within the working class - an element which needs to be considered. Hence a substantial section of the investigation will concentrate on their writing. This is necessary firstly, in order to draw out particular aspects of their personal history which were incorporated into their books, and secondly, to use this material to discuss the contrasting viewpoints of the two writers on the issues which they tackled. Thus the conclusions of the exploration will attempt to reveal the process by which two working-class authors, evolving from like backgrounds, during the same time period, portraying similar hardships in their novels, can result in such diverging perspectives of their world, and hence disparate outcomes for their lives.

The thesis is developed in three stages. The first chapter presents an extension and elaboration of my approach to the topic. The second stage is to contextualise Jones and Greenwood by placing them within their environments, and it is achieved through a biographical portrayal. Drawing upon many of the elements revealed in the personal histories of the two men are the sections of literary analysis which immediately follow the accounts of their respective authors. The final stage of the discussion comprises an examination of the writers, engaging in a comparison of how they treated the events and concerns of their times. There are several parallel incidents and scenes in their writing which provide a useful foundation for a side-by-side exploration of the different ideas of the two writers.
As the themes and issues of the work of Greenwood and Jones are outlined in both the biographies and literary criticism, the last chapter has the opportunity to contrast the two, dwelling primarily on the divergent attitudes reflected in their writing. The chapter engages specifically in an exploration of four themes which recur throughout the work of Greenwood and Jones. Although there are other concerns in the writing of the two men, the following were chosen in order to provide a basis for comparison; the political intent of the writing, their depiction of unemployment, the authors' attitude to the subject, (the people of their novels), and their portrayal of the role of women. The discussion then continues the investigation of the themes by analysing their treatment in two important scenes from the writers' most acknowledged novels. The approach allows a more detailed exploration of the direction of their work and an understanding of the central issues as they arise within a specific set of circumstances. As the two scenes narrate similar events of the 1930s, the opportunity to examine a contrast in viewpoint is maximised. Thus, by placing the themes against the background of the two men's experiences, the discussion attempts to pinpoint the way in which the attitudes of Greenwood and Jones diverge.
"I'm more interested in the conditions that have made you what you are, the drama of life...".1

The 1930s was a decade of contrast.2 Despite the Depression, in early 1933 there was an economic upturn which saw a growth in consumer spending, a greater emphasis placed upon leisure, and a rapid expansion of the affluent suburbs around established urban regions. There was an increase in new technology as the manufacturing sector responded to the demand for cars, domestic appliances, and innovations required for the restructuring of the production processes of a number of industries to ensure competitive viability. The more modern side of the economy and society in Britain is best represented by the instalment of a national electricity grid. By 1933 the country was criss-crossed by high-voltage transmission lines. They connected efficient, recently built power stations, supplying electricity to industry and well-to-do private homes. It was a system well ahead of its time.3 The grid symbolises the substantial spread of modern industry which was closely related to the

overall increased standard of living, and an upsurge in the consumption of goods and services. The new electricity supply dramatically reduced the reliance of industry upon coal and resulted in the movement of advanced manufacturing away from traditional industrial centres. The restructuring and relocation of production aggravated the growing problems in those areas which relied upon the crumbling British 'staples' of coal, cotton and engineering, leaving them virtually destitute, with almost no avenue for economic recovery. The steady, country-wide rise in prosperity left entire regions bereft of the associated benefits. The grid thus signified a change in the economic and social makeup of Britain, highlighting the increasingly obvious divisions between the comfortably-off majority and the deprivation of hundreds of thousands. Coincidentally, the national grid was completed in the same year that *Love on the Dole* appeared in print. The novel was a public reminder of the existing hardships of those who were forgotten in the rush towards the new economic growth.

The decade began with many Britons' awareness of another side to the contemporary situation. Images of poverty, adversity and mass unemployment circulated throughout the nation's consciousness from 1929 onwards - it was the view from the other country, the Britain later to be euphemistically described as the 'distressed areas'. The impact of early thirties' government policy exacerbated the situation for large numbers of working people, illustrating the need to draw wider attention to the resulting problems. As newspapers and, to a lesser extent, radios, exerted a truly national influence for the first time, those who were cushioned from the effects of the Depression were introduced to the suffering of numerous working-class people who had, until then, endured the consequences unrecognised. Walter Greenwood and Lewis Jones, working from within the depressed regions, were able to add their voices to the cry for relief as hunger marches, mass demonstrations and

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4 Stevenson and Cook, *op.cit.*, pp. 218-44.
petitions to the government began to kindle public understanding.

Greenwood and Jones do much more than evoke the hardships of working life during the Depression. They illuminate their respective communities with the writing of experience as they were drawing upon details from their own lives. By supplying the reader with the knowledge that only a native would possess, Jones and Greenwood manage to convey a sense of place, and present an intimate evaluation of existence in a particular location. The two writers also reveal numerous elements of their social and economic backgrounds through their work and provide an insight into how they came to view the world as they did. Hence Greenwood and Jones have the capacity to allow an understanding of 'the conditions that have made you what you are' through an analysis of their writing. However, the perspectives they put forward in their work display a contrast in approach, analysis and attitude to the situations and events into which their creativity breathed life.

'The conditions that have made you what you are' is a phrase which has a significant bearing upon the work of Walter Greenwood. It encapsulates a number of aspects underlying his writing in the poignant way that only a self-reference can achieve. The author's comment, made during the latter part of his life, concerns the influences of environment and experience on the formation of an individual's personality and perspective. Greenwood's remark is also applicable to the work of Lewis Jones. By collecting details from their backgrounds which combine to provide 'the drama of life', it is possible to recognise aspects of their own experience which appear in their work. Both Greenwood and Jones have very particular (although entirely dissimilar) perspectives on the world due to the effects of growing up in such identifiably different environments from most writers of the time. Bringing such distinctive experiences to the process of writing, they cannot help but reveal themselves through the portrayal of life within their
novels. Hence their writing can be seen not only to document their own stories but also to put forward an individual definition of their communities. The novels constitute a form of personal history, and serve to redefine their experiences using the written word.

The authors display a separate Welsh and a 'provincial' English experience of their times. Their novels are products of the countries from which they came, and so can be identified as providing a view from a specific area. The writings embark upon a descriptive journey to represent the distinctive experiences which have been accrued due to originating from a recognisable location. Jones' work reveals a notable Welshness not only in the use of language but by referring to particular events of the Depression which impart a Welsh understanding of the era. The same can be said of Greenwood. He actively depicts a certain perspective of the contemporary social and economic difficulties that another writer from a separate locality would be unable to replicate.

Setting Jones and Greenwood in the context of their environments thus illustrates the particular nature of their viewpoint. By describing the two authors as writing 'from within', the expression refers to an aspect of their work which is governed by a sense of place: that is, their work is a depiction of life from a recognisable location. Presenting a sense of an identifiable area is a facet of the writers' work which a number of their contemporaries saw as important. For instance, Graham Greene, at the time a literary critic for The Spectator, considered this to be the strongest component of Walter Greenwood's creativity. In relation to Love on the Dole and His Worship the Mayor - the Salford man's first two books - Greene declared that:

Together Mr. Greenwood's two novels form a complete picture of a district not equalled ... by
any other living writer who finds inspiration in a particular locality.⁵

Douglas Garman, one of the founders of Lewis Jones' publishing house, Lawrence and Wishart, and a successful critic in his own right, made a similar reference to the activist's work:

... Lewis Jones was rooted in a community not simply in the sense of place and occupation, but also in the much deeper and fuller sense of class.⁶

It is the latter section of Garman's affirmation which highlights a different component of the writing of Jones and Greenwood: that of class. By cautiously adapting the implications of the normally involved term 'regionalism', their work can be viewed not only as the product of a distinct area, but also of a specific stratum of society. For instance, Raymond Williams believed that "a class can indeed be seen as a region: a social area inhabited by people of a certain kind, living in certain ways".⁷ In this way, the idea of regionalism takes on a social, political and economic dimension into which the work of the two authors fits comfortably. Hence their books can be examined as the creative output of working-class writers, incorporating an acknowledgement of the related elements to which that delineation refers.

The thirties witnessed the rise of the working-class writer.⁸ The problems of the decade, somewhat

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⁵ Graham Greene, The Spectator, 21st September, 1934, p. 113.
⁸ See Andy Croft, Red Letter Days: British Fiction in the 1930s, (London, 1990), chapter 3.
paradoxically, allowed those who, under normal circumstances, had little time to write, the opportunity to do so. It was unemployment which presented both Jones and Greenwood with the chance to encroach on the previously middle-class domain of novel composition. They were then able to provide two marginalised but diverging accounts of 1930s' life - from that of working-class writers. It must be emphasised that "working-class writing attempts to bring into the centre of the arena the life experience of that class".9 Both men "wrote as ... adult worker(s) from within the class",10 though for essentially different purposes. By creating a novel from 'within', the two writers were "offering a rare fictional portrayal of a working-class community" from the inside.11 The idea of writing 'from within' allows a distinctive perspective on the contemporary situation, a view of the times and their events unlike that which may have been accepted as 'normal' by the establishment.12 In this way, Jones' books Cwmardy and We Live, are said to achieve the "apprehension of a people and a place, the representation of individual lives inhabiting the wider life of a family, a union, a village and a class - and being shaped by that wider life".13

The means of comprehending the writing of Greenwood and Jones is thus two-fold. It is necessary to place their work not only within their communities, their class and their environment, but within the context of their lives. Perhaps it

12. The establishment is a representation of an "expression of centralised cultural dominance" where "the life and people of certain, favoured regions are seen as essentially general, even perhaps normal ..." and anything outside of that is viewed as 'regional'.- Williams, op.cit., p. 60.
is too ambitious to ask how far the authors can be 'known' in their novels: however, it is feasible to understand their literary efforts by attempting to reveal in them a reflection of their lives. By doing so, it is then possible to see the novel as an example of the writer interacting with his life - his life being the accumulation of his experiences. Positioning the books within the authors' backgrounds allows an interpretation of the development of a set of ideas and philosophies which were the product of their environments. Thus one can see how the experiences of the two men combined to form opposing perceptions of their world which were disseminated throughout their work.

Contextualising the writing in this way enables the formulation of a particularly pertinent question. How does the author's personal history impact upon the goals that were set for his writing? Gaining an answer ties the theory of the 'cause' of the novel to the author's locality, community and personal history. Having outlined the basis from which the work of the two men will be regarded, it forms the foundation for the secondary analysis. Thus by investigating why the writers' backgrounds propelled them towards the aims they put forward for their work, emphasising the contrasting perspectives they had on the world, another avenue of examination is made apparent.

Although the discussion is primarily historical in method, some of the questions posed involve related disciplines. Immersing the work of the two authors in their historical, social and political backgrounds for investigation is the cornerstone of New Historicism, a popular form of literary criticism. It stresses that the meaning of the work and its importance depends on the depth of understanding of the world outside the literature. New Historicism involves many of the tools deemed to be historical (relating to history) in origin: historical texts, by the very nature of the

discipline, need to be viewed in context as they are not independent of their outside world, they are a creation of it. The text can be regarded through the way in which history and the culture to which it belongs is viewed.\textsuperscript{15} The works are then used to make sense of the past.

The implication of the discussion's secondary analysis is also inter-disciplinary. It involves the concept of narrative theory. At risk of over-simplification, some of the broader connotations of the theory of narrativity propound that all narratives - whether historical or literary - reveal a structural unity and only vary in the ways they understand and layout the 'evidence'.\textsuperscript{16} History, or historiography, like fiction, is a constructed narrative which uses a slightly different mode of expression; it incorporates 'facts' into a whole structure to tell a story, having a beginning, a middle and an end. Historiography differs from other narratives as it claims to be 'true' in as far as it attempts to represent the past: the perceived division between literature and history is "cultural rather than cognitive".\textsuperscript{17} Regarding all texts as narratives allows a certain flexibility in the nature of the investigation. It is then possible to look at the notion of Greenwood and Jones creating a 'reality' within the text in order to understand, interpret, and possibly to put forward solutions to solve the problems they saw in the world outside the narrative. Their novels attempt to "legitimise an actual or ideal social reality".\textsuperscript{18} They, as writers, combined their experiences with the products of their imaginations which enabled them to tell a story. Both novelists used imagination in an attempt to fill in the gaps between the 'given facts' so as to produce a representation of the past. Hence imagination has a niche in historical interpretation, especially if it is concerned with the interaction of history and the novel, as the idea of looking for 'the truth' in a text is relatively

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{15} ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid., p. 124.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid., p. 126.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid., p. 134.
\end{flushleft}
impossible; there are as many 'truths' as there are people to write them! In the words of Hayden White:

History - the real world as it evolves in time - is made sense of in the same way that ... the novelist tries to make sense of it -ie- by endowing what originally appears as problematic and mysterious with the aspect of a recognisable ... form. It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined, the manner of making sense of it is the same.\(^{19}\)

The discussion has referred, on a number of occasions, to the term 'personal history'. It is a concept utilised by oral historians, in particular, by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson in the enlightening introduction to *The Myths We Live By*.\(^{20}\) The introduction draws attention to the need to widen attitudes to incorporate alternative modes of understanding and making sense of the process of history, providing the platform for a selection of articles which resulted from the sixth international conference on oral history. Memory and myths are placed on the historical agenda, as they are valuable keys for interpreting the past. Myth is seen as an essential component of human existence - it is "embedded in real experience: both growing from it, and helping to shape its perception".\(^{21}\) The approach encompasses the idea of placing a historical value upon the subjectivity of personal accounts, of overcoming the impulse to look only for the "reality content" of sources. General perspectives of psychoanalysis are introduced in order to study "the intimate, the individual, and the earliest


\(^{21}\) *ibid.*, p. 6.
memories of childhood”. The means by which a life story is told is as important as the information imparted; the silences in the narration, or the omissions of memory, should be noted, as the historian is encouraged to listen more closely to the way a story is related. Using these methods:

the individuality of each story ceases to be an awkward impediment to generalisation, and becomes instead a vital document of the construction of consciousness, emphasising ... the variety of experience in any social group.

To communicate their life stories, the tellers must order, select and revise their memories into a narrative in the continual process of attempting to make sense of the past. Even though when applying these ideas to the writings of Greenwood and Jones it must be remembered that they are written and imaginative constructions, not oral interviews, the novels display enough similarities to oral sources to warrant the incorporation of such an approach into the discussion. Both novelists chose to include in their work a substantial amount of material from their own lives, incorporating the use of memory, drawing upon the myths of their backgrounds, and subjectively evaluating their world. The ideas propounded in The Myths We Live By complement the narrative theory of Hayden White, enabling a more comprehensive engagement with the writing of Jones and Greenwood and with how it was related to their personal experiences.

Contrasting the contemporary opinions of the work of Jones and Greenwood with the emphasis of the current framework is informative. Commentators tended to draw attention to the 'authenticity' of their novels in a way that is not common today, thus exemplifying the different attitudes towards 'truth' in writing and 'real' depictions of working-

22. ibid.
23. ibid., p. 2.
class life. It also highlights society's changing reaction to the portrayal of life 'as it is'. As current evaluations of literature exist in a world of post-modern theory, its power to dispel the idea of creating a 'true' representation of 'real life' has made its presence felt. The 1930s, however, was a decade of people preoccupied with attempting to reveal 'things as they really are'.

The style of literature which was stimulated by many of the beliefs of the thirties was documentary writing. Reportage of the 'real' world, encompassing descriptions of work and details of daily life, captured the enthusiasm of a number of writers at the time. Hence both Greenwood and Jones were either commended for or encouraged to provide a more realistic description of the effects of the Depression on their respective communities. Lewis Jones' first novel, *Cwmardy*, was the result of the view that "the full meaning of life in the Welsh mining areas could be expressed for the general reader more truthfully and vividly if treated imaginatively, than by any amount of statistical or historical research". Walter Greenwood has received a similar appraisal - "the fictionalised account in *Love on the Dole* gives a more graphic picture (of human misery) than any statistics could convey".

Greenwood and Jones were praised for bringing the problems of the Depression into the national eye. "*Love on the Dole* ... and *We Live* ... essentially narrated the unemployment of whole communities". Whilst specifically referring to *Love on the Dole* but equally relevant to Jones' work, *The Daily Telegraph* heralded the novel with "it should be read to widen our sympathies at a time when sympathy is so badly needed ... (It) brings home to us the full tragedy of

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unemployment". The two authors intended to portray life in the distressed areas in order to promote change, though their approach and reasons for doing so differed considerably. They were aware of the full tragedy of the poverty of their respective communities and believed it should be the concern of a greater number of people than merely those who were suffering its ill effects. Thus both authors wrote "an imaginative novel aiming at an emotional response" with the hope of achieving this goal. To express it more thoroughly it has been stated that:

Imaginative writing about unemployment was successful in crystallising and popularising a series of powerful, recurring images about life without work, more persuasive and more persistent than any of the documentary writing of the period. Above all, it helped articulate a feeling for the national character of the problem.

Hence the work of these writers exemplifies the concept that "all fiction is history". Creative writing is a component of a "historical process, which contains and reveals the pressures of social and cultural change. Fiction does not simply reflect its times, (it) expresses them". Novels are able to provide a vivid account of a time, a place, and a people as they must convince the reader that the world they have created is real. Thus fiction is actively historical, moulding "forms of the world within themselves which may well modify consciousness in the world outside". This was, of course, one of the central concerns of both Jones and Greenwood.

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29. ibid.
32. ibid., p. 8.
The political element of the writing under review is a significant issue. Raising some sort of awareness of the plight of the people of their respective regions was uppermost in the objectives that Greenwood and Jones set for their work. Both men were variously active in the Left wing movements of their areas and it is from this political perspective that they have constructed their depiction of the times. Greenwood was a moderately active supporter of the Labour Party in Salford whilst Jones was a highly dedicated Communist militant, engaged in the struggle throughout the Welsh Valleys. Their novels communicate their different political allegiances and the strong motives behind their creation. Of paramount importance was the urge to convince people of the need to change the existing structures of society which permitted such hardship and despair amongst large sections of the working class. Greenwood included a quote from James Russell Lowell in the frontispiece of Love on the Dole which evokes this side of his writing - "the time is ripe, and ripe rotten for change; then let it come ...", though whether or not he achieved the intended aim is another question entirely. Jones stated categorically in the foreword to Cwmardy that "book or no book, the mass struggle must go on and all of us had to play our part", thus emphasising that his writing was just one component of his campaign for change.

The individual backgrounds of the two men are largely responsible for shaping their reactions to contemporary problems. Their divergent responses to current issues and their political beliefs are as much a product of their environment as their novels. To elaborate upon the point - "a writer's ideology is merely a synthesis of the totality of his experience on a certain level of abstraction". Their beliefs system provides a framework for viewing the world. Thus the two writers will be examined individually within the

context of their respective backgrounds. In contrast to the
treatment of Greenwood, the discussion of Jones' biographical
details will not be divided from the examination of his
writing. His single-minded effort to divert all his energies
towards achieving fundamental social and political change
should be reflected in a similar structure of explanation.
Whether it be through his writing or through his leadership
of the Hunger Marches, the one goal dominated his entire life
and so a distinction should not be made between his literary
and his political activities. Greenwood's life and writing, it
will be argued, do not present this structural quandary
because his goals were more conservative. As he had a larger
creative output than Jones, and viewed his literary
achievements as the most important facet of his life, there is
a separate chapter on Greenwood's writing.

The biographies attempt to create a sense of the person
as much as possible. The descriptions and the narrative tell
the story of each man's life, drawing upon as many sources
as were available. Many aspects of the writers' experiences
have been included in order to enhance and support the
thematic discussion. The researcher is thus placed in the
position of editing the lives of the two men in order to decide
the 'relevance' of biographical material to the ensuing
discussion. Details about such elements as family, home
environment, education, friends, work, community, political
activity, and local opinion of the individual appear in the
life-story chapter. The section of literary interpretation
which follows the biography examines the central works and
related writings of the author. The criticism encompasses
Greenwood's three novels of the thirties and his 1967
autobiography, a selection of short stories and several
reviews. The additional writing of Jones includes four short
stories, several political pamphlets, a review and his two
novels. Details of the biographical findings are interwoven
throughout the critical appraisal in order to highlight
important themes, issues and examples of their own
experiences which appear in their work.
The sources used to illustrate the backgrounds of Greenwood and Jones should be explained. Two collections have proven invaluable for this discussion: the South Wales Miners' Library in Swansea and the Walter Greenwood Archives, housed in the library at the University of Salford. The Miners' Library provided typed transcripts of oral interviews conducted with miners, Communists, former comrades and friends of Lewis Jones. The Library also accommodates all the pamphlets written by Jones in the mid-thirties and microfilms of two of his diaries. The Greenwood Collection was initiated by the author's posthumous gift to the library of most of his papers; they include letters, draft versions of almost all of his writing and two volumes of newspaper cuttings. The two central collections also hold rare secondary sources on the writing and lives of both men. Much of Greenwood's work discloses a strong autobiographical strain, as confessed by the author himself, hence much of the detail included in the depiction of the man is drawn from his self-descriptions. The autobiographical material is contrasted with information gained from other sources - the Salford Local History Library and the Working Class Movement Library - and oral interviews. Andrew Davies was very helpful in providing a number of relevant transcripts indicating local opinions of Greenwood which were gleaned during his own research in Salford.

The history of scholarship on Jones and Greenwood is as varied as it is sparse. Walter is by far the more famous of the two as a result of the overwhelming success of *Love on the Dole*. Its reception in the 1930s was enthusiastic: it was held up as an example of a contemporary working-class novel and as an effective, emotive portrayal of the Depression. One of the most influential pieces of writing about Greenwood's work is an article by Stephen Constantine which investigates the initial responses to *Love on the Dole*.\(^\text{34}\) It is the only historiographical piece to successfully attempt a

\(^{34}\) Constantine, *op.cit.*
detailed analysis of the Salford man's work within the context of the 1930s. Despite the popular reaction to Greenwood's first piece of writing, the novel has since faded into relative obscurity. The work was no longer considered relevant by those in the post-war society who believed that they had overcome the problems of the Depression with the establishment of a social security system. And the critical silence surrounding the novel has more or less continued. Few of Greenwood's other books have been given much attention, (his autobiography, *There Was a Time* is an exception), as *Love on the Dole* still casts a long shadow over his subsequent work. It is mentioned briefly in studies of British society by Arthur Marwick, A.J.P. Taylor and John Stevenson, and has received unfavourable criticism both as a piece of literature and as a proletarian novel. Written in the Realist tradition of the liberal Victorian and Edwardian writers, its style is not believed by literary critics to have survived the passage of time. The novel is usually included in discussions of working-class writing and holds a strong position amongst historians as a social document. Penguin books has since added *Love on the Dole* to its 'twentieth-century classics' of literature list. There is no known published biographical material on Walter Greenwood himself.

Lewis Jones was a highly respected figure in South Wales but is almost unknown as a writer today. Contemporary comment on Jones and his work came from the Left and from Wales, and although it was positive, it was still limited. The most succinct and praise-worthy article on the man was by his friend and critic, Douglas Garman. There was a long period of neglect which was not rectified

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38. Davies, *op.cit.*
until the coalfields became an important historical topic in the late 1960s, an area of study which stimulated a renewed interest in Welsh writing. Much of the research conducted on the man was by Dai Smith, who with Hywel Francis and a number of other like minded people, was responsible for the oral history material and the collection of a substantial proportion of the printed sources housed in the South Wales Miners' Library in Swansea. He 'rediscovered' Jones' novel, *We Live*, through a brief reference in Glyn Jones' 1968 book, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*. The activist's work had long been out of print and Smith managed to convince Lewis Jones' publishers to reprint his two novels in 1978, both with his introductions. Smith was the most active of his supporters and first included the author in a discussion of the coalfields in 1976. Smith later concluded his work with an excellent biography of Lewis Jones for the Welsh Writers Series in 1982. The availability of Jones' novels in the late 1970s provoked a trickle of analysis which was supplemented by writings from the continent. One of the main centres of interest in his work is Spain, promoted by the efforts of Ramon Lopez Ortega. His attention is an ironic comment on the indifference to Jones' work displayed in Britain. Only one other writer has devoted an entire article on Jones40 - the rest of the critical material is in the form of comparative studies with other working-class, or more specifically, ex-coalmining writers.41 Scholarship of *We Live* praises Jones' descriptions of collective action42 but highlights the disjointed nature of his prose which has been attributed to his lack of confidence in his own literary skills.43 Information on Jones' political activities can be found in historiographical / historical accounts of the organisations and campaigns in which he was involved, such as the

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41. Holderness, *op.cit.*
42. Snee, *op.cit.*, p. 185.
National Unemployed Workers' Movement, the South Wales Miners' Federation and the Hunger Marches.

The discussion culminates in a chapter comparing Greenwood and Jones. The object of the chapter is to emphasise the contrasting aspects of the two men, visible in how they treated significant issues of their society, how they developed the central themes of their novels and how they perceived the worlds which they depicted. By analysing their work in relation to four chosen themes, it is hoped that a stronger, tighter comparison will result. Extending the exploration to incorporate two specific, similar events depicted in the novels will allow a direct and closer understanding of the treatment of the four issues as they are applied in a defined set of circumstances. The 'opposites' approach - the chalk and cheese argument - relies upon an understanding of the different reactions of the authors to their accumulated experiences. Both Jones and Greenwood "seek the form that will suggest the significance of the experience". Reinforcing an earlier point, it has been said that "statistical and historical research can reveal the forces which determine a specific moment, but they do not attempt to engage with the individual lives which shape, and are shaped by that moment; that is traditionally the terrain of the creative text". The final chapter therefore seeks to use the novels to discover whether "through the reaches of the literary imagination (lives can) ... be made whole again".

The experiences and environment of Walter Greenwood and Lewis Jones are vital to an apprehension of their writing. Displaying their lives is a necessary part of gaining an understanding of each man's work - they need to be regarded within the context of their times. The 1930s illustrates a disparity not only in the duality of both a prosperous and a destitute face to Britain, but also in the

44. D. Smith, "Writing Wales", in (eds) Herbert and Jones, op. cit., p. 187.
45. Snee, op. cit., p. 182.
way that these aspects were portrayed. Working-class writing captures a distinctive perspective on these years even though the phenomenon was still very much a fledgling in comparison to the well entrenched middle-class depictions of British life. Working-class experience is an under-represented force in contemporary thirties' writing but is one that needs to be interpreted and examined in order to make sense of the other Britain that was left to rot during the Depression. A discussion of the impact of life in the stricken areas upon the divergent objectives of two such writers will hopefully provide an alternative viewpoint on these years of contrast.
CHAPTER TWO:  
STRUGGLE OR STARVE! -  
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A WELSH MILITANT.

"It was not (just) Marxism which taught (Jones) the meaning of class struggle. From childhood he had lived in it and each phase of his life drove home deeper and deeper to him its significance."¹

Recalling the funeral of Lewis Jones in 1939, a former comrade said "the valley was black with people then when he died".² He was found dead in his room in Cardiff, after weeks of intensive campaigning for aid to the Spanish Republic. Sadly, the event also coincided with the fall of the motley anti-fascist armies to Franco's encroaching forces, marking the demise of the cause for which Jones had been fighting. The impact of his death was felt immediately. It was "as if the bottom had been knocked clean out of us"³ reflected another activist. The general feeling of shocked grief was reflected by more than 10,000 people who lined the roads as his cortege wound its way through mid-Rhondda. The large numbers reflected Jones' popularity as he was remembered and admired as much for his charismatic

². from an interview with Lance Rogers, 1975, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 13.  
³. from an interview with Tom Adlam, 1974, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 7.
personality and compassion as he was for his political dedication.

Photograph 1. Lewis Jones (centre in raincoat).

South Wales was, at the turn of the century, in the midst of an economic boom. The coalfields had turned the area into one of Britain's most valuable assets as they supplied fuel for the industries of the world. 1913 saw 10,576,506 tons of coal and coke exports leave from Cardiff docks in what was later realised to be a record year. This level was never to be reached again as, despite the huge amount of coal required for the First World War, the entire Welsh coal industry subsequently underwent a prolonged and irreversible decline. Coal mining, so read the findings of a Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest, "directly

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4 An Industrial Survey of South Wales. Board of Trade 1932. Made for the Board of Trade by University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire. H.M.S.O. 1932, p. 89, as cited in Dennis Thomas, "Economic Decline", in (eds) Trevor Herbert and Gareth Elwyn Jones, Wales Between the Wars, (Cardiff, 1988), p. 36.
employs a larger proportion of the population than any other industry ... 'Coal is King' ... (and) the miners themselves are fully conscious of the supreme position which their industry occupies".\(^5\) The Commission was investigating the region's growing reputation for industrial militancy. The miners had successfully won a strike in 1915, forcing the government to the negotiating table for a settlement which not only achieved their initial wage claims but also banned non-unionists from working in the pits for the length of the war.\(^6\) The government had no choice but to capitulate to the miners' demands as they needed the coal for the war effort. The continuation of activities such as these in the post-war era forged South Wales into "perhaps the most militant area in Britain during this period".\(^7\) It was into this atmosphere of political awareness brought by the economic power of coal that Lewis was born.

Lewis Jones' birth place was Clydach Vale in 1897.\(^8\) It was a small cwm adjoining the Rhondda Valley in the heart of the coal fields. The Rhondda region was known for the close ties of village society and most people had a strong sense of local identity and connection, part of the area's "incomparably full, close community life".\(^9\) Jane, his mother, was a domestic servant. His father is unknown and does not appear on his birth certificate.\(^10\) Lewis was raised by his grandmother Anne and frequently worked to supplement the household income throughout his childhood. He followed


\(^7\). ibid., p. 478.

\(^8\). D. Smith provides much of the information in the second chapter of his book Lewis Jones, (Cardiff, 1982). However, it must be pointed out that although the material provided in the biography is invaluable and vibrantly written, there is a tendency to inflate the image of Jones, leaving an impression of a somewhat more subjective appraisal than is entirely appropriate in a historical text.


\(^10\). copy of birth certificate, Pontypridd, County of Glamorgan.
the tradition of the Rhondda Valley when he left school at twelve, ending his sporadic elementary education upon entering the pit. Having joined the ranks of the Valleys' coal miners, "for the next fifteen years or so he was to experience every phase of the miner's life".11

Industrial turmoil interrupted Jones' first year of employment at the Cambrian Colliery. He saw the long and bitter strike of all the mid-Rhondda pits end in the riots at Tonypandy. Moulded by the events he witnessed when the troops entered the town, and by the impact of the 'syndicalist' pamphlet "The Miners' Next Step" published in 1912 - part of the growing socialist feeling in the Valley - Jones developed his political conscience relatively early in life. Lewis' strong views were further influenced by the educational classes organised by Noah Ablett and W.H. Mainwaring, two well known activists in the area. They were the energy behind the Unofficial Reform Committee which was established with the belief that the men should have ultimate control of the South Wales Miners' Federation and emphatically supported unified grass-roots action within the organisation.12 The two men were also an indication of the substantial impact that the tradition of voluntary education made on the people of the region: the variety of facilities available allowed the Rhondda miner to be "generally better informed of the world about him than his counterpart in other coalfields".13 It was a tradition that Jones utilised as he began to widen his reading, becoming well versed in Marxism and related literature.14 As the decade progressed, it was increasingly obvious that the young miner was a natural speaker, having developed some oratory skills in the

14. from an interview with Frank Williams, 1973, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 12.
Cambrian Lodge's mass meetings.\textsuperscript{15} Using these methods, Jones began to lay the foundations for his role as a spokesperson for his people. Already developing a reputation for the forthright assertion of his opinions, Lewis began to carve a niche for himself amongst the activists of the Valleys. Once he had abandoned his attempts to become a mining engineer, Jones' involvement with the Lodge grew and by the end of the First World War he was the youngest Chair ever to be elected. It was a suitable position for a man intent on a life of constant campaigning, for the Cambrian Lodge was one of the most militant in an area of considerable political activity. By this time he was also married, having done so at an early age. However, there is almost no information available about his family life other than the names of his two children, Megan and Avril.\textsuperscript{16}

The South Wales coalfields groaned under the weight of the post-war recession. The drop in world demand for coal began to seriously impact upon the region's economy, undiversified and inadequate to deal with the new turn in events. During the slump, the miners increased their strike activity, hoping to relive the success of the industrial action seen during the war. Jones, with thousands of other miners, fought the coalmine owners as they attempted to introduce lower rates of pay and longer hours after the government handed back the pits to private industry in 1921. It was an intensification of the harsh struggle between the mine owners and the people which was to extend well beyond the years of the Depression. The owners felt justified in the maintenance of their hard, inflexible stance, resulting in the Lock-out of 1921 as the miners continued their resistance. The action was supported by most of the Valleys' population as the area's renown for its political activity and workers' unity continued to strengthen.

\textsuperscript{15} The Lodge was the name for each branch of the South Wales Miners' Federation.
\textsuperscript{16} Amongst the oral transcripts, there is only one reference to Jones' family, and unfortunately it is negative - he "didn't even look after his family" - from an interview with Billy Griffiths, 1969, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 2.
The 1920s witnessed the further radicalisation of Jones' own politics. 1923 saw Lewis Jones on a workers' scholarship to London's Central Labour College. Idris Cox, who became the South Wales Communist Party organiser in 1927, did not always share the popular glowing opinion of Jones. He said of his fellow Labour College student "I would not say that Lewis was as good a student as Charlie (Stead, Jones' room mate at the College) but in some respects he was a more interesting and lively character." It seems Lewis had a "reputation for late night disputes, late rising, absenteeism and a preference for speechifying around London". A fellow Labour College graduate stated that Jones did not study very hard: apparently he was "always popping off to South Wales ... anywhere that the movement would be big enough to contain people like the Lewis Jones'. ... He wasn't cut out to be a good, serious student anyway". It was during this time that he joined the Communist Party, thus beginning a relationship that roller-coasted through as many highs and lows as did his vibrant personality.

A short time after he returned, Jones was employed by the Fed. He was the elected checkweigher at the colliery - it was "the normal practice for graduates of the Labour College, whom the companies were not overly eager to employ". Continuously active on the political front, much of

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17. Described as "more phlegmatic and solid" by a friend and comrade of Lewis Jones [from an interview with Mavis Llewellyn, 1974, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 23] it is not difficult to understand why he and the rather mercurial Jones failed to get along.
19. from an interview with Idris Cox, 1973, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library.
21. from an interview with W.H. Williams, 1972, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library.
22. The South Wales Miners' Federation.
23. It was the checkweigher's responsibility to ensure that each miner's coal was weighed fairly as it affected how much they were paid. Many would not trust a company employee to do so.
Lewis' energy was taken up by the increasing industrial militancy in the coalfields, eventually leading to the 1926 General Strike. Jones' talents as a speaker were utilised both in the Rhondda region and further afield as his reputation grew. The Communist Party decided that his worth as a propagandist was needed in the campaign to strengthen the Strike in the Nottingham area.\textsuperscript{25} The region was suffering from the effects of the growth of a 'non-political' union, the Industrial Union, begun by George Spencer. Company unionism sought to eat away at the achievements of the miners in their fight for better conditions and to dissuade men from joining active unions such as the Fed. The organisation had firm connections in South Wales, attracting large numbers of the "more pliable workers"\textsuperscript{26}, so Jones was ordered to undermine and destroy it as well as to reinforce the commitment to the General Strike.

The long-term personal effects of the strike on Jones' life were considerable. He was charged with sedition, for breaking the "Emergency regulations by urging 'disaffection'"\textsuperscript{27}, and spent three months in prison in Swansea at His Majesty's pleasure. It was evidence of the victimisation that many of the politically active faced from police and the establishment. As one fellow activist stated frankly, "the police here in Glamorgan were as ruthless as the buggers could be anywhere".\textsuperscript{28} Jones was also relieved of his position as checkweigher in 1930 as a new 'reactionary' faction gained control of his Lodge. Lewis' decision not to weigh the coal of those miners he considered 'blacklegs' in the years immediately after the strike played a major part in his dismissal.\textsuperscript{29} The incident provides an insight into the

\textsuperscript{25} For further information see D. Smith, "The Struggle Against Company Unionism in the South Wales Coalfield, 1926-1939", in \textit{Welsh Historical Review}, vol. 7, 1973.
\textsuperscript{26} Deian Hopkins, "Social Reactions to Economic Change", in (eds) Herbert and Jones, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{27} Smith, \textit{Lewis Jones}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{28} from an interview with Ned Gittins, 1973, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library.
\textsuperscript{29} The move could be explained by the fact that "The Checkweigher, the Lodge Secretary and the Miners' Agent were as powerful as the
strident and uncompromising nature of his principles. Jones' decision caused more than a few Party members to turn their heads in disapproval - in fact "there was a deuce of a row in the Party over this".\textsuperscript{30} So began a long period of unemployment, a certainty now that his political sympathies had become so obvious.

The progression of the 1930s exposed the full extent of the government's classification of South Wales as a "distressed area".\textsuperscript{31} It revealed that "a whole society was crucified by mass unemployment and near-starvation".\textsuperscript{32} As the area was dominated by coal mining, just one of several decaying British industries, the structural unemployment resulting from its economic disintegration was devastating.\textsuperscript{33} At the height of the Depression, a third of Britain's coalminers were without work.\textsuperscript{34} Throughout the decade Lewis Jones' activities focussed more and more on the unemployed; their struggles became his struggles. His energies were essential at a time when it was revealed that 85,600 miners were without work in South Wales alone.\textsuperscript{35} In 1931 Jones took on the task of organiser for the National Unemployed Workers' Movement in South Wales. "The communists gave life"\textsuperscript{36} to the N.U.W.M. in 1921 to overcome the political non-representation and neglect faced by those without work. Perhaps, due to these origins, the N.U.W.M. was always viewed with a great deal of mistrust by the

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\textsuperscript{30} Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{ibid.}, p. 209.
authorities. However, the Movement remained small until younger, less demoralised, workless joined in the 1930s. They tended to be more interested in stronger, unified action and Jones came to epitomise this type of member. He was instrumental in co-ordinating mass demonstrations calling for fairer public relief for the unemployed. His energy was unlimited - attending meetings, conducting speaking tours, addressing mass demonstrations, planning future action, listening to individual problems, giving advice and political instruction.

Lewis also led three South Walian Hunger Marches to London in 1932, 1934, and 1936. The Marches were a critical means of bringing the plight of the people to the attention of those in power: "the fact that the seat of government was located in one of the least affected areas perhaps helps to explain the lack of concern which some politicians displayed towards the problem which could be regarded as remote and exceptional". However, because of the sizeable role that the N.U.W.M. played in the organisation of the Marches, they often suffered from police harassment. It is illustrated in 1936 when plans for the March were scrutinised by the Metropolitan Police who had opened a file on it in July, and were to be "kept informed" by the Special Branch for the month of September. The South Welsh component of the March was more than familiar with antagonism from law enforcement as there was a "long embittered relationship between the miners and police" in the Valleys. These demonstrations of mass action, led by people such as Lewis Jones, were the strongest indication that many of the unemployed were not content to "quietly suffer their degradation and poverty". Jones' contribution to the Marches was always impressive - in 1936, for example, he

37. ibid., pp. 109-11.
39. Stevenson and Cook, op.cit., p. 188.
40. Francis, "Rhondda and the Spanish Civil War", p. 79.
managed to obtain the official support of the Fed for the South Welsh contingent for the first time. He often added a personal touch to the proceedings, taking it upon himself to educate the marchers as they moved through various towns. The talks usually began with an explanation of the "character and history" of the places they were staying in and progressed through a political analysis of the current situation. Hence, by using these means, Lewis "would never fail to ... raise the ... consciousness of the marchers". For instance, approaching London, on the march of 1936, Jones drew attention to an important political contrast. He graphically illustrated the great divide between the wealthy frock coated public school boys of Windsor and Eton, "the children of the privileged" and the "penniless and ... impoverished" marchers of South Wales. They were poignant words which encapsulated Jones' Marxist ideals.

However, it was his inspirational abilities as a powerful speaker for which Lewis received the highest praise. News of a Jones' lecture would draw people to the venue from a wide area, usually completely filling it within half an hour. The talks were humorous, intelligent, thoroughly prepared, politically instructive - "he was good on applied Marxism" - and often spontaneous. An example of Jones' subject range and skilful enthralling of an audience was a two and a half hour lecture on the "social significance of sin" during which "not a person moved"! He had the ability to convince people as depicted in the 1934 Hunger March. When the group had reached Reading, resting overnight in the workhouse, - the only available shelter -, the institution's controller insisted on the maintenance of workhouse rules. Lewis refused saying "we are the power in the end, not the

42. Stevenson and Cook, *op.cit.*, p. 188.
43. from an interview with Len Jeffreys, 1972, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library, p. 20.
44. Lance Rogers, *op.cit.*, p. 10.
police, the police are outside, we are in"\(^{48}\) and the people supported his decision. His passion, conviction and honesty made him "a real born orator without any question".\(^{49}\) The emotion with which he endowed his speeches gave his voice a "sort of break"\(^{50}\) to it, reflecting the belief and strength of feeling of the man behind the words.

Jones' most outstanding attribute was his care and concern for the Valley's population. It was an aspect of his personality which he constantly revealed and "it superseded everything else".\(^{51}\) There are several reminiscences concerning this force of emotion. It was a common event to see Jones, sitting listening to tales of trouble and hardship with "tears running down his cheeks".\(^{52}\) He identified very personally with suffering and "never took no for an answer when there was somebody in distress".\(^{53}\) The compassion and love Lewis felt for his people, stricken by unemployment and poverty, were the primary motivation behind in his untiring efforts to strive for better conditions for life in the coalfields.

Jones was eventually able to pursue this concern in an official capacity. In 1936 he was elected as one of two Communist members of the Glamorgan County Council. At a time when South Wales was continually losing vast swathes of its population via mass migration as a result of the unchanging economic conditions, he knew it was imperative to help those left behind.\(^{54}\) "He did things as a Councillor nobody else could have done" stated one friend of Lewis. He cites, as an example, an occasion where Lewis went into a Council Chamber with ninety Labour Councillors and "splits

\(^{48}\) ibid., p. 3.
\(^{49}\) Ned Gittins, \textit{op.cit.}
\(^{50}\) Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 22.
\(^{51}\) Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 2.
\(^{52}\) \textit{ibid.}
\(^{53}\) Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 21.
\(^{54}\) D. Smith, "Wales Between the Wars" in (eds) Herbert and Jones, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 7.
them in two"\textsuperscript{55} over the proposed introduction of a new unemployment relief scheme for the Glamorgan Public Assistance Committee. The issue formerly had unanimous support, even though the new legislation penalised certain sections of the unemployed, a factor Lewis strongly objected to. Lewis Jones and fellow Communist councillor, Fred Llewellyn, (uncle of Mavis Llewellyn, a friend and comrade of the former) actually went one step further. They planned to present a motion to the P.A.C. which advocated a relief-scale rise of 10\% "irrespective of what steps the Ministry of Health may take in the scheme of regulations and scales now before it".\textsuperscript{56} His drive and determination knew no bounds, especially as he often had to walk for well over an hour to honour his various commitments. The extent of Jones' activities prompted Mavis Llewellyn to comment "it was amazing how he did get the time. I don't think he slept very much quite honestly".\textsuperscript{57} Emphasising this point, one aggrieved bureaucrat reported that "Mr. Jones has set himself out to educate his constituents as to their rights to Public Assistance" using several methods at his disposal including a "motor van with a loud speaker", "crowded meetings every Sunday" and a "communist organ, the \textit{Rhondda Vanguard}".\textsuperscript{58} The following year Lewis was bound over for twelve months: he was said to have threatened the local unemployment assistance office with a mass demonstration outside its doors if it did not provide more support for the workless.\textsuperscript{59}

From 1937 Lewis entered the final stage of his short, hectic life. He threw himself into the campaign to support the beleaguered Spanish Republic. The communities of South

\textsuperscript{55} ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{56} Daily Worker, 25th August, 1937, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{57} Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{59} Pikoulis, \textit{op.cit}., p. 63.
Wales strongly identified with the struggle of the Spanish people under attack from the repression of fascism. The turbulent times of the previous year in the Valleys were ample reason for the Welsh support. For much of 1936, the Rhondda Valleys had been actively resisting the attempted invasion of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Lewis held meetings to warn and educate the people of the dangers of the right-wing movement, saying of Mosley, "well, we'll give him a reception he don't want". Will Paynter, a fellow activist and later general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers wrote "it is not difficult for people suffering hunger and deprivation and persecution to find common cause with their own kind in another country facing similar or worse conditions". The history of the region, with its fight against "company unionism, victimisation, harder work for lower wages, imprisonment and 'ruthless' brutality, was precisely how Rhondda people must have visualised fascism". Primed by the speeches of a number of prominent activists, the people of South Wales expressed their "deep-rooted feeling of antagonism towards the Fascists" by disrupting planned fascist gatherings. Hence the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War induced an immediate response from the area, both in humanitarian aid and political solidarity, as "the Rhondda's attitude towards it had ... been decided and determined by its immediate experience".

To fight fascism the Party advocated the Popular Front initiative. It was an attempt to unify left-wing politics for a common cause. Lewis Jones addressed countless meetings with this aim, fulfilling his role as an effective propagandist on the home front as his request to join the International

60. Tom Adlam, op.cit., p. 5.
62. Francis, "Rhondda and the Spanish Civil War", p. 68.
63. Elwyn Jones, defence counsel to Harry Dobson, activist and later International Brigader, as cited in ibid., p. 67.
64. Francis, "Rhondda and the Spanish Civil War", p. 69.
Brigades in Spain had been denied. Jones had not been considered fit enough to go to the Spanish front. He regretted this decision as the Brigades were largely composed of volunteers (a large proportion of whom were Welsh miners) whose aims were to fight fascism in the international arena. It was a cause he considered of paramount importance, writing to friends in Spain, "I'm sorry boys, I'm not with you, I feel guilty". They responded, "(you'd) be more useful at home fighting on our behalf by holding meetings in the valleys and throughout Wales for the Republican cause".

It seems, however, that there were other reasons for the Party's decision to leave Jones in South Wales. Poor health was only one. It was during this time when his relationship with the organisation was on particularly rocky ground. His methods were unorthodox, and undisciplined - "rules that could do nothing for (the) people had to be broken". His behaviour was deemed wilful by Party officials, promoting a decidedly lukewarm response from staunch Welsh communists. As the Communist Party was the "vanguard of the workers", members were expected to adhere to quite specific standards: "they had to be honest, sober, industrious, good citizens". Jones did not necessarily fulfill these criteria. It was suggested that he liked alcohol rather more than was seemly for a high profile Party member and was unreliable, failing to appear at scheduled meetings. Jones' charismatic charm also prompted questionable rumours about his relationship with several women of the Valleys. It is difficult to ascertain the

66. Mavis Llewellyn, op.cit.
67. See Francis, Miners Against Fascism.
68. Tom Adlam, op.cit., p. 6.
70. from an interview with Phil Abrahams, 1974, (oral transcripts), South Wales Miners' Library.
71. from an interview with Glyn Evans, 1973, (oral transcripts), South Wales Miners' Library.
72. Information obtained from an interview with Dai Smith in Cardiff, April, 1994.
motivation behind the circulation of such stories - it is quite possible that they were attempts to undermine Lewis' local standing as a Communist activist, emphasising that, although a popular figure amongst the people, Jones did have some dissenters. Of course it is equally plausible, with Jones being who he was, that they had some foundation in truth!

Jones was very much a free spirit. He was "unable to work through a skein of petty compromises"73 which he associated with many organised bodies. The Fed, for instance, was too restrictive "for a man like Lewis ... he couldn't stand that".74 The Fed, it seemed, did not approve of him either as he was thrown out of the organisation with a number of other communists in the early thirties in answer to his radical politics. Jones' reaction to trade unions was equally dismissive: "he always knew that the Communist Party and the political movement was wider than the trade union(s)".75 Even his commitment to the Communist Party failed, at times, to restrict his behaviour as the structures of any organisation tended to clash with his flamboyant style. One famous incident in which Jones was involved occurred at the 1935 Central Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow. He was elected delegate to the conference yet when Stalin entered the hall to a standing ovation Jones remained seated. In a letter to Mavis Llewellyn he stated that he "objected to that sort of hero worship of Stalin".76 If this is so, it is a position well vindicated in retrospect after news of the atrocities in the Soviet Union was to shatter Stalin's image in the post-war era. Another comrade, Billy Griffiths, also mentioned a further possible reason: he was told that Glyn Jones, the district organiser of the Party "was of the opinion ... that he was so overcome with emotion that he couldn't move",77 and decided that either reason was equally valid. The explanations provide a valuable key to the mercurial

75. Frank Williams, op.cit., p. 13.
76. Mavis Llewellyn, op.cit., p. 21.
77. Billy Griffiths, op.cit., p. 4.
character of Lewis Jones as either reason seems applicable. Billy Griffiths added that, upon return, Lewis was disciplined by being removed from both the Central and District Committees. "His waywardness with matters of policy and organisation continued to dog his steps in the late 1930s, though without dissipating the euphoria in which he worked at a feverish pace".78 When considering the possible direction of Jones' life had he lived beyond 1939, Mavis Llewellyn stated "he much preferred to be free" doubting that he had any ambitions to be "an official in any capacity, trade union or ... even for official positions in the Party".79

Lewis Jones was the most outstanding and influential leader of the area's working-class movement. It was a fact almost unanimously agreed upon, whether or not he was in an official position. Most considered him to be an invaluable asset, if not for South Wales, then certainly for the Valleys. The tendency to eulogise Jones and his abilities is no more apparent than when one activist went so far as to say "he was to me the real Party in the Valleys"80. Jones was, for example, the "lion force" behind any of the mass demonstrations organised in the area.81 His activities as the head of the 1934 and 1936 Hunger Marches from South Wales show the range of his leadership abilities. An instance from 1934 revealed Lewis' skills as a diplomat when he and fellow Scottish leader Harry McShane spoke to a group of Westminster M.P.s. They were said to have left a "profound impression"82 and, as "men of intellectual power"83 had thus aided the impact of the march in this way. As a motivator in 1936 Jones says in an address:

We are going to London to meet the Government and the House of Commons and if

78 Smith, Lewis Jones, p. 20.
79 Mavis Llewellyn, op.cit., p. 18.
80 Tom Adlam, op.cit.
81 Billy Griffiths, op.cit., p. 3.
82 Circular c87 13 March 1934 (W.H./C.P./A.2d) as cited in Croucher, op.cit., p. 160.
83 ibid.
they refuse to see us we will force ourselves in upon the Cabinet and if necessary upon the King, and we will force this pack of gangsters to abolish forever the means test. They are ruining our country.\textsuperscript{84}

Lewis Jones was a man of dedication. He would "work until he dropped"\textsuperscript{85}, a militant who possessed an almost obsessive level of endurance, and "a man whose myriad talents evaded complete fulfillment"\textsuperscript{86} due to his early death at forty-two. His friend, the novelist Gwyn Thomas said "he used all his remarkable talent in the service of his community and his class".\textsuperscript{87} As a speaker he was "capable of articulating the protest, projecting (the) aspirations"\textsuperscript{88} of those around him. Jones was such a gifted, impassioned orator that he was considered even more effective than Arthur Horner - President of the Fed - as Lewis was fluent in English and Welsh whilst Horner spoke only English.\textsuperscript{89}

Young communists in particular were inspired by Jones. One of the less experienced communists declared that Jones had done more to help him than anyone else.\textsuperscript{90} A common refrain was that "he'd talk to you and he'd explain in everyday language what the policy of the Communist Party was, what the ... people of the Rhondda ... should do". Lewis spent a great deal of time ensuring that they understood the major concerns of the Party and considered the younger members important for the future of the

\textsuperscript{85} Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{86} Smith, "The Struggle Against Company Unionism", p. 373.
\textsuperscript{87} Gwyn Thomas, "The Lewis Jones Lectures" at Ystrad, Llwynypia, Ferndale, Hopkinstown, Treorchy, Gelli and Mardy, Nov. 1978 - Feb. 1979, programme.
\textsuperscript{88} Lance Rogers, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{89} from an interview with Will Picton, 1973, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library.
\textsuperscript{90} Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 4
movement.\textsuperscript{91} They stressed that "he was always listening"\textsuperscript{92}, talking "with people, not at people, not over people".\textsuperscript{93} Lewis was equally in his element in a pub as on a platform where comrades remembered him "having chats ... with people ... he was another that could go and sit in the club for an hour, he'd make his pint last an evening".\textsuperscript{94} It is a comment that is at odds with the rumours of Jones' excess drinking.

His colourful ways illuminated the lives of the unemployed. Jones was remembered as "so bold, so self-confident".\textsuperscript{95} He was an example to all in the continuing fight for collective action as he was one of the people, sharing many of their experiences. Even in the years that he was a County councillor Lewis still had to sign on at the Tonypandy Labour Exchange before boarding a bus to take him to the Council meetings in Cardiff.\textsuperscript{96} Jones was able to identify with the poverty of the South Welsh folk as it was also his own - "some days you would see him, there he would be in his rags, old shoes all tattered".\textsuperscript{97} Again Gwyn Thomas expressed it best when he said "he wore his poverty like a cloak, ... he was half in love with it".\textsuperscript{98} Always the humanitarian he took several shirts with him on one of the Hunger Marches and gave them out to those who did not have one.\textsuperscript{99} After marches to Cardiff, it was Jones' usual practice to insist upon buses being available to take the people back to their villages.\textsuperscript{100} Mavis Llewellyn described his connection with people - "he could identify himself ... with their pleasures, their miseries, he was so close to the people".\textsuperscript{101} The feelings

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[1]{from an interview with George Baker, 1974, (oral transcript), South Wales Miners' Library.}
\footnotetext[2]{Tom Adlam, \textit{op.cit}.}
\footnotetext[3]{George Baker, \textit{op.cit}.}
\footnotetext[4]{Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit}.}
\footnotetext[5]{Smith, "Leaders and Led", p. 56.}
\footnotetext[6]{Garman, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 263.}
\footnotetext[7]{Ned Gittins, \textit{op.cit.}.}
\footnotetext[8]{from an interview with Gwyn Thomas, 1970, as cited in Francis, \textit{Miners Against Fascism}, p. 50.}
\footnotetext[9]{Will Picton, \textit{op.cit.}}
\footnotetext[10]{Tom Adlam, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 7.}
\footnotetext[11]{Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 20.}
\end{footnotes}
were reciprocated: on demonstrations he was protected from
the police by a "double rank" of men forming a tight circle
around him in order to get him home safely - he was a figure
well known to the authorities.\textsuperscript{102} It is not surprising then,
that Lewis Jones attracted 10,000 people to his funeral,
lining both sides of the procession's entire route. The calibre
of the speeches at his memorial reflected the high regard in
which he was held\textsuperscript{103} - he was immensely popular, "already
a myth in his own life time".\textsuperscript{104}

Will Paynter's praise of Lewis Jones is notable. He
wrote that Jones was an "exceptional man: he found time to
write two novels whilst strenuously active in the mass
movements against unemployment and for aid to Spain".\textsuperscript{105}
Somehow during the decade, impossible as it seems, Jones
managed to set aside time for his various writings. These fall
into three categories: information / propaganda pamphlets,
short stories and two novels. He also contributed a number of
articles to \textit{Left Review} and to the \textit{Daily Worker}, which also
published his short stories.

Jones outlines his writing process in the foreword to his
first novel, \textit{Cwmardy} (1937). He stated that the work was
"written during odd moments stolen from mass meetings,
committees, demonstrations, marches, and other
activities".\textsuperscript{106} His hectic schedule probably impinged upon
the creation of most of his writing. This was not surprising as
he considered himself first and foremost a militant; 
"... book
or no book, the mass struggle must go on and all of us had to
play our part".\textsuperscript{107} Jones wrote as he lived; for a cause and for
action. He did not write for personal gain or as a purely

\textsuperscript{102} Tom Adlam, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{103} Harry Pollitt, an influential activist and miners' leader, read an
extract which included the words "all my strength has been given to
the greatest cause in the world, the emancipation of mankind" -
Frank Williams, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{104} Francis, "Rhondda and the Spanish Civil War", p. 70.
\textsuperscript{105} Will Paynter in "The Lewis Jones Lectures", \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{107} \textit{ibid.}
literary endeavour. His writing was a natural extension of the activities he was involved with throughout his life. This obvious trait prompted Douglas Garman\textsuperscript{108}, who wrote the foreword to Lewis' second novel \textit{We Live}, to express that it was necessary to "draw attention to one particular aspect of his achievement as a writer; the peculiar unity of his practical and imaginative purposes".\textsuperscript{109}

At the heart of Lewis Jones' writing lay his belief in and love of his people. Thus he utilised and maintained his commitment to the Communist Party as the vehicle for achieving better conditions for the working-class people in the Valleys. Hence the central binding force of all of his work is an obvious political position; that of an active communist. The primary aim of Jones' writing, therefore, was "that it should act as a more effective explanation of the necessary politicisation of the coalfield".\textsuperscript{110}

The \textit{Daily Worker} published two of his short stories in 1932 and two the following year. The first story, "Young Dai", is subtitled "the story of the miner who caught the germ in 1914". It tells of a young miner who is swept away by the fervour of the recruitment campaigns to fight in a futile war which costs him both of his legs. Young Dai eventually becomes Old Dai and joins the class war, teaching his nephew such slogans as "down with the war mongers, the mutilators of our class".\textsuperscript{111} The story is blatantly direct in its political affiliations - simplistic and unsubtle. Together with "Power of the Pit", which sees the miners transformed from victims to activists with such lines as "red is the colour of the blood they lost. Red is the colour of the Revolution they will make"\textsuperscript{112}, the stories leave the reader with no doubt as to the recommended action: resistance, then revolution. While

\textsuperscript{108} He was a poet, critic and one of the founders of Lewis Jones' publishing house, Lawrence and Wishart.
\textsuperscript{109} Garman, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 263.
\textsuperscript{110} Smith, \textit{Lewis Jones}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{111} Lewis Jones, "Young Dai", in \textit{Daily Worker}, 1st July 1932, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{112} Lewis Jones, "Power of the Pit", in \textit{Daily Worker}, 23rd August 1932, p. 4
"Young Dai" portrays the radicalisation of an individual due to the injustices of the system, "Power of the Pit" outlines the path towards mass action. The miners, the majority unemployed, decide to seize control of the pit which has kept them enslaved for so long.

Jones was "concerned much less with self-expression than with creating in his readers the will to act". However, the two later stories present a less didactic approach, revealing Jones engaging with his subject at a deeper level, exploring themes and characters' reactions. Printed in April, "Boots, Shiny, Big and Heavy..." also has a subtitle - "Symbolic of the Mighty Weight of 'Justice'!". It describes the harrowing process of detention and trial endured by a Communist activist after his arrest. Reflecting upon the blindfolded figure of Justice once he is in the court room, he recalls his morbid fascination with the police boots - "better than batons when a man down". At the story's conclusion, the singing of his comrades outside the police station gives him strength as he is reminded that he is not alone in his fight. "The Pit Cage" depicts a group tragedy as the cable lowering the cage snaps and it plummets down the pit shaft, killing most of the miners inside as it crashes at the bottom. The description of the scene is explicit and somewhat laboured as Jones hammers home the pain and needless loss of life. The episode is taken from his experience of the mining existence, an example of just one of the possible daily disasters with which the people had to contend.

The ensuing years saw an increase in Jones' political activity. This, of course, was due to his closer involvement with the struggles of the unemployed. Much of his non-fiction writing was produced during this period and was specifically directed towards furthering the cause. The mid-thirties exposed the previously unrecognised phenomenon of

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113. Smith, Lewis Jones, p. 25.
115. Lewis Jones, "Boots, Shiny, Big and Heavy....", in Daily Worker, 28th April 1933, p. 6.
long-term unemployment. The problem, however, had long been an issue of great concern in the coalfields of Britain; many miners - including Jones himself - had been without work since the 1926 lockout. In 1933, as South Wales organiser for the N.U.W.M., Lewis Jones was asked to introduce the pamphlet produced by the Monmouthshire Marchers Council which outlines their August Hunger March. Jones described the March as a "splendid mass gesture of unity" and said that the "unemployed were entering into action and all the workers turned out to support them". The following year he published *From Exchange and Parish to the P.A.C.: For Decency Instead of Destitution*, one of his two "dramatic, interventionist pamphlets", reflecting contemporary events in the Valleys. The leaflet detailed the plan of action which entailed a mass convergence of people from all over South Wales to Cardiff, fighting for recognition of, and concessions for, the plight of the unemployed. He wrote "on a route lighted only by far-spaced gas lamps, the class fervour of the workers found expression in their lusty voices and tramping feet". In it Lewis also roundly condemned the Labour County Councillors of the area for their neglect of the continually worsening situation.

Further criticism of Labour Councils appeared in a piece written for the *Daily Worker*. Called "The Rhondda in 1934", it conveys the severe living conditions of the Valleys' people and contrasts this with the corruption of those in power. Interspersed throughout the article are comments

116. The definition of which is "more than a year without three days of uninterrupted work" - Burnett, op.cit., p. 211.
118. Lewis Jones, foreword to *Members of the Monmouthshire Marchers Council, Monmouthshire Hunger March of August 1933*, (Abertillery, 1933), p. 4.
120. Lewis Jones, *From Exchange and Parish to the P.A.C.: For Decency Instead of Destitution*, (Tonypandy, 1934), as cited in Dai Smith, *ibid.*, p. 32.
dripping with irony - "yet all is well ... for Labour rules".\textsuperscript{121} He portrayed the working class as "straining at the Labour leash holding it temporarily in check".

A year later the \textit{South Wales Slave Act Special} was printed, the second of Jones' pamphlets. It was a step by step analysis and explanation of the unemployment allowances from a staunchly communist perspective - for example - "SHORTLY WORKERS WILL MAKE THESE PARASITES EARN THEIR BREAD BEFORE THEY GET IT".\textsuperscript{122} Jones put forward the United Front as "the main weapon for successful struggle" and demanded that "every worker ... assist in forging it". The \textit{Slave Act} was a continuation of his Sunday meetings and loudspeaker action which he used to educate people about the Public Assistance legislation.

A characteristic review of \textit{Coal Miner} by G. A. W. Tomlinson appeared in 1937. In it Jones unflinchingly condemned the book for revealing "the outlook of one who has deserted his people and is now consciously engaging in exploiting his experiences as a worker for the benefit of himself and the enemies of his class".\textsuperscript{123} Tomlinson, born into a coal mining family, depicted hunger and his hatred of pit life. But, "like a nice civilised little Tory", he undertook to free himself from his underprivileged class rather than, as Jones did, attempt to free his class from their underprivileged status.

Jones' own novel, \textit{Cwmardy} was published in the same year as \textit{Coal Miner}. The work was typed up on an ancient, inefficient machine in the old Party rooms in Tonypandy after the completion of an extensive amount of research.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} Lewis Jones, \textit{South Wales Slave Act Special}, (Tonypandy, 1935), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{123} Lewis Jones, "Tory Coal Miner", in \textit{Left Review}, August 1937, p. 441.
\textsuperscript{124} letter to the editor from John Ellis Thomas, \textit{Morning Star}, 24th November, 1978.
Mavis Llewellyn, recalling Lewis' writing process, believed that "he had that knack, (the book is) almost a record. It isn't so much fancy fiction, a lot of it is real fact ... he was quizzing people".\textsuperscript{125} He gathered the material for his writing with the aid of a notebook, often exclaiming "that's an idea"\textsuperscript{126} as he committed it to paper. It was a method which anchors the book firmly within the experience of the South Welsh coalfields. Lewis' work strengthened the position from which he criticised Tomlinson, as a review which appeared in \textit{Left Review} substantiated - "in a real sense a writer of the people has emerged from the Welsh Valleys" who "writes of an intimate knowledge that is part of the very fibre of his being".\textsuperscript{127} Similar sentiments were expressed by a particularly stirring advertisement for \textit{Cwmaryd}, one of a series which the \textit{Daily Worker} ran during 1937 - "it is a novel written of the people and by the people - for the people of Britain".\textsuperscript{128} Continuing in the same vein, modern commentary has analysed the writing "not as a private, essentially individual practice but as the product of collective, shared experience".\textsuperscript{129} As Lewis himself professed, his novels were "collective in the sense that my fellow workers had to fight the battles I try to picture, and also in the sense that I have shamefully exploited many comrades for incidents (and) anecdotes".\textsuperscript{130}

\textit{Cwmaryd} was prompted by a conversation Lewis had with Arthur Horner, the then President of the Fed. He held the opinion that "the full meaning of life in the Welsh mining areas could be expressed for the general reader more truthfully and vividly if treated imaginatively, than by any

\textsuperscript{125} Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Daily Worker}, 2nd July 1937, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{130} foreword to \textit{Cwmaryd}.
amount of statistical and historical research". In recognition of Horner’s suggestion, Jones based the book in a town very much like Mardy, (named ‘Little Moscow’ due to the strong socialist beliefs of the population), where the President was born. Cwmardy examines the events of thirty years of the areas’ history ending in 1921. We Live begins where Cwmardy ends and continues the story to the then present of 1939. The Roberts family are cast as the central characters of the early novel. However, both story plots follow the development of young Len Roberts in particular, from a small boy in Cwmardy to a fully active communist in We Live.

Billy Griffiths declared that "Cwmardy was about real people we knew". The evidence for this is revealed in the characterisation of the book as they are drawn almost directly from the people of the Valley. Ezra Jones, the influential miners’ leader and Len's mentor, is strongly influenced by Noah Rees. He was a powerful figure in the area’s political arena who also came from Clydach and was Jones' own teacher in his formative years. Len is a more composite character, probably made up of an idealised Lewis, and a number of his comrades, specifically, Jack Jones - a friend, activist and author. Mary, Ezra's daughter who marries Len in We Live, is linked to Mavis Llewellyn. In the latter novel, Mary jumps up onto the platform in the middle of a Labour party meeting, an occurrence which was drawn directly from Mavis' own life. However, the history of the political struggles in South Wales is so full of strong female identities that the portrayal of Mary amalgamates many of their individual characteristics. The owner of the colliery, Lord Cwmardy, is based on D.A. Thomas He later became Viscount Rhondda, "creator of the Cambrian Colliery Combine and implacable antagonist of Rhondda miners during the

131 ibid.
132 Will Picton, op.cit.
133 Billy Griffiths, op.cit., p. 5.
134 ibid.
135 Mavis Llewellyn, op.cit., p. 20.
famous Cambrian strike of 1910” when the army was called into the Valleys to curtail the strikers. Arthur Horner is mirrored so closely in the character of Harry Morgan, the communist militant in *We Live*, that Harry even has Arthur’s "high forehead ... and his spectacled eyes".137

Jones extracted events from the history of the coalfields in a corresponding manner. The Cambrian Combine dispute of 1910 in Tonypandy is the foundation for the big strike, the climax of the book.138 An extract from the chapter "Soldiers Are Sent to the Valley" was printed in the April *Left Review* of 1937.139 A particularly vivid and forceful passage, it depicts the people of Cwmardy marching to the pit to protest against the strike breakers, only to be violently obstructed by police and soldiers. The scene harks back to the actual events where the people witnessed the arrival of soldiers in the Valley, sent in by Churchill. Also mirroring local feeling is the depiction of the coalmine owners and the police as the villains of both novels, similarly intent on undermining and suppressing the miners’ fight for better conditions. Thus the work reveals a "new class consciousness manifest(ed) in the cohesion of a mining town, which transforms the very nature of the struggle".140 Other significant occurrences in the book include: the death of Len’s sister, Jane, during childbirth, an explosion at the pit and the subsequent inquest and Len’s first impressions of the pit. The experience has a particular clarity, seen, for instance, in Len’s pit cage journey - "the breath was torn from his lungs by the sudden drop as the cage plunged its way into the depths of the pit".141 With the outbreak of World War One, the latter part of the book has a similar theme to "Young Dai".

137. *We Live*, p. 103; a picture of Horner appeared in the *Daily Worker* (28th August, 1937), which bears an unmistakable resemblance to the description.
Len is rejected as a soldier due to ill health, as Lewis was to be when applying for a position in the International Brigade. This gives Len the freedom to observe home front activities with a more critical eye. As his political awareness solidifies, it is interesting to note that Len's accent becomes less noticeable.\textsuperscript{142} He, unlike Dai, slowly reacts against the jingoism of the War but comes to the same conclusions - "it wasn't fate that brought us into ... the war ... the capitalists did".\textsuperscript{143}

There is a consensus of opinion amongst current evaluations of the novels. Although in \textit{Cwmardy} a "collective hero finds a voice"\textsuperscript{144}, it is believed that the work is narrower in focus, more traditional in style and less politically developed than \textit{We Live}. The later book is viewed as a "more consistent achievement"\textsuperscript{145}, probably as a result of Lewis Jones' progression as a writer.\textsuperscript{146} As the time frame of \textit{We Live} - 1921 to 1939 - encompasses his politically active years, the work has been described as "so sure of its historical facts that they can be totalled up in an overwhelming political argument".\textsuperscript{147} Hence, perhaps as a result of this, Jones felt no need to adapt coal field happenings to support the Communist Party line in \textit{We Live} as he did in \textit{Cwmardy}.\textsuperscript{148} However, it must be stressed that both books are "dominated by the unfolding and development of an idea in terms of mass action".\textsuperscript{149} Both books strongly put forward the idea of women fighting alongside and independent of their men folk. They represent a separate voice in the struggles of the coalfields. Both books initially centre around the notion of a working-class

\textsuperscript{142} Ortega, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Cwmardy}, p. 309.
\textsuperscript{144} Ortega, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{145} Pikoulis, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{146} Snee, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{147} Smith, \textit{Lewis Jones}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{148} Snee points out that in the portrayal of the events at Tonypandy, Jones fails to mention the existence of the Fed. This is possibly as a result of his wish to use the strike activity to motivate the workers towards subsequent unorganised mass action. - Snee, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{149} Garman, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 264.
family but move towards the idea of a collective community and class experience. The novels represent the communal aspects of the mining villages of Wales and make "a 'valley' and its 'people' a knowable political entity". Their struggles revolve around the pit, always the most influential feature of the landscape, and its relationship with the area dominates the action in both novels.

Lewis had not finished Cwmardy when he realised that he needed a second book. He considered it necessary in order to cover all of the material he wished to write about. Apparently, so the story goes, he showed the proofs of Cwmardy to Idris Cox who "told him not to be so simple (and) to get on with party work". Cox was obviously unmoved by the novel's unashamed strength of feeling, an aspect which attracted the attention of one contemporary reviewer - "it will be an extremely thick hide which is not pierced by the author's emotion". Possibly as a result of Cox's criticism of his first book for having "no politics", Lewis wrote We Live as a more overtly political work. As a consequence, Jones' writing moved "beyond the family ... (making) the transfer of affiliation to a cause and to a party", revealing "the militancy of Communism arising inevitably out of the miners' lives". We Live, then, reflects the idealism and ideology of the 'red' decade, unashamedly a piece of propaganda for the Communist Party. This provides the novel with a single focus and direction, for, in keeping

151. Smith, Lewis Jones, p. 35.
152. ibid., p. 29.
155. Colin Summerford, the Observer, as cited in an advertisement for the novel in the Daily Worker, 9th July, 1937.
with the rest of Jones' life, he wanted to promote action as a response to all of his activities. Such a fixity of purpose "clarifies the construction of his plot".\textsuperscript{158} A 1939 review of the book in the \textit{New Statesman} was of the opinion that "the author had a sufficient understanding of personality to make us wonder whether perhaps the propagandists are correct".\textsuperscript{159} One 'personality' could be that of the working class as a collective character, and the query may refer to the presentation of effective, unified action side by side with the people's growing awareness of the power of their own class.\textsuperscript{160} Although their class was the product of a set reality, the people are depicted as having the ability to change their own lives\textsuperscript{161}- a belief about which Jones was adamant.

The characterisation in \textit{We Live} draws upon aspects of people known to Jones. When asked about the people portrayed in \textit{We Live}, Billy Griffiths said "(Jones) created out of all the people he knew the best of them all and put it in",\textsuperscript{162} making the characters more a conglomeration of characteristics than real people. Although the characters were obtained from a more general source, major developments of \textit{We Live} are fairly specific. It was thought that the action of Jack Jones joining the International Brigade to fight in Spain was one of the factors which prompted Lewis to include the Civil War in his work. Indeed, as he was finishing \textit{We Live}, Jack had not been heard of for some time, so the last two chapters were written as if Jack had been killed.\textsuperscript{163} Thus Len dies in Spain, fighting for the Spanish Republic. In an earlier section, Len is arrested during a rally for council relief in the months following the General Strike. The descriptions of the cell and court room link back not only to "Boots, Shiny, Big and Heavy..." but also to Jones' own imprisonment at about the same time. The turbulent years

\textsuperscript{158} Garman, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{160} Snee, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{161} Smith, \textit{Lewis Jones}, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{162} Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p.5.
\textsuperscript{163} Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 19.
after the 1921 Lockout are featured and the action leading up to and including the General Strike sees Len embark upon a speaking tour outside the Valley as Lewis himself did. The book moves through the 1930s and the Depression, portraying the struggles of the unemployed with Len, not surprisingly, as their leader. The Means Test marches are depicted, and Ezra is shown as being gradually superseded as leader of the working class by the Communist Party. Mary becomes an active and important element in the Party, relating well with people and promoting the ideals of Communism amongst the community. She reflects the increasing role that women were playing both in the daily battles in the coalfields and in the political arena in South Wales. Her abilities as a speaker mirror the qualities of a number of important female Party figures of the time. She is elected as a Communist to a seat on the council, (again, as Lewis was), the miners stage a stay-down strike and finally the issues of fascism and the Spanish Civil War are outlined. These two latter components of the novel give rise to the chapter entitled "A Party Decision". With lines such as "how do you expect us to recruit workers for Spain if we don't' go ourselves?"164, the chapter narrates the agonising process of selecting volunteers for the International Brigade.

Most stirring throughout the book are the vast scenes of mass action. The people of the Rhondda use the huge demonstrations to voice their anger at the government over the conditions in which they are forced to live. In the depiction of collective movement, Jones "attempts to integrate individual emotions into the experience of mass political action".165 It is shown, for instance, in the phrase the "stormy cheers moulded themselves into music that helped marshal the ranks for the delayed march".166 The "protagonists become part of the historical process"167 which is exemplified in descriptions such as "the mountain which

165. Holderness, *op.cit.*, p. 27.
166. *We Live*, p. 139.
separated Cwmardy from the other valleys looked like a gigantic ant-hill, covered with a mass of black, moving bodies.\textsuperscript{168} The panoramic scene is in strong contrast to Jones' early "Prolekult sketches"\textsuperscript{169} in his short stories and reveals his development as a writer. When comparing the description of the event to, for example, "Power of the Pit", a shift in focus is highlighted. In the short story, the workers' relationship to the pit is merely economic, whereas in the portrayal of mass movement, the nature of the struggle is political.\textsuperscript{170}

In his books Jones sought to "novelise ... a phase of working-class history".\textsuperscript{171} An example of this appears in his summary of the area's historical events which occurs in the letter that Len sends to Mary from Spain. Disclosing his relationship with the people of the Valleys, and echoing Jones' own feelings on the collective nature of the struggle, Len writes:

\begin{quote}
All our lives, we have been together. In our homes, the pit, the Federation, and the Party. The strikes and demonstrations and marches have led us unerringly to this, the battle-field of democracy.\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

He achieves more than a simple narration of the coalfields, however. \textit{Cwmardy}, for instance, was described by a contemporary critic as a "novel which shows the way forward to the creation of a new literature"\textsuperscript{173} as it was created by a writer of the people for his own class. Lewis has been credited with subverting the traditional novel form through the way in which his depictions of "work and community engage with a fully developed socialist

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{We Live}, p. 243.
\textsuperscript{169} Croft, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{ibid.}, pp. 89-90.
\textsuperscript{171} foreword to \textit{Cwmardy}.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{We Live}, p. 331.
\textsuperscript{173} Review of the novel in an advertisement in the \textit{Daily Worker}, 2nd July, 1937.
\end{flushleft}
consciousness".\textsuperscript{174} It is a comment which is particularly appropriate to \textit{We Live}. By presenting the interaction between an active political consciousness and a collective will, he shows that "there are forms of individual expression which do not operate within the liberal bourgeois concept of individualism".\textsuperscript{175} Or, as another critic said, "the class which lives through and creates (contemporary events) becomes a collective 'hero' ".\textsuperscript{176}

Lewis Jones' writing is not the polished product of hours of deliberation at a desk in a quiet room. One critic condemned his books as "extremely amateurish in style and construction".\textsuperscript{177} Some of the character inter-action exposes a definite limitation in his style and ability. Although there is a certain earthiness in some of their scenes, the relationship of Shan and Big Jim (Len's parents) is cluttered with awkward and petty arguments which do not seem to have any other purpose except to amuse the reader. Unfortunately, as examples of comedy they fail embarrassingly. Jones' writing is often periodically flawed by such unexplained devices and unnecessary inclusions. However, creating literature was not his primary aim. His writing had to be accommodated around his other activities, hence his style is sometimes fragmentary and at other times laboured. It is also affected by another means of expression: his oratory skills. Will Paynter declared him to be "an outstanding orator in the true Welsh tradition with a great capacity to inspire and move people"\textsuperscript{178} and considered these skills useful for a novelist. Contemporaries of Lewis thought that he could "paint such wonderful word pictures" and was such a "convincing speaker" that he would obviously be able to write. This was something, in fact, that he found very hard to do,\textsuperscript{179} although his "flair for

\textsuperscript{174} Holderness, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{175} Snee, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{176} Holderness, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{177} David Smith, \textit{Socialist Propaganda}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{178} Will Paynter, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{179} Billy Griffiths, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 5.
language" \textsuperscript{180} made it considerably easier for him than for most. Jones captured the attention of his audience instantly by the sheer power of his speech. It was colourful, witty and emotive, as he was rarely shy of revealing the intensity of his feelings. Lewis poured this strength of feeling into his writing. Unfortunately, the two mediums of communication, prose and oratory, are not always compatible; what may work in a speech to heighten the reaction of a crowd to a particular point would be unlikely to work for a scene of a similar nature in a novel. This is not necessarily a criticism of Jones as a writer - it merely operates as a means of distinguishing him from fellow writers. The difference is obvious when his work is compared to another more famous Welsh Valley novel of 1939, \textit{How Green Was My Valley} by Richard Llewellyn. The Llewellyn novel, described as placing an "emphasis on the heightening of worn symbols of Valley life as a clue for its power" whilst "spotlighting ... a desire for nostalgic reminiscence", \textsuperscript{181} is light years away from what Jones hoped to achieve with his writing. Perhaps, more importantly, it serves to emphasise the fact that his writing should not really be separated from his life and work as action was the desired result for both. \textsuperscript{182} Lewis' first mode of communicating his ideas and beliefs was as a speaker - a direct, active, and people-oriented method - rather like Jones himself. He was, after all, "the kind of man who the public hears about". \textsuperscript{183} However, whether his words were written or spoken, there is no doubt that Lewis possessed the rare ability to articulate the plight of the people, in order to promote the need for the improvement of daily life. As one comrade stated "he would tell you not to be static you've got

\textsuperscript{180} Mavis Llewellyn, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{181} D. Smith, "Myth and Meaning in the Literature of the South Wales Coalfield - the 1930s", in \textit{The Anglo-Welsh Review}, 1976, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{182} It has been done so here in order to place Lewis' writing against the background of his life as a means of emphasising the context in which to place his written work. To separate the two in this way was not, however, how he lived.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{ibid.}
to change"\textsuperscript{184} and Lewis remained true to his own words, to the detriment of his health.

Jones can be seen as the quintessential political militant. Harbouring a heart problem which was partly responsible for his premature death, Lewis struggled continually for his people and his beliefs with no thought for his own well-being. Testifying to the overwork, a fellow communist recalls that "Lewis was active practically every day, every afternoon and every night".\textsuperscript{185} He was physically weak, his body neglected due to years of a thoroughly exhausting schedule. Failing the medical exam for the International Brigade should have drawn attention to his ill health but instead, on the day he died, he worked non-stop, having conducted thirty street meetings, always "happy when there was work to be done".\textsuperscript{186} Consequently, due to the constant activity disguising his illness, the people of the Rhondda were taken completely by surprise when he died of a heart attack at only forty-two. Having just finished the final draft several days before his death, \textit{We Live} was thus published posthumously, Jones' final statement to a decade about to end in a world war.\textsuperscript{187} As an after-thought, it would have been interesting to see how he would have dealt with the fall-out from the years of Stalinism, and to witness the development of his politics in a post-war era where there was not such a heart-felt and inspiring belief in the ideology of the Left. Of merit too is the contemplation of the image of Jones if he had not died in struggle at such a young age; would there still be the overwhelmingly positive appraisal of the man if he had instead grown older with his comrades, his ideals adapting to the years of activity and possibility of compromise not entirely out of the question?

\textsuperscript{184} Frank Williams, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{185} Will Picton, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{186} Phil Abrahams, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{187} According to Mavis Llewellyn, there were plans for a play to follow the novel, to be "centred around the Spanish Civil War" - \textit{op.cit.}, p. 19. It was to present the triumphant homecoming of the International Brigade - Francis, "Rhondda and the Spanish Civil War", p. 70.
Lewis Jones presented himself as a challenge to orthodoxy and as a reaction against the status quo. He was shaped by the environment into which he was born and the struggles of daily life forged the person he became. He was an active communist in a region in which political belief was the product of general hardship. It is essential to see the words Lewis wrote and the reasons why he did so from within the context of his life, as unlike most authors, they were not an isolated expression of creativity; they were a continuation of the goals he was striving for. The novels, in particular, are living examples of his life and politics: "he possessed in a rare degree the power to inspire people".188 His life was one continual process of inspiration and his death is a testament to the way he lived, active to the last with no thought to compromise his beliefs.

"...though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
we'll keep the red flag flying here. "189

189. *We Live*, p. 334 - as he finished the final proofs for the novel just days before he died, these were probably the last words he wrote to appear in print.
CHAPTER THREE:
'WANTED, A FIVER' -  
A WRITER EMERGES FROM THE SLUMS.

"The houses remain: streets of them where the blue-grey smoke swirls down like companies of ghosts from a million squat chimneys: jungles of tiny houses cramped and huddled together, the cradles of generations of the future".1

Walter Greenwood's words brought the slum-houses of Salford to the attention of a nation. Born in one such house, fronted by the family shop in 1903, he began life in what has been described as the darkest place in Northern England.2 The Lancashire 'twin cities' of Salford and Manchester have provided the backdrop for over a century's worth of writing. Greenwood stands with such commentators as Friedrich Engels, Elizabeth Gaskell, Robert Roberts and Shelagh Delaney. His novel Love on the Dole, set in a small region of Pendleton known as Hanky Park, has long been linked with Salford life during the Depression.

The name Hanky Park was taken from the area's main thoroughfare - Hankinson Street. Greenwood himself lived on Ellor Street, a smaller side street, just one part of what

Robert Roberts has since described as *The Classic Slum*. The region of Manchester and Salford was also "the classic soil of the first industrial revolution", helping an earlier Britain to become "the workshop of the world". Salford, with its textile and metal industries flanked by the Lancashire coalfields, ensuring a continual power supply, attracted huge numbers of people who became the workers for the new factories. They lived in dire, impoverished circumstances - insanitary and overcrowded - in small terraced houses, clustered around the factories. In the words of Friedrich Engels, well known for his seminal social commentary on Salford and Manchester, the slums were, in 1845, an "old and therefore very unwholesome, dirty, and ruinous locality". At the turn of the century the Salford slums had improved very little, still a "dark excrescence of an industrial age". A closer view of existence revealed a rigid social hierarchy amongst the working classes, long working days and low wages. Over the years, continuously fighting for fairer working conditions, was a committed political element which did its best to strive for change. The constant battle was vital: according to a survey conducted in several areas of Salford and Manchester in a 1889, 65.5% of people were deemed " 'very poor', with incomes of less than four shillings per adult per week". Salford, well known for its poverty and adversity, by 1931 "formed one of the most densely populated industrial regions

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5. ibid., p. 4.
in the world". Like countless people before him and thousands after, Walter Greenwood grew up in this bleak, soot-covered environment, watching and later participating in the daily struggle for existence. It was a battle simply to keep up with the rent and to pay for food.

**Photograph 2. Walter Greenwood.**

Walter's father Tom was, as his son described him, a handsome extrovert. He was a popular local figure who entertained the neighbourhood in an establishment called "Tom's Hair Dressing Saloon". A barber by trade, Tom Greenwood spent as much time singing and telling anecdotes to his customers and drinking in the local pubs as he did cutting hair. He married Elizabeth Walter when they were

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both in their early thirties. She gave up her job at the local cotton mill soon afterwards. Elizabeth was one of seven children born to a skilled craftsman who was also a committed trade unionist and Labour supporter, a belief in which she shared. She was to have a significant impact on the lives of Walter and his younger sister Betty, constantly fighting against the poverty endemic to life in Salford. Mrs Greenwood was, in the words of her son, a "remarkable woman".11

After a move away from Hanky Park's smog-filled air failed to prevent the worsening of Tom's health, the hairdressing saloon was re-established several streets from its original location. Soon afterwards, Elizabeth began waitressing at a Manchester café to pay off the debts that the move had incurred. Her insistence upon working stemmed from an avid dislike of borrowing money and spending beyond the family's means. She voiced the fears of many slum-dwellers when she stated "nobody in our family is going to see the inside of the workhouse".12 Years later, Walter remembered the impact of his mother's preoccupation: "We had it drummed into us as kids that what you cannot pay for - cash down - you (would) do without. These were words of wisdom when the grubber(workhouse) was the alternative".13

The family's fortunes rose and fell. Like most surrounding businesses, the shop was affected by its customers' periodic unemployment.14 However, the Greenwoods' situation quickly deteriorated when Walter was nine as his father died. Walter's mother struggled to

12. There Was a Time, p. 37.
14. A substantial number of workers in Hanky Park were either semi or unskilled labourers and consequently more at the mercy of fluctuations in the labour market. "Seamen, dockers, carters, miners, labourers, and workers in the sweated trades comprised the majority of the workforce". - E. and R. Frow, Bexley Square, p. 5.
maintain the family with waitressing and irregular after-hours work at a catering firm. It meant she was forced to spend a great deal of her time away from the children, often having to walk home from a catering function in the early hours of the morning. Elizabeth moved the family into her parents' house in an attempt to provide a solution to her prolonged absences from home. She had the task of helping to support them as her father, a skilled craftsman, lost his job as a consequence of his union activity during the Salford General Strike of 1911. The strike is an example of the "strong thread of struggle (which) runs through Salford's labour history"; however, the battle of 1911 left Walter's grandfather a weary shadow of his former self. Both grandparents died a short time later but they left young Walter with an interest in books and music. As his grandfather was also "a great William Morris fan and a Labour Party founder member", Walter inherited a strong affinity with socialism.

Elizabeth Greenwood had, it would seem, very specific ideas about how to raise her children. She believed it was important to maintain a specific standard of behaviour, refusing to succumb to the restrictions presented by economic hardship. According to the account presented in Greenwood's autobiography *There Was a Time*, it was his mother rather than his father who imposed discipline in the household. From the very beginning, Tom's periodic over-indulgence in alcohol caused the greatest friction in the marriage: Elizabeth considered the behaviour pointless and a waste of money. As a result, Walter was left with a

15. From 1910 to 1914, a period known as the 'Great Unrest', workers from a range of industries fought for better conditions and union representation. The result was a success but many strikers and activists were penalised by employers with redundancy and blacklisting. - Edmund and Ruth Frow, *The General Strike in Salford in 1911*, (Working-Class Movement Library, Salford, 1990), p. 1.
mistrust of alcohol: "he drank my share as his own. It must've put me off".20 She frowned upon the relaxed, good natured attitude of her husband and aspired to what can best be described as middle-class notions of 'good social standing'. Her aspirations apparently transcended the commonly accepted ideals of self-help and hard work attributed to working-class respectability. For instance, in direct contrast to her husband, Elizabeth refused to participate in the general neighbourhood chat sessions, an integral part of any working-class community. She swiftly corrected any "lapses into loutish gracelessness ... (with) 'You did not learn behaviour of that sort at home' ".21 She immediately rectified what she considered to be improper table etiquette, 'common' speech, vagrant street-play with neighbouring children and general decorum. These somewhat middle-class attitudes appear to be at odds with the family's emphasis upon the more pragmatic traditions of Labour politics. However, rather than simply reflecting her desire for upward mobility, it is perhaps more an indication that Mrs. Greenwood always hoped that her children would move beyond their present circumstances and become successful: "nothing was too good for her children".22 Greenwood later referred to it as a form of "snobbery", which appeared in the shape of "an overweening ambition for her (children)'s career".23 The same may be said of her attitudes towards their education.

Walter was enrolled at the council school on Langworthy Road. Of the school he said later "maternal ambition was responsible for my enrolment ... where a 'better class' of boy was reputed to attend".24 Very little is known of his elementary education: by his own admission he

20. Stott, _op.cit._
21. _There Was a Time_, p. 80.
was not recognised as an outstanding student.\textsuperscript{25} Like thousands of other working-class children, he received limited and uninspired instruction which took place in uncomfortable and overcrowded classrooms. School was little more than a prison, a place of "insufferable tedium".\textsuperscript{26} There are more references amongst his writings to his friends and their sporadic escapades to Salford's increasingly threatened areas of trees and grass than to his schooling. His mother attempted to overcome the lack of educational opportunity by supplementing his learning in the areas which she considered were lacking. Theatre, music, and literature were subjects which were under-represented in schools of poor, working-class regions. Elizabeth often managed to obtain free tickets to stage performances and so took Walter to a number of operas and plays.\textsuperscript{27} After a performance of \textit{Faust}, mother and son encountered Walter's headmaster who questioned the suitability of the play for a boy of his age. Mrs. Greenwood replied "where the good things of life are concerned you cannot begin too young".\textsuperscript{28} The love of music was something Walter's parents shared - his father was well known for his singing voice\textsuperscript{29} - and so his mother saved in order to buy a piano for Walter so he could practice whilst she was at work "instead of gadding around like a street Arab"\textsuperscript{30}. As a further step in what one commentator has described as his mother's "continuous efforts to instil the family with middle-class 'Culture' "\textsuperscript{31}, Greenwood was made to learn poems and recite them on demand in the hope that he would "get something more worthwhile "\textsuperscript{32} into his head.

\textsuperscript{25} However, his sister Betty, who features very little in Greenwood's reminiscences, won the School Merit prize many times - \textit{ibid.}, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{ibid.}, p. 216.
\textsuperscript{27} This was either from hanging playbills in the shop, or, in later years, from the theatre people she served in the café.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{There Was a Time}, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{29} Apparently it was assumed that this asset and his tendency towards theatrics were due to his Welsh heritage - \textit{ibid.}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ibid.}, p. 71. Though it seems that Betty had more interest in learning to play than her older brother - \textit{ibid.}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{32} (italics mine) - \textit{There Was a Time}, p. 81.
A rule that his mother lived by, which explains the impetus behind her educational efforts, came from Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it". This scripture played a central role in Walter Greenwood's life, reflecting the strong and lasting influence his mother exerted on his values, beliefs and perceptions of his surroundings. He was also affected by the underlying conflict which arose between Elizabeth’s social and political beliefs, an aspect which was to be revealed in *Love on the Dole*.

A year or so before Walter left school, he applied for work in the local pawn shop as a part-time clerk. Financial necessity dictated an early release from the routine of school and, in 1916, Greenwood's position at the shop became full-time. Due to the introduction of a 'Labour Exam', a means by which children without a father could leave school at thirteen, he was able to contribute an increased wage to his mother's income. Working at such a young age greatly influenced Greenwood and his attitude to slum life. The lack of choice due to the family's circumstances was common to many poor working-class families. The deprivation of education was something Greenwood was to refer to as "a debt that can never be repaid. There were so many bright boys when I was at school but all the doors were closed to them". Several decades later, he wrote "it must not be assumed that ... the working lads and lasses of Lancashire were content to suffer the handicap of an unfinished education"; those who were motivated enough, (like Walter

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33. *ibid.*., p. 111: Another text significant to Greenwood's childhood was found whilst examining material in the Walter Greenwood Collection at the University of Salford. It was written in a childlike hand in the back of a Bible with "Walter Greenwood, 4 Mason St, Pendleton, Manchester, aged 11 years, 17th Dec, 1914" inscribed inside the front cover. The text is "children should obey your parents in the Lord for this is right" - Eph ch 6, v 1.

34. The employment requirements were for a good hand writer and an efficient arithmetist - *ibid*., p. 81. The shop was on Church St - Ridgeway's pawn shop: Tony Flynn, *Hanky Park*, (published by Neil Richardson, 1990), p. 38.

35. Stott, *op.cit*.

himself in his drive for self-education), found some satisfaction elsewhere, in evening classes or other educational schemes outside of working hours.

As a full-time clerk, Walter earned 3s 6d a week. He started in the mornings, long before it was light, and finished at about nine in the evening - a fifteen hour day. \(^{37}\) He spent the entire time desperate to be freed from the constraints of both the long hours and the shop itself. \(^{38}\) Fortunately a wartime infestation of body lice introduced by soldiers on-leave from the front forced Greenwood to move from the pawn shop to a job as an office boy. The event was not uncommon given the constant stream of people through the premises: the pawn shop was always a well-utilised institution in areas of substantial poverty.

Walter remained an office boy for some time. This was despite constant requests to enter an apprenticeship - engineering - or to learn a trade - carpentry - (requests which were dismissed by his mother due to "the ever-present spectres of short-time, strikes and lockouts") \(^{39}\). Complaints of boredom were also ignored as she approved of his employment as a "job for life" \(^{40}\) but above all, it was ten shillings a week towards the household finances which were hard hit by war rationing. After peace was declared, an envious Greenwood, longing to escape from Salford and hearing of older friends serving in Bonn in the Occupation Army, decided to take matters into his own hands and chose the next job himself.

Greenwood was able to find a temporary respite from the Salford slums: he became a stable hand. \(^{41}\) Even though the position was not well-paid it still fulfilled his dream to

\(^{37}\) ibid.

\(^{38}\) ibid., p. 38; There Was a Time, pp. 89-99.

\(^{39}\) There was a Time, p. 110.

\(^{40}\) ibid., pp. 109-10.

\(^{41}\) He worked initially for a wealthy industrialist and then at a country racing stable.
live in the country. Throughout his childhood he was
intrigued by the natural environment: "even in Salford I
would creep off somewhere to find a green field where I
could sit stroking the grasses".42 During the few years he was
occupied mucking out stables, the situation in Britain
worsened. Many local faces had disappeared - victims of the
war - and those who survived saw scant evidence of a
country 'fit for heroes'. As the brief post-war economic
buoyancy quickly dissipated43 and the falling balance of
trade figures began to adversely affect British industry, it
became obvious that there was a break down in the simple
economic equation of supply and demand for labour.44 The
'staples' of coal, cotton and engineering were the hardest hit:
"the fundamental problem was (their) structural decline".45
This had a disastrous impact on northern industrial slums
such as Salford where unemployment was already a growing
problem. Salford, whose economy was structured around
Britain's basic industries - a product of early advances in the
industrial system - was amongst the first to suffer when the
economy fell into a recession.

Walter's countryside employment came to an abrupt
end when the 'north-country speculator' was forced to sell
the racing stables. Greenwood had no choice but to return to
the grim world of Salford, yet another casualty of the post-
20's slump. The adverse circumstances of Salford life
worsened as cotton production was threatened by increased

42. Stott, op.cit.
43. "There was a 'craze of speculation' in the Lancashire cotton
industry, in which 42% of spinning capacity changed hands in the
years 1919 - 1920 at seven times its pre-war valuation and new mills
were constructed in expectation of a return to peace-time conditions"
107. Greenwood mentions this in his autobiography. Local mill
employer, Mr. Wheelam, advised people to put their money into
cotton. A neighbour relates that he "sold all his property ... and every
penny piece he's got he put into cotton mill shares ... His money's
doubled already" - There Was a Time, p.129. Mr. Wheelam was very
badly affected by the subsequent drop in shares as he failed to sell his
in time, ibid., pp. 166-7.
44. John Burnett, Idle Hands: The Experience of Unemployment, 1790-
45. ibid., p. 201.
overseas competition - neighbouring Manchester was buffered by economic diversification. And so began Walter's seemingly endless succession of badly paid work: at best he earned 35 shillings a week. Few, if any of the positions offered prospects for the future. One reason for this was his lack of training: he was skilled only in office work - 'bookkeeper-correspondence-clerk-typist'. As he stated in his autobiography, "for us who were young, unskilled work was to be had on cut-price terms" - and he was one of the more fortunate. He was employed in a 'back-yard' packing case-making venture, both in the office and on the shop floor and then moved into the 'wholesale' retail trade. Greenwood remained with the firm until he was retrenched with several others soon after the General Strike. He then spent time on the dole, an experience he greeted with "a bubbling sense of freedom" as it was a release from the terminal grind of daily work.

Walter passed his days of unemployment reading library books and browsing in accommodating bookshops. His "secret elation in being at liberty to indulge" extended to his ambition to write, a desire he had long held. His autobiography provides few details about this particular non-working period. However, it seems probable that Greenwood became more involved with the Left in Salford around this time. There is little information about political activity prior to this time which is perhaps surprising given the family's Labour traditions. However, when he lived on Rossall Street he had a reputation as a "socialist agitator"; a familiar comment when he was holding regular public

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46. Davies, Fielding and Wyke, _op. cit._, p. 4.
49. There is little information to suggest that he himself took part in the industrial action.
50. _There Was a Time_, p. 185.
51. _ibid._
meetings was that "he's on his soap box again". During an unspecified cotton strike, he utilised the services of a barrel organ in order to publicise the issues, collecting money for the workers involved. Many years later one man remembered being paid a sixpence for delivering leaflets for Walter Greenwood in the days before *Love on the Dole* was written. The leaflets discussed trade unionism and "hoped for improvements in the standard of living amongst the then desperately poor". Greenwood also went door-to-door to promote the Labour Party in local and national elections, as well as raising awareness of other important issues. At some point during this active time he founded the West Salford Labour League of Youth. He was also involved in typing out the weekly newspaper at Ashfield Labour Club, the area's Labour Party headquarters.

Greenwood's typing skills were soon in demand from a far less political body - the Motor Works' office at Trafford Park. The position, although better paid than most of his previous work, was temporary and he soon found himself looking at 'situations vacant' notices again. The application for his next employment read:

My qualifications are several year's experience as a salesman, double-entry book keeping and typing. I am quick and accurate at figures and am capable of dealing with correspondence. I have satisfactory testimonials, am twenty six years of age and suggest a wage of....

53. He was told by the author "here lad, you can go to the pictures twice with that"; letter from F. Crookell, *Manchester Evening News*, 1st October, 1974.
55. *There Was a Time*, p.195.
As was the practice of the time, Walter deliberately asked for the minimum of pay to ensure that he was hired. He found office work with a shady firm who attempted to buy up bankrupted businesses. The firm was a sad comment on the state of the Salford economy where numerous small companies, previously secure, disintegrated due to debt. It was a time when "many highly skilled men found themselves in the dole queue alongside their brethren who were designated 'unskilled' or 'labourers' "56 - the workers who had born the brunt of unemployment up until the 1929 Crash. With local industry in tatters, and employment only tentative, the people of Salford entered the Depression of the Thirties with no hope of a rapid solution to their plight.

The Wall Street Crash heralded the end of Greenwood's involvement with the firm. The company's proprietor disappeared and the wages were left unpaid. The situation, initially problematic, had long-term benefits for Walter as he appropriated the typewriter as payment for three weeks work. From here his writing began in earnest. He believed he could write his way out of the grey reality of the slums: it became the key to his future. Greenwood found it to be an involved and lengthy process, a time which he later referred to as "six years (of) incessant practice"57, working "like bloody hell ... to teach myself writing".58 He received numerous rejections for work he sent to publishers before one short story, "A Maker of Books", was accepted for a sum of twenty five pounds. This, however, did not end his reliance on routine employment. He was forced to sell merchandise door-to-door due to the continuing stream of refusals from publishing houses. The job involved 'canvassing-on-commission' - attempting to convince people to buy clothes and other items, to be paid for in weekly instalments which he later attempted to collect. This was a difficult task in a town so badly affected by unemployment: if he engaged a new customer, and the household's

58. Stott, op.cit.
circumstances changed, it soon became a battle of priorities between food, rent and repayments. It is, perhaps, a compromising choice of occupation for one who believed in the politics of Labour. However, Greenwood's thoughts on this aspect of the work are unknown; his main concern was to contribute to the family's finances.

The sales job was essential. In 1931, the newly-elected National Government had just cut Walter off the dole as his sister and mother were officially earning too much money. Due to Ramsay Macdonald's sacrificial economising and monetary politics, Greenwood, like many others, had to rely on the incomes of his family. He described himself as having "sponged shamelessly" on them during the few times that he was on the dole; the longest period was the nine months before *Love on the Dole* was accepted by a publisher. His family were, apparently, "willing victims" and offered support and encouragement for his writing. Indeed, after his initial success, his mother described his literary endeavours as his job - "don't you ever forget it...What's been done once can be done again". He divided his days between dedicated writing and conducting enough door-to-door work to provide twenty shillings commission to the Greenwood finances. Six months later the news came that Jonathan Cape was to publish *Love on the Dole*. It was an event which was to change his life.

Much of the information about Walter Greenwood which has been outlined so far is based upon his autobiography, *There Was a Time*. The implications and structure of the autobiography prompt a number of queries about Greenwood's attitude to his past. It was published in 1967, and yet the narrative ends in 1933, the year *Love on the Dole* first appeared in print. The similarities between the two works are unmistakable: themes and even phrases of the

59. *ibid.*
novel are replicated in his autobiography. It seems that Greenwood wanted to emphasise the 'authenticity' of his literary depiction of the Depression by repeating particular aspects in *There Was a Time*, thus anchoring *Love on the Dole* in his experience of Hanky Park. 62 The title of the 1967 publication is taken from a verse of the Wordsworth poem "Intimations of Immortality". Greenwood, by selecting this stanza in particular 63, has used the idyllic nature of the poem to imply a sense of nostalgia - overtones of which reappear throughout the work. Due to the style of and the material included in the autobiography, the result was to 'novelise' his own life. As one reviewer commented, the work reads more like "a Greenwood novel than a self-conscious documentary". 64 His story has been edited with a heavy hand, presenting the writer very much in the way that he would like to be seen and it is precisely this aspect which does lead the piece to appear self-conscious. 65 Hence the autobiography is important not only for what is included but, just as importantly, for what is left out. 66 Alice Myles is the most obvious omission.

Alice Myles was engaged to marry Walter Greenwood. However, the couple's lengthy relationship ended in 1935 when the engagement was broken off. Unfortunately for Walter, the matter became very public when she filed a breach of promise suit against her former fiancee in January.

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62. Many thanks to Andy Davies for a discussion on the topic and for allowing me to refer to a copy of his unpublished paper presented to the University of Manchester, 1991, "From *Love on the Dole* to *The Classic Slum* : Representations of Salford". Of course the effects of the passing years on the author's memory and selectiveness of his storytelling should also be considered.  
63. There was a time when meadows, grove and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream...  
(included in autobiography after table of contents.)  
65. The idea of Greenwood's self-promotion is discussed at length on pp of this chapter.  
However, Alice Myles is not mentioned in any of the available Greenwood material - novels or letters - and is present only in the newspaper stories of the time. Not surprisingly, given the local and national standing of the Salford man, commentary on Greenwood and his involvement with Alice also survives in oral extracts from people of the area.68

One Salford woman, Elsie Osman, went to school with Alice's younger sister. Consequently Elsie met Walter Greenwood on many occasions, especially as the two younger girls were enlisted by the writer to help provide writing material for his literary efforts.69 Elsie described Alice Myles as a "plain mill girl", living off Liverpool Street and courted by Walter. He later "ditched this poor ... Salford girl": it appears local feeling was that "she wasn't good enough, when he got on"70 though this is, of course, is very much open to debate. Ronald Gow, the Mancunian playwright who, in 1934, adapted Love on the Dole into its highly successful theatrical form, believed that the couple had split because Alice "wouldn't 'rise' with him, or wouldn't go to London with him, or wouldn't share his new opulence".71 The situation was eventually resolved in an out of court settlement of 700 pounds when Greenwood lost the case and, in the middle of 1937, he married Pearl Osgood, a dancer in a Broadway show. The two had met whilst Walter was visiting New York with Ronald Gow during Love on the Dole's 1935 opening season.

Alice attracted a great deal of public sympathy. She was variously depicted by the contemporary newspapers as

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68. This information was obtained from interviews conducted by Andy Davies whilst researching his PhD [published as Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-Class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-46, (Buckingham, 1992)] and appears in Davies, "From Love on the Dole", op.cit., pp. 7-12.
69. Please see p. 80 of this chapter for further details.
the "inspiration for the book and the play which made him"72, a "childhood sweetheart"73 and the "thinly disguised heroine of the novel, his faithful sweetheart during his years of destitution".74 Ronald Gow remembered meeting Alice and Walter briefly in a Manchester street sometime during the first tour of the play. Greenwood introduced her as "my young woman" and yet she remains at best a shadowy figure reduced to the comment "'she's put me right back where I was'"75 when the settlement was completed. Although Alice's name is notably absent from Greenwood's writing, she can be seen to have made an impression on Love on the Dole. Whether she was as inspirational as the press of the 1930s claimed is difficult to substantiate without more supporting evidence. So far, this has not been forthcoming.

Several scenes in Love on the Dole are drawn almost directly from Walter Greenwood's life. One episode, in particular, involves Alice Myles. In 1928 he went to Peel, on the Isle of Man - "I chose the Isle of Man because I had often heard my mother tell of the time she went there"76 - and the event marks his first "real holiday" from Salford.77 There is no allusion to the visit in the Greenwood autobiography and all other references to his stay involve only himself. However, Gow recalled that Alice accompanied Walter to the Isle of Man as the holiday was raised in relation to the 1936 suit - "their sexual relations were part of the court case under the obsolete Breach of Promise rules".78

Walter later wrote a description of the visit. It was to appear in an article about writers living on the Isle of Man a

72. The Star, 22nd September, 1937.
75. Gow, op.cit.
77. Moorhouse, op.cit.
78. Gow, op.cit.
few years after Greenwood eventually moved to Peel in 1965. As is the case with the autobiography, his anecdote reveals a remarkable similarity to the mirroring scene in *Love on the Dole* when two of the characters, Harry and Helen, spend an idyllic week away from the Salford smog. Both versions recount rowing a hired boat on clear, blue seas, evening explorations of a fishing town and the overwhelming dread of returning to Salford. Greenwood referred to the visit as "one of the happiest times of (his) life" and alluded to the Isle as his 'Shangri La', thus it is hardly surprising that Peel was where he died (of heart failure) in September of 1974.

The importance that Greenwood attached to the stay in Peel stresses a vital aspect of his experience. Walter's early life was dominated by one goal - to leave the confines of Salford and the life he envisaged leading if he remained there. It explains the determination behind his efforts to teach himself to write: his literary achievements provided an escape route. The faith Greenwood placed in his political beliefs did not seem to extend far beyond Salford. Thus it was his literary skills not his political orientation which he saw as the solution to his predicament. It appears that the trip to Peel merely strengthened his resolve to remove himself from Salford. In his later years he outlined the premise which motivated him - "it all revolves on what kind of life you want ... - supposing you have a choice. In my case it is the freedom from the crushing desolation of city, office and factory life, ... against which my mind and heart had been in revolt, consciously and unconsciously, ever since early boyhood. I would not care to put a price on what

79. Taken from the final draft of an article that was to be included in "Authors of the Island" (further details unknown, Walter Greenwood archives) with a letter dated 18th November, 1971, addressed to the editor of *Manx Life*, and see *Love on the Dole*, pp. 119-25 - the chapter is called "Magic Casements".
80. Keenan, *op.cit.*
81. Gow, *op.cit.*
freedom from these mean...". More candidly, in 1937 Walter wrote that "(I) taught myself how to write for no other reasons than that the writers' profession paid more money than clerking". An enlightening description of his reactions to the initial flushes of success concerns the first substantial bank withdrawal the author made when he was thirty-two. Reinforcing the account, an older Greenwood, comfortable in his success, professed that "I find nothing so consoling outside of good health ... as a pocket full of money". Being overly familiar with the severe lack of money and the hardships that it entailed, Walter developed a very pragmatic attitude towards it. Having available funds meant that he had financial security for the first time in his life.

A 1967 interview with the writer emphasises the direction Greenwood's life was to take. It stressed that "in all those years of childhood, growing to adolescence and maturity, there had been a dream of fair places, and he sought them as soon as he were able". Hence Peel was the first 'fair place' and Gow, remarking upon its significance, said "I can quite understand that he was giving reality to the scenes he had imagined in the novel". Gow mistakenly assumed that the trip had taken place after Love in the Dole, believing that the writer lacked the necessary finances prior to its publication. He would not have been surprised to learn that the five pounds ten shillings acquired for the week long excursion was done so at a cost. Walter explained "it was flag hash that earned me that holiday which inspired the passage": instead of a nine pence lunch of mashed potato, bread and sweet tea "the lunch-break (was) spent strolling the flagstones of Manchester's main streets". According to

82. Walter Greenwood, "Writers on the Rack", (reference unknown - judging by the accompanying photograph, it can be dated between 1965-70). [photocopy Dr. S. Constantine, University of Lancaster].
84. The County Book of Lancashire, pp. 9-11.
85. Moorhouse, op.cit.
86. Gow, op.cit.
87. Sunday Express, op.cit.
88. There Was a Time, p. 178.
Greenwood, it was a well-utilised system for those who needed to save money for marriage or holidays and serves to highlight the strength of will which Greenwood employed in order to leave Salford.

Walter's relationship with Gow discloses this aspiration in a rather unflattering light. The playwright had a prolonged disagreement with the writer over who was to take credit for the play. "Greenwood always claimed authorship" stated Gow, much infuriated over the entire affair, even though "he had no hand in the writing of the actual play (as at) the time he knew very little about the theatre". 89 Gow, somewhat bitterly, believed the matter was a "pretty good key to Greenwood's character" and it appears that he had ample cause for complaint. The letters the two exchanged during the writing of the play in 1933 are illuminating. They expose an extremely ambitious side to Walter: from the outset he wanted a "commercial success in a large West End theatre ... (this is) where the money is made" 90, and taking the play to the U.S. was by no means out of the question. 91 In contrast, Gow, a seasoned professional, was far more realistic - "I certainly didn't write a play about unemployment with any idea of a West End production, no one in their senses would do that". 92 Walter also took control of the publicity for the play, granting exclusive interviews 93 to discuss "his play" 94 whilst continually objecting to the form the legal agreement between them was to take. 95 Nothing, it appeared, was to prevent Greenwood from achieving his goal. The motivation extended to the relationship he held with the press.

90. Walter Greenwood in a letter to Ronald Gow, 5th December, 1933.
91. ibid., 20th September, 1933.
93. Greenwood's letters to Gow, op. cit., 1st, 5th, and 11th of December, 1933, and 8th January, 1934.
95. Greenwood's letters to Gow, op. cit., 1st, 5th, and 20th of December, 1933, and 5th January, 1934.
Two of the letters from the correspondence are poignant examples of how the author publicly referred to himself. The self-description he gave to Gow was of "a scrawny sort of person, a half-starved-looking individual with a flaming tie"96, later saying he was "mistakeably the incarnation of a caricature of 'Famine'".97 This rather obviously self-conscious presentation of himself reveals an understanding of how he was depicted by the media. Naomi Mitchison met the author soon after the work was published. In her words he was a "thin, shy, nervy, obviously underfed but immediately attractive young man".98 He had gained a reputation as an idealistic young writer struggling to make his voice heard - this was the most familiar contemporary portrayal of Greenwood - and it appeared as if he felt the need to add a visual representation of himself to support that image.

The awareness with which he encouraged the creation of his public persona is visible in many of the interviews that he gave to the press regarding *Love on the Dole*. Just prior to the novel's publication he stated "I have tried to show what life means to a young man living under the shadow of the dole, the tragedy of a lost generation who are denied consummation, in decency, of the natural hopes and desires of youth".99 As late as 1971 the novel was still hailed as a "cri de coeur for the unemployed slum dwellers" with the supporting words from Greenwood - "I was burning up inside with fury at the poverty around me ... it was a burning hatred but I realised that this was no way to go about writing it all down. This (the novel) would be carrying a torch".100 The writer of the article also mentioned in a somewhat ironic tone that Greenwood "made a small fortune

96. ibid., 16th September, 1933.
97. ibid., 28th November, 1933.
98. Naomi Mitchison in a letter to the editor, the *Guardian*, 17th September, 1974.
99. from *Manchester Evening News* article - just prior to publication of novel, (no further details, Walter Greenwood newspaper clippings, vol. 1).
100. Stott, *op.cit.*
from telling the world about the plight of Salford's poor" emphasising that the novel was partly written "because he knew that if it were published he could buy his way out of Hanky Park through the power of his own words". This, of course, he duly did but his self-promotion rarely included his overwhelming aim to leave Salford as soon as he had the chance: he referred only to the more public reasons for completing *Love on the Dole*.

The moulding of Walter's public image has a further episode. It concerns a story which first appeared in the New York *Herald Tribune*, February, 1936. According to the author, the first drafts of the novel were completed on the back of wallpaper, donated by a friend, which Greenwood then cut into smaller pieces. The story became part of the romance surrounding the novelist, elaborating upon the already prevalent view of Walter as a young writer fighting heroically against poverty. The anecdote is partly substantiated by the oral testimony of Elsie, the Salford woman, however, in her version it was the two girls, not the writer, who cut up the wallpaper! Thus, as a further comment upon Greenwood's ill-fated relationship, perhaps the conscious exclusion of Alice Myles from his writing is related to the maintenance of this image. The breaking of the engagement and subsequent court case would have been damaging for the career of an aspiring author, especially one who had a reputation as a crusader against poverty and injustice. It is quite possible that he followed his mother's practice of maintaining a 'dignified' silence with regard to personal affairs - the event would have been a very public airing of his private life - so it is not surprising that he omitted to mention this particular period of his life.

101. *ibid.*
103. It also appeared in the same newspaper in 1938, on the 25th September.
There is an air of contradiction and ambivalence around the persona of Walter Greenwood. He was not quite as he seems and to pin him down to a specific set of characteristics is a hard task indeed. He did not, during his own lifetime, present a straightforward image to the world and this duality remains. There is much to be said about the difficult notion of truth and fiction in the self-promotion of the man: it is worthwhile noting that much of the material which is housed in the Walter Greenwood archives at the University of Salford was not only donated by the author himself, but was written or collated by Walter Greenwood. Thus the representation of the writer available today is partially moulded by his own hand, and thus is quite subjective. Many aspects of the ambiguous nature of the man are apparent in the work which survives him. The strong public affirmation to the ideals of Socialism which was undermined by the desperate private urge to leave slum life behind is but one instance of the uncertain motivation which governed Greenwood. However, the contemporary press was permitted to accumulate certain traits and life experiences in their search to find the man behind *Love on the Dole*. Those are the facets of the Salford writer which are the most familiar and remain to provide a slightly lopsided portrait of the author.

Walter Greenwood was seen to represent an 'authentic' experience of the Depression. Most of the newspaper articles list his series of jobs, his spells of unemployment and the long struggle to gain recognition. By emphasising these elements, Greenwood hoped to promote himself and his work. "His status as an 'out o' work' was important in shaping the responses to *Love on the Dole*". This, of course, is at odds with the knowledge that Walter relished the freedom that unemployment brought, and was willingly supported by the earnings of his mother and sister: it is another example

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105. Like, for instance, the two volumes of newspaper clippings which Greenwood paid an agency to collect. [Vol. 1, 1933-1939 and Vol. 2, 1939 - onwards].
of the contrast between the private and the public person. He set himself apart from his environment yet felt the need to justify himself for not adhering to the accepted social norms of, for instance, routine employment. Thus Greenwood can only be understood in any depth if he is placed within the context of his experience. The contradictions he presents as a Socialist writer depicting working-class life are far less complicated if he is seen as the product of his up-bringing. As the author himself states, "if you ask any Lancashire lad who has made his mark in any walk of life ... he will attribute it primarily to his mother's influence". The duality of his mother's aspirations for gentility and the more solid commitment to Labour activity led to a somewhat confused view of his own circumstances; Greenwood, it has been said, "is a working-class novelist ... trapped by liberal ideology both as an explanation of the world, and as it shaped the novel form". However, only his writing can further an understanding of how Greenwood, influenced by his experiences, developed his perception of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR:
'THE SMILE OF FORTUNE'
GREENWOOD WRITES HIS WAY TO SUCCESS.

"I prefer to write of the Two Cities as I know them irrespective of whether or not I earn ... approval".¹

The 1930s was Walter Greenwood's decade of success. The constant effort and uninterrupted focus of the Salford writer eventually produced the envisioned result. He appeared before the public eye with a first novel for which he was always to be remembered. In 1933, *Love on the Dole* altered Walter Greenwood's existence in many of the ways that he had hoped. It allowed him to make the life changes he had dreamed of for so long. The work captures many of the attitudes he held, and encapsulates numerous authorial experiences of Salford. "Regarded as the best novel of the Depression"², it tends to overshadow much of his other writing. The two subsequent novels, *His Worship the Mayor* and *The Secret Kingdom*, although acknowledged by critics and reviewers, were unable to deflect much attention from the huge reputation gained by *Love on the Dole*. His first piece in print, "A Maker of Books", later included in a 1937 collection of short stories entitled *The Cleft Stick*, is a useful introduction to an analysis of the more famous novel.

¹. Walter Greenwood in a letter dated 12th October, 1933 to the editor of *The Woman Citizen*, 20th November, 1933, p. 9.
The story is indicative of the concerns obvious in the rest of the selection. The plot revolves around a compulsive gambler who longs to leave his limiting and repetitive job but fails due to his own weaknesses (he also bears an uncanny likeness to a character in the autobiography). The tales depict unwanted pregnancies, suicide, and illness set against the poverty-stricken background of the slums and they interlock: many of the personalities reappear, if only by name, in other stories. The collection explores the characters' reactions to hardship, exposes their fallibilities, and examines their dreams for a better existence. Unfortunately, the seeming lack of compassion with which many of the characters are presented, and the constant ironic tone, results in the reader forming a somewhat negative view of these people. The characterisation is generally determined by gender, interestingly enough. The female characters are, on the whole, either weak, naive, burnt out or manipulative - "what a fool she had been to have wished Hulkington dead; Hulkington whom she could twist around her fingers...".3 The male characterisation is comparable: if not money-hungry, the men are deluded, desperate or philanderers - "the others had been too easy prey; what man would be fool enough to select such a wife?".4 The language is occasionally clumsy but the tales themselves are well structured. The Cleft Stick, with the majority of its stories written between 1928 and 1931, represents the work of a developing author. None-the-less it prompted a glowing response from Edith Sitwell, insisting that it was one of the best collections of stories she had ever read.5 The writing is consistent in theme, style and language to its better known successor.

The selection's overall similarity to Love on the Dole is by no means a coincidence. Like numerous other working-class writers, Walter had a mentor.6 Ethel Mannin, author

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and intellectual, wrote that Greenwood referred to her as his "fairy godmother, because it was I who encouraged him to write the novel which made his name".\(^7\) He had sent Mannin his collection of stories - it "was material from someone who could obviously write"\(^8\), and her advice was to "write a novel using some of the characters".\(^9\) It explains why the names of Mrs Dorbell and Mrs Bull - two of the novel's old women - and Ned Narkey - the local thug - are so familiar.

The tale is set in Greenwood's own Hanky Park, portrayed as a microcosm of industrial England. The plot follows the lives of Sally Hardcastle, a young cotton worker and her teenaged brother, Harry, who, at the beginning of the story, is embarking upon a seven-year engineering apprenticeship. The Hardcastles are the quintessential 'respectable' working-class family. As Harry senior works in the coalfields, the family presents the effects of the crumbling of the three basic British industries. Sally becomes the sole wage earner in the household when her father is put on short time and Harry is laid off following the completion of his apprenticeship. Harry eventually marries Helen after an unplanned pregnancy while Sally's own ill-fated relationship with the Labour activist, Larry, is undermined by two of the area's more sinister characters. The novel's ending sees Sally prostituting herself to the shady bookmaker after Larry's death, thus buying herself and her family out of poverty.

Overall, as a text, *Love on the Dole* places a greater emphasis on themes rather than issues. The most prevailing is the sense of enclosure throughout. This is visible in the repetitive nature of the opening and closing scenes, providing a circularity to the text.\(^10\) Helen Hardcastle replaces her mother-in-law as she wakes the family to

\(^8\) ibid.
\(^9\) "Author's Preface", *The Cleft Stick*, p. 9.
prepare for another working day. The roles are the same, as is the imprisoning sameness of purpose of those enacting their part: it is still drizzling outside and the ship's siren is again heard in the early morning air. The circular structure represents the all-encompassing air of stagnation with which Greenwood describes slum life.

The near claustrophobic atmosphere is both physical and psychological. The tangled mass of buildings which make up the slum constrains the inhabitants in a huge web, the "mile after mile of ... grey, depressing streets ... (are) never ending".11 However, it is the restrictions of poverty - the lack of opportunity and hope - which take the higher toll. When circumstances are exacerbated by unemployment, the problem increases dramatically. Few of the characters seem to have the power or even the will to alter their lives, and this lack of change is reflected in the habitual aspects of the week such as the pawn shop cycle. On Monday the items are taken in to be pawned, thus providing a few extra coins in the struggle to make ends meet. On Saturday, payday, the items are redeemed for the weekend. Harry (as Walter himself had done), observing the women who use the service, reveals that they are the "same familiar faces he had seen week after week for years, until they became as institutions".12

The characters are dominated by the sound of the factory siren. Time ceases to be measured in years or months; its passing becomes a daily phenomenon, a repetition of specific, sequential events, governed by the work cycle. Harry embodies the author's response to the constant, restricting demands of employment, realising that "Hanky Park was the only spot they knew of where they could find someone to buy their labour. Wages controlled their lives".13 Thus it is not surprising that work is depicted as another of the constraining factors of slum life, a "day in ...

11. ibid., p. 86.
12. ibid., pp. 31-2.
13. ibid., p. 123.
day out ... eternal grind". Yet unemployment reveals itself to be a worse state of affairs, a gradual erosion of body, mind and spirit. The workless characters experience a heightened sensation of imprisonment as "the confines of the world shrank". Being denied work "can and does reduce most working folk to pauperdom".

Love on the Dole's feeling of entrapment is very much a reflection of the author's own reaction to growing up in Hanky Park. Reflecting a similar view, Larry senses that "the district's tentacles (were) feeling to get a grip on him". Walter's strong urge to escape from his environment is mirrored in the people of the novel and, as with the characters in The Cleft Stick, most of them attempt to gain some form of release. Much of this is merely temporary - "reading cheap novelettes or the spectacle of films of spacious lives" or indulging in fortune telling. Some methods of escapism, such as alcohol and gambling, only compound the problem. Again Greenwood's personal experience governs this view; the behaviour of his father explains the former and the labour traditions of his family would no doubt have influenced his unfavourable opinion of the latter. The two who are able to escape from Hanky Park do so in such a way as to makes the action a tragedy in itself. Larry leaves Hanky Park through the cemetery gates and Sally becomes a mistress, selling herself in order to leave the slums. Neither action can be described as positive!

Walter Greenwood retells aspects of his experience through the plot. For instance, the real Hanky Park is so obvious in Love on the Dole that the author was asked to provide notes on the places that he had included. A "true

15. ibid., p. 172.
16. ibid., p. 86.
17. ibid., p. 192.
18. ibid., p. 65.
19. letter to Greenwood from David Hooley - 14th of April, 1967 - who completed information, with Greenwood's help, for the school's
Salfordian could have lived through that book”20 was one local affirmation, revealing that the novel supports evidence gleaned from oral interviews, describing the area's living conditions.21 The characterisation draws upon the people Walter knew in the area. In an early interview, Greenwood stressed that "Love on the Dole is taken from real life … and while the characters are imaginary, they are based on real people".22 Harry contains many elements of the author himself, including working as a pawnshop clerk and the fulfilment of young Walter's desire to enter a trade.23 Marlowes, for example, where Harry takes his apprenticeship, is based on Metro-Vickers, an engineering works in Trafford Park. It could be assumed that Sally is partially based on Alice Myles, if only because she was also a mill worker. Walter, however, says only that she was "an amalgam of many of the mill and factory girls of my acquaintance, all of whom had to battle with the conditions of the time".24 Mr. Hardcastle may well incorporate aspects of Alice Myles' father, a worker who had been on and off the dole for several years. According to a 1935 article, Mr Myles had been 'Means Tested' and it was decided that his children were to support him.25 Larry Meath has much in common with James Moleyns, a character in the autobiography. He is also said to be based upon a vigorous local activist called

edition of the novel published by Bodley Head. Salford Local History Library holds both letters and the author's notes.

22. News Chronicle, June, 1933.
23. The negative consequences of this action are discussed with hindsight and a Socialist interpretation. Harry is laid off as soon as his apprenticeship is finished, having learned very little. Marlowes is unwilling to pay him a full wage after seven years of him "performing men's work but only being paid boys' wages". - Love on the Dole, p. 91. See also p. 47 for the apprenticeship 'graft'. As a further comment on the scam Greenwood writes, "what they've really served their apprenticeship to ... is able-bodied pauperdom at twenty-one years of age" - "On the Dole" in The Spectator, 17th July, 1936.
Larry Finley, a man Greenwood met through Ashfield Labour Club.26 His organisation of Salford working-class struggle included the position of shop steward in the Amalgamated Engineering Union.27 However, according to friends, Meath is a somewhat flawed representation of Finley, lacking a number of his qualities.28 When Larry's character is fully examined, the basis for his creation is primarily the author himself.

One of the criticisms directed at *Love on the Dole* is the lack of a plot resolution. The ending is manipulated by factors of chance, bypassing a significant political conclusion to the novel. Sally's beauty becomes her means for escape and Larry's death can be seen to symbolise the futility of Labour activism.29 As he dies partly due to injuries sustained at the 1931 Means Test march, the novel's only depiction of political struggle, the implication is of "the apparent destruction of any hope for change".30 The account of Hanky Park's poverty is as graphic as it is bleak, "leav(ing) the necessity for political change in no doubt".31 Poignantly illustrating this is Jack Lindsay, Harry's long-term unemployed friend, "an anonymous unit of an army of three millions for whom there was no tomorrow".32 The inclusion of the quote from James Russell Lowell below the inner title of the work - "the Time is ripe, and rotten ripe for change; then let it come ..." implies that a recipe for change is

included amongst the pages of the novel. Yet the book does not put forward any solutions to the problems it exposes; it merely relies upon outside intervention in order to rectify the plight of the Hardcastles. This is surprising considering both Greenwood’s previous political activity and the declaration confirming this to the press at the time the novel was published: "I am an enthusiastic member of the Labour Party in Salford."

Love on the Dole was greeted with a fanfare of public acclaim. The fame it created for its author strongly assisted in his election as a Salford City Labour councillor to the ward of St Mathias in November of 1934. This was one of the poorest, darkest areas of Salford, with many houses lacking a number of the most basic amenities. He was unsuccessful in his first contested election of the previous year even though the novel was held in high regard by the local Labour movement. Although it was a three-year term, by 1937 Greenwood’s address was Walton-on-Thames, Surrey and he decreased his committee attendance from three in 1934 to only one in his final year. It is highly likely that he found the role of a Labour councillor in a Conservative majority a frustrating experience. As the Salford City Reporter wrote, somewhat facetiously, "it wasn't really his scene". The reduction in Council involvement conflicts with the notion

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33. The failure to "proffer any radical alternative" is the reason why it was not included in a discussion of socialist fiction in Britain - David Smith, Socialist Propaganda in the Twentieth-Century British Novel, (London, 1978), p. 2.
35. Manchester Evening News - (just prior to publication of Love on the Dole, further details unknown, Walter Greenwood newspaper clippings, vol. 1).
37. For instance, in 1929, of the 950 houses in the district, 129 houses had to share a water closet, 33 houses had no sink, and 28 houses had boilers which were unfit for use - E. and R. Frow, The Battle of Bexley Square, p. 6.
39. Greenwood’s time as councillor coincided with the Alice Myles court case and subsequent marriage to Pearl Osgood, perhaps suggesting another reason for his move out of the area.
that the novel was first created as "propaganda for the Salford Labour Party". The political element of the work was obviously reduced during the redrafting process as by the time the play was written, Greenwood was urging Gow that "anything that smacks of propaganda cut it out".

The portrayal of Larry aptly expresses Walter's ambiguous commitment to socialism. As an activist, Larry is unusually isolated, one of a kind; there are few references to his interaction with other politically motivated characters in Hanky Park or to the socialist movement in general. It has been noted that "Larry 'proves' that the working-class militant is exceptional". Indeed, the very fact that Larry is described as atypical puts forward the idea that socialism is unattainable for most people in the slums: "his quality of studiousness and reserve elevated him to a plane beyond that of ordinary folk". Larry shares much in common with Robert Tressell's Frank Owen, "the typical autodidact who puts his education at the service of his class". Both are removed from the majority of the working class by their standardised speech patterns and by their audiences' identical lack of comprehension when the two attempt to explain socialism.

The majority of the slum-dwellers do not ascribe to Labour politics. Confirming this Mrs. Bull declares "Tain't no use talkin' socialism to folk. 'Twon't come in our time...". It is important to stress that left-wing politics was not such an anathema in the eyes of Salford's working class. For example,

41. *News Chronicle*, June, 1933.
42. Walter Greenwood in a letter to Ronald Gow, 14th January, 1934.
47. It is worth noting that Greenwood even has Larry reviving Frank's money trick in "Dirty Work at the Crossroads" - *Love on the Dole*, p. 180.
in the municipal elections of 1932, Salford registered a strong fourteen percent swing towards Labour. \(^{49}\) Perhaps Greenwood's ambivalence towards the depiction of Labour activity reflects his own experience whilst campaigning during the 1920's. By outlining the disillusioning distance between the activist and most working-class people, he is drawing attention to "one of the principal contemporary obstacles to the development of support for Labour". \(^{50}\) However, there is little regard for this view from Edmund Frow, a well respected and highly dedicated fighter for many years in the politics of Salford's Left. He remembers the author as "an observer not a participant". \(^{51}\) Frow criticises Greenwood for "distanc(ing) (himself) from the workers (he) portrayed so graphically"\(^{52}\), and his inability see them as a "world historical force"\(^{53}\) capable of creating change. Frow's opinion is certainly not refuted by disclosures that Greenwood made in 1938:

I do not believe that there are classes of mankind; types, yes, but classes, no. There are economic divisions true enough, but money or lack of it never yet nor ever can make or unmake a lady or a gentleman.\(^{54}\)

These comments have a direct bearing on the novel. The presence of distinctly middle-class ideals throughout Love on the Dole has been well-documented. It has been convincingly argued that the 1933 work "touched middle-class susceptibilities" by describing the erosion of the Hardcastles' respectability. \(^{55}\) Walter highlighted the

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difficulty of upholding such standards when the family is rendered helpless by the events of the time. The novel is a non-threatening evocation of the plight of the unemployed. The crucial political scene is the 1931 Means Test demonstration. Although it is credited with being an accurate depiction of the events which took place in Bexley Square in Salford on the 1st of October, the scene is not followed up in terms of the consequences for those who were struck off the dole. Thus Love on the Dole does not cause the middle-class audience undue worry about working-class radicalism. It is this aspect which has received the most thorough criticism from modern scholarship.

The book does not challenge the status quo. It does not question the "form of the bourgeois novel, nor its underlying ideology". The language style has come under attack - the "narrative fairly creaks with Edwardian gentility" and it is true that some of Greenwood's high-flowing descriptions are reminiscent of Dickens at his most mediocre. Overall, the criticism is a little severe, especially in the light of Greenwood's dedicated attempts at self-education; after all, what sort of guidance would a young man living in the slums have except to read the more traditionally accepted 'classics' of literature? The lack of access to a wider variety of fiction was bound to affect his literary style as he had a limited example of material to follow. However, there are examples of unwieldy images, needless repetition and self-conscious 'wordiness'. Some of the characterisation borders on caricature - Ned Narkey and Sam Grundy are the scurrilous villains - revealing Greenwood's tendency towards melodrama. The portrayal of Larry and Sally has been undermined by the "constant strain of romantic fiction which confuses and mystifies the nature of personal relations" as they occasionally sink to the level of romantic hero and heroine. However, none of this should come as a great surprise if the writing is regarded from within the context of

56. Snee, op.cit., p. 171.
Walter Greenwood's life. The influence of Mrs Greenwood is unmistakable when, in his autobiography, Walter referred to a "nagging, permanently dissatisfied and demanding gentleman" living within him. He absorbed the literary traditions of his mother and shared the duality of her attitude towards Labour politics. Whilst she was "striving towards the lower reaches of the middle class", he was experiencing the results of a "division created by his life having always been conducted on the fringes of working-class existence". Hence while Love on the Dole was written from within a working-class community, featuring the hardships of working-class life, it was not written for the working class.

Contemporary local and national opinions of Love on the Dole differ greatly. Gow remarked that "a distinguished member of the establishment" advised the members of parliament to see the play and Ethel Mannin proclaimed that it would "shock smug, fashionable, comfortably off, middle-class London into a realisation of what the industrial North is really like". Other middle-class intellectuals showered Greenwood with support: Naomi Mitchison declared the work was "torn (so) painfully out of his immediate experience that nothing else could equal it". The play was instrumental in attracting nation-wide attention to the book as, by 1936, it was estimated that one million people had been to a performance. While the British newspapers praised the novel with accolades such as "this is an impressive, a deeply moving book", "painfully

59. There Was a Time, p. 176.
61. Ronald Gow, "Looking Back", (further details of article unknown, ), April, 1980. (photocopy from Dr. S. Constantine).
62. As cited in Croft, op.cit., p. 108.
63. Naomi Mitchison, op.cit.
64. Herald Tribune, 23rd of February, 1936.
65. The Spectator, 1933 as cited in Croft, op.cit., p. 108.
convincing"66, labelling it as a "social document"67 Salford, however, remained unimpressed.

The novel was known as a solo effort and this was substantiated by the author. Only one newspaper said anything to the contrary and, interestingly enough, it was the Salford City Reporter: in 1929 the City Reporter "described how a young man, encouraged by James Openshaw, - later to be mayor of the city - the secretary of the West Salford Labour Party, and the Reverend S. Proudfoot, the vicar at St. Thomas', Pendleton, was working on his first book - to become famous as Love on the Dole".68 Just how much of a role they played in the creation of the work is unknown although Greenwood is remembered attending the Reverend's talks on socialism.69 However, the connection, once established, was enough to cast doubt upon the originality of the novel in the eyes of the locals. One Salford view was that "...it was a Catholic priest that took it and typed it and knocked it into shape"70, implying that Greenwood should not take all the credit for authorship of the book71.

The negative reaction to Love on the Dole in Salford says a great deal about the area's opinion of the writer. He was painted somewhat over candidly as a "thin, weedy, nondescript sort of lad"72 when he first began attracting attention in Salford. Amongst Greenwood's contemporaries, few had a favourable word to say about him. One response was that "the mud from that book would have stuck on any area he cared to name, and it has passed on to generation

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70. Presumably meaning Samuel Proudfoot - from an oral interview and idea as cited in Davies, "From Love on the Dole", p. 8 & 10
71. "Some people even credit (Proudfoot) with co-writing Love on the Dole with Walter Greenwood" - Flynn, op.cit., p. 15.
after generation", while another was to call the writer a "jumped-up rent collector who made a few bob out of calling Salford and then cleared off...". These harsh words reflect the discomfort felt by many Salford folk at his glaringly open portrayal of poverty and slum life. Greenwood was seen to have discredited Salford and its people, ignoring the community's sense of propriety by exposing the area to the eyes of the nation. Referring to the presentation of Hanky Park's populace, one reaction defensively stated that "they wasn't what he said they were". A further comment was that Greenwood "made money out of misery": Walter himself was well aware of the irony in making money by writing of poverty and unemployment.

A final accusation directed at the writer is somewhat misleading. "Walter Greenwood, like many more famous people who 'make it', tend to forget their humble roots" declared one Salford woman, angry that he had continually urged her to leave the area if she wanted to become a successful writer. He certainly did not forget area as he stated "Salford and Manchester are packed with material, and I intend to make the fullest use of it". Greenwood's subsequent writing shows that he did just that. Even in his old age he rang the offices of the Salford City Reporter to confirm details such as "can you still hear the factory whistles from Trafford Park?". Greenwood's 1974 review of F.C. Ball's biography of Robert Tressell, author of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, reveals all too well that the Salford man had not forgotten his roots. He spends almost the entire article discussing the poverty of his childhood and life in the slums with almost no reference to the book he was supposedly reviewing! The only reference to Tressell is that

74. Davies, "From Love on the Dole", pp. 6-11.
75. Gow, "Looking Back", *op.cit.*
77. *News Chronicle*, June, 1933.
Greenwood's Labour Club sold his book both at meetings and
door to door.79

Greenwood never really achieved the same level of
success after *Love on the Dole*. The eagerly awaited second
novel, *His Worship the Mayor*, was met with a variety of
responses from critics. Drawing upon Walter's experience of
Salford politics, the book details the life of Edgar Hargraves, a
small shopkeeper who, by a series of fortunate occurrences,
becomes Lord Mayor of the Two Cities. It is a much more
politically oriented book than *Love on the Dole*, presenting a
critical appraisal of life in the area in a way that his first
novel does not do. *His Worship the Mayor* details the petty
jealousies and the upwardly mobile, ingratiating but
inherently self-serving attitudes of the Hargraves. Written in
a highly satirical style, the work depicts their social
'superiors' in a most unflattering light; they are grasping,
greedy, arrogant and amoral.

The novel has a parallel plot. Coinciding with the rise of
the Hargraves is the plight of the Shuttleworths, a family
debilitated by poverty, obvious victims of the inequalities
endemic to society. The two stories are told simultaneously,
as the lives of the two families are interwoven, emphasising
the gulf between them. While Edgar Hargraves buys his way
up the social and political ladder, the Shuttleworths, like
other poor, working-class families, struggle merely to
provide food for their table. Mrs. Evans, the forthright,
outspoken neighbourhood friend and defender of the family,
summarises the situation best with "It's nowt but work and
worry and seein' nowt for it when all's said an' done."80 The
statement confirms that *His Worship the Mayor* provides a
strong, supportive, sympathetic authorial voice for the
poverty-stricken, working-class characters. They are allowed
a certain dignity that only the Hardcastles seem to possess in
*Love on the Dole*. The chapter detailing Joe Shuttleworth's

79. Walter Greenwood, "Prophet of Poverty", *the Sunday Times*, 3rd
February, 1974.
application and interview for Poor Relief is powerfully written. Joe, one of the long-term unemployed, is completely powerless in the face of the cold, hard wall of the Public Assistance Committee as they deny him any financial support.\footnote{ibid., pp. 181-88.} The graphic illustration of the dehumanising process of applying for poor relief suggests that Walter had more than a passing knowledge of the situation.

Greenwood draws upon his experiences of other areas of Salford life. For instance, \textit{His Worship the Mayor} accurately depicts Salford's inter-party animosity. Hargraves stands for election for the position of a Conservative councillor and his opinions of the Labour candidate, Hardman, are distinctly hostile. Hardman's election speech is described by Hargraves as "impertinent and insulting" as it details the corruption and mismanagement of city affairs by the blue-ribboned council majority:

To keep the rates down the Progressives have increased municipal debt, drained sinking funds, discharged staff, overcrowded the hospitals, slept patients on the floor in the name of economy, and set up a Means Test for the hungry school child. Down with the baby-starvers.\footnote{ibid., pp. 154-5.}

Sadly, Hardman eventually falls victim to the machinations of council politics which effectively silences his criticisms. The event strengthens the view that Greenwood himself was increasingly disillusioned by the existing political process. Jack Shuttleworth, despairing of change, perhaps reflects the writer's own thoughts with "it was sometimes exhausting to think about...; and all thoughts led to the blank wall of impotency. It made him feel old".\footnote{ibid., p. 212.} Hence it is the second Greenwood novel to be aware of the injustices of society but incapable of putting forward any solutions to rectify its
problems. It does, however, challenge the existing structures of society which prevent "the denial of an adequate home or marriage"\textsuperscript{84} for impoverished families such as the Shuttleworths.

Reactions to \textit{His Worship the Mayor} were cautious. The villains of the novel are undoubtably the middle-class power brokers and they are attacked relentlessly throughout as "soulless oppressors of the poor".\textsuperscript{85} The one character who escapes a satirical lynching is Richardson, the young curate, who takes a genuine interest in the hardships of his parishioners but he plays a limited role in the book. It seems the portrayal of the middle class as "personifying the enemy of the working class and the cause of their distress"\textsuperscript{86} had an impact upon how the work was received in some quarters. While the \textit{T.L.S.} deemed that the "very violence of his indignation ... defeats its own aim"\textsuperscript{87}, questioning the 'fairness' some of the observations, another critic declares it to be a "courageous novel; it is written with humour and sympathy, from love and not from hatred".\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Left Review} believed that the most glaring omission was "the complete absence of any suggestion of a solution to the state of vulgar bigotry and exploitation on the one hand and of unrelieved misery and want on the other".\textsuperscript{89} \textit{The New Nation}, in contrast, proclaims that "we should be proud ... that (the work) comes from a man in the forefront of our own movement".\textsuperscript{90} The comments from the well respected novelist, Graham Greene, were the most enthusiastic. He praised the work for the sense of place that it created, congratulating Greenwood for his unequalled ability to find "inspiration in a particular locality".\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{84} Laing, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Constantine, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 237.
\item \textsuperscript{86} \textit{ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{87} \textit{Times Literary Supplement}, 20th September, 1934.
\item \textsuperscript{88} From the Walter Greenwood archives; newspaper cuttings, vol. I
\item \textsuperscript{89} \textit{Left Review}, No 2, November, 1934, Vol 1, p. 46.
\item \textsuperscript{90} S.E.R. Wynne, \textit{The New Nation}, October, 1934, p. 113.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Graham Greene, \textit{The Spectator}, 21st September, 1934, p. 412.
\end{itemize}
The years in between Greenwood's second and third novel involved a great deal of change for the author. During the intervening time, he had transposed himself from Salford councillor to a married London resident. Never-the-less, the subject of the 1937 novel, *The Secret Kingdom*, remained firmly centred in Salford. It retells the lives of the Byron family, an oddity in the poor, working-class neighbourhood for their 'gentle manners', learning and different dress standards. Greenwood's mother is thinly disguised as the main character, Paula Byron. There is no doubt that the likeness is intentional as the book is dedicated to "Elizabeth M. Greenwood, with gratitude and devotion". In her early thirties, Paula is the eldest of the three Byron daughters, and is a mill worker with an interest in literature and opera. Paula marries Robert Treville, a barber with an excellent singing voice who also has a predilection for alcohol which he strives hard to contain. He is, without a doubt, closely based on Greenwood's own father. Other details are taken from the lives of his parents. For instance, Paula's father, William, a skilled craftsman, is also well-read, and a trade union supporter, and she shares his commitment to the Labour movement. Thus the novel is another unshakeable example of Greenwood's use of stories from his experience to provide material for his writing: it becomes a form of family biography.

*The Secret Kingdom* also encompasses the story of the next generation. Paula and Bert have two children - Lance and Patricia - and the struggles of raising a family and making ends meet are a constant stress. When they re-establish the shop in another area for the sake of Bert's health it is another reminder of Greenwood's own childhood. The family's relocation to the more genteel region represents Paula's longing for middle-class respectability and it also removes Bert from the influence of alcohol-consuming friends. It is perhaps a strong indication of Mrs. Greenwood's other reasons for moving out of Hanky Park. Lance is a version of the young Greenwood: he is pale, thin and very responsive to his mother's aspirations. Lance follows the path
that Walter's mother had dreamed of for her son - he becomes a piano virtuoso. After being sacked from an office job he spends time on the dole and his reaction is identical to Greenwood's own; "it really was a delightful experience to be freed from the interruption of the office, to have the whole day to devote to the piano".\textsuperscript{92} He eventually manages to escape the poverty of the slums through his musical talent.

The novel considers a number of issues which affected Salford people at the turn of the century. These include socialism, the role of women in society, poverty, unemployment, and the mechanisation of the workplace. Again, however, the greatest criticism is to be directed at the plot: there is no appearance of any solution to the many disadvantages of working-class life. William, like Larry Meath, embodies the political beliefs of the author but both "die in a mood of disappointment, frustration, and hopelessness".\textsuperscript{93} Internal monologue is an important feature of the book as Greenwood employs it to explore the characters' hopes and fears. The language shows a progression in both style and sophistication from \textit{Love on the Dole} - for example - there is little of the clumsy repetition or awkward phraseology of the first novel. The biggest similarity between the two works is the reappearance of middle-class values which pervade \textit{The Secret Kingdom}, and in the novel, Greenwood presents an "uncritical acceptance of (middle-class) culture". Thus he is "attempting to write a record of working-class events with a sensibility and linguistic consciousness which has accepted lower middle-class values as its norms".\textsuperscript{94} However, the \textit{Guardian} was unaffected by this opinion and deemed it to be a "deeply moving" work whilst another critic believed it was "disappointing as a novel (but) has ... a sociological value as a picture of the insecurities that haunt life on the poverty line".\textsuperscript{95} The \textit{Spectator} stated that "Mr. Greenwood writes with

\textsuperscript{93} Johnson, "The Politics of the Novel", p. 183.
\textsuperscript{94} ibid., p. 182.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Time and Tide}, 4th June, 1938.
a vivid clarity; a gesture, a turn of speech, a cough, and the whole man lives". 96 These thoughts provide another dimension to the earlier comments of Graham Greene: Walter does not only provide a complete picture of a district, he also reveals many of the people who live within it.

The remainder of the thirties saw Greenwood concerned with a number of projects. Two of them are particularly important; the writing of How the Other Man Lives for the Labour Book Service in 1939 and his involvement with the organising of the film of Love on the Dole which was eventually released in 1941. The two undertakings are related. Both were vehicles of support for the Labour Party97 and were also part of the thirties' fascination for 'reporting things as they really are'.

Documentary-style writing was very popular throughout the decade. 98 How the Other Man Lives, influenced by this style, is filled with "reportage ... of the ordinary world of people ... the world of work, the world of everyday economic struggle". 99 The novel is a series of portraits of working people, thirty-seven in all, detailing their various occupations. Greenwood provides information about a clerk, a down-and-out, a steel worker, a housewife and, not surprisingly, a Labour Party agent. Walter, as a "professional writer ... (an) investigative narrator"100, was an outside element and had become part of the middle-class movement of documenting the lives of the working class for the enlightenment of middle-class Britain. However genuine his motives were for the creation of the novel, he was more removed from the people he was writing about than he had

96. Other reviews printed on the back cover of the novel.
97. The aim of the Labour Book Service was "to supply outstanding books of all kinds at remarkably cheap rates to Labour supporters and sympathisers" - "Labour's Own Book Service", Milgate Monthly, April, 1939.
98. It led into a more structured set of theories developed by Mass Observation, an influential trend which was introduced in the summer of 1937. See Croft, op.cit., pp. 243-267, and Laing, op.cit.
99. Ibid., p. 145.
100. Croft, op.cit., p. 245.
ever been before. In the foreword of the book, Greenwood outlines his aim - "the primary requisite of those who wish to change the present face of humanity is to know something about their fellow men and women", and thus his modest ambition is to "arouse interest ... in that direction". He had more success in achieving this goal with the film of *Love on the Dole*.

*Love on the Dole* took almost ten years to appear in the cinemas. The journey from book to film was dogged by the British Board of Film Censors who deemed it to be "a very sordid story in very sordid surroundings ... There is too much of the tragic and sordid side of poverty". John Baxter, who directed the film, maintained a strong allegiance to the original story. He used the poverty, an element of the story the censors most deplored, as the basis for adapting elements of the film into propaganda for the Labour Party. The last third of the film is peppered with such phrases as "we need a little effort from everybody, a new start, that's all, a new start". The final scene closes on a distinctly political message. As the camera rises above the black smoke of Salford, a quote from Labour M.P., A.V. Alexander is displayed, promising the reward of a New Britain for the working men and women so that "never again

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102. It is interesting to note that *His Worship the Mayor* was considered for filming before the more famous novel. It was to be produced at Ealing Studios by Ralph Keane but there is no further knowledge of its actual existence. *Evening Chronicle*, 24th March, 1939.
104. It is somehow ironic that it was Baxter not Greenwood who used *Love on the Dole* as Labour propaganda, especially in the light of the latter's comments to Gow when he was engaged in the writing of the play. The setting up of Walter Greenwood Productions in relation to the making of the film also rekindled the on-going dispute between the two over authorship of the play. See Gow's letter to Constantine, 23rd March, 1984.
105. From the film of *Love on the Dole*, housed in the British Film Institute, copy obtained for the library of the University of Western Australia, 1992.
must the unemployed be the forgotten men of the peace".\textsuperscript{106} The film was praised for the direction of the actors as Baxter had apparently achieved "what documentary directors have been trying (to do) for years".\textsuperscript{107} It seems this particular piece of cinema was what reportage-writing attempted to emulate as its goal was to be "the literary equivalent of the documentary film".\textsuperscript{108} The fact that the film was finally made and resulted in a positive reception proved, without a doubt, that Greenwood had "succeeded in penetrating (the) Southern consciousness".\textsuperscript{109}

Walter's writing was the product of his experience. He was able to draw "inspiration very directly from his native community"\textsuperscript{110} and his talent was primarily utilised by the author to alter his life.\textsuperscript{111} Writing about what he knew best thus proved to be highly successful for Greenwood. However, this direction did nothing to rectify the main problem inherent in his work. As he presents the Salford situation of deprivation without a plausible resolution, the "political impasse" he creates sees Walter unable to solve "the problem he has posed his characters of finding some way of rising above the limitations and constraints imposed by a working-class life".\textsuperscript{112} Edmund Frow, the continually active Communist leader, criticised Greenwood for his inability to see past the view of the individual and of the short term. Frow remembers Walter attending meetings, notebook in hand, content to capture the scenes for the page: in the classic Marxist sense he "never grasp(ed) the truth that it is not enough to interpret the world, the point, however, is to change it".\textsuperscript{113} Although Greenwood's socialism did not

\textsuperscript{106} ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{107} Documentary News Letter, May, 1941. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Laing, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 144. \\
\textsuperscript{109} Constantine, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 243. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Davies, "From Love on the Dole", p. 10. \\
\textsuperscript{111} It is interesting to note that although in the short term Greenwood moved to London, a substantial distance from the community of his youth, in his later years he lived on the Isle of Man, not very far from Salford. \\
\textsuperscript{112} Johnson, "Politics and the Novel", p. 183. \\
\textsuperscript{113} E. and R. Frow, "Walter Greenwood", p. 56.
survive the weight of the slum's restrictions fully intact, it is easy to understand that "in the face of the grim and unending struggle of everyday life, the prospect of radical change seemed a long way distant". Walter did, however, create *Love on the Dole* as a contemporary portrait of poverty for many people who were completely ignorant of the hardships of the working class. He focussed wider attention on the problems of the area by providing a receptive population with essential information. One belief was that the novel "should do more to stir the public conscience about the evils of the slums than any number of technical treatises on housing and unemployment". Hence *Love on the Dole* is one of the three most famous and enduring representations of the Depression sixty years on. Together with the Jarrow march of 1936 and the photograph of the shabby, unemployed man, leaning against a wall at the corner of the street, it stands as a reminder, as a needle to prick the social conscience of a nation.

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Edmund Frow once remarked that Walter Greenwood and Lewis Jones were as different as 'chalk and cheese'. The comment, coming from a man who knew Greenwood and was an active Communist contemporary of Jones, stimulates a useful line of argument. The description refers to several characteristics of the two authors which deserve closer scrutiny and provides a valuable basis for comparison. Although they spent their formative years in what would generally be considered similar circumstances - within a distinctive working-class community which was forced to endure poverty, adversity and to maintain a constant struggle for change - the outcome of their lives was very different. Jones died in a Cardiff lodgings' room in 1939, physically exhausted, after having frenetically campaigned throughout the previous weeks in an effort to boost support for the Spanish Civil War. He had suffered from heart problems for a number of years, had not worked full-time since the General Strike of 1926, and was as poor as the people for whom he had been fighting all of his life. Walter Greenwood was found dead on the 11th of September 1974, coincidentally also a victim of heart failure. He had lived alone for many years in a comfortable house on the Isle of Man, periodically writing but no longer able to capture the public attention through his work as he had when he was young. Hence Frow's evaluation of Greenwood and Jones is as apt as it is thought provoking, especially when it is regarded

in reference to their achievements. The divergent directions of the two men's lives are best represented by the work they produced in the 1930s; it is here that their disparate responses to their accumulated experiences are most effectively exposed.

One method of developing an investigation and comparative analysis of the authors is to focus on particular aspects of their writing. The aim is to examine four key themes, chosen for their ability to anchor the discussion to a firm, comparative foundation. Looking at specific areas of the writers' portrayals of the Depression years provides a foothold in the process of comprehending the effect their experiences had on their perspectives of the world. Isolating certain recurrent issues in order to undertake an examination which stresses difference was a straightforward task. It was necessary to provide the exploration with a reasonable cross-section of material with which to analyse the writers' works, and the themes selected are also interconnecting. They are as follows: the political intent of the writing, the presentation of unemployment, their attitude towards their subject (the people of the novels), and the portrayal of the role of women. These concerns provide a structure for contrasting the approaches of the two authors. The discussion is then expanded by a consideration of the writers' depictions of a comparable event in the history of the inter-war era. It is here, in the minute analyses, that the four issues can be explored closely in an attempt to explain the dissimilar perspectives of the writers. The first thematic concern is the political aim of the two novelists.

An exploration of the political intent of the Salford man's work accentuates a number of irregularities. When considering Walter Greenwood's creative output during the 1930s, the Means Test demonstration in *Love on the Dole* is the sole account of political struggle. The author himself did not participate in the General Strike as he obeyed the ruling of his current employer, a wholesale retailing company which forbade any activity of that nature, and there is no
account of the events of 1926 in *Love on the Dole*. Hence the demonstration chapter acquires a greater significance. The lack of collective action in Greenwood's novels reveals an anomaly in his political attitude. While the two Labour advocates - William Byron from *A Secret Kingdom* and *Love on the Dole*’s Larry Meath - promote union activity and urge the working class to organise, Greenwood does not depict the working class engaging in any form of political struggle in order to support these beliefs. This is at odds with the actual history of the area. Salford, as has been shown, had a dedicated and consistent thread of labour activity running through its history. For instance, it was Salford which saw the ramifications of Tom Mann's endorsement of the 'Don't Shoot' pamphlet in 1912 for which he was arrested. Therefore Greenwood had ample material from which to draw upon especially as his own grandfather was involved in the great transport workers' strike of 1911.

There is a half-heartedness in Greenwood's depiction of Left politics. The Labour activists are often dispirited and disillusioned after years of fighting unsuccessfully for improvements in the lives and employment conditions of the working class. They are presented as isolated individuals who operate without the aid of like-minded supporters. The Labour candidate for the council elections in *His Worship the Mayor* is bought off by the corrupt Conservative incumbents and the only other character with any Leftist leanings, and a member of an unnamed trade union, Jack Shuttleworth, is so frustrated with the status quo that he is unable to act. These portrayals, and the lack of a supportive presentation of

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2. Metro-Vickers, the engineering firm which is the basis for Marlowes, had a pro-managerial Works Committee, whose duty should have been to organise supportive Strike action amongst the workers. However, it made "strenuous and successful efforts to keep the works going", and perhaps the lack of action was a reason why the Strike is not referred to in the novel. See Edmund and Ruth Frow, *Manchester's Big House in Trafford Park: Class Conflict and Collaboration at Metro-Vicks*, (Working Class Movement Library, 1983), p. 3.

collective struggle, tend not to sit comfortably alongside Greenwood's claims to be an "enthusiastic member of the Salford Labour Party". Though his maternal grandfather was a vigorous campaigner in the early Labour movement, his final years, broken and defeated, must have left an indelible mark on the young boy. The circumstances of the old man's death were hardly the encouragement needed for a life of sustained activism. Another factor in Greenwood's ambivalent attitude towards the role that Labour ideology was to play in his life was his mother. She, it must be remembered, disclosed a singularly confusing mixture of beliefs. Whilst confirming her adherence to the principles of the Labour Party, Mrs. Greenwood also instilled in her children a more individualistic policy of self-achievement. With Walter, the latter influence eventually proved more insistent. In time, as is shown earlier in the discussion, Greenwood grew more and more interested in his own writing career as a means to solve his difficulties and so political activity became very much a secondary concern. The results of his final choice of direction are communicated through his work.

As a Communist, Jones had no such break in his political perspective. He formed his ideological approach to life in his early years as a young member of the Cambrian Lodge. It was more as a result of the common feeling within his community that his politics developed as they did than as a response to familial or individual influences. As a consequence, Jones' beliefs were supported by a substantial number of his fellow Valley dwellers during his years of militancy. The sustaining power of the people is clearly acknowledged in We Live's mass march where the decisions of both Len and Mary are upheld and followed through by their co-protesters. Jones did not appear to have any doubts about his commitment to Communism. Even though he periodically flouted the rigid structures of the Party, he regarded it as the most effective means of achieving the

4. There Was a Time, pp. 58, 65 and 70.
changes to the people's existence that he deemed essential. All of his writing reflects the intensity of his political faith, and nowhere is it more apparent than in the mass demonstrations of *We Live*. His surety of purpose drove Jones somewhat obsessively beyond the point of normal physical endurance. On the day of his death, he finally squeezed one meeting too many into an already daunting schedule of activity. Jones died, as Len does fighting in the Spanish Civil War, for the political commitment he maintained whilst alive. Indeed, the letter of encouragement that Len sends to Mary at the end of the novel evokes the spirit of Jones' perspective as a Communist - "whatever happens to me you will carry on building the Party, drawing our masses into unity that will save Cwmardy for the people".5 Nobody except a fellow militant could have maintained Jones' focus. The contrast with Greenwood, who suffered from a more shakeable faith in his own politics, and a tendency towards looking after his own interests first and foremost, could not be more extreme.

Briefly, the opposing perspectives of the writers are represented by the conclusions of their books. In Greenwood's work, the plots of both *Love on the Dole* and *The Secret Kingdom* are drawn to a close by the escape of the central characters from their poverty-stricken surroundings. The former novel, as is well-known, sees the Hardcastle family saved from the eroding effects of unemployment through work obtained by Sally's disillusioned and cynical agreement with Sam Grundy. Her choice is echoed by Violet, Paula's second sister in *The Secret Kingdom*, who becomes the mistress of a wealthy business man she meets whilst waitressing. Paula is 'rescued' from slum life by the musical success of Lance, in much the same way that Greenwood's own mother benefited from Walter's literary achievements. Neither of the novels present any hope for the long-term incumbents of the impoverished areas, though both books acknowledge that the escaping characters are leaving behind

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people for whom these options are far out of reach. The ending of *His Worship the Mayor* is probably the most depressing of all. The last scene closes on a shopkeeper with socially mobile ambitions, (an imitation of the former Mr. Hargraves), being snubbed by His Worship the Mayor. The insinuation is that there are plenty of people who wish to step into the shoes left discarded by Hargraves as he buys his way into his mayorship. Many are willing to follow his acquisitive path. Meanwhile, the Shuttleworth family are in mourning for Joe, another victim of the battle for survival, and desperately in need of the tiny sum that his death brings. Jack's last, bitter words echo the dominant feeling of the novel - "we're nowt but bloody playthings for them what's ne'er done an honest day's work in their lives". The contrast in plot resolution with Lewis Jones' writing could not be more explicit.

There is an inherent difference in the closures of Jones' two works. *Cwmardy* reveals the deepening of Len's political consciousness as he walks down the mountain side in the final scene. The foreshadowing of an ideological divergence with Ezra, Len's mentor, is imminent as the young man's beliefs become more established and the connection between Len and Mary grows markedly closer. Len's closing statement pre-empts the continuation of the novel's major themes which reach their full potential in *We Live* - "... if our people have the power to win strikes even against bullets and batons they have the power to do away with their poverty, to put an end to the struggle and begin to live clean, healthy lives".7 Jones' posthumous work, *We Live*, concludes with Mary running after the demonstrations in aid of the Spanish conflict. She has decided to sustain her commitment to the people and the Communist cause, uninterrupted even by the grief she feels upon receiving the news of Len's death in Spain. Len's last words of advice to her are "don't grieve

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6. *His Worship the Mayor*, p. 246.
too much, because belonging to the people, you will always find me" there.  

Walter Greenwood's later work is almost free of the contradiction in political intent. Although beyond the time period being considered, it is interesting to note that, when regarding Greenwood's creative output after 1937, there is a change in emphasis. Politics began to play an ever-decreasing role in his writing. In the preface to *How the Other Man Lives* he writes that he does not believe in classes of people - "there are economic divisions true enough, but money or lack of it never yet nor ever can make or unmake a lady or a gentleman". The statement is telling. It partially reflects the huge changes that had occurred in Greenwood's life in the previous years. He had made enough money from *Love on the Dole* to move to London, to marry a Broadway dancer, to serve as a councillor for the city of Salford and to circulate in very different social circles from those to which he was accustomed. The mere title of *How the Other Man Lives*, implying a distance from the people about whom he wrote and the new target audience for his work - the middle class - stated in no uncertain terms how far removed he was from the area and life which made him who he was. It immediately brings to mind the quote from Gyorgy Lukacs, "when a writer is isolated from the vital struggles of life and from varied experiences generally, all ideological question of his works becomes abstraction". And isolation results in a lack of creativity. Greenwood, it is true, did maintain an inseparable bond with Salford in the form of continually utilising the area as material for his writing but he never again achieved the success of his first novel. Subsequent

works dealt with love, and much of it was laced with 'Northern humour' but he had severed the basic link with working-class life and so many pieces fell flat. It was not until his autobiography was published, a volume loaded with nostalgia, that Greenwood recaptured some of his lost readership. The disparity with Jones in this respect is striking. The Welshman was very unwilling to leave the area he called home even for a matter of weeks. Whilst at the Labour College in London he often returned to South Wales and when he was required to uphold the General Strike in Nottingham he did so reluctantly as he felt, like Len does in We Live that his place was with his people. Jones never lost the vital connection to the area in which he was born, political or otherwise. It is shown both in his writing and in the continuation of his activities in South Wales. As a result of his early death and because of the nature of his political commitment, Jones was never isolated from the battles which formed him: "it was not Marxism which taught him the meaning of class struggle. From childhood he had lived in it and each phase of his life drove home deeper and deeper to him its significance". Therefore his creativity was anchored in the daily fight of the people of South Wales, constantly providing his writing with the necessary energy and input.

The writers' political intent directly influenced their relationship to the subjects of their novels. Jones' biography graphically explains the reasons behind his resolve to fight for improvements in the South Wales area: he was spurred on by the deep and unrelenting regard he held for his fellow Valley inhabitants. Time and again throughout his writing, this sense of caring is revealed in the portrayal of people. Even though the characterisation of Shan and Big Jim tends to be quite clumsy in places, there is the feeling that aspects of them are reflections of people he knew. A number of comrades remember him with paper and pen, jotting down phrases and incidents from the stories of the coalfields,

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which endorses this view. The depiction of some of the individuals in the novels can be awkward but there is a vibrancy in the group descriptions which offsets the otherwise somewhat halting literary skills. The stay-in strike in *We Live* is an excellent example of lively narration. Having been down in the pit for twenty-four hours, the men decide to hold an Eisteddfod to keep their spirits up in the darkness of the mine, and to occupy themselves. The banter which is exchanged and the atmosphere of support and fellow feeling is memorable. The empathy Jones displays in the recounting of the people's conflicts is communicated in their relationship to one another. For instance, as the stay-in strike extends into days, the population above ground, the majority of them women, engage in a pitched battle with police at the pit head in an attempt to send food down to the hungry strikers. The account of their actions is filled with pride and respect as the author exposes the intensity of his feelings for the community he portrays. One of the more poignant episodes of pit life is acted out in *Cwmardy*. The mine death of a recently married worker is relayed with sensitivity as Len breaks the news to his young spouse - "as soon as she saw him her face went white ... She looked slowly from Len to the neighbouring women, then back to him. His coatless form and wild eyes struck her like a physical blow".¹³ It is not hard to imagine Jones himself in the unenviable role of bearer of bad tidings, something he most likely would have done at some stage as an active person in the community.

The most impressive element in Jones' presentation of the population of his novels is their inherent strength. The people are rarely described in terms which would imply weakness or that the author lacked faith in their abilities. The population is both class-conscious and politically aware, projecting the "power of a new sensibility reaching forward into the future".¹⁴ In the concluding episode of *Cwmardy*, Ezra poses the questions "who sunk those pits and mined

¹³. *Cwmardy*, p. 141.
them? Who made those lines into rivers of coal? No one but our people. And what do they get in return? Nothing but poverty, struggle and death".\textsuperscript{15} Ezra's words affirm the findings of the Commission investigating industrial militancy in South Wales during the war years, "the miners are fully conscious of the supreme position which their industry occupies".\textsuperscript{16} The self-awareness reflected by the workers in Jones' writing is explicit in the people's reaction to the disintegration of the General Strike. They decide to fight on, as they did in reality. After several months of strike action, they march to the local council offices shouting "we gave them power. They must give us bread".\textsuperscript{17} The people voted their leaders on to the council in order to protect their general welfare. Sadly, the population are forced to demand more money for 'relief and school feeding', unable to relax in the knowledge that their needs will be cared for. The people of Jones' books make their own decisions and realise that it is they themselves who must continually struggle for any improvements in their lives.

Greenwood did not express such clarity of view in his portrayal of people in his novels. Like his political intent, his attitude towards the characters populating his writing is ill-defined. A highly critical letter, attacking various perceived inconsistencies and errors in \textit{Love on the Dole}, was written to \textit{The Woman Citizen} by a Mrs. Sydney Frankenburg. Walter Greenwood took the trouble to write a detailed reply to a number of the points that she raised including her criticism of his representation of the people of Hanky Park. She wrote "as a midwife who knows the poor from working amongst them for many years, I 'defend' not the slums but their courageous inhabitants from those who describe them all alike as supine and degraded".\textsuperscript{18} Mrs. Frankenburg's remarks

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Cwmardy}, p. 310.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Cited previously, p. 25 of "Struggle or Starve!".
  \item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{We Live}, p. 153.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Response included at the end of Walter Greenwood's letter dated 12th of October, 1933, to the editor of \textit{The Woman Citizen}, 20th November, 1933, p. 9.
\end{itemize}
are somewhat exaggerated. While a number of the author's references to the slum dwellers in *Love on the Dole* are unflattering, he certainly did not refer to everyone in the novel using such blanket terms. Of more note is the way in which the author depicted some characters speaking of their fellow inhabitants. Larry, in particular, is the main offender in this regard. In the scene where he is informed that he has been sacked as a result of his Labour activities, he says to the foreman, "it's driving me barmy to live amongst such idiotic folk. There's no limit to their daftness: won't think for themselves, won't do anything to help themselves ...".19 Hence Greenwood provided a recognisable perspective on the depiction of people in his novels - from that of a frustrated Labour activist - an experience with which he was apparently familiar. For instance, in *His Worship the Mayor*, Jack Shuttleworth, a defender and protector of his family, becomes angry with his fellow inhabitants for not standing up for themselves, constantly "slavin' and sweatin' ", enduring all that slum life throws at them. In abject frustration, he finally groans "one o' these days workin' folk'll drive me right off me rocker",20 and the thoughts of Larry are reiterated.

Mrs. Frankenburg's words ring true for some aspects of Greenwood's writing. A review of *The Road to Wigan Pier* Greenwood completed a few years later seems to support her opinion. He wrote, in what can only be described as a superior tone, "most readers ... are mentally spineless and as soon as they see tables of statistics ... turn the pages to a more agreeable chapter ...".21 The rather elitist stance is a little more filtered in his fictional writing but it is still identifiable. While Greenwood positively portrayed the people fighting to withstand daily adversity on the one hand, he also implicitly condemned them on the other. It was as

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20. *His Worship the Mayor*, p. 246.
though he was not entirely sure what his feelings were towards them - empathy versus annoyance - and the indecision is common to most of his early work. Even though Greenwood was sympathetic to the plight of the slum dwellers, from time-to-time the terms he used to refer to them were quite dismissive. In the letter to the editor he declared that he could not "as a Socialist, resist the opportunity publicly to denounce the calm effrontery of self-appointed, economically-secure apologists of degraded humanity", alluding to his critic, Mrs. Frankenburg. If 'degraded humanity' was specifically used to describe how Walter Greenwood perceived the inhabitants of his community, then it certainly does not leave the impression that he had a great deal of respect for the people with whom he grew up. He objectifies them, occasionally using words which deny them their humanity and the letter is an apt example of that tendency. The phrase 'as a Socialist' surely suggests that he should have avoided a depiction of the people implicit with blame, and not proffered an off-hand and negative image of those around him.

There is no palpable sense of unity amongst the people of Hanky Park. In Love on the Dole they indulge in backbiting and unfavourable neighbourhood gossip as represented by some of the dialogue between Mrs. Nattle and her cronies, an aspect of life well-supported by Robert Roberts' The Classic Slum. Neither is community feeling strongly represented in Greenwood's novels; the people interact with each other, but their lives are usually lived

22. letter to the editor, op.cit.
23. Carole Snee and Roy Johnson both refer to problems associated with Greenwood's writing style. Like a number of working-class authors of the decade, he utilised the popular form of Naturalism in order to present the area and people of his novels. Unfortunately, the style had its flaws. His attempts to "show things as they really are" creates a distance between him and his subject as he tries to regard them with the eye of a scientist (visible especially in the opening scene of Love on the Dole with the passage "the excess in population is kept in check by typhus and other fevers", p. 12) - Snee, op.cit., pp. 175-6 and Johnson, "Politics and the Novel", p. 444.
along individual lines with no real regard for the wider world except when it directly affects them. Roberts' dedicated an entire chapter to the rigid hierarchy of working-class communities and the overall absence of common bonds between the people of Greenwood's writing corroborates this impression. Greenwood exposed the firmly entrenched standards of 'respectability' in *Love on the Dole*, revealing the barriers the concept erected within local society. The values worked in conjunction with the class structure detailed by Roberts, and Greenwood showed them to be flawed beliefs which involved double standards, as is seen in the portrayal of Sally Hardcastle and the means by which she escapes slum-life through the wealth of Sam Grundy. Hence the writer's attitude towards his subject is shrouded by his rejection of the values generally accepted by the working-class community of his youth. It highlights a certain element of the ambivalence in the depiction of people in his novels, stemming perhaps from the distance between himself and his community. Greenwood's adherence to the ideals of socialism would have been responsible for some of the lack of mutualality for, as Roberts declared, "Hyndman Hall, home of the Social Democratic Federation, ... remained for us mysteriously aloof and ... had ... about as much political impact on the neighbourhood as the near-by gasworks".

Jones and Greenwood offered entirely dissimilar perspectives on the presentation of the people of their novels. Greenwood displayed a mystifying array of contradictions in the way he related to the subjects of his writing. He revealed an empathy with the people but confused the matter by condemning the characters for not attempting to solve the difficulties of their environment. However, the most baffling effect of all was that Greenwood did not give the people any power to act: they are portrayed as victims, helpless in the face of corruption - as seen in *His Worship the Mayor* - and unable to defend themselves against circumstances outside of their control - visible in

25. *ibid.*, p. 16.
Love on the Dole. Thus there is no doubt that the underlying attitude towards the subject of his novels was complicated by ambiguity. Again the disparity with Jones is obvious. The Welsh militant allowed the inhabitants of the coalfields their own voice, their own resolve to continue in their activities and a self-respect that few possess in Greenwood’s writings. At the risk of over-simplifying Jones’ position, it was his politics and the deep regard he held for his fellow Valley dwellers which manifests itself throughout his work. Greenwood’s up-bringing, flecked with the conflicting values which he absorbed from an early age, left him at a distinct disadvantage when it came to putting forward a unified attitude to the people he was describing. He was somewhat removed from the other residents of Hanky Park both because he was given a different system of beliefs with which to view the world - one can go so far as to say that his working-class consciousness was flawed - and later by his own efforts to write his way out of the slums. The people of Jones’ fictional world reflect a firm sense of their own identity and their place in the coalfields. An anecdote from a woman who grew up during the inter-war period is a vivid illustration of the pride of the Welsh people. During the prolonged lock-out of miners in 1926, it was the practice to shake the table cloths regardless of whether the family had eaten any food at that particular meal - “in a strike there were no crumbs, but pride”. Such was the attitude of the people that they refused to let others know that they were in dire circumstances, preferring instead to continue with life as they normally would. It is the sort of image which Jones’ stressed in both of his novels - the refusal to give into adversity without a struggle.

26. Greenwood’s desire to leave Salford brings to mind Jones’ review of Tomlinson’s book, entitled “Tory Coal-Miner”. While only Jones’ reaction to the work is available, the similarity between Tomlinson and Greenwood is noticeable. It appears that the two had the same goal - to leave behind their home communities - an aim that Jones criticised in his review without hesitation. See p. 46 of “Struggle or Starve!” for review details.

Greenwood's presentation of unemployment, unlike the other the issues considered, is relatively uncomplicated. It is the component of his work which he related most convincingly of all. He not only depicted the physical effects of being without work, he portrayed the more damaging psychological consequences of unemployment. Even though his own experiences of life on the dole cannot really be described as entirely negative - he stated that he relished the freedom it gave him to pursue his aim of becoming a writer - Greenwood's account of the fate of the unemployed is told with sympathy and feeling. The boredom brought on by days of nothing to do, the emotional turmoil provoked by the inability to provide for the family, and the problem of becoming a financial burden are narrated with compassion throughout Greenwood's work. The decay of mind and body in response to unemployment is exemplified by the gradual erosion of Joe Shuttleworth. He reflects the impact that not having a job has on his pride - "Ay, I don't like keep bein' treated, Judy. Ay, I wish I wus workin' so's I could pay me corner".28 Towards the end of the novel, the devastating effect that worklessness has on his sanity is graphically portrayed. Joe begins carrying his old lunch tin around with him, and although the mine had long since closed, he spends his time waiting at the pit head for the morning shift.29

Joe Shuttleworth is an extreme example of the degradation involved in being without work. Other characters experience the more normal frustration and lowering of self-esteem. Mr. Hardcastle expresses his impotence with "oh, why the devil couldn't they give (me) work?".30 Harry notices that unemployment not only saps his strength but the continual financial constraints prevent him from participating in normal activities. His exclamation of "Ah may as well be in bloody prison"31 encapsulates the feelings of all the unemployed people in Greenwood's

writing. Bert Treville, as a hairdresser, suffers indirectly from the unemployment rife in the community. Bored and anxious in his shop, he "nervously pace(s) the floor. 'Why doesn't someone come in?' he kept asking himself aloud".\textsuperscript{32} Perhaps the saddest depiction of the consequences of unemployment for the ordinary working person is Jack Lindsay. Harry finds him on the street corner, reduced to selling contraceptives and pornographic postcards, almost entirely without hope and with very little self-respect remaining. Their mutual friends are respectively reduced to crime and the army as a way out of the situation common to all of them, once their apprenticeships ended at Marlowes.

Greenwood vividly exposed the overwhelming effects of unemployment on the wider community. As the Depression worsens, he tells of queues growing ever longer at the pawn shop on a Monday morning, weekly payments for the clothing company and rent left unpaid so families could eat and the severe restrictions that being without work placed on normal activities such as marriage and child rearing.\textsuperscript{33} Conditions in the area corroborate Greenwood's account of the hardships of the community. Edmund Frow, whilst conducting a survey on Ellor Street for the Salford branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, formerly Greenwood's address, found that "few houses had furniture because it had been pawned or burned for fuel. Food consisted of bread, margarine and a cup of tea".\textsuperscript{34} Unemployment is shown to be the factor which simply exacerbates the already chronic problems of poverty and adversity in the slum communities. The people are presented as victims of the circumstances they find themselves in, helpless and set upon, without much recourse to action.

\textsuperscript{32} The Secret Kingdom, p. 297.
\textsuperscript{33} Greenwood's own courtship with Alice Myles apparently lasted some seven years before it was broken off. Perhaps this suggests that he too (like Larry) refused to commit himself to marriage whilst his financial situation was unstable. Of course this is merely conjecture.
Jones offered a different perspective of unemployment. He placed less emphasis on detailed descriptions of a community with no work. Instead he focussed his attention on the people's fight to solve the current problems. As a militant Communist, Jones did not regard unemployment in isolation. He saw it as just one element of the wider inequalities of contemporary capitalist society, part of the lot of the working people. Mary communicates it concisely when she states "our poverty and misery is the expression of our class condition, but it is also the foundation of the unity that will sooner or later destroy both".35 Due to company victimisation, Len, in much the same manner as Jones himself, is unable to return to work after the gaol sentence he received for his part in the General Strike. He then takes on the role of advocate for the local unemployed who have no true representation from the Federation. The situation is not easy for Len. Mary realises "how keenly he felt the fact that since their marriage he had been unemployed most of the time".36 As the months turned into a year, Jones draws a vivid picture of Len - "the long unemployment was painting a premature oldness on him, but (his organising) activities prevented his becoming demoralised".37 Len gains a great deal of energy from the part he plays amongst those without work and, in response to his tireless efforts in this capacity, the Party places him in the position of political trainer for the new members. It becomes the "logical outcome of his tremendous influence with the people and prestige in the Party".38 The quote is so applicable to Jones that it resembles remarks made about him by fellow Communists at the time. Though the population endures the hardship that unemployment entails, they are not shown to be daunted by the problem, on the contrary, it engenders their urge to fight. For instance, at the Party meeting directly after the unemployment cuts are first enacted, the people demand "tell us what to do and how to do it, and all of us will be

36. *ibid*.
38. *ibid.*., p. 188.
behind you". And that is exactly what happens. The people follow the Party line which stresses that unified action is the primary tool to rectify the government cuts and to solve the crisis of unemployment.

If Greenwood and Jones differ in their presentations of unemployment, they have one element in common. In Greenwood's books, unemployment does not have an obvious root cause, it merely exists as one of the factors to be endured in slum life - the numbers of unemployed people gradually increase during the course of all three works but no real explanation is given for the phenomenon. He did not directly tie the events of his novels to the wider situation of the 1930s by attributing a specific reason to the problem within the plot structure. Neither, in fact, did Lewis Jones. As stated, Jones saw the issue as part of the fundamental flaw of capitalist society but did not explain the mechanics of the situation. Unemployment was another stage in the cycle of struggle in the coalfields, so the people fight against it as they battle to maintain a minimum wage and consistently demand poor relief. Where they diverge in their depiction of a workless community is in the effect that unemployment has on the people of their novels. While Greenwood concentrated on capturing the more personal results of being 'out o' collar' - the devalued sense of self and the physical decay - Jones dwelt far more on the fight against its consequences - the poverty and the starvation of communities. Again the disparity centres on the thread of politics which runs unbroken throughout the appraisal of the four major concerns.

The treatment of the role of women in the novels is the final theme to be considered. In the process of narrating the events of the Valleys, Jones was able to "expose the ideological ways in which women are perceived". For instance, in Cwmardy, Len attempts to explain to Mary how

39. ibid., p. 228.
40. Snee, op.cit., p. 189.
he sees the portrayal of women by his fellow workers - "the boys in work talk of girls as the owners talk of us ... our men make our women slaves in the house ... my butties talk about women exactly as if they were cattle." He continues with "look at our women today. They are on the picket lines with us, they are in the riots. It is they who give our men the guts to carry on". He expresses a component of coalfields life as women played their part in the daily struggles alongside husbands, fathers and brothers. They also provided an independent voice against the injustices faced by all, and, as Party members, they worked hard to promote the Communist solution within local communities. They often organised separate avenues of protest like, for example, the 1934 Women's Hunger March to London, which left from Ceridwen in South Wales. In Jones' novels the older women are a potent force. For instance, Shan, Len's mother, despite her age, is as vigorous in her activities and defence of her community and husband as the younger women around her. Mary also emphasises the essential role that women take-on in the political activity of the district. When, in We Live, Len demeans the role of Cwmardy's Women's Guild, Mary defends it with "those women do more work in a month than your Party ... do in twelve". The women of the Valley claimed their place in the battles of the inter-war period. Oral reminiscences substantiate the active nature of their role. During incidents of particularly violent strike action, one Valley inhabitant recalled that "women joined in the fray too; they wielded coshes made up of half a brick in a stout stocking", fighting side by side with the picketing miners until the arrival of more police made all such activity impossible. Women also enacted a crucial role in the wider political sphere as well as at the grass roots level. For example, there were several women such as Gladys Evans, Margory Pollitt, and Doris Cox who commanded attention as popular, powerful and eloquent speakers within the

42. We Live, p. 15.
43. Coupland, loc.cit..
Communist Party, making their presence felt in no uncertain terms.

Mary is depicted as Len's partner and comrade in the struggle. As the pivotal female character in Jones' writing, she approaches the Communist beliefs and joins the Party on her own terms during the course of *We Live*. It is Mary not Len that the Party selects to stand as the Communist candidate for the position of county councillor. At the time of her election, as an example of the endorsement given to her by the community, one old woman says "... it is the only chance I have ever had in my life to vote for a woman, my gel". Mary stimulates much political activity and support from the women of the Party as her high profile prompts a sort of female solidarity. This is illustrated at the end of an especially emotive speech given at a weekly meeting - "the applause prevented her from continuing for sometime, the women present clapping vigorously and stamping their feet on the wooden floor". She is Len's superior intellectually and has far more emotional control than he, allowing her to remain logical and focussed on the task at hand - "her adamant loyalty to all Party decisions made her on occasions fear her husband's vehemence when he felt a thing deeply". Len relies on her advice, support and reassurance when he needs to make decisions. It is often Mary who enables him to see problems more rationally when he loses sight of his objectives. He says of her, "I see you in every battle; you are at my side in every action", thus stressing that their relationship exists as an equal partnership and as a compatible ideological co-existence. Upon hearing of Len's death in Spain, Mary makes one of the strongest choices of her life; she is advised to go home and rest but instead she

44. *We Live*, p. 217.
states "I can't come yet; the people's day isn't over and I must be with them till the last, as our Len was".49

Greenwood’s narration of women’s roles in the society of his novels is divided. His female characters vary considerably across the span of his writing. There are five independent and free thinking women who are also definitely the more forceful of Greenwood’s characters. Sally Hardcastle, Mrs. Nattle50 and Mrs. Bull, the area’s midwife, are the strongest personalities in Love on the Dole. Paula Byron is particularly forthright in The Secret Kingdom and, Mrs Evans, of His Worship the Mayor is Greenwood’s most defiant portrayal of all. These characters stand in stark contrast to the likes of Helen Hawkins, and Mrs. Hardcastle, Mrs. Shuttleworth and her prospective daughter-in-law, Meg, who are lightly drawn, rather ineffectual depictions of women, offering little in the way of solid contributions to the forward momentum of their respective novels’ plots. Even Paula’s sisters, Ann and Violet, are distinctly less assertive and self-contained than their sibling, having far more in common with their shadowy, somewhat subservient, genteel mother. The absolute influence of Walter’s mother on the characterisation of Paula is the central explanation for her strength. Paula’s controlling manner and rigid notions of social etiquette echo many of Mrs. Greenwood’s documented personal traits. Paula is the power behind the relationship with Robert Treville, a man subsumed by her iron will, as Walter’s father also seemed to have been. She stands out against the backdrop of her working-class community, refusing to compromise her values and upholding her belief in the importance of literature, opera, music and theatre, despite the distinct lack of support from those around her.

Mrs. Bull and Mrs. Nattle occupy primary positions in Hanky Park. Indeed it can be said of the two women that

49. ibid., p. 333.
50. Mrs. Nattle also plays a dominant role in His Worship the Mayor, one of several characters who cross-over into Greenwood’s second novel.
their assumed duties in the community are vital to the continuation of existence for many in the area. Mrs. Bull sees the full cycle of life in the slums as she also lays out the dead before the undertakers arrive. Her advice is often sought and she is known for her willingness to assist in a crisis. Mrs. Nattle, whose ability to ‘oblidge’ her neighbours for a fee, enables numerous women to stretch a few pennies a bit further as she pawns items, and she also operates as the area’s clothing sales agent. Sally offers a slightly different but by no means less effective role of womanhood. She totally rejects the behaviour accepted as 'respectable' for the women of Hanky Park, defying her father with "Ah'd be fit t' call y' daughter if Ah was like that, an' a tribe o' kids like Mrs. Cranford's at me skirts", adding "you'd have me like all the rest o' the women, workin' 'emselves t' death an' gettin' nowt for it".51. By refusing to succumb to the double standards upheld by most of the residents of the slums, she follows the lead of Mrs. Bull who flouts convention whenever it puts health and happiness in jeopardy. - "She'd ha' bin a sight worse off hangin' about here <loin' nowt but thinkin' If y' want to know, it was me as 'inted t' Sam Grundy that she'd tek no hurt if she went away for a while".52 As Mrs. Hardcastle and her younger reflection, Helen, bewail their fate, submitting to the social expectations of their place in working-class society, Sally makes her own choice about her future. She, like Mrs. Bull, prefers the path of pragmatism even if it is at the expense of social status within the community.

The contrast in the characterisation of women is just as expressive in His Worship the Mayor. While Mrs. Shuttleworth presents the image of a woman completely degraded and broken by her circumstances, revealing the fate of someone in total acceptance of their unhappy lot in life (her trade-mark phrase is ‘oh, you are so good to me’ when ever anybody helps her in some way), her neighbour,

52. ibid., p. 253.
Judy Evans, fights every step of the way. Her admirable defence of Mrs. Shuttleworth against the tyranny of Edgar Hargraves and his family is an excellent example of her character. Mrs. Evans' support of and aid to the Shuttleworth family is one of the reasons for their eventual survival. She is an amalgamation of the best attributes of the four old woman of Hanky Park. With the cheerful caring of Mrs. Jike, the resourcefulness of Mrs. Dorbell, the forthright nature of Mrs. Nattle and the independent mind of Mrs. Bull, Mrs. Evans is a woman to be reckoned with. She and the other four resilient female personalities play a dissenting role in their communities, and serve as a foil to the more down-trodden depictions of women in Greenwood's writing.

The examination of the role of women reveals a number of important elements. Most significantly, it is an issue where Greenwood and Jones come closest to sharing a similar view, but only in places. Overall, the delineation of the central female characters in their books is forceful and compelling. Sally and the other primary women from Greenwood's writing are comparable in capacity and substance to Mary and her mother-in-law Shan in Cwmardy and We Live. They exhibit strength of will and possess distinctive personalities which express themselves in their involvement in communal life. For instance, although Sally tends to remove herself from an active part in the world of Hanky Park, her intervention into the relationship between Ned Narkey and Kate Malloy (who becomes pregnant after their brief affair) results in their marriage - an indirect admission of his culpability. The point of divergence occurs in the presentation of the secondary female characters. While Jones represents the background women as being committed to the struggles of the coalfields, powerful in their resolve and in their numbers, Greenwood exhibits a contrary approach. The less crucial female characters are flawed. Mrs. Frankenburg criticised the portrayal of women in Love on the Dole. According to Greenwood's letter, she stated that "every time Salford women are mentioned in the mass they are described as on their doorsteps with 'unwashed faces and
matted hair...').\(^{53}\) Her comment is an oversimplification of Greenwood's depiction, however, there is an element of familiarity in her statement. Groups of women in his writing are presented in rather undervalued terms and lack any individuality. The women in the pawnshop, where Harry works, are all old before their time, disillusioned and 'dishevelled'. Likewise, the women in *His Worship the Mayor* are, when collectively described, shabby, prematurely-aged and bent, unwashed and untidy. There is a facelessness and underlying negativity in the portrayal of the secondary female population of Greenwood's novels which is somewhat disturbing. They appear, as a group, to be a series of lesser Mrs. Shuttleworths, degraded by their circumstances, worn out by the struggle to provide for their families and unable to fight any longer. Thus, while the central female characters are forceful and active in their roles, they are unusually so in the face of Greenwood's other female descriptions. The contrast with Lewis Jones' portrayal of the role of women in this instance could not be more extreme. All the women of his books are constantly battling for what they feel they deserve, refusing to surrender to the dehumanising effects of poverty. Once more, the major variance between the two writers is how they relate the people's ability to withstand the effects of adversity.

A useful technique for expanding the investigation of the four central themes in their work is to study a chapter from the authors' most well-regarded novels. *Love on the Dole* and *We Live* overlap chronologically and depict similar issues of the 1930s, though treating them in very different ways. Two chapters in particular present parallel episodes in the turbulent history of the inter-war period - the 1931 Means Test marches in Greenwood's book and the 1935 mass demonstrations against the Unemployment Assistance Bill in that of Jones. These scenes of protest and public outcry at two very arbitrary government decisions promote a further inquiry of the four central themes. They have used several of

\(^{53}\) Greenwood's letter to the editor, *op.cit.*
the more potent events of the times as a vehicle with which to highlight key aspects of their viewpoints on the Britain of the Depression.

‘Historical Narrative’ is the title of the Greenwood chapter. It purports to be an accurate description of the occurrences of the 1st of October, 1931 in Bexley Square, Salford, an event in which the author was personally involved. Indeed the title seems to suggest that Greenwood's intention was to provide an air of authenticity to the fairly detailed account he presented in the novel. Contemporary reports from others involved in the demonstration corroborate Greenwood's portrayal of the Battle of Bexley Square, as it became known. The Means Test came into operation in September and was "the most hated piece of Legislation at that time". The Salford branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement was responsible for organising the march to Bexley Square to protest against the severe policy, preparations for which took place over the several weeks prior to the 1st of October. The assembly point was a patch of land in Liverpool Street, opposite the weekly meeting place for the N.U.W.M. There were a number of speakers before the demonstrators set off along the planned route to the town hall, where a delegation was to meet the City Council in order to present their list of demands. It is at this point that the majority of the trouble occurred - the police initially prevented entry to the Square, and then attacked the crowd in a brutal and unprovoked manner.

The scene opens with Harry being told the devastating news that "they've knocked y' off dole". His father's dole and Sally's wages were deemed sufficient for his subsistence

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54. ibid.
55. Love on the Dole has been used as supporting evidence in Edmund and Ruth Frow's The Battle of Bexley Square: Salford Unemployed Workers' Demonstration - 1st October, 1931, (Working Class Movement Library, 1994).
56. ibid., p. 5.
by the Public Assistance Committee. The disbelief and incredulity Harry feels is vividly created, and the point of view gradually widens to allow the reader to recognise similar responses from almost everyone else in the office that morning. It is an effective opening to the chapter, and there is such an immediacy in the depiction that one cannot help but be aware of the influence of Greenwood's own experiences of the situation.

The atmosphere that results from the first enactment of the latest government policy is, not surprisingly, negative and confused. The people mill around the area outside, unsure of a course of action. There is no real sense of each individual sharing more than a fleeting awareness of the common dilemma; the unemployed in the scene only find a "sorry sort of relief in the knowledge that all ... were similarly affected". Instead most thought that the possibility of being 'knocked off dole' would more likely impinge upon "him as lives next door; Ah could understand 'um knockin' him off". Thus they deny the problem will affect themselves by targeting each other as more deserving of an unfavourable P.A.C. decision. Their feelings of powerlessness in the face of the day's events are reflected in that their "dismay was made all the more complete by the knowledge of their own impotence". Throughout the initial stages of the march, the participants appear very uncomfortable in their role as demonstrators. Larry Meath, one of those who addresses the crowd, blames the working people for not acting sooner; he reminds the attentive crowd "that the cause of their protest was of their own making" as they failed to heed the warning signs at the time of the general election. The implication is that the working class should hold themselves ultimately responsible for the National Government's new legislation. Larry's claims are

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58. ibid.
59. ibid., pp. 196-7.
60. ibid., p. 197.
61. ibid., p. 201.
62. ibid., p. 198.
both harsh and unreasonable, revealing a decidedly unsympathetic attitude from one who should perhaps be encouraging resistance rather than condemning all in his position as Labour organiser. In the light of Larry's accusations, a conflict arises; while he blames them for not taking action earlier to prevent the cuts, the result of the people's eventual protest ends in complete failure. What, then, are the implications of the chapter?

Larry's characterisation throughout the scene raises a number of questions. His illness pervades the day's happenings, and it takes precedence over the march and the reasons behind it. It undermines his position as organiser and has the effect of creating a martyr out of him for no identifiable reason. A certain amount of symbolism can be inferred from Larry's sickness; the weakness resulting from his illness represents his power as a Labour activist in Hanky Park. His ill health is also one of the causes of his death later in the novel. Larry is very careful to stay well within the boundaries of the law in his role, perhaps to the point of siding with the dominant forces. For example, he urges "his audience to appreciate the preparations, in the way of attendant police, which had been made in anticipation of any disorderliness".\footnote{ibid., p. 198.} As the rally ends with the mounted police riding down the marchers in confrontation completely at odds with their duty to protect and serve the public, it is difficult to understand Larry's stance on the matter. His 'kowtowing' to authority reveals itself in his reaction to the rude and unreasonable demands of the police to change the route of the demonstration - "We'd better do as we are told ... it's useless arguing with these men".\footnote{ibid., p. 202.} His insistence upon being punctual for the deputation's meeting with the town councillors blinkers his outlook as he interrupts the rally's leader mid-speech, criticises him for lateness and takes over the direction of the crowd in order for the march to be on time. However, most worrying in terms of his role as a
Labour advocate, is Larry's tendency to undermine the unity of the demonstration. He does so in a number of ways. In addition to his emphasis on punctuality, his submission to the authorities and his labelling of the people as blameworthy, he belittles the organisers of the protest. His own speech begins with "a repudiation of the previous speaker", and he answers a political comment from the organiser with "Oh, don't talk so damn daft, man. Get something done, for God's sake". By not fostering a common front amongst the leadership, how can the rally as a whole maintain its cohesion in the face of adverse circumstances and achieve its aims? Greenwood's summary of the other men at the head of the protest is not very flattering - for instance, the 'finely featured young man' closely resembles Edmund Frow, but he is portrayed as a somewhat fanatical socialist who has difficulties effectively carrying out his role as an organiser, (so much so that Larry initiates the march's proceedings). The underlying attitude of the author towards the politics of the rally is shown in the description of the march's placards as presenting messages of "arbitrary imperiousness" as they read 'Not a penny off the dole' and 'Hands off the people's food'.

Oral reminiscences of Bexley Square reflect an alternative image of the proceedings. These function as an illuminating counterpoint to Greenwood's story of the events. The demonstration was ten thousand strong and was one of many similar protests in response to the Means Test all over the country. The biggest contrast with Love on the Dole, however, is the perception of the atmosphere of the demonstration. Where Greenwood presents an uneasy crowd and implicit police violence overshadowing the course of the day, his contemporaries recall that the mood of the protest was far more positive. When they heard the list of demands to be delivered by the deputation "the crowd roared its approval and a sea of hands was raised in support of the

65. ibid., p. 198.
66. ibid., p. 200.
67. ibid., p. 201.
The demonstration moved easily through the first police cordon when they attempted to redirect the route. One N.U.W.M. participant stated that the success was proof that "unity and determination is strength", and noted that the populace lining the roads "were with us in opposition to the things we were demonstrating against". Greenwood, however, has some of the marchers breaking the barrier but the majority, under Larry's instruction, re-form ranks and continue along the new course. The spectators in the novel are merely curious rather than supportive, and people walking alongside the rally are 'shamed' into joining those involved. An N.U.W.M. spokesperson declared that "it was ... a disciplined, well-marshalled demonstration under complete control of the organisers ... Morale was high", and one of his comrades, suffering from organising nerves, worried needlessly that there would not be enough people - "the unemployed responded in mass, it made me feel strong just seeing them". The impression from Greenwood is of uncertain leadership and self-conscious marchers, many of whom are attending on the spur of the moment as there is no real sense that much preparation was undertaken for the demonstration. These diverging aspects of Love on the Dole's presentation of the Bexley Square incident are vital to a deeper understanding of Greenwood's work. Placing his depiction of mass action next to Lewis Jones' treatment of protest exposes the disparity in the direction of their writing. The title of the We Live chapter is equally representative of the themes it discusses. 'Cwmardy Marches' implies the movement of the whole community in protest, which is what transpires. The people of the village have been anticipating the action for weeks as the Communist Party

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70. ibid., p. 3.
strenuously promoted the mass march and raised considerable public awareness of the issue. The 1935 demonstrations throughout South Wales against the proposed spending cuts on the unemployed put forward by the Unemployment Assistance Bill were enormous events. An entire region was galvanised into action as an estimated 300,000 people marched in a spectacular display of public disapproval of the government legislation. Jones includes these scenes in his chapter but has, as the centre piece, one incident in particular: the storming of the Unemployment Assistance Offices in Merthyr by a large contingent of South Welsh women and communists. The occurrence was widely reported at the time and condemned from some quarters as the actions of a wayward minority, yet Jones places such an emphasis upon it that he writes a chapter around it.

'Cwmardy Marches' sees the increase in the role Mary plays, both within the community, and within the Party. She is instrumental in the preparations for the demonstration at a local level, organising her street into its own contingent. The banner the people of the street walk behind is significant - "Sunny Bank Women want Bread not Batons". It vividly illustrates the importance of the Valley's women; they are not secondary to their men folk. During the demonstration, a majority of the women form a separate contingent, representing a force in their own right. Half way along the planned route, Mary makes the decision that the women of the march should personally take their complaint to the director of the nearest Unemployment Assistance Office. The justification for the change in plans is that "it is only when (legislation) ... is acted upon in Cwmardy ... by people who are paid to operate it, ... that an Act of Parliament is of use to the Government". Thus the women not only assertively reinforce their own role in the protest

73. D. Smith, "Wales Between the Wars", in ibid., p. 9.
74. We Live, p. 246.
but also stress the specific problems that they, as women, endure from day-to-day.

The most notable element of the demonstration is the buoyant mood. The preparations and the day's proceedings are caught up in a carnival-like atmosphere; brass bands complement the singing, and colourful banners abound. It is a celebration of community action, involving even the youngest children carried by their mothers, which fosters a vibrant sense of group identity. Unified beneath the Sunny Bank standard, the people march out of the street together, rather than in the "usual straggling individual manner".75 The people organise themselves into ranks which they maintain with almost a military strictness, refusing to allow anyone to break into the formation to march with their friends. The area's turbulent political history is manifested in the shop windows on the main street, which "still (wear) shutters as mementos of past battles",76 and the image reaffirms that the population is more than familiar with the idea of mass struggle. The purposefulness which pervades the scene stresses that the protesters are very conscious of their goals, sure in the belief that they are achieving them in the best possible way. Mary and Len, in their determination to have the protest heard, will not be deferred from or denied their chance to fight for the people's welfare using the most effective means. Hence they demonstrate outside and within the doors of the Unemployment Assistance Office. Every individual on the march, witnessing the vast mass of humanity on the move, is empowered by the collective aspirations and the overwhelming sense of a common goal. Len, looking back at the huge number of people, "realised that the strength of them all was the measure of his own, that his existence and power as an individual was buried in that of the mass".77 The intent of the scene is made very clear - unified action is the only true way to achieve success. And so Jones ends 'Cwmardy Marches' with "three cheers for

75. *ibid.*, p. 238.
unity" as the chapter closes on the day's accomplishments. The phrase is not only the catch-cry of *We Live*, it summarises his entire ideological outlook.

Jones admirably evokes the powerful image of collective action. The sights and sounds of a moving population are forcefully depicted in 'Cwmardy Marches': "time and distance were obliterated by the cavalcade of people, whose feet made the road invisible", and underlying all other noise is the "deep monotone of countless boots tramping rhythmically on the hard road". Unfortunately, not all the details included in the chapter are as expressive. The writing is constantly interrupted by what only can be described as the comic interludes of Len's parents, Shan and Big Jim. The exchanges are awkward, distracting, and sometimes entirely forced, and their purpose amongst the vast manifestations of public consciousness is completely unknown. Equally unsatisfactory are the personal political asides between Len and Mary. They amount to strained, metaphorical ramblings which fail dismally in their attempts to become poetic socialist rhetoric. It is perhaps unintended irony that those surrounding the couple during the demonstration are, like the reader, at a loss to understand their comments. However, the final scene, with its focus on the caring unity of the family, reminds the reader of the true reasons behind the day's activities; it reinforces the notion that everyone is entitled to the quality of life experienced elsewhere and the battle is fought for the family as well as for the people. Therefore, of primary importance throughout the chapter, is the need to promote change. The necessity of this stance is echoed in many of the oral interviews from South Welsh protesters of the time. One woman, seeing the obvious decay in people's lives, was emphatic in her support for mass action - "Well you couldn't not take part in any activity which would make people ... feel that at least they were fighting back ... and it was absolutely

78. *ibid.*
80. *ibid.*, p. 244.
essential to get other people to understand the enormity of the situation". The interviewee has encapsulated the very essence of Jones' writing.

The divergent aspects of the portrayal of popular protest by Greenwood and Jones are numerous. From characterisation through to atmosphere, the two treatments are distinctly different. One example is the delineation of women. Greenwood barely mentions the participation of women in the rally - they are mainly 'blowsy' background figures who watch from the sidelines, very much removed from the men who march to the square. In strong contrast, the South Welsh women play a significant part in the demonstration, and make their presence felt in a very definite manner. Likewise, the attitude towards the police in both chapters is particularly noticeable. From the outset, Greenwood depicts a demonstration with an atmosphere of repression and unease. The high profile of the police is overtly threatening. From the man who is dragged out of the office by a constable after disputing the loss of his dole, to the last 'sickening thud' of a baton on an unprotected head, there is no doubt that the police are the perpetrators of the day's violence. Before the march is underway, dotted amongst the listening crowd, the plain clothed constabulary are already powerful in number and in physical appearance - "their size rendering them conspicuous" - and the contrast between the police and the demonstrators is glaring. The people in the crowd, suffering the ill effects of a poor diet forced upon them by unemployment, are mostly

81. Dora Cox, from an oral interview recorded in 1985, participant in 1934 Hunger March from Tonypandy to London, as cited in Beddoe, op.cit., p. 155.
82. Walter Greenwood responded to a number of the points raised by Mrs. Frankenburg' letter to The Woman Citizen, and one concerned the brutality of the police described in the novel. She declared "as to the way that crowd is dealt with, it is gross libel on the police and incredible to anyone with the least knowledge of their training and general instructions" - he wrote "the author was at the head of that demonstration and was subject to blows from a baton ... Knowledge of police training and instruction, and experience of its practice are two vastly different things.". op.cit
"shabby fellows, scrawny youths ... coughing, spitting",\textsuperscript{84} and a few women, pinched and cold in the bitter wind. They are hardly a match for police the stature of Ned Narkey, "his magnificent physique set off to perfection in his new uniform".\textsuperscript{85} The marchers are, unquestionably, completely helpless in their attempts to defend themselves from the police onslaught at the end of the rally. Ironically it is not until the first clash with police that there is any indication that the protesters believe in what they are doing - a "new spirit immediately manifested itself when the march continued ... an air of animated expectancy pervaded the demonstrators".\textsuperscript{86} However, perhaps it is the possibility of further struggles which ignite their feelings, rather than the importance of the march's cause. The main element to emerge from the chapter is that from the beginning, the march is doomed. There are warnings of impending trouble - "Larry feared for the outcome of this demonstration".\textsuperscript{87} Defeat is foreshadowed in the somewhat desperate statement - "the protest, surely, in face of their numbers, must be effective".\textsuperscript{88} The people are no contest for the police, both physically and in their strength of commitment, and so the behaviour of the police results in the demonstration's ultimate demise.

Jones does not provide 'the arm of the law' with any real power. The police play a very secondary role in the events of the day. When the women's contingent approaches the Unemployment Assistance Offices, the police are "white-faced and trembling",\textsuperscript{89} and although they declare access to the buildings to be prohibited, the huge crowd sweep across the barricade with ease. The supreme strength of public will renders the police impotent. This portrayal is very much in keeping with the Communist opinion of the police as the tools

\textsuperscript{84} ibid., p. 197.
\textsuperscript{85} ibid., p. 198.
\textsuperscript{86} ibid., pp. 202-3.
\textsuperscript{87} ibid., p. 203.
\textsuperscript{88} ibid., p. 199.
\textsuperscript{89} We Live, p. 246.
of the capitalist state. To present them as dominant in the face of an enormous protest movement would undermine the very foundations of Jones' argument - the system could never be changed if collective action had no might. Thus Jones alters the image of the police. A force that is despised by all in the coalfields due to their well-deserved reputation for harassment and victimisation, and their collusion with the coalmine owners becomes a shaky group who quail before the mass. There is also a certain familiarity in the way the police are presented; the inspector refers to Len by name as he argues with the group's intended destination. "You can't stop here, Len"\(^{90}\) conjures up the feeling of a close-knit community, where everyone knows everyone else. It is when police reinforcements are sent into the Valley from elsewhere, as occurs in Cwmardy, that this aspect of inter-village relations is lost.

The overwhelming difference between the two depictions is, without a doubt, political intent. Greenwood poignantly describes the dispiriting effect the news of the cuts has on the unemployed and he is able to portray the damaging psychological problems associated with being 'out o' collar'. However the overall purpose of the chapter is cloudy. The scene's major closing concern is Larry's fate in the hands of the police, and his arrest serves to fuel the developments of the romantic plot. Thus the events of the march, the novel's most important political scene, are subsumed by Larry's relationship with Sally. There is no further consideration of the forced arrests, the highly corrupt trials and subsequent protests against a gross miscarriage of justice which continued in actuality. Nor is there any comment on the aftermath of the Means Test. Sadly the Salford City Council enforced the government's policy. In February of the following year "expenditure was cut by 76,000 pounds".\(^{91}\) Unlike the results of the demonstrations after the Means Test was introduced, the 1935 protests

\(^{90}\) ibid.

\(^{91}\) E. and R. Frow, The Battle of Bexley Square, p. 23.
against the unemployment cuts were eventually successful. This is a major point of divergence in the two appraisals and one that Jones successfully utilised as a means of establishing the triumph of mass protest. Indeed the next chapter of *We Live* sees the people of the Valleys, inspired by their successful action (the government restores the benefits), organising a stay-in strike to rid the area of company unionism. Thus Jones is able to write about the people's ultimate victory over those who enforce the government legislation at the local level, whereas Greenwood cannot.

Edmund Frow prefaces his analysis of the effects of the Salford City Council's cuts with "in spite(sic.) of the efforts of the unemployed ...". Perhaps if the government had acknowledged the protests across Britain at the time, instead of allowing the situation for the economically devastated regions to deteriorate even further, Greenwood could have resolved his portrayal a little more positively. However, the variance in the authors' approach to the depictions is essentially in terms of commitment. Jones possessed the focus of a militant Communist, while Greenwood swayed between active Labour supporter and observer, and probably became frustrated by the slow process of political realisation in Salford's Left movement. These views are exposed in the way the writers establish the roles of the lead characters: Mary and Len are shown as pre-emptive organisers, interacting with the people and their fellow Party members, while Larry is a remote figure, who does not seem to play any real part in the preparations for the day's activities and is removed from the other activists in the area.

The 'chalk and cheese' argument is particularly appropriate when exploring the intended political outcome of both men's writing. At the risk of oversimplification, it is possible to put forward several general ideas about the work of Jones and Greenwood. As has been stated previously, Jones' ideology dominated everything he did, including his writing. He not only saw and identified the cause of his

92. *ibid.*
people's plight - the capitalist system in which they lived - he also empathised with their suffering and advocated, in the most emphatic way, a solution to the situation. The solution is, of course, the institution of a socialist state after the populace had risen in revolt. Greenwood was far more ambivalent in his attitude to the problems around him. He recognised that there were inherent flaws in contemporary society, witnessed the hardships that these produced and was able to describe the slum dwellers' circumstances vividly. However, the contradictions in his viewpoint rendered him impotent when it came to putting forward an alternative. Jones realised that no one would speak out against the general adversity except the people themselves. Hence he devoted his life to organising and stimulating collective action so that together, unified, the populace could produce change. Greenwood, although aware of the need to alter the status quo, seemed to lack any faith in his own powers to put forward a new direction. While he was certainly instrumental in drawing widespread attention to the stricken area of Salford, he was more interested in removing himself, utilising the success of his writing in order to escape, leaving the solution in the hands of others. A firm, unwavering political commitment on the part of Jones gave him the strength he required to continue his struggle and enabled him to tackle directly the adversity of his times. Instilled with conflicting values, and unsure of the endurance of his political beliefs, Greenwood maintained his dedication to his writing in order to modify his life. Thus they lay bare their disparate political viewpoints on the world of the 1930s.

Finally, a visual representation of the dissimilarity in the writers' political direction provides a fittingly symbolic reminder of the differences in the two men's approach. An interview conducted with Greenwood in the early 1970s made mention of his practice of raising a red flag outside his house on the Isle of Man as a warning against interruption when he was writing. The article was called "When the Red
Flag is Flying Walter Just Wants to Be Left Alone". It is not known whether the use of a red flag in particular was an ironic choice on the part of Greenwood; in the light of his self-professed socialist beliefs, the significance of a red flag could not have escaped his notice. However, the implications of the action and its intended effect are obvious. He was using a well-recognised emblem of unity and action in Left politics to prevent people from disturbing him at work; the flag then becomes an object of isolation and warning. What is perhaps more ironic is that a chapter in a Manchester PhD which included a discussion of Greenwood and his politics was entitled "Walter Greenwood: A Red Flag Flying in Hanky Park?". The chapter examined the writer's working-class origins and the nature of his socialism. There is no indication that the author of the thesis was aware of the existence of the article. Greenwood's action is loaded with innuendo and encapsulates the contrast between himself and Jones. Lewis Jones was fond of including references to the flag itself and numerous renditions of the song appear in his writing as a means of unifying the people both vocally and in the more general sense of political belief. He wrote of the red flag in an entirely serious and sincere manner with no hint of the irony implicit in Greenwood's habit of using it to ward off visitors.

94. It is worth noting that the demonstrators in 'Historical Narrative' did not know the words of "The Red Flag" when the tune was struck up during the march.
CONCLUSION

VIEWS FROM WITHIN: REFLECTIONS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE WORK OF TWO BRITISH WORKING-CLASS WRITERS OF THE 1930s.

Investigating the relationship between an individual and their experiences through the written word is an enlightening task. What is captured on the page, wittingly or otherwise, is much more than the writer would have expected. Beliefs, aspirations, and perceptions are all discernible within the narrative as the author mirrors and interprets the world outside. The writing of Walter Greenwood and Lewis Jones not only reveals particular events of their lives, big and small, it reflects their reactions to their experiences and the effect that these had on the way they viewed contemporary British society. What is surprising, however, given the general similarities in the backgrounds from which they came, is the contrast in their perspectives of the times. Fundamentally driven by the desire to leave the slums behind him, Greenwood worked to become a writer in order to achieve his aim. At the other end of the spectrum was Jones, fighting continually against the problems he saw as endemic to capitalist society. He dedicated his life to creating change in order to aid the people of South Wales. The divergence in their ideas is not only obvious in the work they produced in the 1930s, it is represented in the contrasting endings to their lives.
Comfortable, secure, removed from the slums of his youth but alone, Greenwood died at seventy-one.¹ Jones, although worn-out by years of struggle, died young but had sustained his people-oriented politics to the very end. The two men maintained their commitment to their respective goals throughout their lives and had, by the time of their deaths, achieved a number of their aims.²

The thesis has argued that the divergent perceptions of Jones and Greenwood were founded upon their contrasting responses to their personal histories. The contrary reactions to their experiences is the primary reason why the two writers displayed attitudes to their subject matter and the issues of contemporary society which were, at times, almost the antithesis of one another. The values which Greenwood and Jones absorbed during their developing years, and the events through which they lived need to be recognised if their writing is to be understood. Each was a product of his background and the numerous experiences through which he lived and his work is testament to this notion. Knowledge of their life-circumstances helps explain some of the reasons behind their divergent points of view and the inherent difference in and direction of their writing. This approach does not under-value the imaginative content of their novels, but it is characteristic of these two writers that experience, and their reaction to it, played a more important role in the formation of their ideas and work.

It is in the area of political idealism that the two men differ most apparently. The other dissimilarities in their viewpoints stem from this major divergence. Born within a vibrant and active community in South Wales, Jones echoed the strength of his people. His belief in and support of the Valley inhabitants was the central concern of both his life

¹. It is not clear whether he died on the 10th or 11th of September, 1974 as he was not found for a day or so after his death.
². Though Jones did not witness the revolution that he had worked so hard towards, he left an indelible memory of his commitment which, without a doubt, inspired many young Communists to continue the fight for change.
and his writing. While Greenwood revealed an empathy with the Salford folk with whom he grew up, his attitude towards the subjects of his novels was ambivalent. At times unsure of the foundations of his political belief, Greenwood wavered in his commitment to socialism, an aspect of Jones' writing which is never in doubt. The Communist ideology Jones advocated at an early age was always the light which guided him and he unashamedly wrote his second book with the aim of stimulating a similar reaction in his readers.

Thus the thesis reveals the contrasting ways in which the two writers responded to the events and influences of their lives, emphasising that the evidence is plainly visible in their work. While Greenwood and Jones believed that their writing was a means to an end, their respective goals were wholly opposite. The central disparity between the two is that Jones embraced the collective ideal and wanted to alter the world while Greenwood was an individualist who, above all else, wanted to change his life.

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