**Trade Unionism and Politics in the
London Borough of Haringey**

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the relationship between
trade unionism and politics viewed primarily through events
within the London Borough of Haringey. These events are
examined through two case studies of local government union
branches between 1965 and 1987. In these studies I use
original research data with the aim of unifying what are
usually deemed separate theoretical approaches, for example
concern with either the labour process or with the
bargaining relation. I show that by unifying these different
strands of analysis a far greater depth of understanding is
achieved.

The research also examines the development of Labour Party
politics in the 1980s, and particularly the rise of 'radical
municipalism' as a response to traditional labourism.
Finally this critical appraisal is extended to provide a
critique of dominant themes running through radical and
Marxist literature concerned with labour movement politics
and in particular the trade unions.

CONTENTS

Tables and Graphs

Chapter 2:

Acknowledgements

Introduction

This thesis is an exploration of the relation
between local government trade unions, the Labour Party
and the council in the London borough of Haringey in the
period 1965 - 1987. This is the period from the formation
of Haringey council, at a time when relations between
council, party and unions were uncontentious issues in
British politics, through the rise, in the late 1970s of
an assertive trade unionism and a radical political
practice which threatened to unite the economic and
political wings of the labour movement around the defence
of jobs and services; and ending in loss of direction by
the unions, retrenchment by the council and the
substantial cutting of jobs and services which began in
1987.

The centre-piece of this local study is an
examination of two of the borough's local government
trade union branches over this period: the National Union
of Public Employee (NUPE) Education branch, covering
ancillary workers within schools, and the National and
Local Government Officers Association (NALGO) which
organises white collar staff. Through a specific analysis

of their evolution I shall explore these branches both in
terms of their own internal dynamic and in the context of
the wider labour movement, of how the two wings of the
movement, trade union and political, attempted to come to
terms with the decline of the post-war consensus. I focus
on how the interplay of unions and politics formed the
basis of a new local consensus in the early 1980s, what
the nature of this new consensus was, and why it began to
break down in the latter half of the 1980s. Whether this
outcome represents a reformulation of labourism or the
beginning of the end of labourism through the separate
development of party and union, still remains uncertain.
At one level, then, this is a study of union-party
relations in Haringey during a period of critical change;
at another it offers a detailed view of how a breakdown
of traditional labourism was resolved: at first by a
partial overcoming of the divisions between the trade
union and political wings of the labour movement and
subsequently by an as yet unfinished and open-ended
process of the splitting apart of these elements.

My background understanding is that the development
of both local government trade unionism and the Labour
Party in Haringey should be examined through the lens of

a unified labour movement. I see the labour movement in Britain as a single entity with a dual structure: the industrial wing of trade unions under the rubric of the TUC and the political wing in the form of the Labour Party. While the division between the political and economic is a common feature of working class movements under capitalism, the concept of a unified labour movement is premised on the trade unions and the Labour Party being bound together by numerous political, ideological and organisational ties to such an extent that their interrelation is symbiotic. In this formulation I do not see the Labour Party and the trade unions as representing two distinct principles, but a social division of labour within one movement. This means two things: first, that there is a unity between trade unions and the Labour Party; second, that this is a unity-in-separation, that is, a unity affirmed through the division between these two wings. The key to comprehending the labour movement and one of the elements

of labourism is its unity-in-separation <1>.

The defining characteristic of the two wings of the labour movement is their mediating role between capital and labour. That mediations exist is not in itself remarkable. The working class achieves representation via its own institutions in a number of distinct forms from nation to nation. For example, in Italy the Communist Party's main mediation with the state has been through its control of municipalities. It is however the mediating role which defines the Janus-faced character of the labour movement, expressing at once some degree of working class identity and the domination of bourgeois ideas within the working class.

As a medium between capital and labour, the labour movement is not a fixed entity but reflects the dynamic nature of the relation between capital and labour. Consequently it has taken on a number of forms. For

1. This relation may be further understood by focussing on two potential sources of disruption. On the one hand, the unity of the labour movement may be broken, so that the linkages binding its two wings come apart or are radically weakened. In this case, the unions and the party develop separate corporate identities. On the other hand, the separation may be overcome, so that the division between politics and trade unionism is either bridged or narrowed. Each of these hypothetical scenarios represents extremes of the continuum on which the labour movement functions.

example, when the labour movement plays a central role in administering a contract between the classes, such as in the post war consensus, which I characterise as 1945 labourism <2>. As a social relation, this consensus was a contract between labour and capital in which the labour movement was able to serve as a transmission belt for the 'political economy of labour', driven by the increased strength of labour, but also as a discipline on labour which was premised on its unquestioned subordination to capital <3>. The ideology of the labour movement being the idealisation of this contract.

The above implicitly diverges from the present day usage of the term labourism in the following sense. The way in which the term is routinely used elides the difference between labourism and reformism are the two concepts discrete or is one a synonym for the other?. For example D Coates <1989> quotes Hardie from the Labour Party founding conference. In doing so he quotes a classic reformist statement. If labourism as a term means anything apart from reformism it is a term which

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2. For example see Middlemas, K. <1979> <u>Politics and Industrial Society</u>. Deutsch, London.

3. The term 'political economy of labour' is derived from Marx. It and the term 1945 labourism are discussed in chapter two.

encapsulates the above, that is the unitary and symbiotic
nature of the movement. The other aspect of labourism
which gives the term meaning is the historical continuity
which these labour movement institutions represent and
the continuity of the ideology of labourism which may be
characterised as a form of radical liberalism, inherited
from the late nineteenth century and developed through a
Keynesian doctrine of state intervention, which became
the ideational expression of the post-war consensus.
In different ways this mediating role applies both to the
unions and to the party. It is not the case that one wing
represents the domination of bourgeois ideas and the
other working class identity; rather this tension is
present in each wing. This is not, however, how the
labour movement often appears. I define as the 'radical
paradigm' that form of ideology which equates either the
existing trade union movement or some version of a
perfected trade union movement with working class
identity and equates the Labour Party essentially as well
as actually with the domination of bourgeois ideas <4>.

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4. For example see Jeffries, S. <1979>: 'Striking into
the 1980s: modern trade unionism-its limits and
potential', in International Socialism Vol 5, Summer p.
1-53. Fairbrother, P. <1984>: All those in Favour The
Politics of Union Democracy, Pluto, London. Fairbrother,
P. <1990>: Union Democracy and Socialism. unpublished.

By perfection of the trade unions I mean the view that
there is some element in them which if generalised would
represent how they should ideally be; the most common
version identifies the rank and file with this ideal
element. I call 'left labourism' that form of ideology
which equates either the existing Labour Party or a
perfected Labour Party with working class identity and
equates the trade unions essentially as well as actually
with the domination of bourgeois ideas. The particular
form of 'left labourism' with which I am most concerned
in this work is what I shall call 'radical municipalism'
- a form which locates the socialist core of the Labour
Party in a reformed local politics and sees the local
council as a key agency for socialist advancement <5>.

   These two ways of thinking within the labour
movement reflect the separation of the labour movement
into two distinct parts which are not integrated into a
single whole. In these versions, the party may appear
either as an adjunct or an obstacle to the 'real' working
class interest which lies in the unions; or the unions

5. For example see Wainwright, H. <1985>: 'Sharing power:
popular planning and the GLC', in Going Local? no 2
April. Or Blunkett, D. and Green, G. <1983>: Building
from the Bottom: The Sheffield Experience, Tract 491,
Fabian Society, London.

may appear as an adjunct or an obstacle to the Labour
Party. Each of these conceptions is prescriptive to the
extent that it puts forward an ideal of what the labour
movement should be rather than exploring what the labour
movement actually is. One side of the labour movement is
then conceived as its essence, the other side as a mere
shadow or epiphenomenon.

The division of the labour movement and the two
conceptions to which it gives rise are reflected in the
academic literature on the labour movement <6>. There
approaches can be found which mirror the poles of the
'radical paradigm' and 'left labourism': a trade union
literature which ignores or only externally recognises
the political, and a political literature (like that on
municipalism) which ignores or subsumes trade unions <7>.
Both sides seek to explain why the labour movement is
imperfect through an ideal type of what it ought to be:

6. The only work which has attempted to provide an
integrated approach is that of D Coates <1989>: The
Crisis of Labour: Industrial Relations and the State in
Contemporary Britain.

7. This theme is taken up throughout this work, the
shortcomings of the municipal literature are seen for
example in Gyford, J. <1985>: The Politics of Local
Socialism. George Allen and Unwin, London. On the trade
union side in Hyman <1989>: The Political Economy of
Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice in a Cold
Climate. Macmillan, London.

either an ideal type of trade unionism, the model of
which comes out of the experience of militancy in the
manufacturing sector in the 1960s; or an ideal type of
Labour politics which comes out of the experience of the
radical municipal experiments of the early to mid-1980s.
The literature is itself divided along these prescriptive
lines.

This thesis is divided into twelve with methods
constituted as an appendix . Chapter two provides the
reader with a profile of the borough: the Labour council,
Labour Party, the council's workforce and the trade
unions. I outline the basic problem confronted by the
branch reformers in the local government trade unions,
the shift from what is called in the literature
'sectional' to 'institutional centrality'.

Chapters three and four are concerned with the
development of NALGO and NUPE Educational between 1965
and 1979-1980. I analyse how the branches functioned
under their established leaderships, how new leaderships
emerged, and the nature of the radicalism they
introduced. These chapters end with the shift to
institutional centrality well underway; in NUPE's case I
conclude with the low-pay strike in 1979, a year after
the new leadership had been installed; in NALGO's case I

conclude with the installation in 1980 of the new branch
leadership.

Chapter five has three dimensions; firstly, to show
how far the alterations seen in chapters three and four
can be generalised to the other Haringey local government
branches. Secondly to place these changes within the
context of attempts to reform local government. Finally
to show up how the interaction between change generated
from above and below provided a number of different
potentials for the branches as the start of the 1980s.
This brings to a close the first section of my thesis on
the 'Radicalisation of the Branches'.

Chapter six reviews the literature on municipal
government and in particular challenges the notion of a
'new municipal left' as a given and fixed entity. I argue
first that the apparent unity behind this concept was
transitory and composed of a variety of different forces
which were soon to fragment. What became the dominant
municipal tendency arose in the course of political
struggles around the role of the council. I review the
debate on the role of the left in council politics, which
occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the
approach which was finally adopted by the Greater London
Council (GLC). This chapter runs slightly ahead of events

in Haringey by following the politics of the GLC through
to the mid-1980s; this is because the GLC provided the
model for radical municipalism within Haringey.

Chapter seven returns the work to Haringey and looks
at how the borough's labour movement reacted to the
Conservative Government's policy towards local
government. In the wake of a debate over confrontation or
compliance, in which the unions showed themselves through
strike action against cuts to be an independent force, I
show how an alliance was formed between the leaders of
the council and - largely in spite of themselves - the
militant union leaders, the basis of which lay in the
raising of rates to protect jobs. This was the basis of a
new consensus emerging in the borough, which I call 'the
rate-rise alliance', marginalising both the
confrontational left and the compliant right wing. This
ends the second section of the thesis on the 'Rise of
Radical Municipalism'.

Chapter eight takes the study back to the local
government unions. I argue that the alliance around rate
rises and job protection was the culmination of a series
of defeats for the militant union leaders, when they
proved unsuccessful in persuading their members to use
militant industrial action to secure their political and

economic ends. I show how these ends were secured not by
militant means but locally through the unions' alliance
with the council. The coming together of political and
economic issues in the unions which the militant branch
leaders had encouraged by tying defence of jobs and wages
to opposition to the Government, was unstitched when the
alliance with the Labour council secured the economic
position of the union members without political
confrontation.

Chapters nine and ten follow the evolution of NALGO
and NUPE Education branches from 1979-80 through to 1984-
85. They review how the process of institutional
centrality was consolidated within the local government
union context. Both NUPE and NALGO initiated workplace
organisation in the form of shop stewards systems; this
was done largely 'from above' through the 'sponsorship'
of shop stewards by branch officials and without the
participation of the membership. The central problem of
workplace organisation - a lack of members outside a
narrow circle of radicals volunteering to become shop
stewards - was unresolved in both cases. I argue that
this was due to two factors: the continued primacy of the
occupational group in the unions and the growing
dependence of the unions on the council in the context of

the rate-rise alliance. This led in turn to the
reconstruction of hierarchy and bureaucracy within the
branches.

Chapter eleven evaluates the nature and significance
of the change undergone by my two case study branches.
This is done in the light of this study of the
limitations of both 'institutional centrality', and the
more specific concepts associated with local government
trade unionism. I argue that the limitations exist
because they fail to take into account the political
context in which the union branches operate. It is though
this view of the branch leaders having suffered a
political defeat which provides the context in which I
conclude the narrative by looking at the evolution of the
political resolution discussed in chapter eight. I argue
that this resolution created tendencies in the branches
to cede their independence to the council; in support of
this argument I trace the inversion of council-union
relations from the initial dependency of the council on
the unions through to the increasing dependence of the
unions on the council. As the council consolidated its
own bureaucratic and financial apparatus in the context
of central government cuts and as the unions became more
reliant on council support for the pursuance of their

basic economic functions, the outcome was predictable:
the beginning of substantial redundancies in 1987.

Chapter twelve argues that these developments pose a
theoretical problem in relation to what I have called the
'radical paradigm' in the sociology of labour. The growth
of hierarchy and bureaucracy within the branches took
place in spite of the opposition of branch leaders who
shared the critique of bureaucratisation and
incorporation prevalent in the literature. The branch
leaders had a similar analysis and attempted to put into
practice similar remedies to those found in this
sociological literature. I argue that this suggests a
confusion between cause and effect: hierarchy and
bureaucracy appear as the cause of the unions'
difficulties but were in fact the effect of independent
political and economic factors. This brings to a close
the section on 'The Decline of Trade Union Radicalism'.

The methods appendix is at the end of this work. It
is primarily concerned with three issues. Firstly I
discuss the empirical core of this study. This is based
on forty nine interviews conducted with key trade
unionists and political actors. I have used extensive
primary documentation, having access to the complete files
of NALGO, NUPE Education branches, the Haringey Labour

Party (including the formal documentation on its
relations to the council), and Haringey Council
documents. I also had access to documentation on Haringey
joint-union committees and relevant council-union
documents. Secondly I examine my relationship to the
material and the role that my own experience and
knowledge of the labour movement and Haringey council
played. From 1979 until 1986 I worked as a labourer on
the council's Direct Labour Organisation; from 1980 to
1986 I was a shop steward and I have been a member of the
Haringey Labour Party since 1973. Finally I explore the
problems which engaging in sociological research posed
for me and the effects the personal questions it raised
had on this work.

   This work has utilised two areas of literature which
mirror the division between local politics and trade
unionism: one on local government and radical
municipalism, the other on trade unionism. What is
distinctive about the theoretical side of this work is
that it self-consciously brings together these two bodies
of knowledge which are often isolated from one another or
merely externally related. This is important because it
represents an implicit critique of existing demarcations
within the literature, which replicate rather than

explain the existing demarcation of the actual labour
movement.

The most substantial body of literature which I
address is about the unions. Here too I have brought
together otherwise distinct readings, not as a result of
a self-conscious theoretical decision but because I have
in practice found it necessary to merge discussions of
manufacturing and local government trade unionism. The
literature on local government trade unionism explains
the differences from manufacturing unionism in terms
mainly of the fragmentation of the workforce and the lack
of importance of the workgroup in relation to the primacy
of the occupational group. I have found both these
concepts of 'fragmentation' and the 'occupational group'
central to my understanding of local government trade
unions in Haringey, but the weakness of these approaches
lies in their inability to explain their development in
spite of the obstacles posed by fragmentation and
occupational centrality. This literature has tended to
take static pictures of local government trade unions,
explaining the remarkable growth shown by unions in this
area only through external 'sponsorship' and without
reference to their internal dynamic.

The literature on manufacturing unions has provided
me with a framework for explaining how the unions I have
studied evolved in practice, though it has been necessary
for me to modify this framework to recognise the
specificity of local government unionism. The concepts of
'sectional' and 'institutional centrality' drawn from the
manufacturing literature provide a basis for
understanding the internal dynamic of these union
branches, since they focus on what is crucial for all
forms of trade unionism, manufacturing and local
government, namely bargaining power.

The literature on local government plays a less
important role in this thesis but is still pertinent to
it. I have been mainly concerned to use it to explore the
origins of radical municipalism but I have been
disappointed to discover how far they have been obscured,
particularly in the more radical readings. The generally
state-centred character of this literature, which
examines the local state in its relation to central
government, writes out intra-labour movement relations
between council, Labour Party and local unions. Its
tendency to adopt an uncritical stance toward the
policies of radical local government derives from a top-
down mode of analysis which abstracts the actions of the

local council from the wider labour movement and ultimately from the borough's population.

I have found that the lines of disciplinary demarcation inherent in these separate literatures place limitations on their ability to explain the changes that have occurred in the local government union branches or to grasp their significance for the reform of labourism in the 1980s. What I have called the 'unity-in-separation' of the labour movement makes it imperative to integrate the trade union and political literatures if the relations between the separate elements are to be understood. Because of the different types of literature discussed, I have integrated them into the body of the text rather than constructing a distinct chapter on literature survey. The industrial relations literature is discussed throughout chapters two to four and chapters nine to twelve. What I have called the 'radical paradigm' in the sociology of labour is discussed in chapter twelve. The literature on local government and municipal politics is discussed in chapter six.

A Profile of the Haringey Labour Movement

The borough's working class

In this chapter I shall review some of the key factors which affected Haringey's working class in the 1970s: social and demographic changes, the effect on the Labour Party, the changing role of the council, the main local government trade unions and finally the problems which those who wished to reform the trade union branches faced in the 1970s <1>.

Haringey was one of the thirty-two new London boroughs (see Figure 2:1) created as part of the reorganisation of London local government in 1965. It was formed from three urban district councils, two of which were predominantly Labour areas, Wood Green and Tottenham, and third Conservative Hornsey <2>. Figure 2:2 shows the wards in 1981.

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1. The figures I shall use are compiled from a number of sources which are listed below. I do not claim any precise statistical validity for them, but have used them to offer a general impression of the changes undergone by the Haringey working class in this period.

2. In 1945 Labour had failed to win the Hornsey parliamentary seat due to the Communist Party inspired 'unity' candidate and again in 1966 when the CP stood their own candidate, Max Morris. In the 1980s he joined Hornsey Labour Party, becoming a councillor and leading opponent of Tariq Ali's application to join the Labour Party.

figure 2:1:
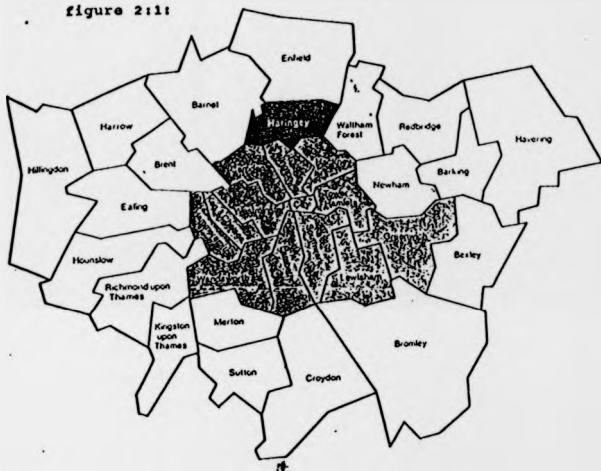
The London Boroughs.

Source: Central Research Unit <1982>: Analysis of
Population Change in Haringey. Population Working paper
no.6, Haringey, London.

figure 2:2

The Wards 1981.

In 1983 the three parliamentary constituencies were merged by the Boundary Commission into two; Hornsey-and-Wood Green and Tottenham. This created one safe Labour seat, Tottenham and a new Conservative marginal, Hornsey and Wood Green. Haringey was in every sense a bureaucratic construction, as one local history put it:

> ...historically the various parts of the
> borough have developed independently of each
> other, and communications which are now
> considered desirable, that is, from east to
> west, do not exist to any extent today
> because in the past it was not necessary [3].

Employment in Haringey has been marked by a rapid decline in its traditional manufacturing base. Manufacturing was almost exclusively concentrated along the Lea Valley and dominated the Tottenham constituency (see figure 2:3). Since the turn of the century light industry had been attracted to a ready supply of labour. By 1900 there were 20 firms which rose to 120 by 1930 [4]. This involved the movement of established firms from the East End of London, and during the 1920-1930s the establishment of newer electrical industries. By the time of Haringey's formation this traditional manufacturing

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3. London Borough of Haringey Libraries Museum and Art Service. <1977>: The Urban Growth of Haringey. Haringey, London. p.2.

4. ibid.

COMMERCIAL & DEFINED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

base was already in decline. Table 2:1 shows that decline
from 1966.

Table 2:1
Decline of the borough's manufacturing industry 1966-1981.
Numbers employed

	1966	1971	1978	1981
	48,950	46,977	39,877	27,053

Source: 1966: London County Census. 1971 figure onwards are
from: Haringey Trades Union Council Support Unit. <1987>:
Industry in Haringey 1979-1986: A History of Industrial
Decline. Haringey Trade's Council, London.

　　　As indicated in table 2:1, the numbers employed in
manufacturing declined by 44.7 % between 1966 and 1981. A
clue to the cause of this decline was given in a 1978 study
by Haringey council. This concluded that between 1965 and
1975 job losses in this sector were 'overwhelmingly due to
closure rather than relocation' <5>. Table 2:2 breaks this
decline down further by industry and sex.

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5. Local Development Plan <1978>: Supplementary Information.
Haringey, London. p. 27.

Table 2:2

Changes in Employment in Haringey 1971-1981: Industry and Sex (numbers and %)

sector	1971 male	female	1981 male	female	Total 1971	1981	% + -
Food,Drink,Tob	2,954	2,066	1,804	1,266	5,020	3,070	-38%
Paper,Print,Pub	1,888	1,647	1,137	826	3,535	1,963	-44%
Furniture,Tim	3,960	557	3,227	440	4,517	3,667	-18%
Clothing/Foot'W	1,070	2,808	891	1,695	3,878	2,586	-33%
Electrical Eng	4,633	4,131	1,627	1,064	8,764	2,691	-70%
Mechanical Eng	5,494	2,148	2,896	933	7,642	3,829	-49%
Metal Goods	4,365	1,801	2,769	1,027	6,166	3,796	-38%
other Man	4,966	2,489	3,569	1,882	7,455	5,451	-26%
Total	29,330	17,647	17,920	9,133	46,977	27,053	-48%

Source:Industry in Haringey (figs taken from Dept of Employment)

As table 2:2 shows across the spectrum of manufacturing trades decline was dramatic averaging 48% in the ten year period between 1971-1981. As table 2:2 reveals this was most extensive in the engineering sector. This decline in manufacturing jobs was partly offset by the expansion of the service sector. By the early 1980s the structure of the borough's employment shows that the service sector had clearly established itself as the major area of employment, as shown by table 2:3.

Table 2:3

Structure of employment in 1981 Persons in employment by Broad Industry % of economically active

	%
Executive	0.9
Manufacturing	25.3
Construction	8.8
Services	62.4

Source: London Regional Manpower Intelligence Unit. <1982>: _Employment Profile of Haringey_. Manpower Services Commission, London. Appendix 2.

As table 2:4 shows, from the mid-1970s part of this shift

away from the manufacturing sector was taken up by an

increase in the council's workforce

Table 2:4

Haringey Staffing Levels:

yea	full-time	part-time	total	year on increase
1969	5,477	2,757	8,234	na
1970	5,807	2,554	8,361	127
1971	5,886	3,198	9,084	723
1972	6,545	3,398	9,852	768
1973	6,575	3,706	10,281	429
1974	6,723	3,809	10,532	251
1975	6,908	3,970	10,878	346
1976	7,145	4,125	11,270	392
1977	7,467	4,356	11,823	553
1978	7,467	4,356	11,823	-
1979	7,775	4,172	11,947	124

Source: GLC _Annual Statistical Abstract_.

Rather than being dramatic, expansion was steady, averaging
337 per year increasing the workforce by nearly 4,000, a
trend which continued until 1987 (see chapter six table 6:2)
when the workforce totalled 14,596. A 6,362 (77%) increase
from the 1969 figure.

Alongside this changing employment pattern and in
common with other areas was the breakdown in traditional
working class community-based organisation. At its heart was
the breakup of the "traditional" working class family. There
are a range of indices of this widespread phenomenon; for
example, by the early 1980s 8% of all households contained
at least one one-parent family <6>. Part of the changing
face of the borough's working class has also been an
increase in the black and ethnic minority population. By
1981 50.5% of Tottenham's head of household was born outside
of the UK, 37.8% of whom were from the New Commonwealth and
Pakistan <7>. During the 1970s the other major change was
the rise in unemployment. Graph 2:1 shows its growth in
Tottenham and Wood Green Employment Offices between 1979-
1981.

6.London Borough of Haringey <1985>: <u>Submission to the
Secretary of State for the Environment</u>. November. p.10

7. ibid, p.25.

GRAPH 2: UNEMPLOYMENT & VACANCY TRENDS

TOTTENHAM EMPLOYMENT OFFICE
(NUMBERS ON REGISTER, 000's)

UNEMPLOYMENT

VACANCIES

28
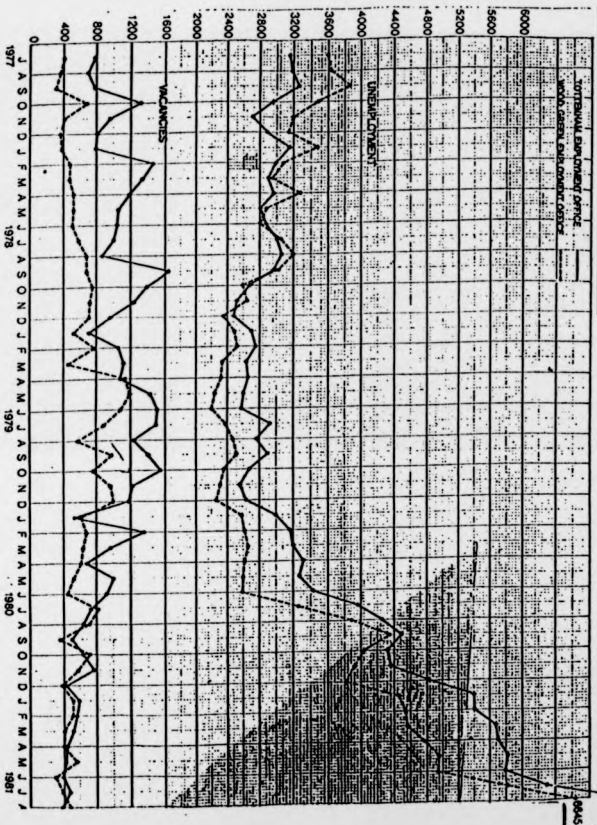
Alongside this there had been an awareness of a growth in poverty in the borough. This is most vividly illustrated by the case of Tottenham. 66% of Tottenham council tenants claim housing benefit, and between 60% and 65% of private tenants are on the official minimum income provided by supplementary benefit. The number of claimants at the Tottenham office for supplementary benefit increased by 81% from November 1979 to July 1985, that is, from 9,323 to 16,881 <8>.

The epicentre of change was the burgeoning reserve army of labour. Unemployment both united and disaggregated class. It is the template through which the changing pattern of employment, the collapse of the traditional family and the rise of the borough's ethnic population took on a social and political character. What united the working class was that labour power had decisively shifted from being a scarce to an over-abundant commodity. The scale of change is illustrated by the following example; in 1966 there were 29,000 people out of work in the Greater London area, 0.7% of the working population and 90,000 job vacancies <9>. In

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8. ibid, p.15.

9. Figures from the GLC: <u>Annual Statistical Abstract</u>.

1986 there were 17,815 unemployed in Haringey alone, 61% of the 1966 figure for the whole of London.

The independent development of the three constituent parts of Haringey is also reflected in the formation of the working class, that is the type of work and stratification within the three boroughs, and its political institutions. This formation had taken place primarily between 1900 and the mid 1930s. For example, a survey carried out in 1931 noted that for Wood Green 250 out of every 1000 of the employed population were clerks <10>, that by 1914 Tottenham had become 'predominantly a lower middle and working class area' <11>, while Hornsey, in a brochure from 1900 advertised itself as 'healthy Hornsey' in a bid to attract the second wave of migration from central London which was middle class in character <12>. Each of the old boroughs had its own political history of the rise and consolidation of labourism, which was to flow into the post-war settlement.

This snapshot of the alterations to the boroughs' working class tends to obscure the fact that the impact of change was different on each of the constituent boroughs.

10. London Borough of Haringey Libraries Museum and Art Service. <1977>: The Urban Growth of Haringey. Haringey, London. p.8.
11. ibid p 5.
12. ibid p 7.

The commonality is found in that structural change broke
down the working class formations of each of the boroughs
that had constituted themselves during the inter-war period.
It was however a change whose roots can be said to go back
almost to when the working class was formed. Both Tottenham
and Wood Green's population began declining in the mid 1930s
and Hornsey's from 1951. By the 1981 census Haringey had the
12th largest fall of population in the country <13>. By the
late 1970s, then, the class formations which had shaped the
three boroughs comprising Haringey had decisively altered.
This is seen most strikingly in table 2:5.

Table 2:5

Decline by numbers and % of Male manual workers 1961 -1981
by major Socio- Economic group.

Group	year 1961	1966	1971	1981	Total 61-81
(decline)					
Skilled	30,260	27,210	22,440	12,820	
(decline)		3,050 10%	4,790 17%	9,620 42%	17,440 57%
Semi-Skilled*	11,480	10,860	9,800	8,420	
(decline)		620 5%	1,060 10%	1,380 14%	3,060 27%
Unskilled	6,640	6,060	5,130	3,130	
(decline)		580 9%	930 15%	2,000 39%	3,510 53%

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*Agricultural workers have been excluded. Source:1961, 66,
71, 81 County boroughs.Census Economically Active.

13. Central Research Unit <1982>: Analysis of Population
Change in Haringey. Population Working paper no.6, Haringey,
London.

Thus by the end of the 1970s the working class formation which had dominated in Tottenham, the manufacturing worker, had definitively disappeared. A working class which had grown up in the welfare state emerged from the consensus, its social economic composition substantially altered and with family and community diminished. From the middle of the 1970s the impact of these changes had affected the local Party and Labour council.

The local Labour Party

The documentation from the local Labour Parties shows that they were, at least from the mid-1970s, aware of the altering nature of the borough's population. For example, the following extract from a resolution to Tottenham General Management Committee in 1978: 'if the party is to grow, it must turn outwards to embrace women and minorities' <14>. If their goal was the involvement of wider sections of the working class, who were they broadening their appeal from? By 1977 the membership of the Tottenham Party stood at 404, three of the wards having less than 50 members. There were 17 affiliated trade union branches, of these only the three Furniture Trade and Allied Trades (FTAT) branches directly

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14. Resolution to Tottenham GMC October 1977.

represented local manufacturing industry, and their delegate
was the union full time official. As far as I have been able
to ascertain the social composition of the Party was such
that it could boast just four manual workers, skilled or
otherwise, on its General Management Committee (GMC) <15>.
At one level this reflected the altered structure of the
working class; the rise of the middle class professional and
the decline of the ''white'' skilled manual worker. The
change in the social weight of these socio-economic
categories of worker is seen in the decline of the skilled
manual workers within the borough, shown in table 2:5. The
semi-skilled white collar worker on the other hand had risen
to the single biggest economically active group in the
borough and was the socio-economic category which dominated
the GMC. This represents further if limited evidence to that
of Whiteley <1983> who found that Labour was being left with
activists who were:

> increasingly more middle class, more,
> ideological in their approach... less concerned
> with pragmatic instrumental questions <16>.

15. The figures for the Tottenham Party are taken from the
1977 Annual report. I have arrived at the figure of four
manual workers from a personal knowledge of the GMC of which
at the time I was a member.

16. Whiteley, P. <1982> The Labour Party in Crisis. Methuen,
London. p.79

The qualification to Whiteley's characterisation of the activists is that they wanted to broaden the Labour Party beyond themselves. In the late 1970s however, for the activists the council was a remote and inert entity. These features of the Labour Party will be examined in detail below.

A radical tradition?

Haringey returned a Labour council in 1971, (as with the rest of London, Labour in Haringey had suffered a 'debacle' at the 1968 local government elections). A review of Haringey council from 1971 to the Conservative Party's election in 1979 shows that its character was somewhat removed from the stereotype of a moribund council held by the new Labour left in the 1980s. The core of the council's activity was a major programme of municipalisation financed by a high rate policy <17>. Within a traditional housing programme it set up in 1976 one of the country's first Housing Action Areas. The production of an Action Report documenting the process with an introduction by a government

17. In their comment on the 1978 local election result the _Hornsey Journal_ wrote, 'a vigorous housing programme has produced much more settled communities in many parts of the borough. Slowly some of the slum clearance programme appears to be giving Labour an electoral advantage'. This programme had been financed through the rates: from 1975 the GLC's _Yearly Statistical Abstract_ shows the borough in the top five for rate rises within London.

minister, points to a view of Haringey as a model of
progress to be emulated by other boroughs <18>. From the
latter part of the 1970s there was an extension of the
council's remit into the areas of equal opportunities and
unemployment.

In 1977 the council produced a statement committing
itself to an Equal Opportunities policy. By the end of the
decade a start had been made on disabilities, gender and
race; the borough was one of the first to employ an Ethnic
Minorities Officer and to set up an Ethnic Minorities Joint
Consultative Committee. The major focus of the late '70s
was, however, unemployment and in particular youth
unemployment. In 1976 the council with Islington, Hackney
and Enfield had been party to creating the North East London
Employment Group. In 1979, in response to a Government
circular on local government employment strategy, the
council set up an 'Officers Employment Group' <19>. By 1979-
80 the council was spending £840,388 on employment projects
and was directly employing 231 youth on various Manpower
Service Commission (MSC) schemes and funding another 50 on

18. Comprehensive Housing service. <1977> First Steps
towards a Housing Action Area LBH. The introduction was by
Reg Freeson Minister for Housing and Construction.

19. Set up in response to Government circular
71/77(DoE/DoI).

the Community Industry Scheme [20]. In 1980 it produced its first Employment Profile: <u>Haringey Employment Review</u> which discussed among other issues setting up unemployed centres and alliances with the voluntary sector [21].

This expansion of the council's role was generated from above; it was directly attributable to the change in government strategy towards the inner-city. According to Friend and Metcalf [1981], in spite of major contradictions this shift in government policy represented a 'genuine break' with the first generation of urban policies; now there was an attempt at reversing the 'flight of industry and consequent economic decline' [22]. It was the support of the government which facilitated this extension of council policy, a point borne out, for example, by the council's Employment Review: the justification for its wide brief came from government which saw the local authority as 'the agent for government in economic regeneration' [23]. A similar pattern of using a higher authority, whether government or

20. Quoted in <u>Haringey Employment Review</u> 1980. table 7.

21. ibid. p.7.

22. Friend, A. and Metcalf, A. [1981]: <u>Slump City The Politics of Mass Unemployment</u>, Pluto Press, London. p.15.

23. Haringey Employment Review 1980 page 2 Cites, Government circular 71/77/ (DoE/DoI).

statute, is also found in the council's pronouncements on equal opportunities. The early policy statements were motivated in terms of the council's moral duty backed up by government statute.

The policies pursued by the council from the mid-1970s show that the Labour Party through the council expanded its mediating role between the working class and state. This entailed an altered political role for the council within a central-local government consensual framework, a development which was to be challenged from two quarters; the Conservative government and the left within the Party and the unions.

The local labour movement was able to influence the actions of the council due to it being the main mediator between the Labour controlled council and the population of the borough. This mediation resides in the fact that in the first instance Labour councillors are a selection of individuals from within the Labour Party carrying out a specialised function within a state institution. In a borough such as Haringey these relations were quite straight forward. A standard structure exists between the Labour Party and Labour Group (often referred to as the Group). The Labour Group has its own internal structure with its own officers, appointing the council leader and the chairs and

vice chairs of committees. The Group's liaison with the Party is carried out through the Local Government Committee (LGC). The LGC is a delegate body comprising nominees from the General Management Committees (GMC's) and the Executive Committees (EC) of the borough's constituency parties (CLPs). Resolutions concerning council policy pass from wards through the GMCs to the LGC; they are then passed to the Group to be acted on. LGC decisions are not, within the Labour Party, constitutionally binding on the Group, accountability being expressed by the possibility of deselecting councillors at selection time. As will be seen, the local Parties were however able to put considerable pressure on councillors to act as direct delegates of the Party and forsake their independence <24>.

Just as council-government relations were part of the post-war consensus, so too were these Labour Group-Labour Party relations (and beyond that relations with the wider movement). The divisions between state and labour movement institutions were blurred, giving rise to an essentially administrative relationship between Labour Group and Labour

24. One of the key difference between the GLC Labour Group and the London boroughs was that the GLC's Labour group had a considerable level of autonomy as accountablity was structured through the 32 constituency parties which selected the GLC councillors.

Party. The Labour government and then on a far wider scale the Conservative Government's attempts to alter local government opened the way for conflict to arise at two levels, the two weakest points, where institutions overlap and are subject to political pressure from the next institution down within the hierarchy; conflict between government and council and between the Labour Group and Party. Government policy unleashed the potential for the repoliticisation of relations between council and its political constituency and began to reassert the division between state and labour movement institutions. How a Labour council reacted to government policy towards councils was then, in the first instance, the product of an internal debate within the Labour Party and broader labour movement <25>. This debate helped reshape the Labour Party-Group and local government union relations and in so doing was itself part of the wider reformulation of 1945 labourism.

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25. Central-local relations have been the major preoccupation of local government theorists. A critique of this one-sided approach is given in chapter six.

1945 labourism

1945 labourism had its origins in the 1930s and was
only consolidated in the late 1940s. Its genesis was the
evolution of a programme around the axis of Keynesianism.
The cohering of the labour movement around an economic
programme which placed the state at its centre opened the
way for the formulation of a programme of social reform
through the state, and for an equation of socialism with
nationalization and stateisation. It was in this manner that
the 19th century radical liberalism which had dominated the
Labour Party (and the working class) was reformulated and
transposed into the inter-war period. The shift to
Keynesianism by working class organisations was part of an
emerging capitalist consensus which stretched through the
Liberal Party to the Butler and Macmillan wing of the
Conservative Party.

The war became the forcing house for political change,
with the 'Keynesian' consensus taking over the running of
the home front, and the radicalising effect of the war on
the working class pushing Labour to the centre of the
consensus. If the 1930s had began to shape the working class
the experience of the war was to crystalise it. This
radicalisation arose because the working class had both won
the war and had been seen to do so which was lost neither on

the ruling class nor the working class itself, who now
demanded recompense. That payment was to be the post-war
consensus. Panitch <1977> has viewed the decision to push
for full employment and the creation of corporate structures
as a conscious choice by the ruling class in the face of
working class power. In the first instance then the
capitalist side of the bargain allowed for the regulation of
working class power. The other side of the contract was what
was ceded to the working class; sanctions were now placed on
capital and a wide range of political and social
institutions were created. This expansion of political
institutions created a sub-system of corporate structures
grafted onto the existing political structures. As such post
war corporatism within a liberal democracy was, as
Panitch <1979> has pointed out 'specific to those groups
which are class based' <26>. These developments represented
material and political advances for the working class. The
concessions achieved allow an analogy to be drawn with
Marx's characterisation of the inroads British trade unions
had made in the early 1860s as 'the political economy of
labour'. In his inaugural address to the International,

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26. Panitch, L. <1986>:'Theories of Corporatism', in,
<u>Working-Class Politics in Crisis Essays on Labour and the
State</u>. Verso, London. p.176

speaking on the victory of the ten hour bill he states :

> the great contest between the blind rule ofthe
> supply and demand laws which form the political
> economy of the middle class and social production
> controlled by foresight which forms the political
> economy of the working class ...it (the ten hour
> bill) was not only a great practical success; it
> was the victory of a principle; it was the first
> time...the political economy of the middle class
> succumbed to the political economy of the working
> class <27>.

As such I view the various institutions of the post-war
state as arising out of working class strength. The totality
of these state institutions and the inter-relations with the
labour movement represented the functioning of the
'political economy of the working class', the heart of 1945
labourism.

In the immediate post-war period these gains had found
a direct identification between the working class and the
labour movement. By the late 1940s a separation was already
underway between the working class and its organisations.
This separation arose as a consequence of the consolidation
of the consensus; the Labour Government had carried out its
reform programme. The Fabian doctrine of society run by an
elite in the best interests of the population had become a
reality. Labour could administer this system in a good, bad,

27. Marx, K. <197> The Inaugural Address of the Association'
in K Marx and F Engles Collected works vol 20, Lawerence @
Wishart, London. p11

or indifferent manner, but had nothing more to say, or more importantly do, once the institutions of the post war state had been laid. Just as Labour had nothing to offer, so the working class within the political economy of labour had little need for governmental representation. The direct substitution of state and state agencies for working class collectivity began a process of blurring the divisions between labour movement, that is independent working class organisations, and state/corporatist institutions. This fostered a working class identification with these state organisations, leading to a growing divergence between the working class and its organisations. This divergence took the form of the withdrawal of the working class from political activity leaving the structures and organisation intact. The anatomy of the political relations between class, labour movement, and the state were not only set in aspic by the consolidation of the consensus, but also hidden though the neutrality of administering the system.

As this work will show, the entire political spectrum of the labour movement had a common starting point, that of the defence of what I have called the political economy of labour. The mosaic of political currents, tendencies and groups within the labour movement, broadly speaking can be divided into two categories. Firstly, those who represented

the lineage of 1945 labourism. I understand them to be in
the tradition described by D Coates, when he stated that,
Keynesianism created, and was perceived as creating, as
early as the 1930s, by the intellectuals who would lead the
post-Attlee labour movement - a middle way between private
capitalism and state socialism' <28>. For those in Haringey,
who I place in this tradition (and I am mainly concerned
with labour councillors) their intellectual status is
unimportant, rather they were the administrators of the
corporate structures and - as the above has shown - rested
on a working class stratification which had by the end of
the 1970s long since ceased to have any substance. Secondly
there were a wide range of opponents who also based
themselves on the defence of the political economy of labour
but who also wished to transcend 1945 labourism. One key
terrain over which these debates were to occur were Haringey
council's trade union branches.

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28. Coates, D. <1989>: <u>The Crisis of Labour Industrial
Relations and the State in Contemporary Britain</u>, Philip
Allan, Oxford. p.13

Haringey council trade union organisation

There were eight major union branches or groups based within the borough which organised an increasing membership.

National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) Education: This union is based on a workplace branch. As with all manual unions from 1977. there was 100% union membership through Union Membership Agreements (UMAs are a form of closed shop). The branch organises manual workers in education, who are split into four groups: caretakers, kitchen staff, school meals supervisory assistants (women who look after the children in the break) and coach escorts (women who escort infant children to school).

General and Municipal Workers Union (G&M): This union is restricted to manual workers in education. Its structure and membership replicate those of NUPE. Each branch has approximately 50% of the workforce.

NUPE Manual: Workplace based, it organises all manual workers outside of education. This breaks down into several different production groups: cleaning (mainly road sweepers and dustmen), parks, council drivers, home helps, porters and caretakers (outside of schools).

Transport and General Workers Union (T&G): Its structure and membership replicate those of NUPE Manual. The membership of these two unions has fluctuated wildly over the years; for example, in the 1970s the T&G was a peripheral union but now it organises nearly half of the available workforce.

National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO): It is the main white collar union with over 2,500 members in 1978, spread across all council services and organising across all the varied white collar grades. Until 1982 it was based around a workplace branch (that is borough based) which was then replaced by a hybrid shop stewards system, which retained elements of the old branch structure with a stewards structure superimposed.

Managerial, Administrative, Technical and Supervisory, Association (MATSA): The clerical section of the G&M. It was formed in 1983 as a break away from NALGO.

National Union of Teachers (NUT): By far the largest teaching union in the borough. It comprised one branch covering most of the schools in the borough.

Craft Committee: It was the first to have a shop steward, as opposed to a branch-based structure. It organises all non-supervisory DLO workers and comprises the Electrical, Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union (EEPTU) and the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT). The overwhelming majority of workers are in UCATT.

In the mid-1970s individuals to whom I give the generic title of 'branch reformers' emerged within a majority of union branches (the exceptions were the G@M and TGWU and NUPE General Manual). These reformers, who were part of a much broader left-wing development encompassing the Labour Party, wished to develop a more militant trade unionism, as one of my respondents from NALGO put it, to transform the branch 'from a staff association to a trade union'. In attempting this they confronted a number of substantial problems, which militated against a simple equation of numbers with trade union homogeneity. The workforce more than adequately complied with Terry's apt description of local government workers as 'the fragmented workforce' <29>.

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29. Terry, M. <1982>: 'Organising a fragmented Workforce', <u>British Journal of Industrial Relations</u>, Vol. XX No 1.

The fragmented workforce

Haringey's workforce was fragmented in several different ways: i) different production groups within unions, ii) small workgroup size and geographical dispersion, and iii) the size of the part-time workforce.

i) NALGO and the general manual unions organise a wide range of disparate production groups; that is, these unions organise horizontally across a spectrum of vertically separate production processes and council services. This has a fragmentary effect on the branches. The union, rather than having any internal cohesion, represents an external unity which has to mesh together a range of different interests.

ii) The small size of workgroups and the geographical dispersion of the workforce are remarkably uniform characteristics of all the unions. Haringey covers 11 1/2 square miles with approximately 500 workplaces; these can range from major office complexes which employ upward of 200 people, down to small building sites which might have two operatives. While the degree of dispersion varies enormously depending on the type of work undertaken, a comparison between the overall size of the workforce and the concentration of workers shows how little concentrated it is. For example, in 1980 the DLO had just under 500 operatives split 50:50 between those on building sites and

yard-based maintenance workers. The average size of
workgroups of site workers was ten. While maintenance
workers are split into three depots of roughly 150 each, in
reality they are even more fragmented, working either as
individual jobbing craftsmen or in pairs, only visiting the
yards once a day to pick up their workload. Of course, some
groups of workers have an obvious cohesion, such as road
sweepers and dustmen who not only work from a yard but
within clearly defined work groups. The biggest single
production group of 2,000 education manual workers are
spread over a hundred schools, giving an average of 20
workers per school. While there are a number of office
complexes which employ over 200 people, these are often
composite places of work, with workers divided by service
and department.

iii) The problem of fragmentation is compounded by the level
of part-time work. This takes on a number of different
connotations. Not only, as might be expected, are the
majority women (table 2:6), but part-time jobs fall
disproportionately on the manual unions (table 2:7).

Table 2:6

Division between male and female full and part-time workers:

	Males			Females			
Year	full time	part time	total males	full time	part time	total females	grand total
66.	3,538	196	3,734	2,352	2,128	4,480	8,214
67.	3,614	210	3,824	2,376	2,204	4,580	8,404
68.	3,502	267	3,796	2,273	2,573	4,846	8,615
69.	3,291	241	3,532	2,168	2,516	4,702	8,234
70.	3,239	198	3,437	2,568	2,356	4,924	8,361
71.	3,211	484	3,695	2,675	2,714	5,389	9,048
72.	3,436	539	3,975	3,018	2,859	5,875	9,852
73.	3,448	463	3,911	3,127	3,243	6,370	10,281
75.	3,808	589	4,397	3,167	3,999	7,166	11,563
76.	3,900	403	4,303	3,245	3,722	6,967	11,270

Source: GLC Annual statistical abstract.

The first point to note about table 2:5 is that between 1966 and 1976 employment rose by 3,056 an increase of 37%; of this 81% was amongst women, consolidating their majority position within the workforce, which rose from 54.5% in 1966 to 61.8% in 1976. This is more than offset, however, by the growing numbers of part-time women workers. While female employment increased by 2,487, only 893 of these jobs - or 35% - were full time; 1,593 of these women or 64% were part-time. This tendency for women workers to be part-time is even starker when viewed as a proportion of the total workforce: in 1966 it stood at 25.9%, by 1976 it had risen to 33%. By contrast, the proportion of part-time male workers was 2.3% in 1966 rising to 3.5% in 1976. So alongside the consolidation of women as the majority of

employees was that of their position as part-time workers, rising from 47.5% of all female workers in 1966 to 53.4% in 1976. The contrasting figures for male workers were 5.2% rising to 9.2%. The size of the part-time workforce represents a dilution of the impressive growth in local authority employment in the borough, rising from 28.4% of the total workforce in 1966 to 34.4% in 1976. The unions were confronted with organising approximately a third of the workforce who were part-time. Table 2:7 shows this was largely a problem of the manual unions.

Table 2:7

Full and part time division between manual and white collar

| | Manual | | | Non-Manual | | | |
Year	full time	part time	total	full time	part time	total	total all
77	2,216	2,928	5,144	5,144	1,194	6,338	11,482
78	2,209	2,932	5,142	5,258	1,424	6,682	11,823

Source: GLC: Annual statistical Abstract.

Not only were non-manual workers in the majority; in addition, only a few were part-time workers, which stood at 18% split between teachers and white collar. Among manual workers, however, from the mid-1970s part-time workers have represented a majority: 56% in 1977, split 50-50 between the

general and education branches. Table 2:8 shows the relation

between unions and these categories of fragmentation.

Table 2:8

**Fragmentation, Concentration and Part Time Density of local
authority workers in Haringey.**

Union groups	Production* groups: Same	Multi	Service** groups: Same	Multi	Average work-group size 1-10	11-20	21-30	% of part time workers 0	10-30	31-70
NUT	X		X				X	X		
Craft	X		X		X			X		
White collar		X		X		X			X	
Ed manual		X		X		X				X
Gen manual		X		X	X					X

*The composition of a 'production group' is made up of all
workers of differing occupations who are required for the
provision of a particular service. For example in a school
the ancillary production of an educational service requires
the combined labours of cleaners, school-meals providers,
caretakers, etc.

**The composition of 'service groups' is contingent upon the
council's organisation of services; for example, in Haringey
the functions of a school are divided between the School
Meals Department and the Education Department.

Outside a common pattern of relatively small

workgroups, table 2:8 shows that it is not possible to

discern any other common pattern between unions around the

categories of fragmentation discussed above. This

fragmentation gave rise to a range of what I classify as

structural problems for the branch reformers in creating and

maintaining an authority based organisation. Fragmentation also created differentials between branches. For example, both NALGO and NUPE Education had to contend with a fragmented membership, but the problem was augmented for NUPE with a part-time membership of 70%. In their attempts to develop authority-based organisations the branch reformers were confronted by a series of problems which, like fragmentation, were specific to local government. It was this specificity and the radically different nature of authority-based organisation from its manufacturing counterpart that has exercised the concern of the main body of local government industrial relations literature. What follows is an illustration of my understanding of and development of the main themes taken up by the literature.

Comprehending local government trade unionism

The growth in the numbers of local government shop stewards has been noted by many commentators. For example, Somerton put their number at 9,500 in 1971 and by 1977 NUPE alone claimed 10,000 <30>. With this phenomenal growth there has been a limited number of important case studies into

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30. M, Somerton. <1977> 'Trade Union and Industrial Relations in Local Government', <u>Studies for Trade Unionists</u>. Vol 3, No 11 September.

local authority based organisation and the role of shop
stewards: Marchington & Armstrong <1982>, and primarily the
work of Terry <1983> and Kessler <1986>. These studies have
drawn two broad conclusions. Firstly, the way in which shop
stewards emerged, their role and relations to their members
has been shown to be very different from their counterparts
in manufacturing. The difference is so vast that Terry
commented that:

> the emergence of shop stewards in local
> government forces us to revise or expand our
> ideas about their development and behaviour <31>.

One of the central differences between manufacture and local
government is the lack of relevance of the workgroup. Within
the local government context it is superseded by the
occupational group. Kessler has stated that:

> the existence of occupational groups in
> relatively independent services suggests that
> such terms as 'fragmentation' and 'unity' have
> very different meanings in the local authority
> context than say in private manufacture, where
> despite undoubted potential for sectionalism
> workers are usually integrated into a single
> production process <32>.

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31. Terry, M. <1982>: 'Organising a fragmented Workforce',
op.cit.

32. Kessler, I. <1986>: 'Local Government Shop Stewards
Revisited', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol
XXIV No 3, November.

The importance of the occupational group is derived from two sources. Firstly the point alluded to by Kessler that is defining a category of worker through a specific council service. This means that categories of council employees, for example cleaners, by working in relatively independent services are split up into a number of distinct occupational groups, such as cleaners working within the schools service.

Secondly, although the Whitley structure allowed little scope for localised bargaining, its substantive nature was not conducted between the single employer and representatives from individual workplaces but representatives employed to negotiate on behalf of the multi- workplaces within the borough, for example, for the school cleaners spread across the borough's 100 schools.(Of course issues arose which were of concern to a single - workplace or individual such as the need to handle grievances.) Rather for an authority-based organisation the optimum type of negotiations were on behalf of an entire occupational group. For example, if an under-staffing agreement was negotiated for school cleaners, it would apply to that occupational group rather than any particular workplace or the cleaners colleague within the workplace, the school caretaker.

The type of hierarchical production process and the nature of localised bargaining expands the basic bargaining category beyond the workplace to the occupational group. However, the form of localised bargaining and the nature of the production process provide a boundary against a collectivity wider than the service-based occupational group <33>. Consequently, although it would appear from the close relations between the different types of work undertaken that it would create a relatively homogeneous workforce, the organisation of production into services creates divisions between workers carrying out similar tasks, a division reaffirmed by authority-based organisations who bargain for occupational groups defined by service rather than by job. Similarly, the question of a

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33. For white collar staff the use of the basic Whitley bargaining category for pay and conditions related to grades which cut across service divisions. This created a tension as to where the basic form of collectivity existed, whether across services through grades or via the organisation of production into services. For a number of reasons which are discussed extensively below, the former was how the branch originally organised negotiations. From the mid-1970s the pattern began to change when negotiations began to take place around service-based demands, which largely corresponded with occupational groups, such as social workers or housing officers. As I shall show, this tension was never fully resolved, since service organisation highlighted the ambiguity of organising what amounted to two hierarchically distinct occupational groups, managers and support staff.

collectivity arising between service - deliverers and
ancillary staff is not only impeded by the hierarchical
division of labour but in the majority of cases there is no
physical link between ancillary functions and service -
delivery. They either work at different times and therefore
do not meet each other, or ancillary workers service a range
of different occupational groups without any common
linkages. From the viewpoint of both an authority-based
union organisation and their members the occupational group
represented the optimum form of collectivity.

The replacement of the workgroup by the much larger
constituency of the occupational group is the basis for
comprehending the distinct local government characteristics
of what I categorise as the sociology of domestic
organisation: that is the relations between the authority-
based union organisation (whether this was based on a branch
or a shop stewards committee) and the members <34>. At the
centre of this is the ambiguity concerning the role of shop
stewards. Since the early 1960s it has been considered that
the only role regarded as being central was that of

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34. Kessler who also makes this point adds an important
caveat that the difference is with manufacturing and that
many of the characteristics would be applicable to other
governmental unions.

negotiator <35>. The emergence of authority-based
organisations brought into question this key role for the
steward (A point first noted by Fryer et al. 1974). Within
the local government context both negotiations, and the
equally important issue of custom and practice are no longer
conducted on behalf of a single workplace and definable
workgroup but ideally on behalf of an occupational group.
Herein lies the ambiguity around the role of the steward
within the sociology of the domestic organisation. The
attempts to theorise this position have been far less
successful than the more descriptive statements of the
ambiguity surrounding the role of the local government
steward. On the basis of this narrative I have attempted to
provide a slightly different framework for viewing the role
of the local government shop steward.

The second point the research has shown up is that the
development of authority- based organisations was very
different from manufacturing. Both Terry and Kessler have
addressed the problem of how shop stewards structures
evolved among the fragmented workforce. Terry's research

35. A less forceful and somewhat broader role was ascribed
to stewards prior to the emergence of semi-independence from
the official union structures from the late 1950s. For
example contrast Goodman, & Whittingham, 1973 study <u>Shop
Stewards</u> with the 1947 study by Barou, 1947 <u>British Trade
Unions</u>.

showed that where an effective authority wide organisation developed 'one individual was crucial to its success and to its continued existence' <36>. He categorised such an individual as the 'key steward'. The key steward had three attributes; mobility, access to members and 'access to decision-taking levels of management'. For the key steward to emerge there had to be managerial sponsorship of the workplace organisation. When management chose to strengthen local organisation for their own ends the 'key steward' was given the necessary support <37>. For Kessler managerial sponsorship was both expanded and refined to include a political dimension of the active participation of councillors and the necessity for a centralised personal department. Kessler can also be said to have developed his own variant of a sponsorship thesis arising from within the union structure, that of the 'artificial imposition of a representational figure'. For this to arise a catalyst was necessary:

> for instance some form of industrial action or
> an outside influence, usually a branch officer or
> full-time officer impressing upon the workers the
> need and the value of a collective response <38>.

36. Terry, M. <1982>: 'Organising a fragmented Workforce',
op.cit.
37. ibid
38. Kessler, I. <1986>:'Local Government Shop Stewards
Revisited', op.cit.

The centrality of the occupational group, the ambiguous role
of the steward and the question of what agency could develop
an authority-based organisation were all issues that the
reformers confronted. In doing so, they were to
fundamentally alter the sociology of the domestic
organisation. In carrying out this change they also had to
confront another question that the literature has tended to
subsume into the sociology of the domestic organisation,
that is, the question of economic leverage <39>.

Within the local government context it is the case that
the very notion of economic leverage is problematic. The use
values created were non-strategic as they lacked relations
with any other sector of the productive process. This placed
the branches in a relatively weak bargaining position as
opposed, for example, to rail workers or miners. The concept
of 'economic leverage' itself is something of a misnomer,
(although I continue to use it for lack of a suitable
alternative) since the union-council bargaining relationship
was removed from the market with council revenue taken from
existing surplus, government grants and rates. By not

39. By viewing the steward from the sociological vantage
point of the domestic organisation the steward's role is
cast as a democratic question that is who do stewards
represent. The other side to this is the type of economic
leverage open to these workers and the interaction with the
domestic organisation based on the stewards ability to weild
economic leverage.

creating exchange value, the impact of industrial action, as
an indication of trade union power, has the reverse effect
on the employer, saving revenue through the non-payment of
wages. Within this general framework, the Haringey unions
will be shown to possess economic leverage, and inside
individual branches to exhibit highly differentiated levels
of economic leverage. Linking together the sociology of the
authority-based organisation with the notion of bargaining
power provides a starting point to understanding the dynamic
behind the type of branches that the reformers in Haringey
confronted and the substance behind many of the issues which
were to arise within the reformed branches <40>.

The nature of the Haringey branches

Within Haringey workplace branches predated the
borough's formation: for instance the T&G and NUT date back
to the turn of the century. Given the importance of national
bargaining to local government unions this in itself would

40. Consequentially while Kessler's explanation for the lack
of organisation among female manual workers (like home
helps) through an argument around gender and fragmentation,
is valid, I have tried to take the argument one stage
further. I have sought to comprehend the subordination of
female manual workers to the dominant occupational groups as
a relationship which is primarily economic in character. I
will show, for instance, how this worked itself through in
the case of the subordination of manual women workers in the
schools (cleaners and dinner ladies) to the caretakers. One
important issue this raises is the articulation of
occupational hierarchy within the unions and gender.

not have taken on great significance, except for the
peculiarity of the negotiating structure within the London
area. From the borough's inception local Whitley Committees
were created between the branches and the council, known as
Local Joint Works Committees (or Staff Side in the case of
NALGO). This meant that from 1965 the branch leaders carried
out a local bargaining role within the context of tight
national agreements, creating a considerable amount of
autonomy for the branches from full time officers
(FTO) <41>. This bears out the point made by
Boraston et al. <1977> that 'a relatively narrow scope for
workplace bargaining may assist workgroup organisation to be
self-reliant within permitted limits' <42>. With the
exception of the Craft Committee and the NUT, who organised
single occupational groups, all of the other branches were
dominated by clearly definable occupational groups: dustmen
in the case of the General Manual branches; caretakers among
the Education manual branches; and senior managers in
NALGO.

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41. Even in the mid-1980s there was still a considerable
difference in the level of autonomy from FTOs afforded to
London as opposed to the rest of the county.
42. Boraston, I., Clegg, H. and Rimmer, M. <1975>: <u>Workplace
and Union: A Study of Local Relations in Fourteen Unions</u>.
Heinemann London. page 179.

In spite of the very different sociology of the their domestic organisations, the common denominator which exists between local government and manufacturing is that the basic building block of the branches is the exercise of economic leverage. This commonality has enabled the utilisation of a manufacturing frame of reference to conceptualise the sectionalisms within the Haringey branches and the subsequent alterations that they underwent.

Batstone et al. <1977> argued that if the union is important for determining the workers wages' and conditions, that is effecting the workers' 'life chances', then a domestic organisation would have considerable 'institutional centrality'. They stated:

> We may talk of the union having a high degree of institutional centrality when it is importantly involved in determining the wages, conditions, and work of its members. For such centrality leads to 'mobilization of bias' in favour of the union. This term refers to a 'set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures ("rules of the game") that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others' <43>.

In this study, what is observed first is a 'sectional centrality' which I define as occurring when a definable

43. Batstone, E. Boraston, I. and Frenkel, S. <1977>: <u>Shop Stewards in Action: The Organisation of Workplace Conflict and Accommodation</u>. Blackwell, Oxford. p 10.

occupational group is able to shape branch structures to maximise its own sectional interests to the detriment of other definable occupational groups. Batstone et al. touch on the question of sectional centrality, noting that this can occur when certain groups of workers occupy strategic positions in production. They claim that in this context workplace institutions will 'probably change to accommodate and recognise power of this kind' <44>. Interestingly enough they cite Turner et al's. <1967> study of car workers as an example of this type of domestic organisation <45>. For the car worker, caretaker, and senior manager alike what generated the very different types of domestic organisation and local bargaining relation was their ability to exercise economic leverage. The common denominator between sectional centrality in manufacturing and local government unions was then the exercise of bargaining power. The major division between Haringey and the car workers alluded to by Batstone et al. was that within local government that exercise of power was not an expression of the interest of the workgroup but specific occupational groups. The basic explanatory framework I have developed for explaining sectional centrality also unifies the two levels on which I have

44   Ibid   p.10
45. Ibid. p 11.

viewed local government unions; the sociology of the
domestic organisation and the question of economic leverage.
The unifying factor is found in the nature of the local
government production process.

Table 2:8 has shown the entire council workforce was
fragmented, and as such all branches had a fragmented
membership. This universal character of fragmentation
obscures however a more precise understanding; behind the
fragmented workforce was the fragmentation of the
occupational group. The basic type of production in local
government consists of the provision of services either to
individuals or small groups of consumers throughout a
borough. For the council there is a need to provide a range
of outlets for any particular service. When this is looked
at from the viewpoint of the labour process, what is
observed is not a single production process where an
occupational group carries out different coordinated tasks,
as is normally the case in manufacture, but the replication
of the same task at many workplaces across the borough. Each
individual or group of service workers works at the point at
which a part of the service is consumed, the completion of a
cycle of service delivery, whether it be teaching or school
meals. A number of services, such as street cleaning, do not

have this immediate relationship with consumers; however, the basic argument remains applicable as the effect of the division of labour is also to fragment these occupational groups. A similar pattern of fragmentation was followed in the case of ancillary and white collar staff, to take an example from each; school secretaries and school caretakers. Both occupational groups are fragmented by the number of schools within the borough. For the council, however, in all cases each point of service delivery and its ancillary and administrative support represents only part of the whole; this division of labour creates the main characteristic of local government, the fragmented workforce. Behind this stands the main problem for the unions; the production process spontaneously fragments the core grouping for the union, that of the occupational group.

While all occupational groups were fragmented by the production process, sectional centrality arose from among those occupational groups who could overcome the spontaneous fragmentation imposed on them by the production process. In doing so they achieved a collectivity and came to dominate their branches. An integral part of sectional centrality was that to varying degree the other occupational groups within a branch remained fragmented along the lines given by the production process. This meant that beneath the surface of

the formal equality of union organisation, the majority of
branch members remained fragmented as they were unable to
achieve a collectivity of their occupational group. The
criteria for achieving sectional centrality varied between
the different categories of union branch.

Within the General branches the key differences between
occupational groups was between those who were depot-based
and those who were not. It was the depot which provided an
arena for both formal and informal interaction among
fragmented occupational groups. This allowed for the
exercise of economic leverage to be built from the depot
upwards and the dominance among depot-based occupational
groups of the more economically powerful dustmen.

Without the depot as a focus for the majority of
workers there was no other route to forming a cohesion for
their occupational group. My research shows that the
exceptions to this occurred where two key variables existed:
the ability to accrue free time during the working day and
economic leverage. Both were characteristics of caretakers
and senior managers; free time allowed them to run their
branches and both had considerable economic leverage. While
the prerequisite for the dustmen's power was based on
forming a collectivity afforded by the depot and expressed
through the union branch, for the caretakers and senior

managers their ability to exercise power was ceded to them, as individuals, by their location in production. The branch was far more an adjunct to that leverage than a precondition for the expression of leverage.

Without the combination of the interaction of the two variables, economic leverage and free time, occupational groups were incapable of overcoming their fragmentation; they could neither spontaneously generate an organisation of the occupational group as a means of overcoming their lack of bargaining rights nor could they generate bargaining as an occupational group which would have allowed them to develop their organisation. This created a vacuum which represented the problem for the branch reformers in moving the branches from sectional to institutional centrality. What agency would generate bargaining for the different occupational groups and what interaction would this entail in relation to devolving workplace organisation? This work will reveal a more complex picture than at present exists from the work of Terry and Kessler but will also show elements of both Terry's managerial sponsorship and, in particular, Kessler's 'artificial imposition of a representational figure'. Alongside these branches constructed around sectional centrality was the existence of an 'informal bargaining system'. Formally the workforce

confronted an extremely hierarchical management, underneath this formality however was a general lack of control over the labour process, which gave rise to unofficial negotiations.

Unofficial Negotiations

There were two reasons why management lacked control over the production process. Firstly, for the majority of manual workers the labour process was characterised by 'formal' rather than 'real' subordination, in the sense that neither were workers placed under the direct supervision of managers in the immediate process of production (not least due to their dispersal and fragmentation) nor, given the extremely low level of technology, was there any substantial base for the technical subordination of this kind of labour <46>. Second, for all workers the organisation of work was removed from the discipline of market mechanisms, leaving

46. Elger <1979> in his critique of Braverman has commented on the complexities surrounding Marx's use and development of the terms formal and real subordination. I do not attempt to put forward a view on this complex question except to note that the present day usage of these terms takes place at least a century after Marx's usage of them to describe the transition from manufacture to modern industry. As such, the use of this terminology can only be an analogous one and suffers the limitations of all analogies. My main concern throughout this work is with the interaction between control and resistance surrounding the labour process.

the managerial functions as defined by Edwards of
'coordination and the exercise of authority' <47> to be met
by other means. The replacement of market relations by the
regulations of public bodies and internal council auditing
created a range of problems for management's enforcement of
work discipline. Work was carried out on a cost plus basis,
with any increase in costs being met by the council. If
tasks only have notional costs which can overrun without any
implications for the workers or the service management, this
removes a major imperative from management and with it a
discipline on the labour process. Another form of external
constraint was removed due to the use values created by
local government workers lacking any relation with other
sectors of the productive process. Lastly, the market which
the council faced was comprised generally of atomised
consumers who had little power to impose their will over the
work performed. When the council was the monopoly supplier
of these services it could neither lose its market share nor
incur losses. Without the market, the linkage between
technical coordination and the exercise of managerial
authority was essentially through a set of political
determinants. These determinants had a liberal ethos,

47. Edwards, R. <1979>: <u>Contested Terrain: The
Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century</u>,
Heinemann London.

expressed in the form of good working practices and benign
disciplinary codes, which derived from the more general
conditions of the post-war consensus. The interaction
between the political dimension and relations of production
formed a system of control which was extremely hierarchical
and bureaucratic, as a mechanism to overcome the limitations
of formal subordination and the lack of market mechanism
governing the productive process. Against this was workers'
spontaneous struggles within the labour process.

The interaction between the forms of control open to
management and the workers' spontaneous struggle created the
preconditions for a struggle over time to take place. For
the workers the main element of informal bargaining was the
winning of free time from the working day, summed up by one
of my respondents as a 'time bonus', a term which I shall
also employ. For the worker, the importance of time bonuses
arose negatively out of the fact that bargaining over money
was largely ruled out, and positively because time could
substitute for money. On the side of management, there was
an attempt to integrate workers' struggles over time into a
form of control by bargaining free time in exchange for work
and discipline. Time, apart from being an area of
contention, also represented an area of convergence between
worker and management which allowed the time bonus to

represent the unofficial bargaining counter between workers and management. In so far as the time bonus was an element in the workers' lives, it was an individualistic and sub-trade union relation with management The branches were incidental, the bargain was struck between workers and foremen, generating a division between workers and branch.

The problem stated

Those within NUPE Education and NALGO who wished to reform the branches were confronted by; a fragmented workforce, an extremely bureaucratic and hierarchical management structure, a complex and extensive informal bargaining system, and most importantly an existing workplace organisation based on sectional centrality. The problem for the branch reformers in NUPE Education and NALGO can be summarized as to how they were to shift the branches from a sectional to an institutional centrality. The journey from sectional to institutional centrality was one largely initiated and carried out by workers whose conceptions of trade unionism were based on the manufacturing model of shop floor organisation, the core of which, particularly within NALGO, was the building of a shop stewards system which was equated with class and power. In attempting, and failing, to replicate the manufacturing model the branch reformers were

however to create a form of workplace trade unionism
specific to local government, one where the far more
ambiguous role of workplace organisation was to become
apparent, and the interaction between politics and trade
unionism was to take on increasing significance. For the
change within these branches not only signified an
alteration in their domestic arrangements, it also
represented an illustration of how a fragment of the labour
movement and the working class altered and attempted to come
to terms with the ending of the post-war consensus. Such
''weighty'' matters were not considered, as the branches
entered what was uncharted territory.

The Evolution of NALGO: 1965-1980

An overview of the Branch

Haringey NALGO was formed in 1965 by the amalgamation
of the Hornsey, Tottenham and Wood Green branches and part
of the Metropolitan District branch which covered
education. While no figures are available for the old
branches (almost certainly Tottenham and Wood Green Labour-
run authorities would have had the majority of members)
their combined membership totalled 1,273 <1>. Elections
were held at the Annual General Meeting for branch
officers, the most important being the chair, secretary,
and treasurer. Annual elections also occurred for
departmental representatives which took place on a
department-wide basis; for example all members of the
housing department were eligible to vote for their
representatives. These two groups - the branch officers and
departmental representatives - formed the Executive
Committee which met bi-monthly to run and administer the
branch. On a daily basis these functions were carried out
by the key branch officers primarily the secretary. The

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1. The figures for branch membership have been complied from
branch subscriptions returns at NALGO HQ.

executive also formed a number of sub-committees which were
accountable to it. The most important of these comprised
the NALGO members sitting on 'staff-side'. From its
formation until 1980 the branch secretary was Norman Child;
as with all the other leading branch officers, Child was a
senior council officer. I will use the generic title of
'the old leadership' to refer to this grouping. It was not
until 1980 that the first branch officer, the secretary,
obtained job release to carry out full time union duties.

The formation of Haringey created a large branch, the
membership of which was divided into two major occupational
groups; support staff, and core managerial grades. The
managerial grades were those of Serving Officer (SO) and the
grade above that, Principal Officer (PO). The position of a
worker within these grades, for example being a PO2 as
opposed to PO3, corresponded to a definition of
responsibility which equated with either direct supervisory
or administrative responsibility. (From the mid-70s an
important sub-division among the professional staff emerged
which is taken up below). The overwhelming majority of
workers were concentrated in the three town halls of the
boroughs which had formed Haringey. This allowed the branch
secretary to cover workplace problems. At the time of

writing, Roger Roles, the council's senior insurance officer
and for many years a member of NALGO's National Executive,
was the last of the old leadership still working for the
borough. He described the secretary's role in the 1960s and
1970s as being 'much more involved in the day to day
operation because the branch was so much smaller'. He saw
this in marked contrast to the 1980s:

> I get the impression that because of the
> various procedures they have these days the
> lot of the branch secretary is now on a much
> more corporate basis. He hasn't got the time
> to be involved in departmental issues unless
> they have an across-the-board effect <2>.

The branch minutes, in comparison with those of any other of
the borough's branches are a model of clarity, betraying the
occupations of their writers. According to Roles:

> The minutes were precise because people in
> negotiations knew that words meant things,
> should and shall, shall and will have two
> different connotations, one is mandatory and
> the other isn't. When you are negotiating it
> is essential that you get those right,
> because at some stage, some bugger's going to
> challenge you <3>.

These minutes provide a window into a well ordered and
regulated branch, the pace of which was relaxed and whose
tenor was one of intimacy. A sense of its character may be

2. Roger Roles side 'a' [hereafter RR].

3. RR. side 'a'.

gained from the minutes of one of the first discussions of the newly formed branch, which took place between the treasurer and other executive members about centralising branch records:

> The treasurer considered the keeping by him of a central record of members and subscriptions paid, would be essential to the efficient carrying out of his duties as treasurer <4>.

The branch was both hierarchical and paternalistic, though this is a view which Roles strongly contested. 'It certainly wasn't paternalistic', he said, 'some of the debates at the executive were very vitriolic and of a very high standard. The quality of argument and debate in those days was very high' <5>. Yet in his defence a picture emerges of a hierarchical structure with a clear line of command:

> The officers were doing the leg work. They were coming back with positive recommendations... It may sound critical, but I went to this years AGM [1987]... You had motions which were being put, with no positive recommendation either way. I think within the branch the branch officers have got to lead; if you stay silent it can be taken you are acquiescing. It certainly didn't happen in those days <6>.

4. Executive Committee minute [here after EC minute] October 1965.

5. RR. side 'a'.

6. RR. side 'a'.

Within this framework it is possible to point to certain bureaucratic excesses within the branch. This is revealed in the following account of how the leading branch officers amplified their authority over the executive. The branch leadership and other senior council officers dominated Staff-Side. They used this negotiating body as an 'inner cabinet', where its deliberations remained confidential from other executive members <7>.

The length of tenure of the branch leaders, their position as senior council officers, the branches' paternalism and hierarchy were manifestations of a branch which functions on the basis of a sectional centrality in the interests of the core managerial grades <8>.

Sectional Centrality

At the centre of the characterisation of the branch as being dominated by the sectional centrality of the managers was the economic domination by the core managerial grades.

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7. This point was made by Jeff Rudin, who was the first member of the new branch leadership to be elected to the Executive committee (see below).

8. A similar length of tenure in the leadership is observable in the borough's other branches, including my other case study NUPE Education.

Roger Roles did not dispute this point. In defending it he emphasised that:

> Whilst some would argue that initially the
> top echelons of your grades benefited, in
> actual fact if you can, what I would call lift
> the lid of a pot and create a vacuum, you've
> got room to bring other grades up and that
> certainly happened <9>.

His claim that the raising of the top echelons benefited other grades would be strongly contested by my other respondents. For example Ray Gillard, a senior personnel manager who worked for the borough since 1970 pointed out that the type of negotiations the branch entered into created a tendency where:

> Agreements were aimed towards the middle group
> of employees, and a lot of the lower grades
> were left out, because they didn't have much
> clout. Secondly most of the agreements were
> unrelated to equal opportunities or anything
> like that. They were all based on improving the
> lot of core officers, white males. A typical
> staff association <10> .

The sectional centrality of the branch can be said to have been institutionalised in 1974 with the establishment

9. RR. side 'a'.

10. Ray Gillard side'a'[hereafter RG]. It was only in the latter part of the 1970s that the emphasis in negotiations began to shift towards lower paid workers. That was the support staff and the lowest end of the SO grade. Opposition to this shift was to underlie the break away (which Gillard was part of) from NALGO and the formation of the MATSA branch in 1983.

of the 'Haringey Job Evaluation Scheme'. This scheme arose
from the London Whitley Job Evaluation Scheme, and
represented the growth of local bargaining based on criteria
for an individual's incremental advancement between and
within SO and PO grades. The scheme provided a mechanism for
the advancement of individual workers generating a form of
wage drift between services. Inbuilt into this system and
therefore the life chances of the managerial grades was the
NALGO branch (who according to Gillard virtually designed
the entire scheme) which not only compiled the claim for
upgrading but also jointly heard any appeal <11>.

It was not that the core managerial grades were endowed
with this strong bargaining position but the manner they
used it which provides the basis for my characterisation of
sectional centrality. The impact of bargaining across
service for the managers epitomised by the 1974 agreement
effectively split the branch into two between the core
managerial group and the support staff. For the managerial
grades the cross-service bargaining mechanism was the means
by which they asserted their economic leverage which

11. Although the advancement made by Haringey's core
managers may have been unusual, it was not exceptional.
Other NALGO branches benefited from the internal labour
market. The best localised package I have been able to
identify was not negotiated by a union branch but by the
GLC's staff association

excluded the support staff (and certain professionals who
were excluded, a point taken up below). This was the basis
on which the relations between dominant and subordinate
occupational groups functioned within the branch structures.
It was this cross-service bargaining structure which
obstructed the emergence of service-based bargaining. For
the support staff these existing bargaining relations
represented the mechanism by which the union structure
fragmented them. This did not take the form of a
bureaucratic exclusion from the branch structures, but was
in some ways more insidious. While they were able to take
part in the formal trappings of the branch they were
excluded from the ''real branch'' by the bargaining relation
and in their fragmented state had no means by which to
reorientate the branches' negotiating priorities. It was
this which generated the branch's characteristics and the
way in which it was constructed. Not least among these
characteristics was the role of the departmental
representatives.

Departmental representatives 1965-1975
The issue of workplace representatives became an important
and controversial one from the middle of the 1970s, but in
the preceding decade they were a quiescent and uncontentious

part of the branch structure. Departmental representatives
differed from stewards in that they were elected to cover a
whole department and accountable to the branch executive
rather than the workplace. Their main role and indeed origin
was that of collecting union dues. Roles saw them as central
to the fabric of the branch:

> it was the departmental representatives' duty
> to collect the subscriptions each month; that
> meant they had to go and see the members each
> month; that's when complaints were made. You
> were very close to your members <12>.

In many unions from a similar starting point, the
collector had evolved into the more authoritative and
independent figure of the shop steward. Clegg <1954> was
able to make this point:

> In many industries there is no official
> provision for a shop steward... The need for a
> spokesman to deal with management on the many
> trivial issues which arise is not thereby
> removed. It is easy to see that matters of
> this sort are likely to be brought to the
> attention of the collecting steward who is
> probably the only officer of the union on hand.
> Unless he refuses the task with determination
> he is likely to become the regular spokesman of
> his fellows <13>.

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12. RR side 'b'.

13. Clegg, H, A. <1954>: <u>General Union A Study of the
National Union of General and Municipal Workers</u>. Basil
Blackwell, Oxford. p.111.

I could find no evidence of departmental representatives
blurring into a shop steward's role, or any substantial
tension between them and the leadership. Rather it was their
weakness which is observable.

Departmental representatives did, however, begin to
expand from their original function as collectors. This
embraced such minor things as distributing Public Service
(NALGO's national magazine) and the branch magazine to the
most important task which they acquired, that of calling
departmental meetings. It is not possible to date the start
of these or their frequency. Roles was undoubtedly right
when he stated that 'I think these things develop, don't
they, as issues come up' <14>. Their ad hoc nature is borne
out by the minutes which mention them only at times of
disruption, for example, a meeting of the housing department
in 1970 over the major issue of ending Saturday
working <15>. Their absence from the executive committee or
sub-committee minutes, shows them to be a weak counterpoint
to the executive.

This lack of contention surrounding the role of
departmental representatives was partly due to the branch's

14. RR. side 'a'.
15. EC. minute June 1970.

negotiating structure which excluded any relation between
negotiations and the departmental representatives. The
formal role of the departmental representatives can then be
seen to obscure the power relations within the branch by
providing representation disconnected from economic power.
It may well have been that members felt dissatisfied with
their branch but understood that their representatives had
no power to alter their situation.

The impact of industrial unrest on the Branch 1970-1974

A characteristic of this period was the extension of
industrial unrest from those unions based within the
manufacturing sector to unions representing workers in a far
wider spectrum of employment, including local government
workers. Walsh <1981> has seen this as a period of militancy
within local government and Terry <1982> has gone so far as
to view local government as ' a new strike prone industry'.
From the late 1960s strike action began amongst local
government workers, much of it unofficial (for example the
1969 London dustmen's strike). Its depth can be gauged by
the embrace of industrial action by the white collar unions,
for example, in 1971 NALGO and NUT members took strike
action over their London weighting claims. It is against
this backdrop of the rise of industrial militancy among

local government unions that the maintenance of branch
homogeneity has to be judged. Industrial action did affect
the branch, gradually altering its routines, but this was
largely a result of external forces, primarily the official
union structures above branch level rather than any
groundswell from the membership for a more militant course
of action. While dissent among the branch membership
existed, it was notable by its weakness.

Between 1970 and 1973 the branch was confronted on a
number of occasions by the issue of industrial action. In
January 1970 a special meeting of the executive took place
to discuss a forthcoming special conference on the pay
claim. NALGO nationally was recommending acceptance. The
minutes start with a precis of the representatives' reports
on the mood of the membership, which was one of general
dissatisfaction, with opinions divided on the course of
action to take. Some called for rejection coupled with
demands for immediate action, others for acceptance, linked
to the demand 'to go all out on negotiations for the second
stage making it quite clear that militant action should be
considered, if the negotiations did not come up to
expectations' <16>. The minutes continued with voices from

16. EC minute May 1970.

the Executive urging caution and calling for a vote against action which was supported <17>.

The branch took its first tentative steps in industrial action in October 1972, when the executive 'fully supported' the social workers' work to rule' <18>. Rather then emanating from branch members, it came from a resolution by the Metropolitan District Council calling on branches to support the work to rule <19>. In May 1974 industrial action occurred over London weighting, when for the first time the Executive came into conflict with the membership. As with the social workers, it originated in Roles view 'very much from national and district' <20>. The action they took was to boycott local election duties which:

> was quite a penalty because the pay wasn't bad and it was extra pay because you got paid for your day's work as well. So to get members to do that was quite significant and it had an impact as I recall... but my memory fades <21>.

This action represented a boycott of voluntary overtime outside of the workers' normal duties, affecting only a few

17. ibid.

18. EC minute's October 1973.

19. ibid.

20. RR. side 'a'.

21. RR. side 'a'.

core officers. In spite of this the branch was faced with members who worked normally. Given the conservatism of the branch, it was surprising to find that the minutes show that these members were disciplined. From this evidence, the picture is one where the leadership, far from lagging behind the members, were if anything ahead of them! Roles rightly pointed out that 'obviously you had a large section of people who didn't believe in strike action in those days; it was something which hadn't happened in local government and in Haringey in particular' <22>.

An aspect of this conservatism of the Executive Committee is found in their narrow definition of what constituted trade union issues. Throughout this period it was expressed in the insulation of the branch from the wider labour movement. For example, in 1974 a resolution to affiliate to Haringey's trades council was lost <23>. I could find only one example of major dissent over the Executive's narrow view of trade unionism. In February 1973 a motion from a Mr Hughes calling on the NALGO branch to express 'its opposition to the government's counter-inflation policy on the grounds that it is a serious erosion

22. RR. side 'a'

23. EC minute January 1974.

of traditional trade union rights' was lost. The minute
commented that:

> Mr Hughes was disappointed at the decision
> and was of the opinion that the executive
> spent the majority of its time carping on what
> he considered incidental matters, whilst
> letting a thing like this go unheeded [24].

Mr Hughes represented the ''left wing'' of the branch
leadership; Roles remembered him as a 'traditional Labour
Party member', holding 'quite strong political views' [25].
This episode, as with the debates on industrial action,
provides a point of reference against which to assess the
radical changes which were, in a very short space of time,
to overtake the branch.

From the mid-1970s a younger, more radical element
began to be elected to the executive committee. Jeff Rudin,
the first of such people, is first mentioned in an Executive
Committee minute of May 1974. People like Rudin brought to
the branch a militant conception of trade unionism, moulded
by post-68 student radicalism and reflecting the direct
action ethos of industrial militancy of the early 1970s. In
the timescale of that militancy, it was only after the more

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24. EC minute February 1973.

25. RR. side 'a'.

general wave of industrial militancy had declined, that
these militants began to have an impact on the branch.

The rise of a Professional Sub-Group

From the middle 1970s it is possible to identify the
rise of a sub-group among the professional workers,
initially within social services and housing. From a
relatively small professional establishment in these
services, a qualitative and quantitative growth took place.
This involved an expansion of existing posts and more
importantly the creation of new ones, as the scope and
nature of the workload of these services expanded. The
importance for the branch of this professional sub-group was
that the new branch leadership was to be drawn exclusively
from their ranks.

My categorisation of these professionals as a sub-group
is derived from the nature of the work they undertook. For
professionals, like social workers, community workers and
housing advice officers, their work put them outside of what
were the two main categories which characterised the core
managerial grades; supervision and administration
responsibility. Instead, this sub-group was primarily
concerned with the regulation, both statutory and voluntary,
of the social aspects of council services, dealing directly

or closely with the public. This created an anomaly over grading; with SO and PO grades corresponding to a definition of responsibility which equated either with direct supervisory or administrative responsibility. For the sub-group neither area was central, placing it partially outside of the managerial grades. I have established the existence of this anomaly through graph 3:1. This shows a comparative employment profile for Social Services and a selection of other council services in 1979. The disproportion of workers at the top of the administrative grades among social services employees equates in part to both support staff and elements of the sub-group within that service. This is in marked contrast with the employment profile in these other services and denotes the lack of a sub-group.

Within this broad outline, the rise of the sub-group in each service has its own particular starting point, such as the Seebohm Report in relation to Social Services and in housing the 1974 Housing Act. The Housing Act can be identified as the major turning point from the demolition of housing stock and the building of high rise accommodation towards housing renewal. Linked to this was a move from an administrative approach towards housing stock, to the involvement of tenants, epitomised by the growth of housing action centres and housing aid. This 'humanising' of relations between

GRAPH: GRADE DISTRIBUTION IN A SELECTION OF HARINGEY SERVICES.

Legend:
- ++++++ Planning.
- ++++++ Valuation.
- ———— Environmental Health.
- ++++++ Civic Amenities
- ++++++ Social Services

GRAPH 3:1
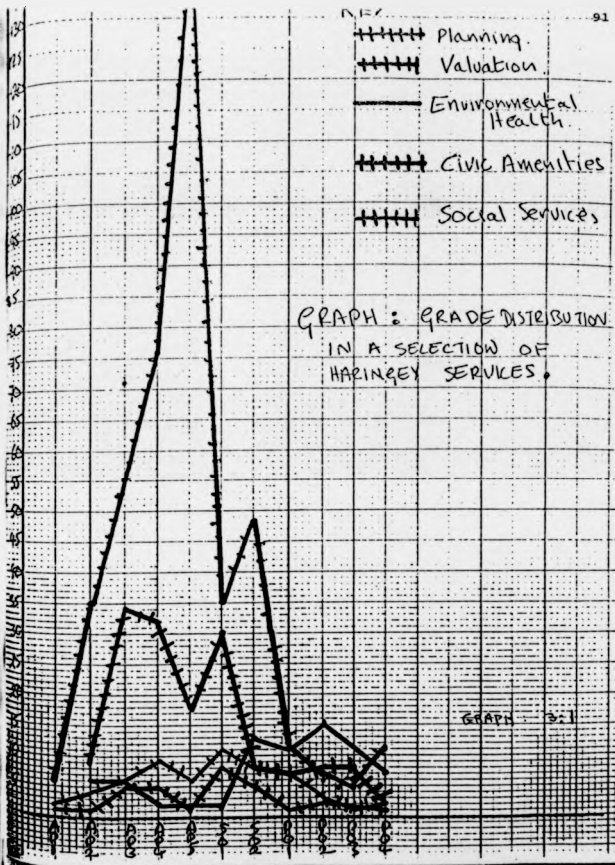
council officers and clients created the demand for a
different type of worker. Mary Corbishley, a housing officer
and a leading NALGO activist during the late 1970s and early
1980s, perceived these workers as having less of the
traditional 'management executive perception, a controlling
perception, towards housing clients', instead a more caring
attitude and 'concerned with the tenants' control of their
community' <26>. These jobs engendered their own liberal
ethos and provided a cohesion for these workers who, albeit
very loosely, were bound together by a caring ideology. The
expansion of this type of council service created its own
demand for those who were interested in 'helping others'.
Corbishley, in contrasting them to the core managerial
grades more than adequately catches the social
characteristic of this sub-group:

> The radicals were in housing and social services,
> increasingly libraries. These were the posts taken
> by the 60's generation of university graduates.
> Prior to that local government had been an area of
> employment for the upwardly mobile working class,
> moving into lower middle class. Their attitudes
> would be in keeping with that upward mobility; get
> more money, a comfortable job, and not worry too
> much wabout what you're doing. Then you got all
> these boring people who said: I want a satisfying
> job, I want to achieve something, what can I do?
> Become a social worker. This must have had an
> effect on the perception of the union <27>.

26. Mary Corbishley tape 1 side 'a'[hereafter MC].
27. MC1. side 'a'.

I will adopt the term used by Corbishley - that is, 'radicals' - to describe the professional sub-group's social political and trade union views, distinguishing them from those of the core managers. It was from among the ranks of the radicals that a self selection process occurred whereby a number of them become directly involved in transforming the branch. I will use the label 'branch reformers' to distinguish them from the 'old leadership'. Corbishley's description of the radicals as the '60s generation' of university graduates was certainly a correct characterisation of the nucleus of the branch reformers. All these initial activists, (with the exception of Corbishley, who had attended teacher training college,) had a university degree. In many cases they had no formal professional qualifications for their career in local government. For example Jeff Rudin had gained an MA in Anthropology from London University and got a job with Haringey council as a social worker. Rudin recalled that he was appointed despite the fact that the application asked for:

> A professionally qualified social worker. I wasn't professionally qualified as a social worker or community worker. I should say so-called professional <28>.

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28. Jeff Rudin [hereafter JR] 1 side 'a'.

Similar accounts were related by Bob Hatherway and Joan Monroe. Hatherway, who was to become branch secretary in 1980, had trained as an engineer at Cambridge, looking forward to a career as a naval architect. After finishing his degree, he was offered a job designing war ships which he declined. He ended up :

> as a temporary handyman at a children's home to provide an income; that was June 1973. By December '73 it was clear the permanent handyman was coming back and it was clear that I enjoyed the child-care, social work side of that business. I applied and got a job as a residential social worker <29>.

Joan Munroe, the second identifiable 'radical' to become active within the branch, after Rudin, commented that she had gone to university getting a degree in computer science, but had become:

> more interested in politics than computing, and went straight on to do a certificate in community work, being a useful way of organising. I went through a lot of political changes at university, an anarchist one year, a socialist the next, that sort of thing. When I came to work in Haringey, it was my first permanent job <30>.

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29. BH1. side 'a'.

30. JM. side 'a'. These limited accounts would seem to more than adequately bear out the education thesis put forward by Niclsion, N., Ursell, G. and Blyton, P. <1981>: <u>The Dynamics of White Collar Unionism</u>. Academic Press, London.

A wider perspective on the division between the old
branch leadership and the radicals is gained by contrasting
the quotations from the radicals with the following
testimony offered by Roles on growing up in the Tottenham of
the 1930s:

> I had led a very tough existence as a child,
> we were a very poor family. My father had been
> unemployed for a number of years in the
> recession and when he died he had never earned
> more than £3 ten shillings a week, that was his
> maximum earnings. He was a waterman... <31>.

There was a generational division which was extreme;
one group was coming to the end of their working lives, the
other just beginning. In addition, the old branch leadership
had a lived experience which spanned the 1930s, the war and
the emergence of the post-war consensus. The radicals, by
contrast, were part of the generation who grew up within the
welfare state; this formed the basis of their very different
world view. It is illustrated through their perspective on
work. The jobs they acquired were incidental to their lives
and were then 'intellectualised', or given a meaning, not as
meeting their own material needs but as helping others.
Outside of sections of the middle class such an attitude
would have been an unthinkable luxury to Roger Roles's
generation.

31. RR. side 'b'.

The perspective of the branch reformers

Two strands of thought can be discerned from their practice which have their origins in the student radicalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Firstly, from their own student experience they brought to the branch an eclectic mix of anti-authoritarian ideas, ranging from the anti-professionalism found, for instance, in Rudin's comment about 'so-called professionals', to what was to become its most definable aspect, an opposition to the exclusion of different oppressed groups from the branch. Secondly, the fact that the reformers had been in higher education during the height of the post-war industrial struggles, allowed for a ready identification with the working class. It was the reformer's imagery of a working class which was to inform their desire to transpose a shop stewards system to the NALGO branch. For the radicals, the connotation of the shop steward was one of class and power; the personification of the working class. For the political conceptions of the radicals to be translated into trade union practice, they had to engage with the day-to-day problems of the branch and evolve a more cogent view of what they wanted and how they might achieve it. Their starting point was the formation of their own caucus within the branch, the Duke House Group.

The concern of the 'Duke House group' (so called because it met in a council building named Duke House) was to change the way the branch functioned. As Rudin put it 'the focus was the branch and the attempt was to try and transform it into a trade union branch' <32>.

While no documentation survives, Joan Munroe, the convener of the Duke House group from its formation until she left the borough in 1978, dates its origins sometime around the beginning of 1975. She commented 'Jeff (Rudin) was already the education officer; he now decided we needed to set up some kind of education school for representatives, to inform ourselves of what was going on, and from that we picked out, I suppose, the younger radicals in that group and talked to them' <33>. Commenting on the politics of the participants at its formation Munroe did not perceive any overt political allegiance:

> I don't remember anyone being in an organisation or politically active, except for Harry Lister [a future branch secretary and Labour councillor] who was in the Communist Party, and he only got involved latter <34>.

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32. JR1. side 'a'.

33. JM. side 'a'.

34. JM. side 'a'.

She characterised the participants as:

> A lot of people who were fairly liberal in
> their politics, they weren't at all akin to
> the SWP, probably Labour voters... We weren't
> the party left, we were the non-aligned left.
> We were probably the people who would be in
> the Labour Party now <35>.

While it has been impossible to establish the exact
membership of the Duke House group, my respondents believe
it was around twenty five, in other words a substantial
group. They were able to recall fourteen names, these
included two future branch secretaries (all subsequent ones
started work in the borough after 1979), two future Labour
councillors, and with the exception of Rudin and Munroe, the
others have all become senior managers. Munroe's
retrospective view of their motives for involvement was that
'they probably were the young people who were in the council
at that point on lowly grades and wanted to throw their
weight around' <36>. How far this was a conscious motive for
individuals at the time remains speculative, but their
subsequent evolution into management does show up the
general fate of their radicalism.

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35. JM. side 'a'.

36. JM. side 'a'.

Duke House was an informal body. Disagreements took place, but apart from the force of argument or moral pressure there was no other means of imposing a collective view on the individual. There were two factors which allowed it to function. Firstly, its members were confined to the radicals and as such the caucus represented the formalisation of a ready-made consensus. Secondly, it was possible to maintain this inbuilt consensus because of the nature of their practical task of turning the branch into a trade union <37>.

The following account of the activities of the Duke House group gives a picture of a loose organisation which evolved out of the need to meet two main functions; mutual

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37. The Duke House Group represented a parallel to the Batstone et al. Quasi-Elite, or rather, in this case a Quasi-Elite in formation. There is of course no correlation at the empirical level between the Duke House group and Batstone et al. Rather behind the different sociologies of the domestic organisations is Batstone et al. statement that 'The Q-E and the conveners form a key group within the organisation, and, in particular, they play a major role on the shop-floor in terms of the general reaffirmation of values and their application to major issues'. What they are alluding to are the activities of the core trade union activists within the domestic organisation, as was the case with the Duke House Group. Of corse there is no necessary correlation between a Q-E within a domestic organisation and the wider trade union movement. The old branch leadership in NALGO were equally a Q-E. The interest centres on how different Q-Es are formed and interact with the wider membership.

support within the branch Executive and socialisation within

the group itself. Munroe commented:

> We had fairly regular get togethers; we often
> had drinks after meetings which was part of
> talking things over and providing a support
> network for people raising issues. Also it was
> self-education; part of the game was to
> understand the system, what was going on and
> what the issues were, so that you could
> participate more in debates... <38>.

Their perspective meant they began to take responsibility

within the branch. Munroe continued:

> We also got on the running of the branch. I
> remember being on the rules working party and
> organising socials; there were also people
> standing for positions such as chair <39>.

From my reading of the minutes, these accounts understate

the intensity of some of the issues they were involved in.

They were also partly defined by the nature of the old

leadership, who through retirement and death were rapidly

losing their cohesion. According to Rudin:

> it happened very rapidly, very, very rapidly.
> After being totally on my own for a year I
> was joined by Joan Munroe. Within another
> year or two that there had been this complete
> change over... Certainly in the last year or
> two of Norman Child's tenure [he resigned in
> 1980], with him still very capable as an
> administrator, the policy making was being
> made on the Executive by the Duke house
> people <40>.

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38. JM. side 'a'.
39. ibid.
40. JR1. side 'a'.

The comments by Rudin on the rapidity of change were echoed
by Munroe, who saw the importance of the Duke House group in
the following terms:

> It represented different forces... it also
> galvanised those forces; change might have
> happened anyway but it facilitated it <41>.

While Munroe's characterisation of the reformers as
facilitators is a good one, it obscures the fact that to
take on that role there were two prerequisites. Firstly, an
organisation had to come into existence to give body to
these ideas; secondly it was possible for them to act as
facilitators due to the growing inertia of the old
leadership, who proved incapable of replicating themselves.
A vacuum began to emerge within the branch which the
reformers started to fill. This inability of the old
leadership to replicate themselves situates the ascendancy
of the reformers as something more fundamental than a
struggle between two competing elites. It indicates that the
decline of the old and the rise of the new, seen for example
in the emergence of the professional sub-group, was part of
a more deeply seated change within the working class, (as
has been discussed in chapter two). Along with the rise of
the Duke house group was a process among the reformers of
political clarification.

41. JM. side 'b'.

The politics of the Duke House Group

Munroe's characterisation of the Duke House Group as
the non-aligned left in reality only captured a very brief
period in their existence, their transition from the world
of the student to the labour movement. The label 'non-
aligned', however, is appropriate as it provides a
definition of the majority views within Duke House and a
strand of political activism which in the late 1970s found a
resonance among large numbers of socialists. For instance
the term 'non-aligned left' is encountered again in this
work as a self- definition among Labour Party activists. One
of the important facets of the non-aligned left was that it
denoted being to the left of the left-wing of traditional
labourism including the Communist Party (CP). In terms of
the Duke house group, and the branch reformers in general
this meant that there were two competing views amongst the
left, those of the non-aligned left and the more traditional
views of the CP which inside the trade unions were usually
organised under the rubric of a broad left. Thus an implicit
political division existed between the non-aligned left and
a CP broad left axis. Rudin was emphatic that such political
divisions never affected the running of Duke House, and
there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. However implicit
within Duke House there were two perspectives on altering

the branch; the CP's and the one which emerged from the non-aligned left.

A large part of the explanation for the lack of Communist influence given by my respondents - although Communists were in the Duke House group - centred on personal animosity towards the leading CP member, Harry Lister <42>. The personality question tends to obscure a more fundamental division between the CP and the majority of the reformers which helped form the non-aligned left. Their areas of difference can be identified. Firstly, the norms and practices of the CP were founded within the labour movement, creating a conservatism which clashed with the very different tempo and anti-authoritarianism of the radicals' student background. Secondly of greater importance was the consolidation amongst the reformers of political views which were to the left of the CP as the following example illustrates. In 1976 the Working Women's Charter Campaign was formed. Munroe and Corbishley (the latter of whom at that time was teaching) were members of the Haringey branch. The campaign was taken into NALGO by women in NALGO Action who met on a London-wide basis who put forward resolutions to NALGO branches to adopt the Charter and to establish Women's Committees within the branches (which were

42. BH1. side 'A'.

endorsed by the union in 1978). While the CP played a
supportive role within the union's bureaucracy, the
initiative and the activists on the ground came from forces
to its left. They, rather than the CP, set the agenda in
relation to such questions. The inability of the CP in this
period to formulate a ''shop floor'' strategy towards such
questions played no small part in making the 'people on the
other side' more attractive. Finally, the implicit division
between the labourism of the CP and the more
''revolutionary'' approach of the non-aligned left
manifested itself around the question of how to deal with
expenditure cuts. This issue simmered from 1977 onwards,
coming into sharp relief in 1979. Hatherway captured the
basic line of demarcation between the radicals and the CP
members thus:

> I think at the time I thought it was a
> personality issue; it came to a head in
> relation to Thatcher's election in '79, I think
> looking back on it now, it was a fairly
> straightforward split: hard left Labour Party/
> SWP versus the CP... lines that would look
> exactly the same today <43>.

For the period under discussion it was the non-aligned left
which dominated among the branch reformers, and who in their

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43. BH1. side 'a'.

turn were part of a broader political development <44>.

From around 1978 there developed a coherence to the reformers' views. By then, the project for turning the branch into a trade union had come to mean the following: democratising the branch, ending the exclusion of the support staff, opening up the branch to women and minorities and shifting the emphasis of local negotiations to the lower paid staff. These goals were encapsulated in the desire to create a shop steward-based structure. It was around these issues that they were to transform the branch.

The Ascendency of the Reformers 1976-1979

The latter part of the 1970s was a period of confrontation between the old leadership and the reformers. It occurred at a time when the homogeneity of the branch was beginning to fragment under the impact of two sets of external factors. The first of these can be characterised as coming from above and represents the impact on the branch of the devolution and extension of corporatism, such as the early legislative programme of the 1974 Labour government for example the <u>Trade Union and Labour Relations Act</u> and the

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44. The development of those socialists who can be grouped under this generic title of the non-aligned left is central to this work and a rounded view of them is provided in chapter five.

Employment Protection Act. The second set of factors arose
from the changing economic circumstances of the membership,
and may be seen in the impact of the social contract and
government expenditure cuts generating a pressure on the
branch from below. Local government pay decreased in real
terms by 2.5% in 1976-7 and by 8.0% in 1977-78 <45>. This
fall correlated with a notable shift within the branch
around industrial action. This shift made the earlier
debates over the legitimacy of industrial action appear
somewhat "twee", they already belonged to a bygone age.
Hatherway first noted the change at a 1977 branch meeting:

> called to discuss our response to the first
> effort of NUPE and the T&G to organise
> against the pay policy. It was attended by
> large numbers of NALGO members from the
> building works division. What happened was
> about twenty donkey-jacketed supervisors
> arrived at this meeting. The reaction to it was
> quite extraordinary the right had an apoplectic
> fit because they thought the meeting had been
> invaded by manual workers. A few really well
> known right-wingers were almost hysterical at
> the concept of the meeting being invaded by
> these roughnecks <46>.

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45. Cited in: Public Finance Foundation <1986>: 'Public
Service Pay Over Two Decades Under Attack?', Discussion
Paper 25. London. The importance of this fall in real wages
fits into a cycle around local government wages and economic
militancy. Its full importance for the branch reformers is
discussed in chapter 8.
46. BH1. side 'b'.

Within the branch these external factors interacted with the struggle for control between the reformers and the old leadership, culminating in the coming to power of the reformers. This was to be a fragmented process taking place along three lines of development: political struggles within the branch structures, the growth of departmental organisation and the receptiveness of the membership to militant policies in defence of their jobs and conditions. The interaction of these issues were to determine the character of the branch at the end of the 1970s.

Departmental Representatives 1975-1979

The various constraints which had blocked the development of workplace organisation began to break down from the mid-1970s. There was no guiding hand pushing a coherent policy across the union, but rather a fragmented development amongst the departments. If any pattern can be imposed on the growth of workplace organisation it would seem to correlate with the disruption caused by wage freeze and the threat of cuts, that is, out of a direct material need.

The minutes of the executive committee start to reflect this development by showing far more frequent departmental meetings, for example, an initial meeting of NALGO school

workers occurred in September 1977 to discuss the effects of
a Green Paper on education <47>. A meeting of the borough
engineers put forward a resolution to the executive on car
allowances and London weighting. While each service has its
own history of how its departmental organisation was built
up, I can find no evidence of the emergence of any stable
structure outside of the two areas in which the radicals
were prominent; Social Services and Housing. Social Services
was to become the first service to overcome the
institutional blockages of the branch and create a service
organisation, that is one based on the occupational group of
social workers.

In Social Services a clearly defined project existed to
build up workplace organisation, which the reformers were
able to fuse with a wide range of grievances felt by their
fellow professionals. In 1974 departmental representatives
existed but their line of command was into the branch
structure with no service-level organisation. Rudin
explained just how lacking ''shop floor'' organisation was

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47. EC minute October 1977.

and how a few people began to change the situation:

> We didn't function; there was no organisation,
> there was no accountability, no collective
> decision making. Because such ideas were
> totally new, it was very difficult to start
> changing things. Development was very much on
> an ad hoc basis, it was at least a year after I
> had joined the department before there was any
> getting together with other departmental
> representatives <48>.

To overcome these difficulties the reformers organised

outside the branch structures, Rudin recalled:

> I was able to agree with Bob (Hatherway) and a
> few other departmental representatives that we
> should meet regularly and that's what Bob
> undertook to do; meetings took place at his
> house <49>.

It was through this activity of the reformers that the

fragmentation within the service began to be broken down and

a start was made in the construction of a service-based

organisation. From Rudin's account, this occurred sometime

in 1974; by 1975 the reformers had set up a departmental

social services committee which Hatherway attended.

This represented a major development. By creating a

structure for formal collective decision making they

brought into sharp relief the inability of the branch

leadership to deal with social service problems. Hatherway

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48. JR1. side 'a'.

49. JR1. side 'a'.

commented that the Executive:

> found a lot of difficulty coping with the
> conditions of employment of people who didn't
> work in conventional offices, whether these
> people were social workers or residential
> social workers <50>.

It allowed the departmental committee to gradually become

the de facto leadership within the service. For example, in

September 1977 a call for a day of action in support of

Tower Hamlets social workers was organised by 'Area 1' -

that is, members of a cluster of Social Service offices -

whose representatives included Rudin and Hatherway.

These developments, however, came to fruition in 1978

not over a local dispute but over the national pay claim,

which was devolved to local negotiations. Because of the

departmental committee within the Social Services, it was

able to gain control of the pay negotiations from the

Executive. The claim was formulated by social workers and

presented to departmental meetings for endorsement; it was

only then passed to the Executive who were left to endorse

it <51>. The rapidity of the shift in negotiations from the

branch to the service was facilitated by a more open

Executive, well under way to being in the hands of the

50. BH1. side 'b'.

51. EC Minute May 1978.

reformers. This was however, secondary to the inability of
the Executive itself to play a constructive role in the
social workers' pay negotiations. This derived from a lack
of understanding on their part of the needs of workers 'who
did not work in a nine-to-five job'. It was the embryonic
service organisation rather then the branch leaders who had
a monopoly of knowledge about the concerns of the social
workers. The formation of the service committee had
effectively created a power base outside the central branch
leadership. It was not, however, having departmental
representatives which was central but forming a collectivity
of the occupational group which had control over the
negotiations. Organisation was linked to the exercise of
bargaining power. If the reformers had not engaged in the
activity of building workplace organisation, it is highly
unlikely that these developments would have taken place. The
workforce would have confronted the Executive in a
fragmented state. Instead the reformers were able to
articulate the grievances of the workforce, allowing this
process to be justly characterised as a movement from below.

The breaking down of the old branch structures had by
the end of the 1970s shown up a pattern based on the
development of service organisation. This was characterised
by the branch Executive ceding its negotiating role to the

service level organisation. This transfer of power had only
taken on any real substance in those areas where the
professional sub-group were in the ascendancy. This points
to a linkage between a substantial discontent among the
professional sub-group over their position within the
council's hierarchy, and their marginalised position within
the branch's bargaining structure. It was these issues that
the reformers were articulating through their different
perspective on trade unionism. While departmental
organisation evolved in other services, it did not
spontaneously break out of the confines imposed by the
branch structure. This meant that the attempted transition
from a sectional to institutional centrality of the branch
could not be concluded from below. This was to lead in the
1980s to a second pattern of development; the extension of
bargaining by the new branch leadership and the imposition
by them of a shop stewards system. In the mid-1970s however,
a different perspective had opened up - that of a more
militant transformation which was not based on the altering
of services but of transforming the branch in toto.

The limits of militancy

In 1977 the gradual process by which the branch was
undergoing change seemed to be superseded by the possibility

of a rapid fusion between the radicals and the broader membership; the core managers and the support staff. This was indicated by the formation of the NALGO Emergency Committee in a response to the 1976 Labour Government expenditure cuts. Hatherway recalled:

> It was part of our AGM resolution to fight the
> Labour Government cuts. It was set up on a
> quasi shop steward basis, of one representative
> from each council department <52>.

The reformers had won at a branch meeting what was then a militant and implicitly political resolution; as Hatherway stated 'it was against the Labour Government and its substance was concerned with defending jobs and conditions' <53>. This represented a substantial achievement, taking place at the 1977 AGM, a year prior to the left coming to dominate the Executive. This response of the branch was important, as the issue of expenditure cuts had entered the branch as a question of how it should defend its members' jobs and conditions. The political dimension stood behind the 'narrow' trade union question, allowing the reformers to achieve a wider area of support. It was through the narrow trade union issue that the political questions raised by expenditure cuts began to permeate the branch.

52. BH2 side 'b'.

53 BH2. side 'b'.

This represented the start of the relocation of the branch's political centre.

In 1977 and again in 1979-1980 expenditure cuts were addressed through what can be characterised as a militant defence of the branch members' jobs and conditions. This defence held within it three propositions. Firstly, it opened the way for the branch to carry out a basic trade union function, that of defending members jobs. Secondly, it overcame the division between trade unionism and politics insofar as the branch, to defend its members jobs, were confronting government (and council) policy. Thirdly, it represented a possible mechanism for the reformers to fuse the radicals with the broader membership. At the centre of this was the potential it held out for overcoming the division between the trade union and the political. This was, however, fraught with ambiguities; as a defensive structure the NALGO Emergency Committee could only respond to the actions of government and council, that is, to political institutions. The Emergency Committee turned out to have little practical relevance as the council was able to offset expenditure cuts through a combination of a high rate increases and negotiations with government. This primacy of the political which arose first in relation to the Emergency Committee was to be continually exemplified

throughout the anti-cuts struggle. The reliance on this
reactive mode of operation within the branch (and among the
wider labour movement of the borough) became a continual and
important thread in the branches development, (and as will
be seen in the wider Labour movement of the borough).

In terms of the branch it was the third issue which was
of immediate significance; the syndicalist model (involving
reliance on an outside agency) had opened up a different
route to the members. At the time, however, the mid 1970s,
far from being counterposed to the reformers evolving
service based organisation, these two issues were interwoven
and were to remain so for a number of years around the
proposition of forming a shop stewards system. In practice,
they were to provide two separate routes for the reformers
to win the membership, the rapid perspective of the
syndicalist model always remaining at the level of
potential. In 1977 the effect of the councils political
action was to close off the potential route along which the
reformers could hope to reach a wider membership. It meant
that the reformers' influence was limited by the existing
parameters of the branch and the existing quantities within
it; the radicals and the core professionals.

The limits on the power of the Reformers.

Within the existing parameters the reformers were still able to advance. Hatherway was quite clear on the fundamental element which confined them 'there was never a natural majority for the left by any stretch of the imagination' <54>. This is illustrated by their attempts to set up a shop stewards system. At NALGOs 1977 conference, the union endorsed a National Executive working party report to support branches wishing to set up a shop stewards system. Without this endorsement it is inconceivable that this centre-piece of the reformers' programme would have ever been considered by the branch. The branch set up a working party from the general purposes sub-committee which consisted of Norman Child, Rudin, Hatherway, and Harry Lister. Hatherway's retrospective view of the working party was that 'It was not a successful exercise' <55>.

The report of the Working Party resulted in the Executive calling a special general meeting, (without putting forward a recommendation), which decided on a membership ballot. As far as it has been possible to ascertain both sides in the debate campaigned vigorously as both had an identification of stewards with class and power.

54. BH2. side 'b'.

55. BH1. side 'b'.

The shop steward was a talisman for the left and a bogeyman for the right. The latter was expressed in points three and four of the 'Nine Reasons Against the Stewards System' found in the Executive document <u>Communications and Membership within the Branch</u>:

> There are many members of the branch who will feel that adoption of the steward system is too reactionary and may well produce results that have been seen all too frequently in other unions where shop stewards are very powerful. The possibility of this insofar as local government officers are concerned will therefore be distasteful.
>
> Even if it can be demonstrated that the steward system might lead to streamlining branch procedures, it will also make it that much easier for a minority group to achieve rapid control of branch affairs <56>.

For the first and last time the Executive was publicly split along left-right lines with the members supporting the old leadership and rejecting a shop stewards system.

A second example of the limits placed on the advance of the reformers was expressed through their refusal to stand against Norman Child for branch secretary. While this was partly an effect of personal prestige, since 'no-one would say a hard word against Norman' (neither did any of my respondents), of greater importance was that for a

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56. NALGO branch Executive document. '<u>Communications and Membership within the Branch</u>'. Points three and four form Nine Reasons Against the Stewards System.

substantial section of the membership Child represented
their perception of how a NALGO branch should function. Both
their defeat over the shop steward question and the
unassailable position of Child represented parameters to the
advance of the reformers. It meant that through the latter
part of the 1970s the branch was increasingly shaped by a
range of compromises between the reformers and the old
leadership, compromises which arose out of debates carried
out by few people within the branch structures.

Narrow and broad trade unionism

The election of Jeff Rudin to staff-side in 1975 had
marked the start of the process of change within the branch
structures. Rudin recalled from his first staff-side
meeting:

> A fairly acrimonious discussion between myself
> and the rest of staff-side. They wanted me to
> agree that whatever was said at that meeting
> would be confidential to that meeting. I said
> nonsense, we are all elected members of the
> Executive Committee, it would be confidential
> to that body. It had elected me and I was
> accountable to it. <57>.

In this manner the decisions and discussions of staff-side
became the property of the Executive. If Rudin was able to
start the process of change by attacking bureaucratic

57. JR1. side 'a'

excesses, the substance of the division between the two
groups began to take on an increasing political character.
This political division was primarily expressed through
different interpretations of what constituted trade
unionism, the narrow interpretation of the old leadership
and the broader definition of the reformers. For example, at
the Executive Committee of September 1977 a resolution from
Harry Lister calling for the affiliation of the branch to
the Trades Council was lost; a resolution from the Publicity
Sub-Committee to affiliate to Chile Solidarity was referred
by the old leadership to the AGM (where it was passed).
Resolutions to affiliate to the newly formed Haringey anti-
racist committee were lost on the grounds that it was a
political issue, <58> and a resolution to give a £10
donation to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
was passed only on the casting vote of the chair <59>. These
suggest that the old leadership's division between political
and trade union issues was contested but generally
maintained. This was however to be a temporary 'stemming of
the tide'.

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58. EC minute October 1977.

59. EC minute June 1977.

In pursuit of their broader trade union aims the reformers were able to circumvent the old leadership by utilizing branch committees other than the Executive. Most importantly the Press and Publicity Sub-Committee. This became the driving force for both branch affiliations to the broader labour movement and an arena for discussions around branch based issues, such as; the training of representatives, greater membership involvement, and the planning of day schools <60>. The reformers were also positively aided in a broader interpretation of trade unionism by the impact of the national union on the branch. For example, during this period the minutes record that a circular from the National Executive called for co-operation in any inquiry into racial discrimination <61>. The union sponsored women's committees <62>. It supported the setting up of a stewards system <63> and it asked the branch to

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60. This point was made by Joan Munroe.

61 EC minute December 1976. Correspondence from National Executive Committee [hereafter NEC] to branch.

62. EC minute January 1978. Correspondence from NEC to branch.

63. EC minute November 1977. Correspondence from NEC to branch. This was followed in 1978 with a circular from the NEC urging departmental representatives 'to be responsible to and for a particular group of members and negotiate on behalf of its group and individuals within this group'.

pursue industrial democracy and worker participation <64>.
Once the door had been opened, these issues began to take on
an autonomy and their own timescale. For example, the
setting up a shop stewards system was contingent on the
balance of local forces who either supported or opposed it.
There can be no doubt that these initiatives combined with
the movement from below provided major bridgeheads for the
reformers into the branch structures.

The minutes show that the turning point for the
radicals came in 1978. This was marked by their ability to
begin turning the branch outwards to the broader labour
movement, as might be seen through its affiliation at this
time to Chile solidarity, the National Council for Civil
Liberties, the South-East Region of the TUC and other such
bodies. The tide was running in favour of developments which
were associated with the reformers. Part of this was the
collapse of the old leadership. Monroe commented that:

> I think all the issues were argued, it was just
> that the complexion of the Executive changed,
> and the votes began to go our way. Some of
> their arguments were stupid. I raised the
> question of a banner, and they said that it was
> too expensive, so I said I'll make one for a
> fiver. So they were forced to have a banner and
> we could take it on marches <65>.

64. EC minute June 1976. Correspondence from NEC to branch.
65. JM. side 'b'.

The ascent of the reformers to a position of running the branch had then taken place in all but name by the latter part of 1978. It had, however, taken place in the form of a compromise, since the ''syndicalist model'' had failed to develop and the three constituencies within the branch, core managers, support staff, and radicals remained very much separate entities. The consequence of this was that in spite of their advances the reformers were confronted with a leadership which was still powerful both among the members and within the branch structures, leading to change being achieved through compromise and flowing through the existing branch structures, a point made by Hatherway 'We could get things through, if they were packaged as service conditions issues' <66>. The major problem for the reformers was that without an external agency they had no hope of becoming a 'natural majority'. Once in power the reformers were to address this question with a considerable amount of confidence arising from their political convictions, their belief in the effects structural change would have on the branch, and most importantly the resurrection of the syndicalist model with the advent of the Conservative government. Prior to that they had to decide who among their

66. BH2. side 'a'.

number would stand; on this issue the consensus within the radical camp broke down.

The Struggle between Harry and Bob

The announcement by Norman Child in August 1979 that he would not stand for reelection marked the end of an era in the branch. The transfer of power to the new leadership was completed in 1980 with the election of Hatherway, who beat Lister, to become branch secretary. The contest marked the surfacing of splits within the left, of which Hatherway commented that 'Norman announced in August 1979 that he was going to retire as branch secretary. There was then basically a fight for succession from that moment onwards and there were only ever two candidates' [67].

In 1979 Harry Lister had been the left's successful candidate for the position of assistant secretary which provided a strong platform to mount a challenge for succession. According to Hatherway, however, the experience of Lister as assistant secretary was one 'where he was seen to be completely ineffective' [68]. Whether this failure, was real or imagined by Hatherway and his supporters, it

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67. BH2. side 'a'.

68. BH1. side 'a'.

allowed the left vote to be split. Those supporting
Hatherway would have been the non-aligned left, exemplified
by him being nominated by Diane Desmuli, at that time a
member of the International Marxist Group. Hatherway
perceived another factor which allowed him to stand, the
question of not alienating the right-wing by standing as a
service conditions candidate rather than an overtly
political candidate:

> I was staff-side secretary and perceived as
> such, I had also been very successful
> in terms of deals I'd done for low paid
> people. There was a whole range of natural
> support there on the traditional service
> conditions <69>.

His effectiveness as a staff side secretary allowed him to
draw support from two distinct groupings within the branch.
As he commented:

> I got the votes of the hard left and the
> moderate right; the hard right boycotted
> the meeting and there was a whole band in
> the middle who voted for Lister - a broad left
> you could describe it <70>.

Hatherway's account obscures what I consider to be the
anti-Communist consciousness of the support he won from the
right. This was the real substance between an overtly
political and service conditions candidate. The alliance

69. BH1. side 'a'.
70. BH1. side 'a'.

between him and the right is born out by the fact he was
seconded by Norman Child (surely the seal of approval from
the old leadership). Hatherway's election address verges on
being a witch-hunt against Lister, as the following extract
indicates:

> In contrast to the labels that have been stuck
> on me, I believe in the fundamentals of
> representative democracy. I am an inactive
> member of the Labour Party, inactive because I
> do not want to become politically involved with
> the councillors with whom I negotiate. I am and
> never have been a member of any other political
> organisation <71>.

Lister in his election address is well aware of the hidden
agenda. In a section headed 'How far will personally held
views influence the job', he states:

> In a democratic structure conflict real and
> imagined exists between those holding different
> political views. I have never tried to hide my
> own views; at the same time I have never tried
> to impose them on the branch. **My concern is
> about the issues and the problems that confront
> us as a union and I am concerned as anyone with
> the time that I'd spent on secondary issues
> which divert us from the priority which is to
> develop a stronger, better organised, more
> effective and more caring branch** <72>.

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71. BH1. side 'a'.

72. From H Lister Election address to the 1979 Haringey
NALGO AGM February 1980. (emphasis in the original).

Hatherway recalled that it was not a well attended meeting: 'I won by something like 50 votes to 100' <73>. The branch membership stood at 2,796. His election marked the end of the period of opposition for the reformers; they were now in charge of the branch, just six months after the 1979 general election.

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73. Quoted from the Ordinary Quarterly General meeting June 1980.

The Evolution of NUPE 1965-1979

An overview of a Caretakers branch

The Haringey NUPE branch originated as a break-away
among caretakers in the 1950s from the Wood Green General
and Municipal branch. By the time of Haringey's formation in
1965, the branch existed in the other constituent boroughs
organising all of the ancillary grades in education. In 1977
with the introduction of the Union Management Agreement
(UMA), membership increased by approximately 500, placing
the caretakers in a minority of approximately 1:10 in
relation to the other ancillary grades.

The manner of the UMA's implementation typically left
little choice to the individual to decide what union to
join. Peter Spencer, who became branch secretary in 1978,
recalled that:

> everybody had to join. I would imagine at that
> time John Bruce (NUPE's branch secretary) and
> the secretary of the G&M had to sit down and
> work out procedures how they were going to cope
> with it. I know they did, you have that kitchen,
> I'll have that one. I inherited that <1>.

While caretakers always had a 100% unionisation, and
numbered around 80-100 members, prior to the UMA there are

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1. Peter Spencer tape 1 side 'a'[hereafter PS].

no available membership figures for the other groups; the only indication is a branch minute from 1967 stating that its membership stood at 700 (probably an exaggeration). In 1977 there was an influx of 500 new members. Even if the 1967 figure was inaccurate by 50%, the other ancillary grades, all of whom were women, were in a clear majority in relation to the caretakers, all of whom were men.

Before 1977 there is no indication of any drive by the branch to recruit new members. Spencer assumed that the cleaners had the greatest level of organisation:

> I would think the cleaners were already well organised because the caretakers were all in the union. The SMSAs (the School Meals Supervisory Assistants) were not well organised <2>.

My understanding of the nature of the branch supports Spencer's perception and provides a logic for a seemingly ad-hoc form of recruitment. As I shall argue, the branch functioned in the interests of the caretakers who carried out recruitment to the branch on the basis of their working relations with the other occupational groups. The most direct was with the cleaners, the caretakers being their supervisors; slightly more tenuous was their link with the kitchen staff; relations with the SMSAs and coach escorts

2. PS1 side 'a'.

were completely peripheral. This meant that prior to 1977 the greatest density of membership was among cleaners, followed by the kitchen staff, with a minimal level amongst the other two groups.

From 1965 until 1978 the branch met monthly on a Sunday morning, with a continuity of leadership through the secretary John Bruce, who held that position from its origin in the 1950s until 1978. Looking back on how the branch was run, Spencer saw it in the following terms:

> The branch was run by John Bruce, he did all the negotiations, he dealt with all problems. His attitude was that if you wanted a job done properly, do it yourself, because his experience was that on many occasions when he sent a shop steward to deal with something, he had to clear it up himself. Rightly or wrongly I can only tell you the way it operated <3>.

He also recollected the following anecdote concerning the hierarchy within the branch.:

> I tell you this, Alan (Alan Carey, a caretaker who became branch chair when Spencer became secretary) told me he was at a meeting, before my time, and he was there with his assistant Tony, who was very outspoken. Tony jumps up, and he was going on, and John Bruce says: 'sit down, you speak through your caretaker'. How can anyone come to terms with that? <4>.

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3. PS1 side 'a'.

4. PS1 side 'a'.

As with NALGO, the structures of this branch represented an
institutional expression of the dominant economic group, in
this instance, the caretakers. The nature of their
ascendancy was, however, different from that of the managers
in NALGO. This was due to the form in which the caretakers
exercised their economic power, and the manner in which the
labour process fragmented the other occupational groups that
comprised the branch.

Within this branch relations between dominant and
subordinate occupational groups are clearer than those in
NALGO; for example, there is no evidence of any attempt to
involve the majority of the members in the branch. This is
graphically illustrated by the attendance at branch
meetings. Until 1978 these were only attended by the
caretakers and their assistants. For workers from the other
occupational groups an array of informal sanctions, for
example, the fact that these meetings were held on Sunday
mornings, existed which effectively excluded them from the
branch. Until there was a change of leadership in 1978 the
branch meeting was the only available means for collective
decision making; as such, the exclusion of the non-caretaker
membership from its deliberations was crucial. The complete
absence of the non- caretaking membership from this
collective forum allowed the branch to function solely in

the interests of the caretakers. From the perspective of the branch everything was viewed through the prism of the caretaker; how issues were addressed for the other occupational groups was contingent on their relations to the caretakers. This begins to explain Fryer et al. <1978> statement that 'it is remarkable that males in education should dominate branch offices given that only 10% of manual workers in education are males' <5>. To elaborate further it is now necessary to look at how the formal organisation of the branch related to the different occupational groups. I start with an exposition of the position of cleaners and kitchen staff <6>.

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5. Fryer, R, H., Fairclough, A, J., and Manson, T, B. <1978>: 'Facilities for Female Shop Stewards: The Employment: Protection Act and Collective Agreements', <u>British Journal of Industrial Relations</u> Vol XV1 No2 p. 160-174, July.

6. Due to the limited number of occupational groups involved, it has been possible to carry out a more detailed study than with NALGO of how the branch functioned in both this and my concluding chapter on the branch. Even so I have excluded the two 'minor' occupational groups, of coach escorts and SMSA's.

Cleaners, Kitchen Staff and the Branch <7>.

For the cleaners and kitchen staff their formal relations with the branch fell into three categories; indirect contact with branch meetings, direct contact with branch officials arising out of workplace problems, and local negotiations with the employers. Arising from their lack of direct participation in the branch, all of these forms of contact represented an affirmation of the dominance of the caretakers over their fellow branch members. This was seen overtly in relation to branch meetings where different forms of mediation between members and the branch replaced participatory relations.

The relations of the cleaners to the caretakers explains the greater frequency and wider scope of cleaners' issues found within the minutes. These were brought directly to the branch by the caretakers, who in effect played the role of shop stewards. For example, at the November 1965 meeting a report of the works committee mentioned that they

7. Unlike NALGO the NUPE Education documentation is both somewhat sparse and incomplete. The following represents the highlights of seven years minutes, (these cannot tell the entire story) taken from a single hardback A4 book. 'This book is the first record of minutes for Haringey school staff branch effective from 1st April 1965'. [Hereafter Branch minute book 1]. The second set of branch minutes is Branch minute book 2. Along side these minute books there was one file with a miscellany of letters from 1965 until 1979, [hereafter correspondence file].

had called on the employers to provide 'overalls for cleaners'. Similarly, in the following year 'the need for water-proof protection for cleaners was discussed and members agreed that an application for some should be forwarded to the office' <8>. Whether these requests originated from a caretaker seeing a need for cleaners to be provided with something basic like overalls, or the cleaners in a particular school making demands on the caretaker, I do not know. It was, however, the caretakers, rather than the cleaners, who brought issues to the branch, and it was this which opened up the possibility of their being generalised to all the cleaners.

Even this level of representation was not open to the kitchen staff. This is seen in their different modus operandi with the branch, which was through correspondence with the secretary. The kitchen staff approached the branch as individuals, so that the leadership is not told of problems with the kitchens in general but of individual kitchen staff with problems. Typical of this type of individualised 'intrusion' of the kitchen staff into branch life is the following minute: 'a letter was read to the

8. Branch minute book 1, November 1965.

branch concerning a Mrs Purdy who works at Risley Avenue school kitchen, regarding an accident at the kitchen' <9>.

In respect of the cleaners, the minutes provide just one example of the branch's intervention into a workplace problem: 'St Anne's school relief school keeper, Mr Greenwood, spoke about two cleaners who refused to be told of their duty. Secretary also spoke about the case' <10>. The tone of that minute and the lack of any other minute are indicative of the caretakers' supervisory function over the cleaners.

The issue of branch intervention into the workplace was confined to the kitchens. This took two forms: correspondence between the secretary and someone in 'authority' and a branch officer going into a kitchen to discuss a specific problem. Typical of the former is the following: 'St Ignatius school. The secretary informed the members about the bad state of the meals department but was pleased to say that a great improvement had been made since he saw Mr Carter in the education office' <11>.

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9. Branch minute book 1, October 1968.

10. Branch minute book 1, April 1970.

11. Branch minute book 1, January 1970.

As for the direct intervention by branch officers into the workplace, it has been possible to establish that these visits were more frequent than appears from the minutes. It has been possible to throw light onto what they entailed through my respondent, Carol Adeniz. She started work in the kitchens in 1970 and since 1983 has been branch chair. She recalled that:

> When John Bruce used to visit our kitchen, he would come in and go into the supervisor's office; we would take a cup tea into them. They would sit there, discuss and then he would leave although we were his members. The supervisor wasn't even a member of his branch but he never came round and spoke to us. The supervisor would then come round and say 'well, I've spoken to your branch secretary about certain items, now bloody well get on with it <12>.

It is difficult to convey the anger with which this was related. Her view provides an important area of agreement with Marie Williams, (my third respondent). Williams started work in 1979, just after the period presently under discussion. It is significant that her account of her treatment by a shop steward was similar to that related by Adeniz, even though they had radically different perceptions of the role of women in trade unions. It is possible to point to a number of issues which generated this agreement; the premise was that the union would not have treated them

12. Coral Adeniz @ Peter Spencer [hereafter CA/PS] side 'b'.

with such contempt had the union official been dealing with
a man. While I do not disagree with this, the roots of this
chauvinism should not be divorced from the nature of the
caretakers' power, which was in part based on a dependence
on management. This helped to generate a conservative and
deferential leadership, and served as the basis for the
interaction between union officials, members and kitchen
supervisor. The supervisor was a higher authority who knew
what was 'best' for the kitchens and understood the rules
and regulations governing the staff.

The union's lack of independence may be illustrated
through what was the main area of dispute between workers
and management; the arbitrary manner in which management
moved workers between kitchens as a form of punishment
against workers they disliked. The ability of management to
do this was written into the workers' contract of
employment; where an employee worked was at the discretion
of management. There was no attempt by the branch to alter
this by negotiating a procedural agreement that would have
created some form of mutuality, that is, a trade union
sanction which stipulated the conditions under which a
worker could be moved. Consequently, whenever the issue
arose the union was always in a position of weakness quite
independently of the officials' attitude to women.

The local negotiations concerning the cleaners were reasonably straightforward; these took place, as I have shown above, through the caretakers at branch meetings generating negotiating issues. On the other hand, local negotiations for the kitchen staff remain obscure; my understanding is that there was no connection between these workers and negotiations which the branch entered into on their behalf. The branch secretary simply took up issues he thought relevant, two of which are noteworthy. The first occurred in 1967 with the introduction of a retainer fee for kitchen staff in the holidays. The second was an understaffing agreement which dates from 1971. The former was a national initiative with some marginal local negotiations over the amount of service needed prior to eligibility. The understaffing agreement was only implemented after four days of absence; this meant, for example, that in a kitchen with ten workers and with one absent, the remaining nine would have to cover the absentee's work for four days prior to their receiving any financial benefit. In spite of this scheme being in Spencer's word 'diabolical', and Adeniz never recalling its implementation, it was an important initiative in the context of the late 1960s. Its importance was shown in a

1970 article written in the Trade Union Register by a NUPE official by the name of Mike Taylor:

> When there are staff shortages, the ladies instead of leaving the work will catch up on it, and so educational management has been able to impose a tight staffing schedule <13>.

There is one important event which took place at the end of the 1960s, of which unfortunately I have little knowledge. The branch began to be pressed by management over the question of a bonus scheme for the kitchen staff, as a consequence of report No 29 of the Prices and Incomes Board. What is clear was that the branch was not equipped to deal with the issue and on a number of occasions turned to the union for advice. In the minutes there are a number of letters from the Area Officer and the Executive Committee of the union on this matter <14>. This led to the only recorded section meeting for kitchen staff, and some time later the scheme was abandoned. There is no further information on either of these issues <15>.

13. Taylor, M. <1970> 'The Revolt of the Low Paid', in K Coates, and T Topham (ed.s) <u>The Trade Union Register</u>. Merlin Press, London.
14. Between June 1969 and January 1970 this issue is recorded in the minute book with continual reference to 'discussion between secretary and regional officer'. Also two letters survive in the branch's correspondence file between the secretary and national officers on this subject.
15. The failure to implement a productivity scheme within the kitchens shows up the lack of impact of government pressure for reform within the borough.

The Caretakers and the Branch

The above shows what little relevance the branch had
for the non-caretaker members, but what is more surprising
is that a similar conclusion can be drawn concerning the
caretakers' own formal relations to the branch. The very
tediousness of the minutes speaks volumes about the lack of
branch character. Nonetheless the minutes identify four
areas where the branch concerned itself somewhat with issues
relating to the caretakers. These were the defense of their
'craft status', regulation of the labour process, informal
agreements and the advancement of pay and conditions through
local negotiations.

The minutes reveal little attention to the defence of
any of the branch members' interests, including those of the
caretakers, but the major, albeit thin, seam of continuity
is to be found in the defence of the caretakers' 'craft'
status. For example, on the issue of appointments, the
caretakers never attempted to control entry, but they sought
a voice in deciding who should be appointed. This partly
arose from pressure by assistants who wanted caretaker jobs,
but it also derived from the caretakers' self-perception as
a craft with a legitimate right to an opinion on who was the
right man for the job. A branch minute of October 1965

illustrates this concern: 'The method of selecting school
keepers was not approved and will be looked into' <16>. In
the following month, a minute revealed the branch's concern
at 'the appointment of an outside man at Highgate primary
school when the short list was only two. The other applicant
was an assistant for three years at Tollington' <17>. This
issue is one of the few which consistently appeared over the
years, through correspondence from the branch to the
Education Department and in reports from the local Joint
Works Committee. In a similar vein there is a minute which
records that 'the status of school keepers was defended in
regards to the new method of form filling required by the
office' <18>, and another which expresses the branch's
disapproval of a caretaker moonlighting, 'the case of Bro
Houghton doing a second job does not find approval by the
branch' <19>. At the following meeting the minute records
that 'The branch remains adamant in the case of Bro
Houghton' <20>.

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16. minute book 1, October 1965.

17. minute book 1, November 1965.

18. minute book 1, April 1970.
19. minute book 1, March 1971
20. minute book 1, April 1971

On a number of occasions the minutes reveal that the caretakers fused their concern over the regulation of their own working conditions with an equally strong concern over protecting their status: 'The position of staff on the school after hours without permission was to be looked into' <21>. Or again, 'Bro Dean spoke about a teacher who was very late in leaving the school at night' <22>. There are also entries which directly relate to the regulation of work, such as: 'A letter to be sent to the office on the deplorable work of the window cleaners' <23> or 'School keepers were warned of a drop in their fuel requirements, a new type was being tried out' <24>.

The third category of minute shows up some of the informal practices that were open to the caretakers: 'it was decided that owing to some difference of opinion with contractors, this branch would work to the book for school keeping hours during week-end working, except in emergencies' <25>. This, however, did not preclude the caretaker making an agreement with the contractor, something which was considered 'entirely between themselves'. This

21. minute book 1, October 1968.

22. minute book 1, January 1970.
23. minute book 1, December 1967.
24. minute book 1, February 1971.
25. minute book 1, June 1971

strongly suggests that any agreement with contractors would have involved a financial transaction. In relation to the cleaners the branch was notified that 'assistant school keepers would be able to claim 3/4 of a cleaner's work in her absence. This is for information only' <26>. Presumably this meant 'do not tell the cleaners'!

In the category of negotiations and plus payments, I have included the upgrading of caretakers' houses. Understandably this was and remains a major concern; for example, the minutes record that the officers were asked 'to see about telephones at school keepers' residences' <27> or 'to further a request for piped hot water in caretakers' homes from the school' <28>. From the surviving correspondence file, I was surprised to find as late as 1978 that the housing conditions of some of the caretakers were bad, as the following indicates:

> It has been acknowledged that certain deficiencies have been remedied - such as urine seepage through the walls - but it is still maintained that the property is most inadequate for the needs of an average family in the late 1970s <29>.

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26. minute book 1, September 1970.
27. minute book 1, June 1971
28. minute book 1, March 1969
29. Letter from Education department to the branch secretary dated 19.1.7

When looking at the question of local negotiations, the issues I was able to uncover were very limited. For example, in 1967 there is a minute recording members seeking clarification over overtime rates and payments for weekend lets. They were told at the following meeting that payment was 'per the green book', that is, the nationally agreed rate. The most substantive agreement minuted dates from 1968; it states that 'when a person is sick or on leave the letting fees will be taken into consideration for the purpose of paying out wages' <30>. This was important as it represented the consolidation of their payment for lets onto the basic wage calculation for sick and holiday pay. This was, however, a Joint Whitley Council rather than a branch agreement, although the branch would have had a role in its implementation.

On a more mundane matter the branch asked management 'if gas maintenance can in future be carried out by the gas board' <31>. The reply it received at the following meeting was that 'the office has rejected the proposal that all gas maintenance be done by the gas board' <32>. The lack of

30. minute book 1, September 1968.

31. minute book 1, September 1970

32. minute book 1, October 1970

negotiating issues for the caretakers is the most notable feature of the minutes; a large amount must be lost, but the substantive agreements would have been minuted, as with the 1968 agreement over lettings. Local negotiations seemed to have been non-existent in strong contrast with the period after Spencer took over as secretary <33>.

Rather than addressing any issues of negotiation, the minutes are saturated with the branch's concern over protecting the caretakers' craft status and an ethos of deference. For example, in the 'Bro Houghton' case, he was seen as ''bullying'' the branch's name and degrading the caretakers' status by having a second job. As for their attempts to formalise plus payments or regulative issues, I am left with the strong impression that they were carried out on the basis of deference. For example, the small incident of gas maintenance was not important in itself, but the impression given by the minutes is that they had made a request, were turned down and then resigned themselves to that answer. What was absent was any form of bargaining.

This reveals a paradox: logically the branch should have shown a range of benefits for caretakers over the other occupational groups, particularly around local negotiations;

33. see chapter 10.

instead, the documentation confronts the reader with the impression that there was little substantive difference in the way in which the branch treated the different occupational groups within it. My understanding of this is that the caretakers' economic leverage, rather than being expressed through the branch's bargaining relation, was realised primarily at the workplace. This understanding shifts the focus of power out of the formal structures of the branch into the workplace. To comprehend how this worked, I now look at the labour processes of the three occupational groups starting with the caretakers.

The Caretakers' Labour Process

The caretaker's life is structured around his work. His house is situated on the school site, which can be in use up to sixteen hours a day. Outside of very limited set duties, Spencer was unable to put forward a routine to the day, which is indicative of the caretakers' control over their work. This was not always the case; they were the direct benefactors of the technological change during the late 1950s from coal to oil and gas fired central heating. A separable issue is that of their potential economic leverage. This was considerable, due to their pivotal role within schools; the caretaker is in charge of the day to day

running of a school's non-teaching, non-administrative side, as such he is essential to the smooth running of the entire school. The caretaker can, without going outside of any formal procedures, damage that routine by the withdrawal of his good will. This of course was not one sided; Spencer saw it as a quid pro quo:

> By the same token the head teacher can make life difficult for the caretakers, so what you do is study one another, don't you, and keep one another happy. It would be a foolish caretaker who didn't keep his head teacher happy and a head who didn't do the same with the caretakers <34>.

This has allowed for the growth of custom and practice, where the structuring of the working week was determined through semi- formal negotiations:

> How you work that 39 hours is usually agreed between the caretaker and the head, taking into account the needs of the school <35>.

The ascendancy of the caretaker was based on these two strands; their potential to disrupt and the control of their working day ceded to them by the organisation of the labour process. The potential to disrupt the workings of a school was subordinated to the control they exercised over their time. This allowed for the emergence of a 'time bonus', which Spencer saw as 'the ability to pull flankers'.

34. PS2. side 'b'

35. PS2. side 'a'

Not surprisingly Spencer was reluctant to speak about the time bonus; he would only go as far as saying that 'if the school itself is happy with the caretakers, then he can take certain liberties in terms of the day'. On the issue of the time bonus and evening lettings, while the caretakers are supposed to be on duty, he commented that 'if you have half a brain, you will let the hirers know where you are because they might need to use the phone in an emergency' <36>.

The nearest I got to finding out exactly what the time bonus meant for the caretaker was the following comment from Spencer who stated that the previous branch secretary, John Bruce, had 'never worked more than six hours a day'. This meant that on an eight hour day he secured a minimum of ten hours a week time bonus. It was probably, however, a good deal more.

The dynamic behind the time bonus was a reciprocity between worker and management, with the need for formal supervision by management removed in return for not auditing the caretakers' time. It was this system which explains both the lack of use of the branch by the caretakers and their deference encountered above. This can now be seen as not

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36. PS3. side 'a'

simply oriented towards management as such but to a system
which worked in the caretakers' favour. This was exemplified
by an account provided by Spencer of a scandal caused by one
caretaker who had been drunk one evening and shouted at the
hirers. This was seen as letting the side down by breaking
the unwritten agreement. The caretakers, then, exercised
their ascendancy through the workplace; this had not evolved
from trade union militancy challenging the organisation of
the labour process, but organically through individuals
accepting the levers of power ceded to them by management.
Representing the benefits of a spontaneous struggle over the
labour process, the time bonus system stopped the evolution
of a more formal trade unionism based on a potential to
disrupt the schools through a more vigorous use of branch
structures.

This dichotomy between the formal and the informal
arose initially from the caretakers' inability at the
workplace to transcend an individualistic framework. The
nature of their work excluded collective workplace
bargaining, which would have undoubtedly created a very
different set of relations between management and the union.
Instead negotiations were necessarily individualised around
largely private agreements, the 'craftsman' bargaining with

his master in antithesis to the norms of formal trade
unionism.

As with the NALGO branch, sectional centrality involved
a similar division between the branch structures and the
manner in which the real bargaining relationship took place.
As such the branch was subordinated to and shaped by the way
the caretakers exercised their power. As this bargaining
relation largely took place outside the branch, the branch's
content was filled with the formal trappings of that power:
craft consciousness and deference. The branch represented
the caretakers' guild, a viewpoint inadvertently put forward
by Spencer:

> Given the way the branch was organised it was
> the caretakers who were always getting together,
> anyway they were like a fraternity. When you
> joined the union, you joined the fraternity of
> caretakers. We see ourselves almost as a
> profession; we are the school caretakers, we meet
> every month and discuss all our problems, a great
> sense of identity, it's still there now <37>.

The exercise of sectional centrality by the caretakers
denied the prime function of the branch, that was to develop
service level bargaining for all the occupational groups.
This was a position that was made possible by the lack of
economic leverage given to the cleaning and kitchen staff by

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37. PS3 side 'b'.

the labour process. It is to an examination of their labour processes that I now turn.

The Cleaners' labour process

All the cleaners were part-time workers. Their work placed them at the periphery of the school's labour process, taking place before the school opened and after it closed, but prior to school lettings. This created an enclosed set of parameters to the cleaners' working world. During term-time they worked split shifts: starting between 6-6.30 a.m. through to 8-8.30 a.m., recompensing between 3.30-3.45 in the afternoon, possibly working until 6 p.m. depending on their hours. Work was done on an individual basis, with their own designated areas and a rigid time scale for completion. In term time their job was to maintain a high standard of cleanliness. All the heavy work – mopping, sweeping out the school, emptying of the bins – was done in the afternoon. The morning was mainly spent damp-dusting. School closure created a different work pattern: the split shift was abandoned, work was concluded in the morning and its nature changed. Each closure amounted to a spring clean, with the summer break known as the "the big clean". This involved the scrubbing of ceilings, walls and all furniture being moved to clean behind them.

The caretaker was the cleaners' manager. His duties included administrative work, such as filling in the cleaners' time sheets, booking in holidays and marking down sickness, and the supervisory duty of ensuring that a standard of work was maintained. In the holidays this included taking a direct foreman's role by pre-planning the cleaners' work, that is, deciding in what order the school should be cleaned and making sure that the relevant areas were ready for the cleaners' attention. It was through the caretakers' supervisory role that the cleaners were able to gain a time bonus. Its most common expression was around their starting and finishing times. This had been explained to Spencer by John Bruce:

> I remember him saying to me; I worked out they came in half an hour late in the morning and went half an hour early in the evening and they got their work done. That's an hour a day, five hours a week at say £3 an hour, that's a £15 bonus <38>.

The second type of time bonus was developed around overtime, (a practice superseded by an understaffing scheme in 1981,) and was achieved when a worker was absent; her hours were divided amongst the remaining cleaners and booked down as

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38. PS3 side 'a'. It should be noted that cleaners have never earned £3 an hour.

overtime. This overtime was never worked. Spencer recalled:

> In the past if a cleaner was absent, they did
> the work in their own time no one ever did extra
> time and all the hours for that absentee were
> claimed as overtime <39>.

The cleaners' time bonus paralleled that of the caretakers, in so far as it represented the same type of reciprocity between management and worker; in this instance the caretakers' supervisory duties were traded for free time on behalf of the cleaners. The dynamic of this relationship was, however, different when viewed from the position of the cleaner in relation to the union. The critical difference between the cleaners' and caretakers' time bonus was that for the cleaner there was no potential economic leverage backing up their time bonus. This created a type of patronage by the caretaker over the cleaners in which the caretaker was not only her supervisor but informally the cleaners relied on his goodwill to provide their time bonus. The reality of this period in the branch's history was that the cleaners were stuck at the margins of the schools' labour process without any collective occupational identity. Their time bonus gave them a modicum of freedom within their working day. Even this highly circumscribed form of independence was absent for the school meals staff.

39. PS3 side 'a'.

The labour process of the School Meals Staff

Adeniz started work in 1971 at one of the biggest kitchens in the borough, serving over 700 meals a day; she explained the division of labour in her kitchen:

> I use to be a server which meant you only dealt with the dinning room and washed up the plates and cups. When I transferred full time into the kitchen, I became a general kitchen assistant. The way we worked it the pastry, meat, custard and the gravy were done by the cooks and the assistant cooks, the potatoes and vegetables were cooked by the general kitchen assistants who also washed most of the floors and did the washing up. I was in with the assistant cooks who were also responsible for the ovens so we did quite a lot of non-cooking work in that kitchen <40>.

A large element of the work was hard manual labour:

> All the veg and potatoes, everything was fresh at that time, so your potatoes came in sacks, and you had to stand and peel them in cold water. The fish you had came in boxes, frozen fresh fish and you had to stand and cut it into portions, it was hard work <41>.

The cooking itself paralleled a production line:

> When I started it was all cooked freshly but we were very much into what was called slap cooking. If you made sponge for 24 you would make one in a large tin and cut it into 24... syrups sponges, spotted dick and all that are all gone now <42>.

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40. Carol Adeniz tape 1 side 'a'[hereafter CA].

41. CA1   side 'a'

42. CA1   side 'a'

What is striking about this work was the workers' lack of
any control over its organisation. Adeniz spent several
minutes thinking about this, and could only recount the
following general point :

> Well there are laid down rules and laid down
> menus, it's a bit difficult to cut corners because
> we have recipes and we have to follow them
> recipes. There are small things which let you
> cut corners but you never think of them because
> you do them automatically <43>.

This lack of control, and it is the most rigid example
encountered, arose because these workers were engaged in a
continuous production process which created an internal
regulation to their labour process. The workers ability to
impose sanctions on the labour process could only have
arisen through formal trade union mechanisms. This was not
only absent but the union functioned in a negative manner,
regulating the existing system largely against the interests
of these workers.

From the basis provided by the production process a
system of control was created which rested exclusively in
the hands of the Supervisors. The attitude that this control
generated among the supervisors is shown in the following
comment from Spencer, concerning the head of the school
meals service, Mrs Buckingham, and one of her supervisors

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43. CA1   side 'b'

over the branch's struggle to provide rubber gloves for the workers:

> Mrs Buckingham thought she won the argument, as far as she was concerned, because she saw a woman working in the sink with no gloves on: 'Look, they don't use them'. I know they don't all wear them but some want to and they should have them. It's like the supervisor who said to me: 'the women like scrubbing the floor on their hands and knees, it's like a social event. Look' she said, 'see how they stop every now and again and straighten up and have a little natter and then get down again and start scrubbing'. It was like being on the plantation talking to the overseer <44>.

Adeniz explained this type of discipline as the result of the fragmented nature of the School Meals Service, and the autonomy of its management from the control of the council. Adeniz believed that 'Mrs Buckingham ran her service apart from anything the council did. It worked in the way she wished it to' <45>. The fragmented council bureaucracy, which allowed Mrs Buckingham to run things how she wished, was the norm among all the council services. What differentiated the kitchen staff was their inability to spontaneously impose sanctions on the labour process. This revealed, in a sharper manner than in the case of the cleaners, the lack of and the need for some form of official

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44. CA and PS2 side 'b'.

45. CA1 side 'a'.

trade union role to place sanctions on management. This
absence created an enclosed world of work which stretched no
further than the kitchen. It consisted, in Adeniz's view, of
the 'ten or twelve people in a kitchen who tend to become a
little unit as long as you get on with people' <46>. This
narrow world set the boundaries of their consciousness as
workers, which Adeniz rightly saw as an important difference
from the caretakers who saw themselves as being employees of
the borough:

> You very rarely met people from other kitchens.
> The supervisors recruited and even threatened
> you with sackings from that little workforce.
> There were lots of little workforces, you weren't
> part of the whole workforce in Haringey <47>.

This lack of any trade union mediation into the
kitchens is one reason why it was such a static world; this
description of the labour process could equally well have
applied to the 1950s or 1940s. For kitchen and cleaning
staff, the failure of the labour process to cede any
economic leverage to them interacted with the power given to
the caretakers to provide the preconditions for sectional
centrality. The cleaners' and kitchen staff's exclusion from
any formal participation in branch decision making meant

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46. CA1 side 'a'.

47. CA1 side 'b'.

that they were excluded from the only possible mechanism by which economic leverage could have been generated; through the actions of the collective organisation of the occupational group. Without collectivity these workers remained fragmented in their 'own little workplace'.

Gender, occupational group and the caretakers branch.

The caretakers branch lasted for just over a decade and raises the question of women within the branch. There is no indication that at any time during this period women members attempted to get involved with the branch. It is certainly possible to point to a range of institutional barriers- for instance branch meetings that were held on Sunday mornings. Another problem was that the majority of women tended to view their work as an extension of domestic labour, which generated a level of passivity on their part <48>. Cunnison <1983> in her study of school meals staff comments on the interaction between home and work and the importance

48. Adeniz commented on this point in relation to the impact of the School Meals Project on the school meals staff. This project was set up in 1985 by the London Food Commission, to look into a range of issues associated with school meals (see below chapter ten). Adeniz stated that it had given the women a sense of their own worth where they no longer saw their job as an extension of the home.

for women of the idea of a woman's place and her:

> primary identification with home and family and
> how this is supported by workplace culture, low
> wages, by the broken work career and the
> particular way women's earnings are interacted
> into the family. This means that family
> responsibilities tend to be given priority over
> responsibilities attached to work and hence union
> involvement <49>.

Such a framework fails to fully explain the position of

the women in the Education branch, as the interaction

between family life and work is taken up as the dominant

problematic almost to the exclusion of the question of

bargaining power. As the above has shown it was not because

they were women that they were unable to spontaneously

exercise economic leverage (the key to the caretakers'

power) but because of the role of occupational groups within

the labour process, which led within the branch to the

subordination to the caretakers <50>. The powerlessness of

the women workers within the NUPE branch was in the first

instance related to this inability to spontaneously exercise

economic leverage. The following example illustrates this

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49. Cunnison, S. <1983>: 'Participation in local union
organisation, school meals staff: A case study', in
Gamarnikow (ed) Gender Class and Work. p 92.

50. I am not attempting to say this was the only reason:
there was of course a range of issues which reinforced this
subordinate position not least of these being the home/work
division.

point. It concerns the effect of a labour shortage of
cleaners in the late 1960s. A branch minute from 1969 states
'owing to a lack of cleaners a large number of hours were
not being used up' <51>. This represented a potentially
powerful bargaining lever. Knowledge of this shortfall
required an overview of all the borough's schools; whilst
the branch had this, the cleaners, excluded from the branch,
were excluded from this knowledge. Even under these
relatively favourable circumstances they were unable to
generate service-level bargaining. The idea that the branch
would have acted on this information in the interests of the
cleaners is of course fanciful. Here the potential economic
leverage is directly blocked by the institution which should
have expressed it, the union branch.

By excluding the question of economic leverage a
rounded understanding of the position of women workers
within the branch is not possible. Rather the question of
home and work becomes central, as in the above quote from
Cunnison. The problem with Cunnison's thesis lies not in
what she describes; for sure the home-work division is
central for most working class women. The difficulty lies in
the logical conclusion of her argument: for the reality of

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51. minute book 1, March 1969.

women's lives to change and for trade union involvement to
be possible, the social reality of the home-work division
has to change. An over emphasis of the home-work division
ends up situating social change prior to collective activity
and involvement, and leaves begging the question as to how
change in favour of women comes about without the active
involvement of women. This perspective shifts the locus for
change from the workplace and trade union organisation to
the realm of personal relationships and social policy.
That there was no challenge by the women workers to their
surbordination within the caretakers' branch is a sad
testimony to their awareness of their relative powerlessness
within the labour process. This does not mean that they were
not angry or did not wish to alter the situation, the
crucial factor missing for the NUPE women was not their
experiential understanding (of either their situation in
relation to the union or the home work division) but a means
of altering their work situation. The question they faced
was how could change be achieved. In NALGO an ambivalent
attitude towards shop stewards by the national union was
used as a stepping stone by the reformers to create a shop
stewards structure. The project to alter the branch had been
carried out by both men and women. Gender had been a
contentious issue but this contention was based around the

active participation of women. NUPE nationally was actively
sponsoring stewards and woman's involvement within the
union, but in Haringey there is no indication of any
response from the women workers. Individuals may well have
considered involvement but decided against it because the
problems seemed insurmountable <52>. A comparison of the
development of the two branches shows that gender was not
the prime determinant, rather the comparison shows that the
very different material conditions of groups of women led
them to play different roles. The women radicals in NALGO
had jobs with a certain degree of economic leverage, were
childless and had a higher education. The radical NALGO
women were also able to carry out their very high profile
public role within the branch because their education had
given them access to both the women's and the labour
movement <53>. This undoubtedly helped them to enter the
public world and to question the dominant conceptions
concerning women and the working class which went beyond
their immediate experience. For the women in NUPE the

52. NUPE changed its rules at a special National Conference
in 1975 the object of which was increasing membership
participation and in particular women's involvement.

53 This is not to imply that the women involved in
organising in the NALGO branch did not have to pay a 'price'
for what amounted to their pioneering activity of taking up
'women's issues' within the trade union branch.

conception of the labour movement as a vehicle for change in their lives cut across their life experience generally, and their personal experience of the union which was known to them through the branch.

This points away from the division between home and work to a division between their working lives and the culture of the wider labour movement <54>. This is not to suggest that the possession of a conception of the labour movement ameliorates let alone overcomes the problems associated with the division between home and work. Rather the labour movement allows the issue to be shifted from a private to a public one where the difficulties associated with the home work division become an issue of concern of the public world of the trade union movement which it has to address and attempt to resolve on a collective basis <55>.

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54. This point is alluded to by Cunnison <1983> when one of the women from the kitchen was elected as a shop steward through her contact with the union 'she began to ask questions...'about woman's pay and conditions, the ideology of the family...'
55. It is important to note here that in taking up the issue of women workers the nature of the discourse alters from that centred on the wider aspects of the home work division to the more concrete questions of the problems that entails for the domestic organisation. It is in my view a false dichotomy between the ideal type of the wider discourse and the pragmatism of the narrower question of the domestic organisation.

Without this relation to the labour movement everything about the experience of their working lives engendered a passivity and pulled them back towards the home. The following comments from Coral Adeniz place the women workers in the wider context of their 'lived experience':

> At that time recruitment was done by the Supervisor in the kitchen and it was very much local women. If you wanted a job which fitted in with your children's hours, you went along to the local kitchen and asked your supervisor; she would arrange it, if there was vacancies for you to get a job. Most of the women at that time were married women with children in school and that's the reason they did the job <56>.

Adeniz put forward the following argument which makes sense of her situation. She offered what can be described as a generational argument. Instead of looking back from the 1980s through a filter formed by subsequent alterations in the place of women in the union, she saw her own work situation in the post-war context as a positive gain for women. It should be recalled that for most of this period (1965 to 1979) women workers were married, working in a period of full employment. In reality they were earning a

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56. CA1 side 'a'

second family wage but one which was their own. Adeniz
stated:

> I worked like the other women for the money, why
> else? It gave us that little extra so we could
> buy the kids another pair of shoes and it gave
> me a bit of independence <57>.

It was this limited financial independence which Adeniz saw
as important, (focussing on the independence rather than its
limitations). Her comparison was with her mother who had
been in service during the 1930s. The reason that Adeniz
adopted this generational comparison was based on a defeat
of an aspiration; she had perceived a certain independence
for women through war-work and the receding of that
independence in the post-war settlement. This was not what
she had wanted but there was nothing she as an individual
could do about it. Coral Adeniz had been schooled in the
circumstances of her time into viewing her work in this
generational light. This is important because Adeniz
combined an understanding of her own position, which held
within it the potential for change once the half light that
the post war world had cast women into had altered. In this
small instance, this was to mean two things; the altering
circumstances within the workplace and the bringing of the

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57. CA1 side 'b'.

wider labour movement to the women workers through the new branch leadership.

Branch changes 1976-1978

The beginning of alterations to the branch can be dated from the mid-1970s when the initial fracturing of the post-war consensus began to alter the world around the branch. The changing world began to impinge on and challenge the branch's norms and routines. The second minute book, which starts in 1975, shows up a sharp contrast with the period 1965-1972 <58>. There were three areas in which branch relations underwent change: with the wider labour movement, the national union and the council. The minutes show that a number of labour movement campaigns and bodies start to canvass the branch for support. This is a new departure from the preceding period. These overtures met with a stock reply, typical of which is the following: 'Tottenham Constituency Labour Party anti-racist march on November 6th, letter read; branch to follow normal policy' <59>. Normal policy was to ignore it.

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58. These change occurred sometime between 1972 and 1975, a period for which the branch documentation has been lost.

59. minute book 2. September 1976.

The second, more substantial challenge came from the national union. The union had kept in contact with the branch through the regular attendance of the regional officer, correspondence, and union circulars; on occasions the branch had even asked for information. My impression of union-branch relations in this period is that they were formal and extremely parochial. By 1975 this had radically altered; the majority of items in the second minute book were circulars from the union. These circulars highlighted the concerns of the national union, which showed a higher profile in relation to women members and a more militant position against government cuts in public spending. It was, however, the sheer volume of material now being produced which made a qualitative difference from the preceding period. This coincides with Fryer's Warwick Report <60> and shows the union had already undergone a substantial alteration. It is doubtful that the Ron Keating of the mid-70s would have made the comment attributed to him at a 1967 branch meeting, when he was regional officer: 'A speech by Bro Ron Keating ended this meeting in which he told of the satisfactory running of this branch' <61>.

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60. Fryer, R., Fairclough, A., Manson, T. 1974 <u>Organisation and Change in the National Union of Public Employees</u>. NUPE.
61. minute book 1, March 1967.

In subsequent years, after 1978, the national union was to play an important role in the branch. Prior to 1978 the attitude of the branch to union intervention was one of hostility, as this minute illustrates: 'cuts in public spending; Alan Fisher general secretary circular. Branch decided that it will make its own stand against them, and to tackle the problems when they arise' <62>. Union intervention was treated as a type of disruption to the branch's order and way of life, which the branch leadership neither wanted nor understood. The national union and the wider labour movement were not just intruding on eleven years of routine but were beginning to challenge a routine which had remained unaltered since the war.

External interventions could be blocked by the branch. In 1976 an internal disruption began that the branch had to come to terms with; the first effects of government cut-backs in public expenditure. The manner the branch resolved to deal with the proposed cuts is shown in the following pronouncement:

> The secretary gave the meeting a full report of the details that he had to hand. Members were in agreement; no cuts in school-keeping or alterations to time sheets whatever <63>.

62. minute book 2, January 1976

63. minute book 2, March 1976.

Spencer recalled what lay behind the phase 'no cuts in school keeping':

> I don't think it struck me at the time, but
> looking back on it, the branch officers were
> actually prepared to concede carpet cleaning time,
> which was the cleaners. Sell that, but don't touch
> the caretakers <64>.

This is a clear example of one group of workers selling off another section's practices to defend their own position. This arose directly from the cleaners' lack of a voice within the branch.

These changing relations between the branch and the ''outside world'' present a sharp contrast with the preceding period. The reality, however, was that as with the shifts within the NALGO branch, they did not lead to traumatic alterations, rather disruption was molecular in character. It was this altering world which provided the backdrop to Spencer becoming branch secretary.

Transforming the Branch 1978-1979

In a matter of eight months, from June 1978 to the ending of the low pay strike in February 1979, the basis was laid within the branch to move from a sectional centrality to the inclusiveness of institutional centrality. The motor

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64. CA\PS side 'b'

force for this was to be the new branch secretary, Peter Spencer. His ability to transform the branch did not arise from any internal dissent, but from his own radically different conception of trade unionism interacting with the changing world around the branch.

In June 1978 John Bruce resigned as branch secretary and with one exception, that of Ray Rowley, the other branch officials went with him and his coterie withdrew from branch life. Spencer was voted in as the new secretary 'on a Sunday morning by half a dozen caretakers' <65>.

Spencer had the support of a number of caretakers who became stewards, one of whom, Alan Cary, became branch chair. The core of caretakers Spencer had around him did not support him simply because there had been no one else to do the job; rather Spencer won their support on the basis of his reputation as a "militant". This was hinted at when he remarked about a London-wide meeting for caretakers in 1977 that 'a few of us militants went up'. This implies the formation of a quasi-elite which, although much looser paralleled Duke House Group in NALGO.

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65. PS1 side 'b'.

Spencer's election took place eighteen months prior to the coming to power of the new leadership in NALGO. Formally it bears no comparison with NALGO in respect of the forces involved, the political debates generated and the schisms which racked that branch. Here all that was involved was a decision by half a dozen caretakers that Spencer should be branch secretary. The substance of the change was nonetheless similar within both branches. If the reformers in NALGO had taken up the imagery of militant trade unionism, Spencer brought to the NUPE job a conception of trade unionism steeped in that militant tradition. This went far beyond the boundaries of the caretakers' craft consciousness. In trade union terms Spencer introduced the branch to an alternative world view, formed out of his experience in the car industry:

> I ended up with the Ford motor company, I was there for 14 years heavily involved in the trade union movement. I went there at the beginning of 1960 and I left at the end of 1973. For all of that time I was a member of a union, first of the G&M, and because of my disgust of the way they handled some issue, I transferred to the T&G and was in that for most of the time... I then decided to go into school caretaking. I got a school in Buckinghamshire and became a shop steward in North Bucks for about ten schools, representing everyone. We had cuts there in 1975 which we fought. <66>.

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66. PS1 side 'b'.

Spencer was a labour movement activist schooled at one of
the sharpest points of industrial conflict in post-war
Britain. He was different from those militant workers who
were to migrate into local government from manufacturing in
the late 1970s and early 1980s. By leaving manufacturing at
the height of those workers' power, he had not gone through
their subsequent defeats and was already established as
secretary prior to the major disruptions to local government
unions. His experience and knowledge from manufacturing
unionism were brought to bear on altering the branch . As
with the radicals in NALGO, his concept of trade unionism
was itself subsequently to be redefined by his experience of
local government. Spencers' own development provides an
important understanding of what this transposition of
militancy from manufacturing to local government originally
meant and what it was to become <67>.

For Spencer to act on his conception of trade unionism
meant dramatically reorientating the branch. The axis of
change involved developing the branch in two directions:
firstly overcoming the problem of membership atomisation and
secondly extending the bargaining agenda to include

67. This was not solely one of militancy during his time at
Fords. He had also been involved in serious set-backs to the
union organisation, particularly the defeat associated with
the 1963 ''bell ringers dispute''.

substantive issues from the excluded occupational groups. The starting point for this was solely Spencer's desire that the branch should be run differently and that all members should be informed of branch meetings. This led him to take an elementary step: 'I made up my mind at that time, branch notices would go out widely circulated to all groups of workers' <68>. Mailing members for branch meetings was an obvious first step to overcome the problem of lack of attendance, and address the more general problem of a lack of information from the branch to the members.

This was a considerable innovation in the late 1970s, as it took the union to the members and developed the union's profile; it did not overcome, however, the substantive problem that the members were still excluded from the decision making process, that is, the problem of non-attendance at branch meetings was not resolved. In spite of the council's more liberal attitude to time off for industrial relations, for this branch there was not an option of holding branch meetings in work time. This was due to members' working patterns; there was no common time when the whole branch was working and the production process of the kitchen staff precluded any latitude for them to leave

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68   PS2 side 'b'.

work. These factors represented a boundary which helped shape the branch, focusing on the problems involved in evening meetings, and in particular the problems associated with women. Spencer related that the women membership had told him 'quite clearly they were not very happy at coming out in the evening' <69>. This problem was to be resolved through the development of sectional meetings for the occupational groups taking place in work time.

The second question that Spencer tacked was that of negotiations. His basic approach was systematic: 'When I became branch secretary, I looked at all the agreements we had negotiated, then I sat down and tried to improve them'. In line with this general approach, issues relating to the kitchen staff and cleaners began to be brought into the orbit of negotiations. In just over a year the branch was to throw off a decade and a half of inertia; these changes were fundamentally about extending the areas of bargaining carried out by the branch and about democratising its structures. In was just after the period presently under discussion that a stable pattern around both of these issues was firmly established.

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69. PS2 side 'b'.

The ease with which the branch secretary was able to carry out change was in marked contrast to NALGO. The central difference being Spencer's ability to build up the branch structures without coming into conflict with the caretakers. The lack of any resistance from the caretakers to this development was fundamentally due to the location of their economic power. That power existed at the workplace and largely independently of the other occupational groups. In NALGO the reformers' programme of democratising the branch and opening up the bargaining relation to the lower paid had encroached on the dominant economic group's mode of bargaining. Change in the NUPE branch did not.

It was the nature of the caretakers' economic power which provided the basis for Spencer to act as an individual independently of the different occupational groups. In spite of the demarcation afforded by the workplace based power of the caretakers, at some stage the division between the burgeoning branch structures and this workplace-based power would break down. This demarcation was to collapse and it would be difficult to conceive of it doing so on more favourable terms for the branch. It occurred through a major shift in the consciousness of the caretakers, arising out of the 1979 low pay strike. The impact of this strike represented the second thread in determining the branch's

evolution and was to be seminal in the formation of
Haringey's union-council relations.

Taking the decision to strike

The strike arose out of the rejection by the unions of
a pay offer made under the restrictions of the government's
pay policy - the concordat. For education ancillary workers
this offer amounted to £2 for caretakers, 30 pence for
assistants and between 10 pence and 15 pence a week for
cleaners. The strike, which became known as the 'dirty job
strike', lasted for six weeks and to date represents the
high point of militancy among the national leaderships of
the local government unions and in particular NUPE <70>.
The strike began with a call from the national unions for a
one day strike on January 21st 1979, with future action to
be determined by the individual branches. Three factors were
essential to persuading a large number of low paid workers
to take strike action; a determined leadership, an issue
that the members felt strongly about and a will on the part
of the unions' lay officials, branch secretaries and

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70. In the Autumn of 1978, and beginning of 1979 NUPE
nationally stood out among the unions involved in
negotiations for local government manual workers, as the
most aggressive in support of industrial action, playing the
leading role in developing a climate of opinion amongst the
membership to strike. This militancy was to recede rapidly
after the strike. The reasons for this are not my concern,
though its impact on the branch, as I show in chapter 8 was
to be considerable.

stewards to argue the case for a strike with the members.
That on this occasion the national leadership was seen to be
serious in organising for industrial action was central.
Spencer recalled that 'you could not criticise the national
union, they were pushing it, recommending it. The last time
they have ever done it.' He also recognised that this strong
leadership was not in itself sufficient:

> Its all right for the branch secretaries to go
> to national or divisional conference and being
> told; 'we want everybody out on January 21st',
> you have then got to go back and ensure your
> members want to come out... I can remember at
> one of our divisional meetings, a divisional
> executive member saying; "you got to go back and
> try, I've got to go back and try". So that's
> what we did <71>.

Spencer's quotation highlights the pivotal role of the
branch officers. The branch officers had to take the call
for strike action back to the members. If they had been
unconvinced or hostile it would have been relatively simple
to block the strike call. Spencer, along with the other
branch officials had attended a divisional conference at
which 'they were banging the drum and we firmly believed
that this was the way forward' <72>. They came back to the
borough firmly committed not only to a strike on the 21st,
but to indefinite strike action.

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71. PS3 side 'a'.
72. PS3 side 'a'.

Once back in Haringey the first step in convincing the members to take indefinite strike action was for the NUPE leadership to convince the G@M branch leaders of the need to pursue such a policy. Spencer won 'the argument in the joint shop stewards committee, and being the sort of people they were they acknowledged this' <73>. That the leaders of both branches were united around indefinite strike action sent a strong signal to the members of their leaders' seriousness. The branch leaders were however only able to convince the caretakers to take such a course of action. This was due to the existing division within the branch, the division between the caretakers, who had a trade union tradition and a somewhat ambiguous craft consciousness, and the other occupational groups, who were on the threshold of developing a collective identity. This issue of collectivity intersects with that of structure. At this stage the non-caretaking membership were only formally union members; no structures existed which could provide any substantial link between workplace and union branch. This inhibited the ability of the branch leadership to organise and argue for the strike.

Spencer, subconsciously or otherwise, was aware of these divisions. Rather than having a mass meeting of the entire membership, sectional meetings of the constituent

73. PS3 side 'a'.

occupational groups were organised. This approach arose from
an uncertainty on Spencer's part about the members'
willingness to take action, and where the cleaning and
kitchen staff were unknown quantities. In Spencer's account
of the decision making process surrounding the caretakers'
support of the branch leadership he recalled that this had
involved 'two or three meetings talking about it before we
took the decision' <74>. The leadership was able to
participate in these meetings with a considerable amount of
confidence due to the agreement with the G&M. The caretakers
were confronted with the full weight of the local union
branches encouraging strike action. There could be no
question of a reluctant membership using, ''the get out
clause'' of equivocation on the part of their local leaders
as a reason for not supporting the strike call. This was not
simply a case of the leadership imposing their views,
Spencer remembered that 'we could get the caretakers out,
who knows why, something clicked they were all aroused about
the bleedin thing' <75>. However a unified leadership and
strong feelings amongst the membership on the issue, did not
guarantee an immediate positive response as explained by
Spencer's comment that only after two or three meetings was

74. PS3 side 'a'.
75. PS3 side 'a'.

the final vote taken. Spencer had no recollection, and
therefore I have no knowledge of the details of their
discussions. For sure he would have played a leading role,
but at some stage rank and file members must have spoken.
They would have been an important element in the final
outcome, providing an indication to the more passive members
that support for strike action went beyond just the
leadership.

It is far easier to understand why the cleaners and
kitchen staff did not strike than why the caretakers did.
The national strike pattern was for the general manual
workers, in particular the dustmen to lead the strike.
Spencer found it very difficult to articulate why the
caretakers struck:

> because they were incensed by the fact the
> assistant caretakers, for example, were being
> offered something like 30p a week, and school
> cleaners, according to their hours, were being
> offered 10p to 15p a week. They weren't very
> happy with what they were being offered either.
> I felt at the time they were more incensed at
> what was being offered to assistants and the
> cleaners. The caretakers came out in support of
> them (the other workers) that's the way it
> worked out, and the caretakers were prepared to
> accept that <76>.

Here we have a group of workers who were not militants, but
who not only embarked on indefinite strike action but did

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76. PS3 side 'b'.

so, according to their secretary in the interests of other
workers. The caretakers' action can best be understood in
the context of their status and position in the labour
process. Part of their own status lay in their ability to
defend those workers who they directly supervised,
paternalism helped generate their decision to strike. This
however was only an element. It should be recalled that the
strike came after five years of wage restraint, and the call
by the national leadership to take industrial action
provided a way forward out of an impasse on the economic
front <77>. What enabled both of these feelings to be
transformed into action arose from Spencer's second reason:

> We organised. Let me tell you something, I was
> ringing up branch secretaries in other boroughs
> and I couldn't believe some of the things, the
> wishy washy way they were talking to me. I
> couldn't believe it. We organised, we saw the
> need to strike. If you want it from an egotistical
> point of view it was because I was here and not
> say in Waltham Forest <78>.

This was undoubtedly the primary factor which allowed the
strike to take place, and behind the 'we organised' was the
driving force of Spencer. His leadership position enabled

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77. The 'wage cycle' for local government workers is
discussed in chapter 8.

78. PS3 side 'b'.

him to put forward his wider trade union view to act on the existing trade union consciousness of the caretakers.

For the other occupational groups, the interaction between branch leaders and members whilst formally the same, was in reality very different. The non-caretaking membership were still an undifferentiated mass, and herein lay the crucial difference from the caretakers. Every aspect of the caretakers-branch leadership relations was missing, creating a totally different set of relations between leaders and members. Spencer recalled that:

> My memory of the caretakers and the cleaners meeting is vague. I can well remember, a school meals meeting up at the civic centre, which was unbelievable. I ended up having to stand on a chair and shouting. While there was a large minority of support, quite clearly the majority did not wish to strike, we lost the vote. It was a very emotional meeting, because we were asking them to strike. Our full time officer was there; it scared the life out of him <79>.

This meeting to decide on indefinite strike action was held at the beginning of 1979, fourteen years after the branch was formed. For the kitchen staff it was either their first, as with the parallel meeting held with the cleaners, or second meeting. It was the first time cleaning staff or kitchen staff from one part of the borough would have come into contact with their colleagues from another part of the

79. PS3 side 'b'.

borough. They would not have perceived themselves as a collective body of workers outside of their own 'little workplace'.

The corollary to the lack of collectivity of these workers was that they could not have any recognised leaders. Three types of leadership can arise from a collective body. Firstly that of the formal branch leadership: Spencer had become branch secretary six months prior to the strike call, and the impact he was to make was only just beginning to effect these workers. In January 1979 there could not be any substance to his relationship with these members. The second form of leadership, stewards from among these groups, did not exist. Nor could the third form of leaders have arisen; the informal non-elected representatives - workers acknowledged by their peers as spokeswomen. Such a leadership was to emerge (and is discussed in chapter ten) through an informal self-selection process taking place over a period of time. The prerequisite for this was meetings of the collective body, for example sectional meetings among cleaners where unofficial spokeswomen would emerge and become the ''opinion formers'' among the occupational group.

The prerequisite, then, for a leadership to function was some form of collective identity. Its absence ruled out any authoritative link between the branch and members. Due

to this Spencer was addressing workers who were only
formally branch members, and it was this which represented
the major difference with the caretakers. If the strike had
taken place perhaps a year later both the cleaning and
kitchen staff may well have made the same decision but it
would have been made on a different basis, the far more
informed one of a functioning collective body.

The consequences of the strike

The strike had little immediate impact on unifying the
branch. Adeniz recalled that 'the strike had not concerned
the women' <80>. It had been a 'caretakers strike'. The
effect of the strike was to alter caretakers' view of trade
unionism, shifting it from the narrow confines discussed
above to a more militant view achieved through this
''narrow'' economic struggle. What the caretakers found in
their six week strike action was that their craft
consciousness, their power and status outside of the school
counted for very little. In the course of the strike, which
at times become quite bitter, they had encountered their
true worth and the different experiences of a collectivity
of the trade union and the support of the wider movement

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80. CA\PS1 side 'b'

which had helped them to win some not insignificant advances.

The strike had represented the transition of the caretakers' power. It had shifted it from the discreet sub-trade union time bonus to the exercise of their ability to disrupt schools. This had not been an automatic development derived from going on strike. While the events surrounding the strike allowed them to transcend their craft consciousness this could have proved to be transient had the strike been lost. The caretakers could have become embittered with the cleaners and kitchen staff, and could have retreated from their new found collectivity back into the individualised world of the school keeper. The caretakers neither withdrew into splendid isolation nor recriminations. Victory allowed for the consolidation of Spencer's power base among the caretakers, which not only fused the democratic element of the changes to the branch, it resolved the duality of their school based power and the burgeoning branch structures. The strike provided the basis for a largely smooth conclusion of shifting from sectional to institutional centrality. The strike also represented the 'jumping off' point for the branch's identification (primarily, through not exclusively through Spencer) with the non-aligned left and the subsequent conflict with

government and council over the cuts. This was to be seen in the adoption by the branch of a militant programme for the defence of members' living standards, which emerged towards the end of 1979 as a reaction to the threat of expenditure cuts.

The identification which the Haringey branches of both NUPE and NALGO had with the non-aligned left differed in one fundamental way. In the case of NALGO the relationship was based on resolutions and as I show, while never without substance were always ambiguous. In the case of NUPE there was a solid foundation to the relationship, the 1979 strike, where industrial militancy had provided a way forward because it had been seen to work.

The Emergence of a Collectivity

The borough's unions in 1979

The changes observed in my two case studies had close parallels in the evolution of the NUT and the Craft Committee, where similar reforming leaderships came to power in 1979 and 1980 respectively. In the NUT there arose a group sharing many of the characteristics of the radicals in NALGO; it was exemplified by the route the NUT leaders took into teaching, entering the profession through university rather than teacher training college [1]. In the case of the Craft Committee, a new convener, Dennis MaCracken, was elected in 1979, bringing to the Committee a wider conception of trade unionism. His militancy was shaped by his Northern Irish Protestant background and a rejection of sectarian politics; and by his experience of working on London building sites during the early 1970s, the height of the building unions' economic power. MaCracken's role within the Craft Committee paralleled that of Spencer's in NUPE.

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1. For example Val Graham one of the key NUT activists had a degree in Russian, she became a infant school teacher. Tony Brockman who became the NUT secretary in 1980 had a degree in computer science and had only entered teaching in 1973 'as a stop-gap measure'.

At the other extreme were the general manual branches, the T&G and NUPE General. As late as 1979 these branches were still firmly based on the sectional centrality of the dustmen. This is illustrated by the following anecdote from Ray Gillard, (my respondent from Personnel management) recalling how NUPE General functioned:

> We were in the middle of negotiations with the street sweepers about their bonus rates and the door opened and in walked Mullins (NUPE General's branch secretary and dustman) and three or four of his group and they said 'never mind about this rubbish, we're here to negotiate our clear-up money' and the council members turned to them and ignored the street sweepers and started to negotiate with Mullins. It was a very large meeting jammed solid with officers from street cleansing and members from Civic Amenities. There must have been thirty to forty people in that room <2>.

In neither of the general branches was there a university - educated grouping or a leader like Spencer. Kessler's agency for the artificial imposition of a representative figure was absent.

Apart from the static general branches all of the major unions were undergoing substantial internal alteration. This process was most thoroughgoing in NUPE Education and NALGO, as it involved the breakup of the old bargaining relation and with it a shift from sectional to institutional

2. RG side 'b'.

centrality. Concretely change meant that by the end of the
1970s four of the major unions, with the majority of
borough's employees, either had or were on the verge of
gaining a left wing leadership, the majority of whom were
from the non-aligned left.

Change from above or below

The pivotal role within NUPE Education and NALGO was
played either by individuals or by a clearly definable
category of worker. My ability to draw on similar processes
in other branches begs the question; how was it possible for
these militants to become leaders?

I have already shown that both Kessler's and,
especially, Terry's theses about sponsorship have been shown
to have considerable limitations. Of even less validity is a
view of change ''from below'' derived from a traditional
manufacturing model of workplace organisation (Lane 1971,
Beynon 1973, Croucher 1982). In Haringey there was a general
lack of movement from below, though I will qualify this
assessment in subsequent chapters, particularly in relation
to NUPE.

The inadequacy of both 'sponsorship' and 'membership
involvement' theories would seem to leave these militant

leaders emerging from thin air and the changes which
occurred as their ''property''. That this is inadequate may
be illustrated by thinking through the hypothetical
consequences of Rudin and his colleagues joining the NALGO
branch in 1965. Undoubtedly they would have played a very
different role; the narrative, instead of charting their
ascendancy, would have discussed them as an interesting
footnote. Rudin and his friends were clearly a post-1968
phenomenon; more importantly they would have had less weight
in the branch of the mid-'60s. The key difference lay in the
molecular changes which slowly and imperceptibly had altered
the culture of the branch, previously founded on the post-
war consensus. It was this which opened the way for the
radicals' tenuous but nevertheless fruitful interaction with
the membership.

The literature which has taken up the broader question
of how change came about <3>, found a consensus around the

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3. It is found in the debate around the rise of local
government militancy Walsh, K. <1982>: 'Local government
Militancy in Britain and the United States', Local
Government Studies. Vol 8, No.6, November/December.
Dunleavy, P. 1980 Urban Political Analysis. Macmillan,
London. Fryer, B., Fairclough, A. and Manson, T. <1978>:
'Notes: Employment and Trade Unionism in the Public
Services', in Capital and Class. no 4, Spring p. 70-77.
Clegg, H. A. <1976>: Trade Unionism under Collective
Bargaining. Blackwell, Oxford.

notion of the 'rise of local government militancy' but
polarized around the question of whether that militancy was
generated from 'above' or 'below'. My research has revealed
an interaction of change from above, the presence of
reforming branch leaderships and from below, a shift in the
position of local government workers. This interaction
between human agencies occurred within the context of a
third variable, the institutional framework. The structures
of workplace organisation had two determinants: one derived
from the centrality of the occupational group internally and
the other from the impact of local government reform
externally. The former has been discussed above; it is to
the impact of reform that I now turn.

Change from above - the reform of the bargaining relation

The reforms which affected the unions had begun in the
late '60s and can be characterised as attempts at corporate
reforms, that is to reform the institutions of the post-war
consensus from above through the expansion of local
government and the separate question of productivity, that
is, how in a period of tight labour markets it was possible
to ''get workers to work''. The unions became the
beneficiaries of the growth of corporate management and of a
perceived need to professionalise industrial relations, most

importantly expressed in the Bain report <1973>. For the
unions, however, the real generator of change arose out of
the Prices and Incomes report No. 29 <1967>. Although the
chosen method of the report for reforming pay was through
the introduction of productivity schemes it opened the way
to borough based bargaining and with it the potential for
the development of institutional centrality.

Sheldrake <1988> has pointed out that the type of scheme
introduced came from manufacturing, the benefits of which in
local government were to prove illusory. Sheldrake comments:

> work studies freely adapted from engineering
> industry... were of little use in the caring
> occupations. Further, whilst the erosion of
> demarcation agreements in capital intensive
> situations could readily generate substantial
> savings ... such saving were not easily found
> in the labour intensive activities of local
> government <4>.

As Walsh <1982> commented 'bonus schemes... were as much
methods of paying extra to low paid workers as a means of
implementing tight managerial control' <5>. In spite of such

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4. Sheldrake, J. <1988>: 'The changing pattern of collective
bargaining in local government, in R Saran and J Sheldrake
(ed.s) <u>Public Sector Bargaining in the 1980s</u>, Avebury,
London.

5. Walsh, K. <1982>: 'Local government Militancy in Britain
and the United States', <u>Local Government Studies</u>. Vol 8,
No.6, November/December.

shortcomings bonus schemes covering all full-time male
workers increased from 16% in 1968 to 72% in 1978 <6>.

From the stand-point of the corporate reformers
devolution can only be judged a failure, for while they
succeeded in generating a ''workplace based'' trade
unionism, they were unable to replicate at a local level the
bureaucratic relations which characterised the national
Whitley system. The main reason was the lack of a reliable
agency to regulate the devolved structures. The failure of
productivity payments as a mechanism for increasing output
has an important corollary; it failed as a method of
imposing self-regulation on the worker through tying wages
to output <7>. The devolution of the bargaining relation,
far from turning it into a 'disciplinary' mechanism, opened
it up to a wide diversity of pressures and influences.
For the bargaining relation to become operative at a local
level it had to pass through two filters. The first was the
council. According to Terry, while governmental pressure on
management for reform was intense, 'this was neither uniform
nor irresistible' <8> and Walsh, commenting on the trends

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6. LACSAB Evidence to the standing commission of pay
compatibility, LACSAB 1979.
7. A point alluded to by both Walsh <1982> and Sheldrake
<1988>.
8. Terry, M. <1982>: 'Organising a Fragmented Workforce',
British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. XX No 1.

towards corporate management, pointed out that 'the extent
to which they were ideological movements as opposed to real
operational and organisational changes is a matter of
debate' <9>. What both Walsh and Terry have alluded to was
that underneath the highly centralised Whitley system, the
councils' residual local bargaining autonomy was amplified
by their removal from market mechanisms and the political
autonomy open to them. This allowed for fragmentary, even
parochial, responses by councils to pressures for reform
from above.

    The second filter was of greater importance; the
question of who from the workers' side was to carry out the
devolved bargaining relation. The crux of the problem has
been articulated by Boraston et al. <1975>. After they had
noted the general growth of productivity bargaining and its
extension into local authorities, they commented that 'these
developments have not been matched by trade union action

9.Walsh, K. <1982>: 'Local Government Militancy in Britain
and the United States' Local Government Studies. Vol 8,
No.6, November/December. The failure to make this important
distinction between the bureaucratic imagery of change and
real change has dogged the neo-Marxist literature, for
example, Cockburn <1977>, the Community Development Projects
<1974> and certainly within the British context O'Connor
<(1971>; they have continually mistaken conception for the
child.

along the lines recommended by the (Donovan) report' <10>;
that is, an increase in full time officials (FTO's) to carry
out this bargaining role. Instead it was left to the
stewards.

The qualification Boraston et al. made in relation to
local government, where they saw an increased role for FTO's
to set up productivity deals, was proved to be misplaced. As
I have noted in chapter two, more specific local government
studies have all pointed to the phenomenal increase in the
numbers of shop stewards. The national unions were either
unwilling or unable to provide FTO's to carry out the
bargainers' role, and therefore they lost a controlling
influence over the emerging workplace organisation. The
basic consequence of devolution was that potentially
powerful localised bargaining structures were created and
then ceded to an array of lay branch officials and shop
stewards. In the hands of the stewards the bargaining agenda
was opened up to direct influences from below and the way
was opened for the workers to be influenced by the wider
labour movement.

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10 Boraston, I., Clegg, H. and Rimmer, M. <1975>: <u>Workplace
and Union: A Study of Local Relations in Fourteen Unions</u>.
Heinemann London.

The Particularities of Haringey

Within this general framework of the devolution of the bargaining relation the specifics of Haringey were of major importance in the rise of the branch reformers. As I have commented in chapter two, Haringey's localised bargaining relation, along with other London boroughs, dated back to at least 1965, predating the impetus from government to devolve the bargaining structures. In Haringey the 'corporate reforms' rather than generating entirely new workplace structures were impinging on an existing structure of management union relations based around the sectional centrality of the branches. The expansion of local bargaining came into conflict with these existing relations, based on sectional centrality. For both management and the elites who ran the unions there was no imperative to change, the corporate reforms having little impact - for example, no productivity scheme was evolved within the kitchens, and Ray Gillard could point out that it was some years after the council had adopted a corporate management structure that 'we set up a joint consultative committee with the unions' <11>. Those who wished to build up workplace organisation were confronted by entrenched interests within the branch and council bureaucracy. The branch reformers

11. RG side 'b'.

however, were assisted at every juncture by the consequences
of institutional devolution; for example, the reformers in
NALGO used both national union policy and legislation to
their advantage against the narrow interpretation of
management and the old branch leaders. This early
establishment of a bargaining relation explains the
discrepancy between this work and Terry's sponsorship
thesis. The branch reformers had to carry out change against
the inertia of the existing bargaining structures and the
sectional interests which lay behind them.

There were then two aspects of the institutional
framework which sustained the branch reformers: firstly the
structural determinants of workplace organisation provided
for an autonomy of leaders from members; secondly, by the
leaders ability to draw on support and an independence from
higher authorities. The structural seems to hold the key, as
Ingham <1974> has pointed out:

> .... unless the institutional and normative
> structures of the system are taken into account it
> becomes difficult to explain the specific form
> of action to which the discontent may lead <12>.

It is the case that by the end of the 1970s the militant
leaders were using their institutional power base to

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12. Ingham, G, K. <1974>: '**Strikes and Industrial Conflict-
Britain and Scandinavia**', Macmillan, London.

articulate demands from below rather than act as regulators
from above, and to ``invade'' higher level decision making
bodies without substantial support amongst their members.
Taken by itself, however, the fact that the institutional
framework was used and the fact it helped maintain the
branch reformers misses the substantive development of
collectivity within the workforce.

The importance of collectivity

Earlier research, for example that of Terry, dated the
emergence of workplace organisation at the beginning of the
1970s. Although there is not enough empirical data to draw
any general conclusions, this and other work, such as
Nicholson et al. <1981> Smith et al <1987>, has shown that
these changes within the workforce only began from the mid-
'70s. Comparing the Haringey branches at the beginning and
the end of the decade, this work has pointed to an
alteration in the position of workers. This change was not
sudden, rather it consisted of a series of small shifts
which began to alter the workers' working lives. Change
arose from the inability of the employers, both locally and
nationally, to meet the aspirations of the workers, the core
of which was generated by a fall in real wages. (The local
government 'wages cycle' is looked at in more detail in
chapter eight.) An important caveat was that for the worker

change resided at the level of external rather than internal
intrusions; there was no substantial alteration to the
workers' labour process <13>. These alterations in the
workers' lives drew a number of responses; for example, it
will be recalled that the caretakers sold off the cleaners'
carpet cleaning time. This guild-like reaction was, however,
the exception. In general this work has shown that change
generated a trade union response; thus the tenor in which
industrial action was discussed had substantially altered by
the middle of the 1970s and this shift was not confined to
the reformed unions. The dustmen played a major role in the
'Low Pay Strike' of 1979 and when the NUPE General branch
found the branch secretary incapable of running the strike,
younger workers previously quiescent came to the fore and
took it over, pursuing the strike in an assertive fashion.

It was then from the mid-70s that workers began to act
in a collective manner, engaging in collective decision
making and trade union activity. It was the emergence of
this collectivity which represented the pivotal shift among
the workforce. I have used the term collectivity to denote
what I consider to be the basic change shown up by this
research; that workers, by acting in a collective manner,

13. It was this lack of internal change than invalidates
notions of a process of 'proletarianisation' taking place.

had taken a first step in evolving a class-conditioned
response to their changing circumstances. While the
collective activity of the workers took the form of trade
unionism, what was crucial was not the form of trade
unionism as such but the act of collectivity. The shift to
collectivity was a moment of class formation which was prior
to any characterisation of trade union practice <14>. It
represented the emergence of what Draper <1978> has called
the 'process of maturation' <15>. This concept does not
denote a continuum where 'A' automatically leads to 'B',
rather it is concerned with workers becoming a class
'becoming fit to rule' that is a revolutionary class. For
Draper of central importance is the level of independence
achieved by working class organisations, it is in terms of
maturation as a measure of class formation, that this
concept is useful for this work. This can be viewed at two
levels; firstly the changes seen in these union branches
were not confined to Haringey but were part of a wider
response to the ending of the post-war consensus. How these

14. This is not to disagree with the point made by
Fairbrother <1990>: Union Democracy and Socialism. that it
is because unions are 'rooted in the production process,
which distinguishes them from other forms of organisation,
such as pressure groups or social movements'.

15. Draper, H. <1978>: Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution.
vol. 2, Monthly Review Press, New York. Chapter 3.

workers in Haringey altered can be taken as a measure of
wider alterations to class. Secondly a very direct measure
of maturation was how the branches evolved an independence;
for example the attempts to alter the paternalism which
dominated the relations between members and management.
Similarly within the branches the relations that represented
the relations between 'leaders', including stewards and
members was also indicative of the development of class
formation.

If trade unionism could not have emerged without the
shift to collectivity, it could not be spontaneously
sustained from below,. This is exemplified by the evolution
of NUPE General. The lack of a broader trade union
consciousness among the leaders found the branch entering a
decline once the spontaneous class consciousness developed
during the strike had receded; the 'lessons' from the strike
were soon dissipated. This was in marked contrast to the
role that NUPE Education was to play, the difference between
the two branches residing within their respective
leaderships. Once collectivity had emerged it was the
interaction between the reforming leaders and members which
was to develop the branches. In concrete terms this was a
two way process; it opened the way for the reforming leaders
to provide a labour movement perspective for the members and

for members to effect how the branch leaders reacted to
events. For workers this represented a potential shift from
their fragmented state to collective participation in the
labour movement.

Within this interaction also lay the basis of two
potential gaps between leaders and members. Firstly the
process of developing 'workplace organisation' began to
generate the specific characteristics of local government
organisation, in particular the primacy of the occupational
group. Secondly the reforming leaders were acting with a
predetermined formula of class which lay behind their
manufacturing model of trade unionism. The class content
within these local government unions however, that is how
the membership acted as a collective entity, did not conform
to any predetermined formula. Through moving toward a form
of collectivity, the membership displayed a more inchoate
mass of concerns and prejudices then the model allowed for.
In 1979 the question of how the process of maturation was to
evolve could have been formulated in the following way; how
would the relations between leaders and members evolve that
is how would the domestic organisation develop, which was
largely contingent on whether the workers gravitated towards
the political and trade union conceptions of the leaders or
the leaders be bent and shaped by the members?

The perception of change as either coming from above or from below can now be seen at the very least to be problematic. What this work has been able to point to has been how, in the context of the fragmenting post-war consensus, forces from above and below interacted with one another, creating an ambiguity which did not fit into any easily definable pattern. On the one hand, the rise of collectivity marked a clear departure from the way the branches had previously operated; on the other hand this shift was not strong enough by itself to sustain the reformers. The existence of the reforming leaders, the emergence of collectivity among members, and the institutional factors, in Haringey at least, had opened the potential to become part of the labour movement <16>.

By the end of the 1970s, although the unions were distinguished in terms of their internal regimes, a common denominator of assertiveness and independence was discernible. The unions had an ability and willingness to

16. Implicit within the literature is the diversity of 'workplace based organisation' which opened up once the devolution of the bargaining relation was under way. It was the different permutations of this institutional change interacting with human agency which generated different forms of 'workplace organisation'; for example see Terry, M. <1982> 'Organising a fragmented Workforce', in British Journal of Industrial Relations. Vol. XX No 1. and Marchington, M. and Armstrong, R. <1982> 'A comparison between Steward Activity in Local Government and the Private Sector', Local Government Studies, vol. 8, no 6.

act independently of the council, an independence which
predated both the Conservative Government and the
radicalisation of the council. These changes had begun to
cohere around the core functions of trade unions; the
economic and defensive .

The dual agenda

The major element in this agenda was economic. From the
mid-70s the decline in local government workers' living
standards had generated wage militancy across the union
branches. The second prong was political, politics entering
the branches as part of the trade unions' defence of jobs
against government cutbacks. I characterise the articulation
of these issues by the branches as a 'the dual agenda'. The
importance of the dual agenda was twofold; firstly, these
issues were the form in which collectivity was articulated
and the form in which the shift in NUPE and NALGO from
sectional to institutional centrality was carried out.
Secondly the ''playing out'' of these issues set certain
parameters to the development of collectivity and with it
the core of institutional centrality in the bargaining
relation.

By 1979 the unions had reached a plateau. Confronted with
the rapidly changing situation generated by the election of
the Conservative government, however, the potential arose

for them to play the central role in the defence of local
government. This assessment derives from a number of
factors. The local government unions represented by far the
largest and indeed only serious organised working class
force in the borough. In this sense they had a substantial
social weight. The unions had built up an independence from
the employer and for many of the manual unions their
organisations had been tested and alterations had, where
necessary, been made in the local leadership. Though the
unions would have taken primarily a defensive role in the
context of any large scale strike action, questions of
workers' control would have been raised in a range of
services, as the trade union replaced the council
bureaucracy in deciding on their delivery <17>. If the
branches had performed this leading role they would have
opened the way to unifying other sections of the working

17. This view is based on a direct observation of events in
the London Borough of Hackney during the rate capping
campaign. The council leader was taken to court at the
height of the campaign and the possibility arose that she
would be jailed or surcharged; the response of the unions
was to prepare for indefinite strike action; they were faced
with the problem of who would run and what would be deemed
to be essential services. They began to organise workers to
run these under the control of the Joint Shop stewards
committee. The point was that the union was being forced
into the position of acting as the collective organisation
for the producers of services rather than as wage
bargainers.

class behind them. To explain why this potential was never realized a key determinant lay in the conceptions of the leaders of the reformed unions.

The politics of the new leaders: branch based militancy

In my characterisation of the Duke House Group I used the term non-aligned left; by the turn of the decade it was applicable to the majority of leaders within the reformed unions. By then the practice developed by the non-aligned left was derived from syndicalism. It had three discernible traits; socialism, a militant trade unionism and a commitment to democracy. First and foremost, these leaders were socialists rather than militant trade unionists [18]. Their identification of a militant trade union practice with a socialist ethos was not in itself unique, but what had been revealed is an inversion of the normal relationship: the militant manufacturing model they adopted was transmogrified from a form of trade unionism to a political practice.

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18. For example Peter Spencer's socialism had arisen from working at Fords, from being a 'spiv' and a racist growing up in Hackney in the late 1940s. At the plant he had not only been involved in the union, but according to his testimony he had been deeply effected by the civil rights movement in the USA and had applied it to his own values and practice.

This inversion was based on a view of working class spontaneity as latent within the membership ready to be aroused by the objective circumstances- the attack on jobs and conditions, and facilitated by their programme for democracy. The non-aligned left's desire to integrate democracy into their practice was then not an optional extra but a necessary plank for their conceptions. Democracy provided a leaven for their actions; there could be no militant practice without democracy and no democracy without militancy. In the final analysis the spontaneity of the workers was to substitute for organised political activity. It allowed them to be "untainted" by party politics creating an organisational and a semi-ideological independence from labourism. Concretely the transposition of the militant tradition was freed from a 'party dogma' which would not have been the case if this process had been dominated by the Communist Party.

The basis on which these views had emerged was their experience of the early 1970s in manufacturing, and the ease with which they had been able to transpose this militant tradition. In each union the transfer of power from the old to the new was relatively unproblematic, with the old leadership reaching the end of their working lives and unable to replicate their views. In each branch limited

resources and a loose network of activists had been
sufficient to carry through change. When discussing the
trade union practice of the non-aligned left I will use the
term "branch based militancy" because they looked to carry
out a militant industrial struggle and viewed the trade
union branch as sufficient to that task.

It was a syndicalist viewpoint which the socialist
leaders took to the unions into the 1980s and which very
rapidly was to be shattered. How the unions were to interact
with the changing political terrain during the early 1980s
in Haringey and London is the subject of the next section of
this work.

The Rise of Radicalism

Defending local government

By unanimous consent the relations between central and local government underwent a major alteration after the election of the Conservative Government in 1979. Government's attitude to councils became, as Rhodes commented, one where the 'description control seems a mild appellation for these changes' <1>. The sharpness of the struggle between central and local government, where the meekest defiance by councils led to an extreme reaction by government, arose, at least in part from the government's desire to reduce the ability of the working class to use the council as an institutional expression of class interest. In 1979 the success or otherwise of this project was contingent on a range of issues, not least the labour movement's defence of the political economy of labour. It was around this question that the political forms of central-local government relations were to evolve.

It is far from the case that the government (particularly during its first two administrations) achieved all it desired in relation to local government. For example,

1. Rhodes, R. <1985>: 'Intergovernmental Relations in the Post-war Period A squalid and Politically Corrupt Process', Local Government Studies Vol 11, No.6, p 11.

in spite of Government policy local government's current
expenditure in 1986-87 was in real terms between 5-6% higher
than in 1979-80. Similarly, the declared aim of government
to reduce local government employment did not materialise; a
5% fall did take place in full-time employment between 1979
and 1982 but then stabilised, and while part-time employment
also fell, by 1985 it had returned to just below its 1979
level as table 6:1 shows.

Table 6:1:
Local Authority Employment 1979-1985

year	full-time thousands	part-time thousands
1979	1626	886
1980	1609	865
1981	1578	843
1982	1552	840
1983	1558	852
1984	1551	858
1985	1545	873

Quoted in Stoker, G. <1988>: The politics of Local
Government. Macmillan, Basingstoke

However, while there has been a decline in numbers employed
as Table 6:2 shows, Haringey went against this trend insofar
as the overall increase in employment, noted in chapter two
continued unabated during this period.

Table 6:2:

Haringey Staffing Levels

year	full-time	part-time	total
1979	7,775	4,172	11,947
1980	7,916	4,110	12,026
1981	8,064	4.085	12,149
1982	8,374	3,773	12,147
1983	8,484	3,821	12,305
1984	8,574	4,443	13.017
1985	8,646	4,446	13,192
1986	9,202	4,829	14,031
1987	9,550	5,019	14,596

Source: figures from the GLC yearly <u>statistical abstract</u>.

Since 1979 there can be no doubt that a defence was mounted by councils against governmental encroachments. Until rate-capping the main mechanism in the councils' armory against government expenditure cuts was the substitution of the rates for decreasing government grants; 'the rate rise defence'. This defence was not solely the province of the left Labour councils, it represented a far wider response by councils to central government cutbacks. Table 6:3 shows the increasing share of local authority income being made up from the rates.

<u>Table 6:3</u>

Local Authority Income Sources, 1976-85

Percentage of income	Central government		
made up by:	rates	grants	miscellaneous
1975-76	23.9	46.8	29.3
1978-79	23.9	44.8	32.8
1984-85	27.0	39.2	33.8

Quoted in Stoker <1988>.

Travis <1986> laid out the dilemma the rates created for the 1979 Conservative administration and the opportunities it opened up to councils:

> The Conservatives were committed to cutting spending on services which were not under direct central control. Local authorities had the power to raise any rates they chose... and could if they chose spend more than the new administration wanted <2>.

What is also notable about these alterations in central-local relations was the role of the trade unions. In Haringey, and in boroughs whose unions had gone through a similar development, there was a failure to realise the potential I have ascribed to them in the previous chapter. The realisation of that potential would have given a very different character to the defence that was actually carried

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2. Travis, T. <1986>: <u>The Politics of Local Government Finance.</u>   Allen @ Unwin, London. p 80.

out, Blunkett and Jackson <1987> have rightly pointed out
that the core of this:

> was the imagination and ability of politicians
> together with the professional initiative of
> officers, combating wave after wave of government
> legislation and financial attacks <3>.

The reality was that the local government unions continually
played a subordinate role to the councils, and when they did
come onto the political stage, it was as auxiliaries to the
councils. The way in which councils did defend themselves
against government can be characterised as the 'bureaucratic
defence', most importantly among these being rate rises. It
was along these lines that the defence of the political
economy of labour was conducted. The formulation of these
policies to defend local government represented an element
in the reformulation of labourism, a reformulation which
gained substance through the practice of radical
municipalism. Both processes - the emergence of the rate
rise defence and the practice of radical Labour councils -
were political processes arising from within the labour
movement. The centrality of the labour movement to these
processes has generally been obscured by the local

3. Blunkett, D. and Jackson, K. <1987>: Democracy in Crisis:
The Town Halls Respond. Hogarth, London.

government literature because of the dominance of state-centred theories.

state centred theories

The way in which relations between the centre and localities have evolved during the 1980s has been analysed by many commentators; for example Loughlin <1986> has discussed the juridification of the relation and Rhodes <1986; 1988> has developed an analysis through the use of organisational theory concerning the degree of power enjoyed by different levels of government and different government agencies. The varied theoretical frameworks that have emerged to comprehend change have created a wide ranging debate. The groundwork for this debate was laid in the 1970s by an attack on the dominant orthodoxy of public administration theory. The most influential among those who were breaking new ground were those of the Community Development Projects (CDPs), for example <u>Local, Government becomes Big Business</u> <1976> and in particular the work of Cynthia Cockburn, <u>The Local State</u> <1977>. These works began to broaden the parameters of the study of local government by situating it in a wider social context.

The Althusserian framework, however, in which the CDPs and Cockburn developed their views of localities and the

role of the 'local state' came under sustained criticism.
That criticism came from other neo-Marxist and pluralist
theorists alike, who criticised them for among other things
putting forward a functionalist model of the state; the
state acts for capital because that is the role of the state
in capitalist society <4>. The ease with which Cockburn and
the CDPs' theoretical framework was dealt with also came
about because the theory made meaningless any attempt to
work within the 'local state' which belied much of the
experience of the CDPs' and Cockburn's own research <5>.

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4. For example, see Duncan, S, S. and Goodwinn, M. <1982>:
'The local state: functionalism, autonomy and class
relations in Cockburn and Saunders.' Political Geography
Quarterly, 1, 1. p. 77-96.
5. The importance of this theory for its advocates was that
it provided an ideology for working within the community.
Placed in its wider context this represents part of the
development of a critique of post-war labourism. (For
example see the work of O'Malley 'The Politics of Community
Action' <1977>). This point was acutely summed up by
Donnison in The Good City in relation to the CDPs. After
commenting on their deliberately 'cutting themselves off
from central and local government' he states that:

> Coolly examined and shorn of a certain
> romanticism about shop stewards and tenants
> leaders, the answer suggests that the movement
> may be laboriously reinventing the wheel - or
> to be more precise the Labour Party.

Donnison, D. with Soto, P. <1980>: The Good City. p.33-34.
This political formation will be encountered below, in the
1980s within the state.

By the end of the 1970s, pluralists had learnt from Marxists to recognise that central-local relations needed to be approached with reference to core theoretical questions; political power and domination, class relations and the state. Boddy and Fudge <1980> suggested that the strength of mainstream political science was that it had overcome the agency versus partnership debate but that it tended to be theoretically weak by focusing on the institutions of government to the exclusion of the socio-economic context. On the other hand Marxist literature, while theoretically grounded in Marx's theory of the state, had been crude in its characterisation of central-local relations.

At the beginning of the 1980s the areas which had emerged for analysis were around the rapidly altering centre-local relations and a desire for local government reform <6>. By 1982 Jones and Stewart <1982> were able to claim, in a rejoinder to Page that they had:

> urged major reform in financing in its political and organisational arrangement and its constitutional provision, all to promote more responsible, responsive and accountable local government <7>.

6. This is extensively covered in <u>Local Government Studies</u>. for example the 1981 annual review.

7. Jones, G. and Stewart, J. <1982>: 'The Value of Local Autonomy-A Rejoinder' <u>Local Government Studies</u>. Vol 8, No 7, September/October. p.10-15.

By the mid-80s the pluralists were able to move from having a theoretical desire for change to being able to draw on the actually changing practice of the councils. Such changes were largely to be found among the radical Labour boroughs, run by what has become known as the urban left or local socialists. For the pluralist theorists the practice of the radical councils placed into the sharpest of relief their conceptions of local-central relations and their conceptions about how local government should function, from which a sensitive if not uncritical review of local government emerged within a sustained defence against central encroachment. For mainstream social scientists, the dichotomy Boddy and Fudge had pointed to had by the middle of the 1980s been overcome; the public administration theory had evolved into what has become known as 'localism'. The strength of this pluralism was derived from its ability to bring together the two main areas of local government analysis: the altering centre-local relations, their desire for reform with a critical view of the practice of councils. The most rigorous of this work has came from Young <1986> and Jones and Stewart <1983>. These arguments of the localists are, as Dunleavy and O'Leary have noted <1987>, based on a pluralism which 'recognises the existence of diversity in social institutional and ideological

practice' <8>. The problem for those neo-Marxists who claimed the most radical of the councils' practices for their own, was the ease with which that practice dovetailed with the pluralist theorists. As Livingstone commented on the GLC 'there was nothing a good social democrat couldn't do on a warm day' <9>. What united both Marxist and pluralist theorist alike was their state centred nature.

The common theoretical focal point for Marxist and pluralist literature was an analysis of the relation between centre and locality which took place in terms of an interaction between institutions. The common problem for these state-centred theories is that by understanding the councils' practice in relation to an interaction between centre and locality, the literature obscures the political process which gave it substance. The actions of Labour councils were the product of a political process within the labour movement which resolved how the councils were to defend the political economy of labour. There were then two sets of relations; those between the centre and localities and those between a Labour council and the local labour

8. Dunleavy, P. and O'Leary, B. <1987> <u>Theories of the State</u>. Macmillan, London.

9. Quoted in Wainwright, H. <1987>: <u>Labour: A Tale of Two Parties</u>. The Hogarth Press, London

movement. As I have argued in chapter two it was the
council-labour movement relation that was central to policy
formation as the labour movement, particularly the Labour
Party and local government union branches provided the
mediation between the council and a borough's population.
State-centred theories by analysing the political
interaction between centre and locality but writing out the
Labour Group-labour movement interaction were able to
ascribe an independence to councils. Without this
interaction being taken into consideration the mediation
between a council and a borough's population is lost. It is
the removal of this mediation which allowed the councils to
be perceived as independent entities, their practice an
expression of the ''will of the people''. On the rare
occasions that the labour movement entered the literature it
was in a neutralised, and therefore an unproblematic form,
as a validation for the political actions of the
councillors.

   Behind the literature then there lies a concrete
historical development within the labour movement of how it
was to conduct the defence of local government. This absence
in the literature necessarily overlooks the question of how
political formations arose as part of the process of
formulating a policy to defend local government.

Consequently the literature presents in a finished form the
forces who were to carry out the programme of the radical
councils. The most influential work on the local government
left is that of Gyford <1982> and his book The Politics of
Local Socialism <1985>. What Gyford put forward was an
unproblematic development of local socialists from their
origins in the community into the portals of local
government office. He has characterised this 'left' as:

> the new generation of local politicians who
> emerged in the early 1980s committed to
> pursuing a decentralised road to socialism.
> Rather then a mass proletariat, they seek to
> form a coalition of urban groups, and by
> mobilising them around local issues, transform
> popular consciousness <10>.

The above characterisation of Gyford's is in fact quoted in
Gurr and King <1985> and could have come from any number of
commentaries on local government. In reality the formation
of this left was itself part of the political process by
which the rate rise defence came to dominate. It is a
characterisation which finds support from the major
participants of local socialism, such as Livingstone <1987>
and Blunkett <1987>, and from among socialist theoreticians,
for example Wainwright <1987>. This type of analysis places

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10. Gurr, T, and King, D. <1987>: The State and the City.
Macmillan Education, p 179.

the local socialists as an element of a new left who represented:

> the new tradition by contrast (with the view
> that the Labour Party could be reformed) has
> emerged from circumstances, in the late sixties
> and early seventies, in which a minority of
> working class people were themselves in practice
> breaking out of labourism. Through their
> experience of occupations, work-ins,
> demonstrations and strikes. This minority
> perceived the possibilities of a popular rather
> than purely parliamentary process of change <11>.

The above quotations are indicative of a literature which describes the end of a process where it is indeed possible to speak of a new left or local socialist left who expressed the concerns outlined above. What is absent in the analysis is a consideration of the process of political formation that took place within the labour movement. For example an important element within the labour left described above was women. A discussion in Feminist Review <1984> situates the move of women from the women's movement, into the Labour Party as taking place in 1980 and after:

> I was one such feminist who joined in 1980 and
> I know a large number of others who joined at
> the same time... There was a radicalisation within
> the left wing of the party around the question
> of internal democracy... and the left wing current
> around Tony Benn strengthened its influence <12>.

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11 Wainwright, H. <1987>: Labour: A Tale of Two Parties.
op.cit.
12. 'The women's movement and the Labour Party', Feminist
Review 1984, Summer.

This (which I view as part of a wider influx into the Labour
Party by those I define, below as the 'political radicals'.)
took place after the major reforms had been achieved by the
left and after the formation of what I wish to characterise
as 'the municipal tendency'. In the Labour Party of the late
1970s the focus on municipal politics simply did not fit the
concerns of its left-wing, as the following examples from
within Haringey show. What is apparent from the
documentation is, however, that as the 1970s drew to a close
the adherents of a more traditional labourism were on the
defensive, in the face of an increasingly assertive left-
wing, as the following discussion of the Haringey Labour
Parties illustrates.

The demise of 1945 labourism?

In 1979 the report from the Hornsey delegate to the
Labour Party conference reported that:

> There is no doubt that this conference was a
> major watershed in the history of our party. A
> number of very fundamental decisions were
> taken; immediately they will have a dramatic
> effect on the party internally <13>.

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13. From the written report of the Hornsey delegate to the
1979 Labour Party Conference to the Hornsey GMC, October
1979.

The report continued by reminding members of the long-standing commitment within the local party to the changes which had been made at conference, 'Hornsey has been one of the most stalwart supporters of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD); we have put forward similar motions for some years.'. A similar position existed within the Tottenham Party, for example a resolution from West Green ward for the 1978 conference had called for support of 'the 67 identical proposed constitutional amendments on automatic reselection, submitted to the 1977 conference' <14>.

This division between the old and the new is illustrated on a somewhat broader terrain, by looking at the impact of the 1979 low pay strike on the local Labour Parties. An impending election usually demands the greatest unity. A strike support committee, then a new phenomenon, was established based on the Labour Party. It had the support of the three GMC's, Norman Akinson, MP for Tottenham, and Ted Knight, the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Hornsey. It was indicative of the ascendancy of the left that the initiative for the support committee came from the Tottenham branch of the Labour Party Young Socialists, and had the local parties marshalled behind it

14. Resolution to the Tottenham General Management Committee, June 1977.

within a week. It is within this broader context that the
local Parties response to government policy towards councils
was situated. By the time of the 1979 Labour Party
conference the issue of local government was already of
major importance as the Hornsey conference report shows:

> Conference had 28 motions and amendments on this
> subject. The eventual composite included the
> section, 'this political campaign (against the
> cuts) must be accompanied by a determination to
> resist cuts imposed by the Tories whether at
> national or local council level' <15>.

These examples are indicative of the ascendancy of the left.
The opposition was a minority who were organisationally
marginalised within the local Party structures. On neither
side of this divide is it possible to find any concern about
municipal socialism.

In line with the literature's inability to show these
wider concerns of the labour left it lacks a comprehension
of the heterogeneity which existed among socialists at the
end of the 1970s both within and outside of the Labour
Party, from which the orthodoxy of the 'new left' was to be
formed.

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15. From the written report of the Hornsey delegate to the
1979 Labour Party Conference to the Hornsey GMC, October
1979.

A diverse left wing

The following 'sketches' provide a characterisation for the reader of the most important of the different political groupings (including a characterisation of those on the right of the Labour Party) in 1979-1980. As these show, the left was far from being a homogeneous entity <16>.

The Activists: This is a generic term to describe the Labour left- the label they themselves used. The activists can be divided into three categories. From 'right' to 'left' these were:

The Tribunite/Communist Party Axis: The Tribunites were the traditional left wing within the Labour Party. I have linked them with the Communist Party (CP) as this axis reflected the left wing of the post-war consensus. Both identified closely with the main left leaders within the Party and trade unions and both subscribed to the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) <17>. At this time they had no organised

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16. I have not made a distinction between those who had a national importance and those tendencies which were of parochial importance. These sketches are drawn mainly from Haringey and where appropriate from the London Parties. They are not exact, and do not fully convey the state of political flux at this time.

17. For a discussion on the 'AES' in relation to Tribune see Coates, D. <1980>: Labour in Power? a Study of the Labour Government 1974-1979. Chapter six. For the CP advocacy of the 'AES' see the Morning Star.

grouping within the CLPs. In Haringey, as with many constituencies at that time, the influence of the CP was weak. The Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) which by 1982 had come to represent this axis, was at this time going through a period of self-definition <18>.

The Non-Aligned Left: The term was used by these socialists to describe themselves. I concluded the last chapter with a characterisation of the reforming union leaders as 'the branch based militants', who were part of the wider political emergence of the non-aligned left. The common starting point for both the trade union and political side of the non-aligned left was twofold. Firstly, it denoted being to the left of labourism's traditional left wing, the Tribunite/CP axis. Secondly, they viewed politics through the unions; their political centre was syndicalism. The substitution of the trade unions for a political force was the result of a slippage between two distinct propositions; a view of the unions as the necessary agency for confrontation and a belief that the unions would spontaneously become that agency. This created a fetishisation of the unions and the substitution of the

18. With hindsight the LCC became the vehicle through which this tendency came to grips with the collapse of corporatism and the CP's industrial base.

unions for their own political activity. Political struggle, in this syndicalist framework, was seen as a straightforward and inevitable progression from trade union struggle. Workers, by virtue of fighting back against job losses, spontaneously moved onward to more militant struggles and more radical politics.

For the non-aligned left within the Labour Party this led to a view of politics which was fundamentally an instrumentalist one. Their role in politics was to facilitate the opening up of the Labour Party to the working class and particularly the trade unions, to clear away the bureaucratic excess which blocked working class participation. The non-aligned left were to be central to future developments, as they represented the bulk of the activists. Within this group two layers existed. Firstly, the local leaders, who were already councillors, and who had been Party members since the early 1970s. By the end of the decade they had become integrated into the higher echelons of the Party structures both at a London and borough level. It was from among their number that the core of the municipal tendency was to emerge. Beneath them was a layer who had joined the Labour Party from the mid-70s, and who through their numbers and energy provided the core of the CLPs' input into the national campaign for Party democracy

and who were to be the most vociferous opponents of the cuts.

The Marxists: A number of organised Marxist tendencies worked within the Labour Party. These were; Militant, Workers Action and the Chartists. Nationally none of these organisations were numerically strong. The largest was Militant whose major strength lay in their national control of the Labour Party Young Socialists. The Chartists had been formed in 1968 by a group within the International Marxist Group who felt it important to work within the Labour Party. Workers Action had been formed in 1973 after their expulsion from the International Socialists. They had worked within the Labour Party from 1976 onwards. All of these tendencies, as with those who worked outside of the Labour Party had been formed by the experience of 1964-1970. Within Haringey neither the Chartists nor Militant had a presence. Workers Action had six people within the borough in 1979.

The Moderates: These were the forces within the Labour Party who stood to the right of the activists. They can be characterised as the defenders of traditional labourism. They dominated Haringey council until 1985.

The Revolutionary Left: These were the counterparts to the Marxists, but outside the Labour Party the main grouping being the Socialist Workers Party, (SWP).

The Political Radicals: This definition refers to those who during the 1970s stood outside the Labour Party or 'orthodox' revolutionary organisations. They functioned within three main areas, community groups, the women's movement and black issues. Three areas can be itemised which represented an ideological coherence:

i) their conception of a working class fragmented by ethnic and gender divisions, creating oppressed groups, who were relatively economically disadvantaged and powerless, a position, which is at least partially sustained through racist and/or sexist practices, of the white and/or male working class and working class institutions.

ii) their conception of a hierarchical white male dominated trade union movement.

iii) the view that the Labour Party was 'reformist '

While the views of the political radicals both paralleled and overlapped with those of the activists, there were a number of important differences. They had a coherent understanding of the question of oppression. (Views which were in 1978-1979 just beginning to permeate into the London Labour Parties), while through their decision to be outside of the Labour Party, they were logically part of those political forces who were engaged in building an alternative labour movement.

These examples of the Haringey labour parties and the above characterisations show that in 1979 there was a considerable diversity of views within the left of the labour movement and that within the Labour Party a movement for change within the constituencies was already well under way, a movement in which local government provided an element of a far broader reappraisal of labourism. Exactly what these struggles would do to the boundaries between Group and Party and between council and government were in 1979 unknown quantities. The origins of what was to become the 'municipal tendency' within London are found in 1978 with the formation of a broad campaigning body within the Labour Party; the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV).

The rise of the municipal left.

The SCLV was founded in 1978 by two Marxist groups, Workers Action and the Chartists, and a number of non aligned left activists. The SCLV aimed initially to prepare for a general election campaign to be fought by grass roots labour activists on the basis of a unity of socialist and democratic demands.

The campaign produced alternative election literature for the 1979 election and succeeded in getting several CLP's

to use it. The literature covered both traditional socialist
concerns (labour should not make the working class pay for
the crisis) and "democratic" issues such as woman's rights,
anti-racism and the struggle in Ireland.

The campaign published its own paper _Socialist
Organiser_. which continued after the Conservative election
victory with debate then shifting onto how Labour activists
could use power bases in local councils to work towards
bringing down the government.

This debate led to a major split over the issues of
rate rises, with Workers Action and some independents
arguing against rate rises as simply another manifestation
of cuts, and the Chartist axis (including such future
municipal leaders as Ken Livingstone) arguing that rate
rises could be used tactically to buy time to organise
opposition to the Conservatives. This latter position
inexorably slipped into a position of support for rate rises
per se as the better alternative to cuts in services.

The political split over rate rises rapidly replicated
itself organisationally, resulting in the formation of
London Labour Briefing, whose main raison d'etre was the
winning of "power" in first the GLC and then across the
London boroughs. From the original SCLV intention of using
local authorities as a platform to mobilise a fight against

the government, the potential for local authorities, in
Briefing's terms, became that of maintaining islands of
socialism in a Thatcherite state, with Labour
administrations using the resources at their disposal to aid
the "disposessed". This view, which came to dominate among
the left during the mid 1980s, was formed out of the
experience of the GLC. There the conception of harnessing
the resources of the local state had arisen after it had
acquiesced to the Lord Laws' ruling over Fares Fair. When in
Carvel's words the GLC 'went legit' <19>.

The substance of the GLC's actions evolved from their
innovative developments in social policy which have been
highlighted by Blunket and Jackson:

> The GLC took the lead, welding together a grants
> policy which gave particular support to black
> voluntary organisations; an equal opportunities
> committee to monitor racial discrimination and
> a serious attempt to implement positive action
> in its own recruitment policy <20>.

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19. Carvel, J. <1985>: <u>Citizen Ken</u>. Hogarth Press, London.
p.109. Also see London Labour Briefing, March and April 1982
for the debate within the left over what it should do after
fare's fair.

20. Blunket, D. and Jackson, K. <1987>: <u>Democracy in Crisis</u>.
Hogarth Press, London. p 91-92.

The main elements of this policy were :

i) Taking forward equality - mainly through in house codes of practice against discrimination. This also provided a certain amount of support for women and ethnic groups in minorities.

ii) The provision of grant aid, for example to advice centres, and women's refuges, which plugged gaps in existing service provision.

The methods the council adopted to operate its redistributive function, that was dividing up the surplus at its disposal, and on what lines it would reform its own political and institutional practices evolved into a programme of equality which in the main addressed the most socially and economically disadvantaged, attempting to improve and change their immediate circumstances. I view this nexus of policies as the 'bureaucratic administration of equality' which represented the core of radical municipalism.

Reconstituting class-the role of the political radicals

As far as it is possible to discern the model used by the GLC for their programme of equality was adopted from the USA. Carr (a Labour member of the GLC) has commented that the impetus for their equal opportunities programme 'was a

borrowed model from the United States' <21>. This model had
two elements. Firstly, a recognition that certain sections
of society were disadvantaged as a result of institutional
and individual discrimination. Secondly it prescribed a
method to redress these forms of discrimination through an
interventionist role for central and local government, by
using their employment practices and redistributive powers.
The redistributive practice of the council allowed for
oppression to be disengaged from class exploitation; class
if it was viewed at all was done so through the lens of
oppression and seen as ''classism'', a specific type of
oppression. This conception of oppression and oppressed
groups became the principle criterion, both theoretical and
practical, on which the council's institutional changes and
distribution of surplus took place. The theoretical effect
of this practice provided a material basis around which
class was reconstructed, it could now be viewed through the
prism of oppression. This logically and in practice cut
across the horizontal axis of class creating vertical
communities of the oppressed (within which the unions were
placed), forming a hierarchy of the oppressed. The central

21. New Socialist. July 1985. For example, the concept of
contract compliance had its origins in the federal programme
for equality.

element in this was not the shifting order of these
competing groups but the centrality of the council. It
became the arbitrator between conflicting interests amongst
the hierarchies and over priorities of where the surplus was
to go. This was legitimated in three ways:

i) That it was carried out against male and/or white
dominated structures challenging their racism or patriarchy

ii) By the perception that it represented the demands of the
council's constituency.

iii) It has become linked to a wider vision of a socialist
future which these actions prefigured <22>.

Making this operational called for an agency to carry
it out, and it was the political radicals who had a clear
understanding of the importance of this. The GLC's programme
acted as a conduit for the political radicals into the
councils structures, either in a client relationship or as
administrators of policy. The latter, which was the most
important, took place mainly through the formation of
specialised units, which attempted to circumvent the
entrenched County Hall bureaucracy. The practice of the GLC
was to represent a fusion of the US model with the political
radicals' indigenous theories. Although many of the

22. For example see M Ward's article in London Labour
Briefing on the Economic Development Unit, March 1983. Or H
Wainwright, <1987> Labour: A Tale of Two Parties.

political radicals joined the Labour Party the substance of
their relations was the formation of an alliance with the
Labour Council to carry out the programme of equality and as
such was with the GLC as an institution. The GLC along with
other radical councils during the mid-1980s provided an
institutional home for the political radicals, and through
the administration of the project a temporary ideological
coherence of working within the state.

The 1981 decision of the left councillors to remain in
office and the practice of the post-1981 GLC were seminal
for the evolution of labourism. There were now three
definable ideological currents on the left of the Labour
Party; the various Marxists, the Tribunite/CP axis (from
1982 the LCC) and, now inside the Labour Party, the
political radicals. The basis for this was the assimilation
of the political radicals' views through the GLC's practice
of the bureaucratic administration of equality. The critique
of Labourism that the political radicals had evolved from
the mid-60s was now put into practice not from below but
through the council. A period of transition had begun where
the influence of the Marxists, which had grown during the
1970s, over the non-aligned left began to be eclipsed by the
political radicals. These shifting ideological parameters
within the labour left occurred through the rise and decline

of radical municipalism. The political practice developed by
the GLC was of undoubted importance in providing a model of
radical municipalism for boroughs such as Haringey. These
ideas however only came to prominence in Haringey after the
campaign against rate capping in 1985. Unlike the GLC,
Haringey Council did not have the autonomy from the labour
movement enjoyed by the GLC Labour group. Although the ideas
of the political radicals were to hegemonise the non-aligned
left within the borough this process occurred not only after
the GLC had evolved its model but after the left within the
borough had failed to come to terms with the alliance
between the moderates on the council and the council unions.

The Formation of Alliances 1979-1981

The impact of Government policy on Haringey

I have argued that at the end of the 1970s the left was extremely heterogeneous and that the rise of municipal socialism occurred not only as a response to the Conservatives but also out of internal conflict within the left. This picture is now shown on the borough wide level; in the Haringey case, however, in the period 1979-1981, radical municipalism was unheard of. Rather the debate and the shifting alliances which were to centre around the rates question, was over how and what forces were to defend the political economy of labour .

In June 1979 the Conservative Government declared its intention of holding public expenditure at the 1978-1979 volume through 'tight cash limits' <1>. Haringey council was faced with a dual problem; expenditure was to be reduced in real terms,(as government was redistributing expenditure to other areas) and the planned expenditure levels for 1979-1980 had already been laid, based on the Labour Government's programme of expansion <2>. It was this, coupled with

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1. This analysis of the impact of the chancellor mini-budget of June 1979 was given in the Economist. 22nd June.
2. HM Government <1976>: Public Expenditure to 1979-1980. Cmnd 6393, H.M.S.O., London.

'tight' cash limits to enforce cuts, which created the
sharpness of the 1979 crisis.

One week after the Government's announcement of its
intention to hold down Council expenditure the Labour Group
voted to carry out cuts. Each service committee would have
to make a 2% saving reporting back to the Labour Group
sometime in September. Colin Were, the leader of Haringey
Council, defended this decision as a means 'to avoid a
supplementary rate increase' <3>. This decision was put to
the Local Government Committee (LGC) meeting of July 1st, as
a proposal from the Policy Advisory Group (a joint LGC
Labour group committee) and rejected. Instead a resolution
was passed by a two to one majority calling for 'the Labour
Group to consult frequently with the LGC and CLPs in order
to adhere to the manifesto', with an addendum calling on the
LGC to organise:

> as early as possible a meeting of representatives
> of the Labour movement and community organisations
> of the borough to discuss what can be done to
> defend living standards. Meanwhile the LGC
> opposes any rent or rate increases or cuts in
> services <4>.

The following night, after a meeting between the Labour
Group and the LGC officers, the councillors issued a

3. Quoted in the Hornsey Journal. 29th June 1979.
4. Local Government Committee [hereafter LGC] minute July
1979.

statement saying that they 'refused to be bound by the resolution' <5>. Any action the parties might take against the government would be interpreted as also being against the Group.

The meeting of labour movement activists initiated by the LGC was held on July 7th. Indicative of the concern felt was that over ninety people attended <6>. There they were confronted with a united response from the LGC officers and leading councillors. The officers defended the Labour Group's decision, while the councillors called for unity behind their leadership. The opposition to Council policy was to widen through the one concrete decision to come out of the July 7th meeting- the decision to launch the Haringey Campaign Against the Cuts (HCAC), which rapidly became a focal point for the borough's labour movement activity against cuts, including those in the health service <7>.

5. Quoted in the Hornsey Journal, 6th July 1979.
6. The figure of ninety was given in the report of the meeting to the September GMC of Tottenham CLP.
7. Organisationally the campaign adopted a delegate structure and held its inaugural meeting in October. Until then meetings took place supervised by a steering committee. The centrality of HCAC to the labour movement in relation to Government cuts is discussed below. Its role surrounding heath cuts was exemplified in it coordinating the campaign against the closure of the local hospital in Tottenham. For example see the report in the of Hornsey Journal, of 8th February 1980 of the demonstration to save the local hospital organised by HCAC.

At the LGC meeting of September 19th a resolution was passed which not only supported cuts but endorsed the Labour Group's decision to increase the figure to 2.7% [8]. The nature of the opposition to cuts had also altered. The counter-position now put forward called for a rate increase, 'it recognises that this may lead to a substantial rate increase next year' [9]. This shift indicates that the initial opposition of July 1st had arisen as an instinctive reaction to cuts, and that the no rate-rise addendum had been passed because delegates had voted for the only opposition tabled. The September meeting seemed to settle matters. However, between it and the LGC meeting of October 12th, the issue was reopened.

Two of the service committees Education and Social Services, reporting back to the Labour Group on how to achieve budget reductions, reported that they were unable to carry out cuts without 'decimating services' [10]. Their decision to fight their corner led, for a brief period, to a complete reversal of policy. Councillor George Meehan

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8. LGC minute September 1979.

9. LGC minute September 1979.

10. Angela Greatly chair of Social Services quoted in the Hornsey Journal. September 28th 1979.

(Council leader 1983-85) stated that:

> The majority group felt that there had been
> change of opinion, both nationally and locally,
> on the cuts... Since it was elected to administer
> and improve services, no cuts could be made in
> services... I don't think the people of Haringey
> would accept a large rate rise <11>.

Faced with a loss of support from amongst the councillors,
Colin Were offered his resignation <12>. The impact of this
act saw the Labour Group rally behind their leader, with, at
least publicly, both left and right calling on him to
withdraw his resignation. Meehen stated 'It would neither be
in the interest of the Group or Haringey' <13>. At a group
meeting on the 9th October other group officers also
offered to resign <14>.

The shift in the Group and Party was reflected in the
minutes of the LGC of the 12th October where it was reported
that a discussion between liaison delegates, (LGC members
who liaise with the Labour Group,) and LGC officers, agreed
a motion that 'regretted the resignation threat', reaffirmed
the policy of maximum resistance to the Tory cuts and called

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11. ibid.

12. A 'tactic' he had pursued in 1977 during the Labour
government expenditure cuts with similar success.

13. Quoted in the Hornsey Journal. 5th October.

14. These were: Young, Garwood, Meehen, Harrison, Whittle
and Atkinson. Reported in the Hornsey Journal. 11th October.

on the Labour Group and Group officers to agree that:

> No cuts should proceed in the current year and
> they (the Group) should not take precipitate
> action at this stage, about the strategy for
> next year <15>.

The policy change of the LGC reflected a growing opposition
within the Party, but more importantly it arose from the
rejection of cuts by the service committees. A new alliance
had been formed against cuts, which, temporally at least,
had isolated the leader with a small coterie of followers.
Behind this alliance the "revolt" of the committees was
effective and the cuts were reduced to the original level of
2%. This reunited the Labour Group around the leader and,
ignoring the decision of the LGC of October 12th, the Labour
Group met on the 14th and voted 21-16 for cuts <16>. These
were then passed at the council meeting of Monday October
15th <17>. It was on this note that the debate over the 1979
expenditure levels ended.

The picture I have painted of confusion, uncertainty
and of no clear lines of accountability, is if anything
understated, as I have confined my remarks to the relations
between the Labour Group and LGC. The intensity of the
politicking during the five months between June and October

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15. LGC minute October 1979.

16. Reported in the Hornsey Journal. 19th October.
17. Minute of October Council meeting.

laid the foundation within the borough for the emergence of a range of political alliances in the Labour Party and wider labour movement. The experience of the debates between June and October generated within the Labour Party two separable but related processes concerned with the 1980 expenditure levels:

i) An attempt by the Labour Party to impose order onto the decision making process and to evolve some form of democratic control over the Group's actions.

ii) An attempt within these Party-based structures to carry out a debate on the budget.

Two Structures November 1979 until April 1980

The formalisation of these issues began at the LGC executive committee meeting of November 3rd, where a discussion paper was commissioned, to be 'written in consultation with Haringey Campaign against the Cuts' <18>. This document: '<u>The Effects of Public Expenditure Cuts on</u>

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18. LGC Executive committee minute November. This ensured a consensus within the LGC and the GMC's for the executive's proposals.

<u>Haringey 1980-81</u>' outlined three positions:

> One group of comrades has argued that we cannot
> put the burden on the rate payers and we must
> cut our expenditure even if this means reneging
> on our election promises... A second group has
> argued that if we are faced with causing hardship
> through cuts or with putting up the rates we
> should put up the rates. Finally there is a third
> group who think we should not confine our thoughts
> to these narrow options but instead we should
> concentrate on how we can help to unite the
> whole movement in a concerted opposition to the
> Tory Government's plans to force it to do a
> U-turn on public spending cuts <19>.

The LGC executive meeting of November 3rd also set out a
timetable for debate: the December ward and GMC meetings
would decide the policy of the parties, and their decisions
would be taken to the LGC meeting of January 7th. A
conference 'of the three GMCs and the group on cuts and rate
planning' was also scheduled for December 16th <20>. As this
was not a constitutional body 'no vote was to be taken.'
<21>. This structure had not simply arisen out of an
academic desire for clarity but had been shaped by a real
pressure from Labour Party members on the local Party
structures.

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19. The Effects of Public Expenditure Cuts on Haringey 1980-
81', <u>LGC document</u>. November 1979.

20. LGC Executive committee minute November .

21. ibid.

The establishment of these procedures for determining the budget had instituted a parallel decision making process to the traditional one, based on the exclusive right of the Labour Group to decide the budget. The Labour Group had been party to the formulation of these structures and to the timetable, the Group even deciding to speak to wards and the GMC's about the budget   <22>. In fact, far from abandoning their exclusive right to set the budget, by the beginning of December the Labour Group, independently of the Party, had decided on a cuts budget coupled with a 36% rate increase <23>.

This discrepancy between the Group's public support for the Party-based structures and their actions arose from the intense political pressure they were encountering from within the Labour Party. It is in this light that I interpret their decision to go out and speak to the wards; it was an attempt to regain support by engaging with a broader spectrum of Party opinion than the activists who staffed the GMCs and LGC. The actions of the Group represented the rejection of the delegate status which had been implicit in the Party's structures. A contemporary account of the meetings organised by the Labour Group with

22. LGC minute, November.
23. Tottenham January GMC minute, from the report of the GMC's Group liason officer.

the wards sheds considerable light on how far removed the
Group actually was from the views of the overwhelming
majority of Party members:

> In fact, the debate in the Parties has not
> been so much between this policy (rate rises)
> and the right-wing councillors, but between it
> and the policy of organising the fightback now
> (i.e no rate rises)... The latter was only
> narrowly defeated at the Tottenham GC <24>.

Even if a certain amount of rhetoric is allowed for in the
above report, it situates the Party far to the left of the
councillors. This assessment is confirmed by the decisions
of the borough's GMCs and of the January LGC. The resolution
that was passed at that meeting called for a no cuts budget
with a possibility of rate rises 'to buy time to build a
fight against the government' <25>.

The January LGC decision marked the formalisation of
the two decision-making processes; the Group's and that of
the Party, and with this the formalisation of the
disjuncture between the Party and Group. The consequence of
this breakdown in consensual relations between Party and
Group was to force the latter increasingly into reliance on
their bureaucratic independence from the Party afforded them

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24. From the GMC report of the Bruce Grove delegates to
Bruce Grove Ward January 1980.

25. LGC minute January 6th, 1980.

by Labour Party standing orders. As the LGC secretary's AGM
report for 1979-1980 somewhat diplomatically put it:

> The last year has been dominated by a major
> disagreement over plans to cut some council
> services which dozens of hours of discussions
> failed to resolve... Group members are willing
> to ignore decisions reached by their party by huge
> majorities after very careful consideration...
> Party rules provide Councillors with a
> constitutional defence between elections and give
> party members a constitutional solution at the
> time of reselection <26>.

Far more forthright was the annual report to the LGC from
the Group secretary. He paints a picture of the virtual
breakdown of Group/Party relations:

> The failure to implement LGC resolutions on the
> 'rate' has considerably affected the relationship
> between the Group and LGC. The LGC rightly
> complains about the poor attendance of many Group
> members at LGC and GMC meetings but the hostile
> atmosphere and frequent vilification of the group,
> sometimes on a personal basis, does not encourage
> attendance <27>.

The Party-based decision making structures helped to
legitimise an opposition within the Labour Group, which was
carried over to the rate making meeting. There Toby Harris
(council leader from 1987 until time of writing) proposed a
45% rate increase with no cuts and Maureen Dewar (who I
identify below as one of the core members of the Labour

26. Tabled at the LGC meeting June 1980.

27. ibid. This was not accepted by the meeting and was
remitted to the Group secretary for redrafting.

Group) a 40% increase with a cuts package. Both were voted down, and the 36% rate increase passed. This was achieved by the narrowest of margins; 26 votes to 25. Ten Labour councillors voted with the Conservatives (who wanted a 17% increase) <28>. It is difficult to view this as brinkmanship, as the Labour majority was only achieved by the defection of one of the left councillors to the majority Labour Group and another was 'taken ill' prior to the meeting <29>. The Spring of 1980 was the high-point of the left's ascendancy within the borough.

The left's victory of 1980

What is observable in this victory is how quickly the proto-Briefing group had achieved prominence, expressed through the informal leadership of the left councillors who had come to dominate the non-aligned left. A somewhat stereotypical division emerged between the 'leaders' and the 'rank and file'. This is illustrated by the LGC document 'The Effects of Public Expenditure Cuts on Haringey 1980–81'. in which the no rate-rise option was absent and the left's position was equated with buying time. The document stated the need for the council to avoid 'going it alone'

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28. Reported in the Hornsey Journal. March 28th, 1980.
29. ibid

where it could end up facing defeat and surcharge as with Clay Cross', and added that by increasing the rate 'it would be difficult to buy more than one year's time because of the problems posed by a series of successive rate increases' <30>. These two points cited in the document were the central thesis advanced by Knight in support of his anti-cuts fight during the Autumn of 1979. The practice of Lambeth was then in a very real sense relevant to the debate in Haringey, Lambeth appeared to be building up an alliance which would result in a confrontation with the government. A view endorsed by the left councillors within the borough and through the proto-Briefing group in the SCLV. The division over rate rises seemed semantic but one which was counterposed to the "confrontationist" practice of Lambeth, which would inevitably come to Haringey.

The success of the rate rises to buy time platform within the Haringey Parties signified that the left had become a political force. The nature of their project however determined their political development. The issue of creating a political movement within the Labour Party to confront the government was removed from the sphere of their own actions and ascribed to other agencies, that was,

30. From the 'The Effects of Public Expenditure Cuts on Haringey 1980-81', LGC document.

Government policy on the one hand and the trade unions on the other. It meant that this left had achieved its majority within the Party disconnected from any concrete tasks around the preparation for such a confrontation. The left's victory in 1980 can be characterised as one of good intentions.

The consequence of the Labour councillors' actions was to split the Labour Party into two 'warring factions'; on the one side, a moderate alliance, who formed the council leadership and their supporters within the constituencies, on the other an opposition alliance ranging from the activists to the wider labour movement: most importantly the majority of the local government trade unions.

The moderate alliance

The core of the moderate alliance was among the majority of councillors and I confine my remarks to them. If I had profiled this grouping prior to the 1979 election a more fluid picture would have emerged, with a more open right, centre and left wing <31>. The actions of government and Party, coupled with the councillors' own internal discipline, compressed these differences, largely obscuring

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31. For example; Niki Harrison, (Chair of Education) profiled in 1976 by the Local Government Chronicle. described herself as an 'old style Tribunite'.

them from public view. What became public was a dissent,
usually in the form of gestures, ''smoke signals'' to the
Labour Party indicating dissatisfaction within the ranks of
this alliance. Two issues illustrate this point; the level
of cuts and the question of cuts versus redundancies. On the
first issue, for example, Dewar had moved and Meehan
seconded the 40% rate increase (both voted for the
majority) <32> and the Education and Social Services
Committee's "revolt" over cuts in 1979 was effective in what
I assume was the aim, of reducing the cuts back to the
original level of 2%. These examples show that dissent
existed which helped define the parameters within the
moderates' camp over what was an acceptable level of cuts.

Understanding how the consensus evolved among the
moderates in relation to the question of redundancies is
more difficult. As a council leadership they were clearly in
favour of municipal employment; its expansion during the
1970s is ample evidence of this. It is, however, fair to
assume that a debate took place over the proportion of cuts
in service provision versus redundancies. An understanding
of this is gained from one of the sponsors of the 1982

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32. Reported in the Hornsey Journal. March, 1980.

resolution cited above, commenting to the Hornsey Journal:

> the reaffirmation of the no redundancy policy
> is an appeasement to the left, and an attempt
> to widen the signatures of the resolution <33>.

An indication of the consensus forming around the
maintenance of jobs is found in the following resolution
from the Labour Group to the LGC in 1980:

> The council in consultation with the unions will
> look at ways to save costs across services and
> through redeployment will be able to make the
> most effective use of the workforce <34>.

The documentation around this places it in the context of
the council's good housekeeping policy. Potentially the
implications for the workforce were severe, as it opened up
the potential of joint union - council regulation of the
workforce <35>. It is impossible to know exactly how much
weight the participants gave in their deliberations to their
own political preferences and how much the political
pressure exerted by the Party and unions was assimilated
into a common sense around what was and was not permissible.
It is to the strength and weakness of those external forces
I now turn.

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33. Hornsey Journal. January 15th 1982.

34. LGC minute May 1980.

35. Although it is doubtful that the council attempted to
implement a good housekeeping policy there were other more
substantial reasons why joint council-union regulation could
not work, which are discussed in chapter eleven.

The left alliance

This can be characterized as a left alliance because although it was extremely broad it comprised all those to the left of the moderates both in and outside the Labour Party. From late 1979 through to 1981 this alliance dominated the Haringey labour movement. This is illustrated by the number of affiliations to Haringey Campaign against the Cuts (HCAC). By December 1979 affiliations stood at: twenty five trade union branches, (including the NUT, NUPE education, NALGO, the craft committee and the T&G,) twenty five Labour Party wards, twenty three community groups and thirteen political groups <36>. The community groups can largely be discounted as most were "front" organisations for political groups, including the Labour Party <37>. It is interesting to note that the only two tenants' associations affiliated to the campaign were dominated by the Communist Party.

The scope of HCAC activity was considerable. In September it organised a march and rally against public

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36. The affiliation figures are taken from the minutes of HCAC December meeting.

37. I have use the term front organisations to distinguish my analysis from the notion that community groups had any independent existence outside of the labour movement forces under discussion.

spending cuts with Tony Benn as the main speaker <38>. In the activity around the 1980 rate making, the entire borough was leafleted and a round of public meetings was organised in the majority of wards, culminating in a march and rally, with Alan Fisher (General Secretary of NUPE) as the main speaker. The campaign organised a lobby of the rate-making meeting in March and also sent a deputation into the meeting <39>.

To an even greater extent than the moderate group, HCAC represented a coalition of organisations with varied political viewpoints. Here again the differences were subordinated to a common goal – this time that of fighting cuts. The campaign was split organisationally between the Labour Party and other political groups, most importantly the CP and the SWP. These organisational divisions were cut across politically by the three anti-cuts positions <40>. The beginning of 1980 found the Tribunite/CP axis, which included the majority of dissident councillors, supporting

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38. HCAC minutes August 5th and 26th.
39. These events are recorded in the minutes of HCAC for January and February. These show that they split the borough on a ward basis and had a team of speakers who included Reg Race, Jeremy Corbyn and Peter Spencer. Spencer was the main speaker at the deputation to the council meeting.
40. These were: rate rises to buy time, rate rises on principle and no rate rises. The evolution of these different views has been touched on above in chapter three and particularly chapter six.

rate rises on principle, with a section of Socialist Organiser, part of the non-aligned left, and the revolutionary left constituting the no-rate rise grouping. The majority, however, took the centre position of rate rises to buy time, the position which had been passed at the LGC conference of January 6th <41>.

These divisions were replicated amongst the union leaderships. NALGO was divided between the broad left CP axis around Harry Lister and those to his left. The NUT leadership supported the no rate-rise line, whilst NUPE Education (and with it the G&M Education) in line with the position adopted by HCAC took a no rate-rise position in May 1980 <42>. The craft committee vacillated between supporting rate rises in 1980 and the no rate-rise position in 1981 <43>. The common denominator which united this alliance and where the union branches showed themselves to be an independent force was over the question of cuts.

How these differences interacted is illustrated by the debate that surrounded the founding statement of HCAC. At its first delegate meeting on the 6th of October 1979 a CP

41. Based on the voting figures of various labour movement bodies. See below.
42. HCAC minute, May 1980.
43. Minutes of the Craft Committee 25 January 1980 and 26 January 1981. I move the no-rate rise resolution on both occasions.

amendment, seconded by a Labour Party ward attempted to delete the phrase 'and ultimately bring down the government.' <44>. This amendment was narrowly defeated by an alliance of the no rate-rise grouping and those who supported the buying of time by the use of rate rises. The supporters of the no rate rise position attempted to delete the phrase 'the council should look for alternative means of income' (which without saying so meant rate rises) and was defeated by an alliance of the two pro rate-rise groupings. These interactions point to political divisions which were far greater than those within the moderate grouping, and belied the fact that HCAC was a considerable force within the borough. The campaigns documention provides a sense of a real movement, and at its heart were the Labour Party activists; they organised and staffed regular Saturday stalls in many parts of the borough, they carried out mass leafleting and ward by ward meetings in the run up to the demonstrations and rallies <45>. Underpinning the activities of HCAC were the council's trade unions.

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44. HCAC minute of October 6th 1979.
45. This is indicated by the HCAC minutes which discuss where stalls should be, a rota of people to run them, who was to organise and speak at the ward based meetings. The campaign activists were mainly Labour Party members.

The unions as an independent force

The core element of opposition to the council in 1979
and 1980 was the local government trade unions. As early as
July 1979 they had formulated a 'no cuts no redundancy
policy'. A resolution from the employees side to Haringey
Joint Council and Employee Consultative Committee (HJCECC)
recommended to its constituent unions that 'the work of any
vacancy left unfilled as the result of the proposed cuts
shall not be covered' <46>. The opposition of the unions
soon became more than just rhetoric. During September 1979
both NALGO and NUT members took industrial action against
the council's freeze on vacancies. One social services
office was closed for 1 1/2 days a week, and a number of
schools started a no cover policy. The latter occurred a few
months prior to the coming to office of the new leadership
and was organised through the SWP rank and file teachers
group <47>. In 1980 when the education budget included plans
to cut 90 teaching posts, the NUT responded by applying to
their national disputes committee and receiving sanction for
industrial action if the redundancies were confirmed. The

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46. Haringey Joint Council and Employee Consultative
Committee minute of July 26th.
47. Tony Brockman who became secretary of the NUT in 1980,
and has never been a member of the SWP commented that 'we
organised that no-cover policy, the left was altogether
then'.

redundancies were withdrawn. In April 1980, after an overtime ban by caretakers and cleaners, the council withdrew its decision to reduce the number of school cleaners through natural wastage and to cut lettings payments to caretakers. At the same time NALGO was carrying out a policy of non-cooperation due to the non-filling of vacancies, which again centred on the closure of social service offices <48>. The one area in which the unions suffered a partial defeat was through the Council's second attempt, which began in the Spring of 1981, to make inroads into the pay and conditions of education manual workers. A compromise was eventually reached in September over the reduction in caretakers' lettings payments but the reduction in cleaners' hours was dropped; as the NUPE secretary put it 'we made a deal' <49>.

These strikes, which began in the Autumn of 1979, took place after the unions had undergone the substantial changes discussed in previous chapters and prior to the radicalisation of the council. This brief eighteen month period from the Autumn of 1979 through to the Spring of 1981

48. Minute of the Haringey NUT Executive Committee meeting, 7th February, 1980. The resolution of the NUPE dispute and the NALGO dispute are reported in the Hornsey Journal of 11th April.

49. PS3 side 'b'. See chapter ten for discussion on the two NUPE disputes.

marked the zenith of trade union power and independence
within the borough.

The trade unions' independent activity posed a
substantial problem for the Council who had in one form or
another to confront it, for here was a potential force which
fell outside the Group's institutional ability to ignore.
The activity of the trade unions set a limit to the
Council's independence from the labour movement. The
evidence for this assessment is found in the Council's
practice. Their attempts to make inroads into the workforce
were either rescinded or reduced in impact as a direct
result of union actions. The consequence of this was to
create a set of priorities in relation to cuts which aimed
to avoid conflict with the unions. As one NUT member wrote
in 1980:

> The Council seems to be hitting at the weakest
> and directing their cuts at the periphery rather
> than across the board so that opposition will
> be sectionalised <50>.

Cuts were made in service provision but in such a manner
that they did not affect council worker's jobs, effectively
removing the question of cuts from the direct concern of the
membership. The corollary of this was that the necessity

50. Beste, P. <1980> : <u>Haringey and the Cuts</u>. Haringey
Socialist Worker Party, London. page 5.

for industrial action to defend jobs was removed from the agenda. The unions' militancy had been effective. The consequence of this was that the potential unity of the workforce with the left alliance forming through industrial action was never realised. It was this potential unity which provided the hidden strength to both the branch leaders and the left within the Labour Party. This activity by the branches, combined with the prominence of a number of union leaders within the left alliance provided one backdrop to the debate around the cuts.

The formation of the rate rise alliance

In 1981 the Labour Party formally arrived at the same position it had in 1980; a no cuts budget. This time the Party's policy was carried out by the Group with a 43% rate increase (which was above the inner London average) and with no lobby or deputations from HCAC <51>. In December 1980 the basis for this had been set when the Labour Group had changed course and called for a no cuts, rate rise budget.

The path to this decision had been eased in May 1980 at the Labour Group's AGM when Colin Were, after ten years as

51. Unlike the run-up to the 1980 rate making, HCAC minutes make no mention of any campaign activity surrounding the rate making. This is indicative of a decline in its support arising from the divisions caused by the rate rise - no-rate rise debate.

council leader, resigned. His place was taken by Robin Young, (who was to leave the Labour Party in the middle 1980s to join the Liberals) and the ten Labour councillors who had voted against the Labour Group at the 1980 budget were reintegrated into the Group, with key "rebels" being given committee chairs <52>.

The basic reason for the Labour Group's change of line was, however, the failure of the moderates' strategy; that is, their failure to find an accommodation with the government. Haringey's grant for 1981-82 was again reduced, this time by £3.5m from the 1980-81 level. In terms of the left-right debate within the borough the left had been proved correct, the Government had not 'left Haringey alone', and with this further reduction in grant the core of the moderates' position collapsed.

The inability of the council to reach a resolution with the Government created the logic for the move to a localised bureaucratic defense of rate rises. They were left with the prospect of making further cuts which may well have spread to the workforce and revived the cycle of confrontation with the Party and the wider movement. All this occurred in the penultimate year of the council's tenure, when traditionally

52. Reported in the _Hornsey Journal_. 23rd May.

a high rate had been levied so that it would be possible to set a low rate in election year <53>. Also the Labour councillors faced, at the end of 1981, reselection for the 1982 council elections, the mechanism by which Party members can assert control over councillors. Coupled with these very powerful local considerations there was also an emerging consensus for rate rises among the national trade unions, most importantly within NUPE. At the beginning of 1980 in a letter to Ron Hayward, (then General Secretary of the Labour Party) Alan Fisher called on Labour councils not to make cuts and to compensate for loss of government funds through rate rises <54>. Later that year, at one of the national conferences called by Lambeth about cuts, in which Haringey's Labour Group and unions attended as HJCECC delegates, Ron Keating, then the main political speaker for NUPE, came out strongly in favour of rate rises. Speaking against a no rate rise motion (which was passed), he stated 'my members will not be Kamikaze pilots.' <55>.

The 1981 rate represented a watershed for Haringey <56>. It marked the beginning of a reformulation of

53. This pattern is visible after 1975 by looking at Haringey General Rate Estimates on a year on basis.
54. Quoted in Tribune. January 1980

55. From my notes taken at the conference.
56. Haringey 1981-82, General Rate Estimates. Haringey, London.

the political alliances within the Party providing the basis
for the subsequent developments in the relationships between
Party, Group and council unions. From this budget it is
possible to date the start of the long march of the Labour
Group back into a position of ascendancy over the Party and
the unions. Pivotal to this was the manner in which the
council adopted the rate rise strategy as it marked the
emergence of a symbiosis between the Group and the local
government unions.

To understand the centrality of this symbiosis it is
necessary to recall that a disjuncture had arisen between
the Labour Group and the Party which politicised and exposed
the bureaucratic relation between them. The moderates'
conversion to rate rises meant that the opposition, the left
alliance, fragmented, with the defection of those who
supported rate rises in principle, as the grounds for their
opposition was now removed. The Labour Group was now
carrying out the programme of the Party's centre. In spite
of this the disjuncture between Group and Party remained
unresolved. This was partly because of the continued
dominance of the non-aligned left among the party activists
who ''inhabited'' the Party structures, but more importantly
the decision making process that had been created in the
Autumn of 1979 had represented the breaking up of the old

structures and a politicisation of the relationship relating
to far broader questions than the budget. To summarise;
while the Group could now rest on the CP/Tribunite axis for
support, they could not depoliticise the situation in the
Labour Party and return to the pre-79 administrative
relation between Group and Party. The councillors were,
however, now in a position to play the role of "tribunes of
the people". By utilizing the Party's decision making
process, set up in the previous year, the Labour Group had
been able to set the terms for the debate with the Party
over the 1981 budget.

The Labour Group passed a resolution on December 16th,
the same day as the Government's announcement of Haringey's
grant level, calling for 'a united response of the trade
unions, Labour Parties, and the community to put forward a
common strategy' <57>. Apart from the usual ward, GMC and
LGC meetings, a major meeting was organised for January to
decide on the budget. Unlike 1980 individual trade union
branches were invited to send representatives <58>. The
moderates' willingness to embrace these open structures was
because they now had the support of the party centre; of far

57. Labour Group resolution December 16th.

58. Letter from LGC secretary Steve Hull to all conveners
and branch secretaries, dated December 19th.

greater importance however was the name in which the Labour
Group announced their conversion to rate rises. This was
neither the party nor the Group but the local government
unions. The councillors proclaimed that they were 'raising
the rates to defend our no redundancy policy' <59>. Thus the
basis of the union campaigning was removed.

The Group based its actions on the only potential force
who could challenge its autonomy from the labour movement.
For the Labour Group the support of the unions enabled it to
maintain its independence from the Party and to engage with
the new political forms which it had created, providing the
essential prerequisite for it to begin to reestablish and
reformulate its political relations with the party. Now
decisions were made in the name of the unions. This meant
that the constituency that the non-aligned left had
identified and viewed as a political force had now
"empowered" the moderates to defend jobs through rate rises.
This political resolution meant that the Labour Group became
the direct political representative of the unions in the
council, paralleling (if not parodying) the relations
between the unions and Labour Party in parliament.

59. From the Labour Group's resolution, to the special LGC
meeting January 1980.

Both the theoretical and tactical problems this posed for the non-aligned left approach to the unions and class, through the prism of syndicalism, proved insurmountable. While this had lead them to fetishise the unions the 'moderates' were now able to carry out their programme 'in defence of the unions', and with the unions' support. In the context of a reformulated labourism, that is a reconstituted unity between council and unions, the left were incapable of forming an alliance with any sections of the working class, further marginalising relations between them and the working class. In the face of the rate rise alliance the Labour Party left programme of no rate-rises rapidly turned into a dogma. For the practice of the militant leaders of the trade unions the adoption of the rate rise defence in 1981 was far from the beginning of a process of disintegration of their programme but very near to its end.

The End of the Dual Agenda

In 1979 the Haringey union branches were in the
ascendant, as is shown most vividly in the low pay strike.
The branch based militants where pushing forward on both the
political and economic front, the two areas which had given
rise to the dual agenda (see chapter 5). By 1982, however
branch based militancy had suffered a series of major set-
backs, the most important of these being the formation of
the rate rise alliance. The settlement over the rates was
part of a pattern where the resolution of issues which had
constituted the dual agenda was achieved outside of the
context of the branch based militancy. The inability of this
current to go forward in the altering world of the 1980s led
to its demise and ultimate fragmentation.

The Branches and Wages Militancy

I have argued in chapter five that economic questions
were central to understanding the evolution of the union
branches. Roberts <1988> has commented in relation to wage
increases for both manual and white collar workers 'a

cyclical pattern is clearly evident' <1>. According to Roberts, for manual workers the cycle peaked in 1979 (then being depressed until 1986). For white collar staff it peaked in 1980 with the Clegg comparability award, and was maintained by the arbitration award of 1981 and then subsequently depressed (mainly amongst full time male workers) <2>.

This view of a wages cyclical is supported by the characterization by the Public Finance Foundation of the period 1979-82 as one of 'catch up' after the mid-70s which was one of retrenchment. This is shown in table 8:1

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1. Roberts, G <1988>: 'Pay in local government 1970 to 1986', in local government, in R Saran and J Sheldrake (ed.s) <u>Public Sector Bargaining in the 1980s</u>, Avebury, London.
2. The Clegg Comparability award gave white collar staff between 9.5% and 18% pay rise.

Table 8:1 _____

Public sector pay 1973-1982

Year	Real Pay % Increase	Nature of change
73/4	- 1%	Restraint
74/5	4.5%	Catch
75/6	3.5%	Up
76/7	-2.5%	Restraint
77/8	-8.0%	: :
78/9	2.0%	: :
79/80	1.5%	: :
80/1	7.0%	Catch Up
81/2	-1.5%	Restraint

Notes: Real pay increases of 2% per annum or less are
defined as "restraint." The long term value for real pay in
the economy as a whole is about 2% per annum. Real pay
increases of 3.5% per annum or more are defined as 'catch
up'. Catch up is followed by four or five years of restraint
on each occasion. Catch up can occur in a single year, but
usually takes two or three years to make up the gap.

Source: Public Finance Foundation. <1986>: 'Public Service
Pay Over Two Decades Under Attack?', Discussion Paper 25.
London.

Table 8:1 shows that the catch up in local government pay

had taken place in one leap in 1980. In real terms an

average pay rise of 7% had taken place.

This conception of Roberts <1988>, of a wages cycle is

extremely useful in developing an explanatory framework for

the relations between leaders and members in the Haringey

union branches. The decline in real wages during the 1970s generated a wages militancy which acted as the spearhead for change within the branch. The ending of the wages cycle removed a mechanism by which the membership could have been brought into direct activity on a branch wide basis around economic issues. For the militants loss of this major issue was debilitating.

With the resolution of the economic question, the left, who had rested on the spontaneity of the members, now found that they had no mechanism to exert pressure and control on the higher echelons of the unions. The force of this development is brought out by considering possible alternative approaches by the branch-based militants. It is conceivable that they could have used the preceding period to form unofficial bodies which could have laid claim to control the official union structures. The importance of this is illustrated below in the relations of the branches to the larger union in the altered circumstances of the early 1980s <3>.

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3. Prior to becoming in 1979 MP for Wood Green, Reg Race was the chief research officer for NUPE. He commented that to his knowledge from 1974 until 1980 there was no informal grouping within NUPE which linked the branches together.

Judge-made Law

The low pay strike had represented the tenuous
emergence of a unity between political and trade union
issues <4>. As in other boroughs, notably Camden, one of the
consequences of that unity was that the law entered into the
relation between union and council. In Haringey's case this
came about when a parent took the council to court under the
1944 Education Act and the council's statutory obligation to
provide education. The specific circumstances of this legal
challenge were that the council was continuning to recognise
the caretakers as the sole keyholders to the school during
the strike. Spencer recalled:

> At that time, the caretakers were recognised
> as the sole key holders – very foolish of the
> authority– and they actually honoured it, in
> those days, and said no one else can unlock the
> school <5>.

The councillor who bore the brunt of this council
decision was the Chair of Education, Nicki Harrison. Spencer
recalled that Lord Chief Justice Denning had 'scared the
life out of Nicki Harrison' <6>. She told Spencer that Lord

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4. See Chapters four and five of this work.
5. PS3 side 'b'.

6. Peter Spencer tape 5 side 'b'[hereafter PS]

Denning had:

> told her quite clearly they should have opened
> the school, and accused her of collusion with
> the branch secretaries <7>.

Here for the first time in Haringey the law entered the
relations between the union and council, causing the council
'in their own way to enter into meaningful negotiations over
keyholding' <8>. Further, it was not possible to put this
issue on the back burner; negotiations were still going on
in the run up to the TUC day of action called for May 14th
1980. The day of action was going to involve strike action
by the caretakers and if they remained the sole keyholders,
then once again the schools would be closed. Either side
could have decided that non-compliance was a better option,
but according to Spencer:

> there was no way they weren't going to get
> those schools open because Nicki Harrison had
> been scared shitless by Lord Chief Justice Denning
> and it wasn't going to happen again <9>.

The end result of negotiations was that the council
delegated its responsibility for the opening of schools to
head teachers. The unions tried and failed to get it written
into the key agreement that in times of industrial action it

7. ibid

8 ibid

9. PS5 side 'b'

would pass back to the Education Committee. Spencer recalled
that:

> They wouldn't have that. Now they never ever
> have to make a political decision again because,
> if it was down to the Chair of Education then
> pressure could be brought to bear through the
> Labour Party and they weren't going to wear
> that <10>.

Of greater importance was the reaction of the national
unions to this question. Their legal departments advised the
branches to:

> give up our keys to a designated officer because
> all the unions were getting taken to the cleaners
> by the courts <11>.

In spite of this advice, which was accepted by Spencer, the
militancy amongst the caretakers was such that at a
caretakers' meeting:

> there were 30 caretakers who wouldn't give up
> their keys. They were prepared to go to court.
> We had to issue strong advice to give up their
> keys. Still officers from Education had to go
> down to school with bolt cutters to open
> them <12>.

A comparison between the key holding issue and the
caretakers six weeks strike in the 1979 low pay dispute (see

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10. ibid

11. PS5 side 'a'

12. PS5 side 'a'

chapter 4), is stark. In the former, in spite of certain
unique features the strike was clearly within the tradition
of post war local government trades disputes. The legal
intervention surrounding the key holding issue provided a
new phenomena. I do not offer a judgment as to whether the
decisions of NUPE nationally, and the Labour group were
correct, rather to note how legal intervention acted as a
block to pressure from below. Legal intervention empowered
institutional authority over the rank and file <13>. With
hindsight, the importance of the key holding issue was that
it marked the start of the decline of branch based militancy
and the beginning of a pattern, to adapt Loughlin's
terminology, of the juridification of relations between
councils and unions <14>. The main mechanism for this
development was to be legislation rather than judge-made
law.

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13. The militancy of the caretakers was shown by the thirty
who still refused to open their schools. There can be little
dough that if the national union had given alternative
advice this would have seen far wider support for keeping
the schools closed.
14. Loughlin, M. <1986>: Local Government in the Modern
State. Sweet and Maxwell, London.

The impact of legislation

The wider changes in the objective situation confronting the unions is highlighted by the Local Government and Land Act (1980) and the Education Act (1980). Both the Local Government and Land Act (1980) and the Education Act (1980) indirectly threatened jobs. The former instructed DLO's to make a 5% profit after three years of trading. If this was not achieved the Secretary of State for the Environment had the statutory right to close down any part of a DLO which was loss making, with an attendant loss of jobs <15>. The 1980 Education Act removed the obligation on the council to provide a nutritious meal and children could now bring sandwiches. The problem this posed for the school meal staff was that they are employed on the basis of the number of meals cooked. Consequenly a fall in the number of children taking school dinners would lead to job losses. There is no evidence to show that the respective branches; the Craft Committee and the Education manual branches attempted to carry out a policy of non-compliance, rather their practice was to look for ways to circumvent these pieces of legislation. Yet I have identified the branch leaders as being branch based militants.

15. For a synopsis of the impact of the Local Government and Land Act on DLO's see: Direct Labour Collective <1980>: Direct Labour Under Threat, Free Press, London.

This apparent contradiction can be understood by an examination of the options facing the branches in opposing this legislation. The branches were faced with a situation in which they could not act directly; the law placed the onus of enacting the legislation on the employer. The predicament this placed the unions in is illustrated by the three possible models for confrontation:

i) The agency to take the first step would be the council through a policy of non-compliance.

ii) The national unions could either place demands on the council that they refuse to comply or call strike action against the legislation.

iii) The branches could take some form of unofficial action. Both options 'i' and 'ii' were untenable. An alliance between the councils and the local unions was ruled out by the councils' desire to avoid confrontation. As for the national unions, by 1980, the most militant, NUPE had sharply pulled back from its militancy of 1979. This is evidenced by their response to the key holding issue, and Keating's statement at the Lambeth conference. In these two respects then the branches were placed in an untenable position, they could neither make an alliance with the council over non-compliance nor could they look towards the national union to put pressure on the council to carry out

such a strategy. The third option would have meant the branch confronting its own union, the council, and the state. These examples show that branch based militancy had now found very definite limits. The major limitation of branch-based militancy was a neglect of the issue of influence on wider union structures and polices. Had the reformers broadened their horizons and engaged with these questions then the possibility would have emerged of rank and file influence on national union policy with regard to legislation. As it was, localised protests occurred (as with the caretakers not opening the schools), whilst members were entirely without influence in the response of the national union. Branch based militancy was able to make gains on some local issues but was entirely incapable of dealing with the ramifications of national policy.

One of the major debilitating features of branch based militancy was the failure to built up any influence within the official union structures. If this had occurred then they would have had a voice in the decision making process on how to deal with the introduction of legal restrains. Instead they were left with gestures (such as the caretakers not opening the schools on May 14th, the day of action) and no doubt resentment but no real influence on the higher and largely impersonal authority who decided what they could and

could not do. There was, however, a final area in which branch based militancy was "pushed backed". This was over the question of cuts and shows up the growing division between the political and trade union issues, as will be explained.

Dividing the political from the trade union

With the advent of the Conservative government the branch leaders had reestablished the link between the defence of jobs and conditions with broader political issues. Not surprisingly NALGO provides the best example of the phenomenon. At the 1979 AGM resolutions were passed calling on the TUC to organise a day of action 'in protest against government cuts in services and public expenditure' <16>. A resolution against the sale of council houses called on the Labour council to:

> adhere to its manifesto commitment of refusing to sell its housing stock. Any such resistance will receive the full support of this branch who will seek to use all means at its disposal to assist the council... <17>.

In March 1980 a resolution was passed calling on the

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16. Resolution to Annual General Meeting January, 1980.

17. ibid

executive to

> take all necessary measures to ensure full
> participation in the TUC day of action on May
> 14th <18>.

This was backed up by branch support for the local march and
rally and a branch meeting held on the afternoon of the day
of action, May 14th. At that branch meeting the local Labour
MP Reg Race was the guest speaker and a resolution was
passed 'rejecting the suppression of trade union activity
represented by the so-called Employment Bill'. It continued
by calling on the union at different levels to 'ignore the
provisions of the act if it became law' <19>. Also passed
was a resolution calling on:

> members not to participate directly in activities
> aimed at imposing further cuts, and calls for
> support by the branch, of members taking any
> action to oppose cuts and plan of action by
> departments aimed at resisting cuts <20>.

In the early part of 1980 the first resolution against
privatisation was passed. This condemned the disbandment of
in-house architects services and called for the 'blacking of
architectural consultants established for the replacement of

18. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, March
1980.

19. Resolution to Special General Meeting, May 14th 1980.

20 ibid.

in- house service and the blacking of consultants who accept new commissions from clients who had disbanded their in-house services' <21>.

These resolutions are examples of a trend of the early 1980s where branch based militancy was able to link political and trade union issues. One way to see the wider franchise for these resolutions is for example found in their movers and seconders. The resolution over May 14th was moved and seconded by members who were far removed from the radicals; Reg Hart a member of over twenty years standing and Mike Tusher, a member of the Conservative Party <22>.

As in the mid-70s with NALGO's emergency committee this route to the political through the trade union was rapidly sealed off. The branches' ability to defend jobs was ultimately signified by the rate rise alliance. At every significant juncture the defence of jobs or conditions was ceded from the unions to the council. This removed the necessity of the branches to engage their defensive arm, and

21. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, March 1980.
22. Hart stood and lost as the moderates' candidate for branch secretary in 1981. He then left the union and join NUPE officers in 1983 because of the 'political nature' of NALGO. This information was given to me by Jeff Rudin. Tusher had told me in the early 1980s of his membership of the Conservative Party.

with it the necessity for a collective approach by the
unions. The resolution of these political questions broke
the link between trade union and political issues.

The ending of branch based militancy The Politics of the Non-Aligned Left

The dual agenda, however inadequately, had represented
a codification within a militant framework of issues and
concerns which had evolved at the turn of the decade. By
1982, at the very latest, these issues were resolved. The
militant framework in which this had arisen was now dogma.
What these examples have shown is that various external
agencies had acted as the link between the leaders and
membership, such as the pressure over wages and the
perceived threat over cuts. Without these agencies the
militant framework in which the relations between leaders
and members had evolved was substantially disrupted. The
branch based militants found they were now cut off from the
possibility of 'releasing' the spontaneity of working class
activity. In effect the substitution of spontaneity for
political movements which had characterised the practice of
the left (in particular see chapter three in relation to the
practice of the left) had been undermined by the reemergence
of labourist politics.

The impact of the juridification of the relations between unions and councils and the emerging separation between the ability to maintain jobs and expenditure cuts have shown how labourism began to reform. All these developments show the beginning of the reimposition of a demarcation between what was and was not legitimate trade union activity. The reappearance of a demarcation assumes some form of breakdown in the traditional division between the political and the trade union.

What has been observed was that from the mid-70s a tendency emerged for the assimilation of political questions into the trade unions' defensive role; this had the potential to go beyond immediate issues. The problem for the branch based militant's was the nature of that political solution. The trade union issues of legislation, cuts, rate rises, flowed into the enfeebled and decaying structures of the local Labour Party as they looked for a political resolution. This tide quickly broke down the old relationship but was followed by a reshaping into a more formalised labourism, one where the Labour Group acted as the political arm of the unions in the council chamber. It was this which provided the basis for the reintroduction of a demarcation between the trade union and the political, creating a new set of parameters based around the alliance

between Labour Group and unions. This alliance provided the framework in which the unions concluded their shift to institutional centrality and the context in which the 'inevitable' extension of areas of trade union regulation and legality took place.

The problems raised by the issue of trade union legality have been commented on by amongst others; Gramsci <1919-20> Anderson <1967> and Hyman <1971 1975>. Anderson brought Gramsci's formulation into modern usage when he summed up this problematic as one of power-for as power over the working class':

> The unionisation - or politicisation- of the working class requires the creation of institutions which are in one moment a control of it, as a necessity of any disciplined action. Of course in another moment, they are by that fact a liberation of the class as well. The working class is only concretely free when it fight against the system which exploits and oppresses it. It is only in its collective institutions that it can do so... it becomes the natural objective of capitalism to appropriate it for the stabilisation of the system... It is this ambiguity - power for as power over - which makes working class institutions the best of all anti-working class weapons <23>.

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23. Anderson, P. 1967. 'The limits and possibilities of trade union action', in R Blackburn and A Cockburn (ed.s): The Incompatatibles: Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus. Penguin, Harmondsworth.

If the existentialist framework is removed, Anderson has restated the problem that has engaged Marxist and syndicalist alike, and was to confront the leaders in Haringey where despite themselves they began to represent a power over the workers. It is this internal development which the next two chapters are concerned with, concluding my study of NUPE and NALGO in the context of this labourist political resolution.

NALGO: Change From Above

Organisational changes

For NALGO, probably more than any other branch, the shift to institutional centrality demanded a major expansion of the bargaining relation. To make that change operational called for a mechanism to formulate an agenda for the different service groups and a mechanism for enforcing procedures and regulations throughout the services. This process began almost immediately after Hatherway became secretary, and is seen most overtly in the reorganisation of the branch. Hatherway put these changes into perspective:

> The first change had to be the establishment of a proper branch office which had been Norman Child's' work office... then there was the need to register members, a system for recruiting new members, a system for disseminating information. Ensuring the departmental representative knew who their members were, making sure the branch magazine actually happened on time. I also saw it as my job along with a group of others to ensure that other branch officers did the job they were meant to do <1>.

As part of this reorganisation the new leadership returned to their main theme; workplace representation. Hatherway

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1. Bob Hatherway tape 2 [hereafter BH] side 'a'.

very quickly:

> set up a system based on the old emergency
> committee, where there was effectively a convener
> for each department, sometimes coinciding with
> the staff side rep', sometimes they weren't. We
> were able to use that as some form of basis for
> communication... <2>.

This business-like approach was to have a lasting effect on

the branch's organisational structures. It was not simply

down to Hatherway's organisational skills; the change of

leadership opened up the branch to a ''bureaucracy'' in

waiting - the Duke House group and a wider layer of

activists. Bob Hatherway recalled 'people had a motivation

for doing things they never had before' <3>. This keys into

Jim Hopper's (branch secretary 1984-85) perception of a

wider development:

> The branch was still quite alive or relatively
> alive because we were still making the transition
> from a staff association to a trade union <4>.

It also began to make the branch far more representative.

Wilf Sullivan (Branch Secretary 1986-87) commented:

> Bob Hatherway set up the basis of the branch
> office as it is today. I think he actually
> informed members about issues the branch was
> taking up ... The very fact of that sort of
> person being there [a residential social worker]
> positively encouraged people to get involved <5>.

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2. BH2 side 'a'.
3. BH2 side 'a'.
4. Jim Hopper [hereafter JH] side 'a'.
5. Wilf Sullivan [hereafter WS] side 'a'.

These alterations took place in a matter of months and were
to act as a preparation within the branch for NALGO's first
ever national dispute; 'the 1980 comparability dispute' <6>.
According to Hatherway its impact on the branch structure
was considerable:

> There's nothing that cleans a communications
> chain down better than to have to put it into
> practice in an emergency. It had that effect <7>.

An accolade for the left came from Roger Roles who
commented to Hatherway that the 'right would not have done
as well'. Roles had every right to be pleased with the
outcome. The first national strike, led in Haringey by the
left, helped reestablish grading differentials; the award
comprised 9.5% for the low paid and 18% for the higher
paid <8>. The ability of this branch to take effective
action is added evidence to Sheldrake's <1985> contention
that 'the union side were better organised than ever

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6. Sheldrake, J.<1985>:'The local government comparability
dispute of 1980, in J Donaldson and P Philby (ed.s), Pay
Differentials: An Integration of Theories, Evidence and
Polices. Gower Publications, London.
7. BH2 side 'a'.

8. Cited in Sheldrake, J. <1988>: 'The changing pattern of
collective bargaining in local government, in R Saran and J
Sheldrake (ed.s) Public Sector Bargaining in the 1980s,
Avebury, London. This dispute represented the culmination of
the wages cycle for white collar staff.

before', due to NALGO nationally encouraging the development of workplace organisation <9>.

The rapidity of change in the branch structure and the success of the strike seemed to point to a continuation of the process of change begun when the branch reformers were in opposition. Change evolved around the spontaneous development from within services of service based organisation and the potential of the syndicalist model. Retracing the branch's development it is however apparent that this process of change very quickly ended once the reformers came to power. A new pattern began to emerge, which took shape within the context of the ending of the dual agenda and the political resolution over rates. It was not that the moves towards institutional centrality were stopped or concluded, but within the context of the new political settlement, the movement from below rapidly lost momentum. What began to ''substitute'' for a growing workforce involvement was the creation of a strong branch centre and the layer of activists from among the radicals. Although the reforms were seen by the new branch leaders primarily as a mechanism to open up the branch to the members, in reality the centralising of the branch

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9. Sheldrake, J. <1985>: 'The local government comparability dispute of 1980, op.cit.

guaranteed a continued expansion of the negotiating agenda without the necessary corollary of membership involvement. This was to mean that the achievement of institutional centrality took place largely as an interaction between the reformers altering the branch structures from above rather than an interaction between members and leaders, a process which occurred service by service and was not concluded until 1983.

What highlights this detachment of the wider members from reformers is that on a range of issues the leaders found that it was not possible to expand its support outside of its power base amongst the radicals. Indicative of this was the pattern surrounding sectional disputes.

The establishment of sectional disputes

Sectional disputes remained largely, although not exclusively, confined to the service groups dominated by the radicals. They had originated in the late 1970s within Housing and Social Services, and between 1980 and 1981 they were firmly established creating a method for industrial action based on the principle of calling on the branch to give automatic support to members taking action, or service-based initiatives around disputes which would then be

processed into the official union machinery. The following examples are typical of the resolutions to the branch:

> instructs the branch officers to, if necessary invoke the official industrial action procedures for non co-operation with excessive duty work <10>.
>
> ... branch to support any action taken by social services over sacking of worker <11>.

Failure to expand this sectional militancy from those groups dominated by the professional sub-group highlighted an aspect of the differentiation within the branch. The radical services had entered the 1980s with their organisation established, while the other services were still dominated by the core managerial grades (who had just had a 18% wage increase). In the context of the growing stabilisation the reformers found that this type of sectional militancy could not be transposed to other services. Jim Hopper, for example, who was a workplace representative in Public Works provides a characterisation

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10. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, October 1980.

11. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, February 1981.

of the type of NALGO member within this service:

> Working as a NALGO rep in Public Works
> was always a difficult job. In the main
> you were dealing with a fairly
> reactionary group of people; there was
> always a degree of militancy about pay
> and conditions but there was very little
> perception of white collar trade
> unionism <12>.

By the time Hopper had become a representative in 1982,
NALGO members within that service had become an important
element in the ''broad left'' alliance which had helped
replaced Hatherway with Harry Lister as branch secretary.

The new branch secretary

Hatherway resigned in July 1981, and Harry Lister was
elected in September in a three cornered fight between Steve
Powell (who acted in the interim, and who after losing to
Lister took up a full-time job with the branch becoming its

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12. JH side 'b'. Although Hopper worked for the Public Works
Service he came form the radicals milieu - public school
Cambridge - were he studied History. When I interviewed him
in 1987 he was working as an officer for the borough's
Employment Development Unit (EDU). He commented that his
degree had been originally been designed for the Colonial
Civil Service and he had been determined to get away from
that type of job. That was why he had become a bonus
surveyor within the Public Works Service. He had however
failed to escape Cambridge; his EDU job was, he felt akin to
what his degree had trained him to do.

administrator) and Reg Hart (the moderates candidate) <13>.
At the centre of this change was the end of the non-aligned
left as the major force within the branch; Hatherway's
alliance had collapsed while Lister had been able to reform
the broad left.

Lister's election marked a major watershed in the
branch's development, for two reasons. Firstly Reg Hart
represented the right-wing's first and last attempt to
regroup the old leadership. His failure is definitive
evidence of the major shifts which were taking place among
the members. Secondly, and of far greater importance
Lister's election paralleled the failure within the Labour
Party of the non-aligned left to form into a coherent
entity. The process of the disintegration of the dual agenda
had only just run its course when Harry Lister was elected.
The consequences however were felt by the non-aligned left;
without an active membership there could be no interaction
between members and the non-aligned left to evolve a trade
union practice for the non-aligned left in office. Within
Haringey NALGO this manifested itself as a problem for an
individual; the branch secretary. The failure of greater
membership involvement meant that the ambiguity which had

13. These were the three candidates who appear on the ballot
paper. The characterization of Hart as a moderate is
discused in the previous chapter.

surrounded the moderate/non-aligned left alliance which had put Hatherway into office in 1979 could not be sustained.

The rise and decline of the moderate/non-aligned left and the broad left was exemplified by two disputes in the Summer and Autumn of 1981. The immediate impetus for Hatherway's resignation arose in June 1981 after members of the manual unions were, on the advice of NALGO members in Audit, apprehended for allegedly stealing lead from a depot roof, where-upon the manual unions set up a picket at the depot. The right in NALGO wanted a branch instruction to cross the picket line; the left an instruction not to cross. According to Hatherway at the Branch meeting:

> there was three things up for grabs; the rights, my own which was pretty isolated to myself, and the left wing... I can't remember what won in the end, anyway I was defeated. I basically came to the conclusion then that I wasn't prepared to be isolated. I was losing my natural power base <14>.

Following this dispute Hatherway resigned. The second dispute took place after Lister had become Branch secretary in the Autumn of 1981 when the DLO supervisors took strike action in pursuit of greater control over the shop floor workers. Hatherway pointed out how this related to the

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14. BH2 side 'b'.

changing alliances within the branch:

> I had been using every trick in the book,
> bureaucratic, persuasive and otherwise to prevent
> the DLO supervisors starting what became the
> 'clocking in and clocking out dispute'... I sat
> on this simmering pot all summer and the moment I
> stood up it erupted. Harry had been winding it;
> that's where his alignment with Ron Wyatt (NALGO
> convener in Public Works and future Branch
> president) came from <15>.

The alliance between Lister and the DLO injected a
pragmatism into the branch which represented a break from
the more abstract and normative values about class and
solidarity associated with the non-aligned left. The ability
of Lister to make such an alliance does however, point to
the branch being increasingly seen as important by the
members. This final phase of moving towards institutional
centrality took place after the defeat of the dual agenda
and increasingly took place on the terrain of the growing
need for the branch leaders to regulate procedures.

Gender and race

The last redoubt of the branch based militancy and an
example of the growth of regulation was the Women's
Committee, which along with the Black and Ethnic Minority

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15. BH2 side 'b'.

Committee had a major influence on developments within the branch.

The Women's committee was established at the 1979 AGM and had been an integral part of the consolidation of the new leadership <16>. Mary Corbishley recalled that the Committee had been established as a consequence of a motion to the Branch from the Executive Committee:

> There was some hostility to it on the basis that it wasn't purely accountable to the Executive Committee. Unlike the other sub-committee its membership wasn't purely confined to members of the executive committee <17>.

Corbishley and other women from among the radcials were out to build a movement, which was a variant of branch based militancy; here the project was to break from their nuclei among the radicals to involve women support staff. This was to be achieved by taking up the specific issues facing women workers, which were largely democratic in character with the premise that these could only be achieved through the union. This involved a dual perspective of building from below and placing demands on both branch and council.

These considerations which underlay the establishment of the committee meant that from its outset it was more than a executive sub-committee. Part of its function, according

16 Resolution from the Executive Committee to the 1979.
17. Mary Corbishly tape 2 [hereafter MC] side 'a'.

to Corbishley, was for women to gain confidence to participate in the union and to 'act as a caucus within the union'. She recalled:

> We got together as women and tried to organize
> as a group, to get more women on the Executive,
> to ensure that we had motions going to the branch,
> and conference <18>.

Due to the Committee, the branch in 1982 became the first in the country to operate a system of positive discrimination for delegates to NALGO conference.

This committee was to reach in zenith during 1982-83 in a campaign around child care. The campaign was broadly based and extremely active, organising a number of demonstrations and lobbies of the council. Indicative of its energy was the production of its own badges, then quite a novel phenomenon. The documentation for the claim was drawn up by women and Corbishley recalled that it was:

> the women's committee who negotiated it directly
> with the personnel committee. It then went
> through to staff side <19>.

The campaign which ended in the spring of 1983 found the woman's committee at the height of its powers. The methods and goals of the women's committee stood in marked contrast to how the question of race evolved within the

18. MC2 side 'b'.

19. MC2 side 'b'.

branch. The first time the question of race was placed on the branch agenda was in October 1980 (four years after women had started organising in the union). Diane Desmuli moved a successful resolution supporting ethnic record keeping.[20]. This position was consolidated in January 1981 by a resolution from the newly formed NALGO Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (NBEMC) which put forward a closely argued report to the branch on racism and the need for an ethnic head count [21] which the branch endorsed.

Unlike the Women's committee the views of the NBEMC had not emanated from the non-aligned left; they had a more orthodox origin. From the outset they advocated a regulatory role for the council rather than the branch, exemplified by the vigorous way in which the NBEMC supported the Leaders Investigation Panel (LIP). This took the question of racial complaints out of the hands of the union and supported the council as the arbiter of racism. The LIP was endorsed at a Special General meeting in October 1982, after the executive committee's resolution of uncritical support was amended to

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20. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, October 1980.
21 Report from the NBEMC <u>Combating Racism</u>. presented for endorsement at the Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, January 1981.

include the trade union principle that the 'document
constituting LIP was to be a negotiated document' <22>.

By this October meeting a number of different
undercurrents had began to come to the surface. The LIP
provided one of the reasons given for the break-away from
NALGO and the formation of MATSA. The meeting also marked
the first example I have been able to find of the activity
of an informal black caucus involving NALGO members and
councillors. Pat Tounge (one of the first black councillors
and ex-Communist Party member, providing a link with the
NBEMC, two of whose leaders were in the Communist Party) had
been invited to speak at the branch meeting in support of
LIP. This represented the surfacing of a powerful axis for
the advancement of ''black demands'' between workers and
councillors. Alliances between council and sectional
elements within branches or with the branches were not
unusual, what made this unique was that for the first time
blacks had attained this pivotal position. The NBEMC not
only rested on the goodwill of ''white liberals'' within the
branch but more importantly on black councillors.

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22. Special General Meeting October 1982, Amendment to the
Executive Committee's resolution.

By the beginning of 1982 two very different views were established within the branch on how democratic questions could and should be taken up; through workers self activity and through the regulation of the employer. These were exemplified by the different approaches of the NBEMC and the Women's Committee and centred on the role of the council. Corbishley recalled that:

> The first big debate, when I came back from maternity leave in 1982, was over the question of whether issues to do with racism in the workplace should be dealt with by the union in a union forum or disciplinary hearings. They opted for going to this special sub-group of the council (LIP) rather than seeing it as... a trade union issue <23>.

It was the role of the council which predominated as is seen most graphically in the consequence for the Women's Committee in the success of their child care campaign. The result of their activity was, according to Corbishley 'the best maternity leave in the country'. In spite of this retrospective assessment, at the time a ballot was held over the council's final offer, with the branch leadership, at the behest of the Women's Committee, arguing for rejection. This was decisively lost, where upon the Women's Committee asked for an investigation into the ballot. The investigation by the branch executive showed that apart from

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23. MC2 side'a'.

some minor criticism the ballot was fair and the vote lost
on a 27% turnout <24>.

What is difficult to comprehend is the reason for
holding the ballot, let alone an inquiry. The difference
between the council's offer and the claim was minimal and by
any criteria it represented a substantial advance <25>. The
action of the Women's Committee reveals the high level of
their political expectations: if they had won it would have
shown that a unique movement had developed. The ending of
the child care campaign, however, represented a watershed
for the committee. Unable to find a comparable issue to
organise around, it was never to regain its elan or
momentum. This had two consequences.

Firstly the committee soon contracted back into a hard
core of support among the radicals, reintroducing the
division between the radicals and support staff. This was in
the area in which that division had most thoroughly broken
down. Cobishly's explanation of the failure to maintain
links with the support staff was premised on the rise of
equal opportunities and the more general problem faced by

24. Report Submitted to the Executive Committee June 1983.

25. The agreement has been cited as a product of municipal
socialism, for example Stoker, G. <1988>: The Politics of
Local Government. Macmillan, Basingstoke.

women support staff arising from the nature of their labour process:

> It was difficult to do something about women
> in the lower grade jobs; we stumbled constantly
> over their inability to attend meetings. We tried
> to organise the women's group meeting at the
> different town halls so that telephonists and
> women like that could nip up in their lunch
> breaks. The difficulty was you could formalise
> it at the level of getting council to agree that
> women should have time off for woman's meetings
> but in practice they say you can have time-off
> and keep the service running and it's a total
> impossibility <26>.

The problem surrounding the support staff labour process is an important one and is taken up below in relation to the wider question of their failure to become shop stewards.

The second major consequence was not so much as Corbishley viewed it, one of the council 'highjacking equal opportunities', rather the ending of the child care campaign marked the transition from the women's committee to the council taking over the regulation and administration of the democratic aspect of the committee's programme. This was a problem which Corbishley viewed as being further compounded

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26. MC2 side 'a'.

by the national union:

> The union nationally also began to develop forms
> challenging sexism in the workplace very much
> in a disciplinary and legalistic sense. So issues
> like sexual harassment, which we had begun to
> talk about in terms of how we could take it up
> in the workplace, began to be diverted into
> discussions about what sort of disciplinary
> committee we could set up to look at it and how
> the union would look at things like that <27>.

The fate of this Committee fits into the broader
pattern of the demise of branch-based militancy. In this
instance the theoretical framework of the women's committee
fused together the winning of material benefits with
democratic demands for women workers, as well as identifying
those workers and the branch as the only force who could
achieve these demands. The theory failed to comprehend the
ability of other forces to carry out their demands, in this
instance the council. The very success of the child care
campaign saw a re-run in microcosm of the ceding of
militancy to the council. The committee's leadership was
unable to fully come to terms with the 'problematic of
success', and its limitations the failure of women to remain
mobilised after the success of the child care campaign. It
was in this context that the council can be said to have

27. MC2 side 'a'. It was also the case that the committee
tended to lose its rationale as women's questions were
integrated into the bargaining structure of the branch. This
removed the necessity for a specialised grouping to carry
out that task.

'highjacked equal opportunities'. It was within the
framework of the growing appropriation by the council of the
branch's functions and the stabilisation of the branch's
regulative role that a shop stewards structure was finally
adopted.

The hybrid steward system <28>.

The move towards a shop stewards system took place in
three stages. First, the revamping of the emergency
committee into an 'action' committee had occurred at the
1980 AGM; second, the drive was continued at the branch
meeting in June 1980 with a resolution stating that:

> while recognising a 'shop stewards system' would
> be inappropriate at this stage, the branch calls
> on the executive committee to devise a system
> which would ensure adequate local
> representation <29>.

Finally, the following year's AGM approved the rule change
to set up the system <30>. This was ratified by NALGO HQ in

28. The interviews were conducted in 1987-88 at a very low
ebb of the branches life. Looking back on them they are
extremely subjective as my respondents looked at the
formation of the stewards through the prism of the first
round of redundancies and the inability of the branch to
stop them.

29. Resolution to Ordinary Quarterly Branch Meeting, June
1980.

30. Resolution form the Executive Committee to the 1980 AGM
January 1981.

July 1982, and the branch finally adopted it in April 1983.
Rather than replacing the departmental representative
system, the stewards system was grafted onto it, creating a
rather complicated hybrid structure, which would seem to be
the norm for shop steward based NALGO branchs <31>.

Sue Cannon, a sociology graduate, was employed by the
branch to implement the new structure. The original
timetable was two months, although it was to take seven from
October 1982 till April 1983. The problems she confronted
were compounded by the failure of the leadership to
fundamentally think through the issue and the inadequacies
of the organisational changes of 1980; these had not
equipped the branch leaders with an adequate understanding
of the membership. For example, global membership figures
existed but there was no departmental breakdown; no-one knew
where the members were <32>.

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31. The occurrence of this hybrid structure in other
boroughs points to similar debates between left and right
and the compromise which is expressed at the level of
language where stewards were introduced to aid
communication. Seen for example Nicholson, N., Ursell, G.
and Blyton, P <1981> The Dynamics of White Collar Unionism.
Academic Press.

32. This point was made to me by Cannon, who was confronted
with the task of providing a membership breakdown on a
departmental basis.

Cannon identified her first problem as defining what in reality was a workplace constituency:

> you would have workplace constituencies based on either physical location or groups of workplaces joined together to form one constituency. There was no real identity of what the constituency would be <33>.

This was resolved by visiting workplaces and deciding in consultation with the members what constituted a constituency, a process completed by January 1983. The second stage consisted of the organisation of publicity which Cannon felt was surprisingly low key:

> We did leaflets for the whole branch along the lines; 'You may vaguely be aware that somebody has been drifting around sticking their nose into your office speaking to you, and the elections are about to happen'. We did some minimal publicity on that level <34>.

Formal elections followed in March and April, by the branch secretary sending out nomination papers; if positions were contested a secret ballot was held under the supervision of the branch office. In the first election seventy five stewards were elected <35>, which was perceived as a major success by the branch officers. The first meeting of the

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33. Sue Cannon [hereafter SC] side 'a'.

34. SC side 'a'.

35. SC side 'a'.

stewards was held in May and was addressed by Lister and
Cannon who explained the stewards' responsibilities <36> .

The new structure called for three sets of elections;
firstly for workplace representatives (stewards); those
eligible to vote and to be nominated are members within a
given workplace constituency <37>. Elections are then held
for departmental representatives; all stewards are eligible
to stand plus up to two non-stewards who can be nominated by
anyone within the service. Finally there are elections on a
service-wide basis for departmental representatives. Those
elected sit on a service stewards committee covering their
service, for example, all of housing. This replaced the
departmental representatives service committee. The
importance of departmental representatives is that they, and
not stewards, are eligible to sit on the branch Executive
committee, the membership of which is in proportion to
members within a service. For example, Social Services with
600 members were entitled to 15 representatives, the minimum
number being two. Service conveners have to be departmental
representatives as they can only be elected from service

36. By this time Cannon had been employed full-time as a
support worker for the stewards producing a regular bulletin
for stewards and collating information on membership for the
branch.

37. This structure was explained to me by Cannon several
times!

members who sit on the Executive. There are very few branch
members who understand this structure. In reality the system
is much simpler because competitive elections are the
exception for stewards while the departmental
representatives have largely collapsed into the stewards;
creating a unitary body, with the stewards nominating from
among their number who will sit on the executive.

Five years after the debate over shop stewards had
begun the left had finally achieved their goal; the above,
however, had shown that the context in which this was
adopted was through the sponsorship of the branch
leadership. In spite of this and its hybrid nature, the
ideology which fuelled its introduction remained firmly
rooted in the manufacturing model; for the left the
identification of stewards with class and power was, as
Hopper comments, as strong as ever:

> it allied us more closely with blue collar
> workers, with the standard trade union format of
> shop stewards and conveners, as opposed to a
> seemingly antiquated white collar set up <38>.

The process of implementing and running the system, however,
rapidly overturned the imagery, as the following example

38. JH side 'b'. The formation of the shop stewards system
shows a remarkable similarly in the language used between my
respondents with those of Nicholson, N., Ursell, G. and
Blyton, P <1981> study of Sheffield NALGO branch, The
Dynamics of White Collar Unionism.

from the Education Service shows. NALGO organises school
support staff; secretaries, lab technicians in schools and
the central schools' administration staff. The numbers of
NALGO members within this service was equally divided
between the schools and central administration: 373 and 327
respectively making up the largest single group of union
members 700, with the second lowest union density, 50% of
any service <39>. In individual schools membership was
small, between one and ten scattered through the borough's
schools. This fragmentation precluded a collective workplace
identity, and their position within the labour process meant
they had little to no economic power, relations being
ordered largely through paternalism. Richard Cotton (Branch
secretary 1985-86) understood this point when he approached
a 'twin set and pearls school secretary' in the extremely
difficult circumstances following the riot at Broadwater
farm. She:

> was very hostile and I wore my old Stationers
> tie (one of the borough's Grammar Schools) and
> she said; 'Oh, you went to Stationers'. Somehow
> you can put forward the same message without
> being seen as a wild eyed Marxist <40>.

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39. Figures taken from Cannon's quarterly breakdown of
branch density by service.

40. Richard Cotton [hereafter RC] side 'a'.

It was this type of worker that the stewards system was meant to draw into activity, the intention in Education being that batches of schools would be grouped together. The reality was to be an individual running the section single handed, as Cannon very quickly found out:

> What it took was for somebody to decide; well shit I'm just going to do it and get on with it. Dorothy Burke was around. Dorothy did it virtually single handed <41>.

As with the other services which had failed to make the transition from below, this suggests an amalgam of Terry's and Kessler's views on sponsership. The branch effectively sponsored a steward to act as a key steward, as defined by Terry, opening the way for the emergence rather than the 'imposition' of a representational figure. It was the key steward Dorothy Burke who built up the organisation within the Education service; Rudin recalled her pivotal role:

> For the first time ever the Education Service started to be organised that was starting from virtual scratch. It was a major battle, head teachers and the Education Office were accustomed to teachers being organised but not the support staff. It took a tremendous amount of struggle and determination and guts <42>.

This led to a level of organisation previously unseen among schools. The fact that Cotton could even go into

41. SC side 'b'

42. Jeff Rudin tape 3 [hereafter JR] side 'a'.

schools and get a hearing after Broadwater Farm is testimony to this. The most important development, however, was shown in an Executive Committee minute when it put forward a claim for two seats on Staff-Side for non-teaching staff, due to the proliferation of their issues <43>. What had taken place was that the shop stewards system had opened up a conduit between the membership and the negotiators, so that it was possible for workers with a detailed knowledge of their own labour process to begin to formulate their own agenda and through either a key or a number of stewards to expand the areas of the branch's negotiations. The creation of the stewards structure had then, immediately overturned the imagery which had fuelled its development; in its stead what began to emerge were a number of service based structures equating to occupational groups who started to develop their own bargaining agenda. In effect the stewards system had opened the way for creating a number of sub-branchs based on services and around the occupational groups within any given service. These sub-branches were held together by the branch office which provided both administration and overall co-ordination of activity.

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43 Executive Committee minute November 1983.

Two major (although possibly transient) problems were highlighted by the hybrid system. These were the divisions between support and professional staff - the problem of status and hierarchy - and the centrality of the radicals to the whole shop stewards system. The lack of involvement of support staff was, as with the Women's Committee, a major problem. This corresponds to the Nicholson N., Ursell, G. and Blyton, P. <1981> 'picture of union involvement being unevenly distributed across the formal job status hierarchy' <44>. The problem of status that the branch confronted was not solely, as Nicholson N., Ursell, G. and Blyton, P. have put forward, one of access to knowledge and information available to high status workers. There were two other debilitating factors which mitigated against support staff taking up shop stewards positions. There was firstly the effect of the workers' different position within the labour process. Corbishley (who by 1983 was a senior manager in change of a neighbourhood Housing Office) contrasted her ability to get time off for union duties to that of a support worker. For example, while a telephonist was crucial

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44. Nicholson, N., Ursell, G. and Blyton, P <1981> The
<u>Dynamics of White Collar Unionism</u>, Academic Press, London.
p.45.

to keeping the service running, for Corbishley:

> In the sort of workplace I worked in there
> wasn't that sort of pressure. It was possible
> to organise work in a different manner it doesn't
> mean you didn't do the work <45>.

Secondly there was the tension engendered between the
two hierarchies - that of the council and the branch's. This
expressed itself most forcefully although not exclusively in
NALGO because the hierarchy within the union was more likely
to invert the status of workers, for instance a women
secretary being the senior steward within a department of
professional workers. To continue with this example, the
union hierarchy may place the secretary, as a senior
steward, in a negotiating position that is of comparable
status to senior management. Seen as two competing
hierarchies where the union is continually in a position of
subordination, the status relations had to be constantly
renegotiated and the secretary's position continually
reaffirmed. The pattern which initially emerged within the
branch was for low status workers not to become stewards and
in so doing challenge the council hierarchy or the dominant
power relations within the workplace. The council hierarchy
remained a powerful imperative in keeping the union amongst

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45. MC2 side 'b'

the professional staff precisely the opposite to the
leadership's desires. This provided the context for
Cobishly's observation that despite:

> the stewards system; you still got a situation
> where the support staff didn't tend to represent
> themselves, they were represented by someone on
> a higher grade. <46>

Not surprisingly it was my women respondents who had fully
grasped the problem posed by the hierarchies of council and
branch. Both of these problems were also present within the
NUPE Education branch and are discussed in the following
chapter. The second problem was more specific to NALGO that
was the centrality of the radicals to the system.

In line with the other parameters that were imposed on
the branch it rapidly became apparent that, while the
stewards system had brought more members into activity, the
core remained the radicals. By 1983, with the major
expansion of the workforce, union membership stood at 3,620.
It had risen by 1,773 (over 100%) from its 1973 total of
1,847. The base among the radicals had undergone a
substantial increase, notably in the Library service and the
Architects Departments. The take-up of stewards positions by
the radicals was to a large extent the formulation of their
activist status. What is shown by Cannon's records of

46. MC2 side 'b'

stewards is the gradual tapering off of support for the
stewards system, the further away from the jobs undertaken
by the radicals <47>. The branch leadership were unable to
break out from their ''ghetto''. Cannon recalled that the
biggest response to stewards was from:

> services that were already organised, Social
> Services, Housing, Architects, Planning. I can't
> remember now whether we had any service which
> didn't have a representative as we do at the
> moment. The system wasn't generated across the
> branch <48>.

What makes this specific to NALGO is the maintenance
of one generic group, the professional sub-group, as the
core of the system rather than specific workplaces. I was
unable to find a correlation between this greater
involvement and economic advantage; rather it rested on the
political conceptions of these radicals.

The high tide of the stewards

The zenith of the stewards came during the first flush
of success in September 1983, four months after they had
been set up, in the 'Les Butler dispute' <49>. Butler was a
surveyor from PELAW who was sacked for allegedly embezzling

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47. This is shown in Cannon's six monthly breakdown of the
distribution of stewards which is by service and department.
48. SC side 'b'.

49. See, Greater London Whitley Council Joint Secretaries'
Inquiry, <1984>: <u>Les Butler</u>. January 1984.

his car allowance. NALGO viewed this as victimization and took strike action. This was made possible by the stewards as Rudin recalled:

> What happened was that once a section of Public Works had decided to go out, a meeting was then convened of workplace stewards and the recommendation the strong recommendation from Harry and all branch officers was that we had to give support. That meant workplace stewards going back to their workplaces and we were now being invited to support them. It worked amazingly well. The whole thing didn't last that long but the large services and probably Housing were out in a matter of hours; there was a snowball effect <50>.

In spite of the fact that 'it wouldn't have happened without the stewards', it was not an action called by the stewards. The documentation backs up Rudin's assertion that the branch Executive organised a meeting (attended by the FTO) at which a recommendation for strike action was made as opposed to workplaces walking out spontaneously in support of Butler. In this sense the stewards facilitated the functioning of the branch rather than the branch leadership responding to the stewards.

This was the high point for branch development: the successful setting up of the stewards, the Les Butler dispute and a general air of optimism and crucially the expansion of areas of negotiation such as in the schools. At

50. JR3 side'a'.

no time did the branch have more authority than in the autumn of 1983. The cumulative effect of these developments ended the period begun in the mid-70s of transition to institutional centrality.

The branch can now be characterised as being constructed around what amounted to a range of service based sub-branchs for example Housing Education etc. Negotiation remained centralised on Staff-Side which by then had been enlarged to include representatives from all of these sub-branchs. Staff-side negotiations were largely conducted on behalf of occupational groups within a service. The branch secretary and branch office providing overall administration coordination and direction. This was to remain the substantive structure of the branch until the end of the 1980s. Cannon, however, was able to make the point that the stewards system 'began to collapse where it was difficult to organise' this showed up at the 1983 AGM when there were fresh elections:

> We have always had this core number in Services who least needed representation and services that do haven't got the representatives. So while I don't remember losing a lot of people, I don't remember getting many more <51>.

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51. SC side 'b'.

This "fraying" of the system predated the deselection of Harry Lister as branch secretary in March 1984 over unauthorised appropriation of branch funds for a car loan. The two wings of the branch leadership, the broad left and what had been the non-aligned left had maintained a genuine working relationship since 1980, but were now thrown into a major factional struggle, which was to last until the late 1980s. The most immediate effect was on the stewards, as the factional struggle crippled the branch executive. The effect of this was to act as a form of centrifugal force on the sub-branch's which began to pull in as many directions as there were sub-branchs. This factional struggle and the rise, in 1985, of radical municipalism within Haringey tended to obscure the fact that the hybrid stewards had begun to falter prior to both these events. The domestic organisation was a product of the defeat of the dual agenda and the political resolution of 1981. It was these factors which had provided a set of parameters that had shaped the actions of the actors within the branch and was largely to determine how the branch reacted to the rise of radical municipalism. A similar pattern of development is observable in NUPE Education.

The Evolution of an Active Framework 1979-1984

Achieving institutional centrality

In chapter four I showed how the process to replace the sectional centrality of the caretakers in NUPE by institutional centrality had been laid. As with NALGO, institutional centrality was achieved occupational group by occupational group, and from Spencer's election this took just under three year. This process of change was concluded by the end of 1980. By then, branch meetings had been moved from a Sunday to a weekday evening, and sectional meetings, that is meetings for occupational groups, had been established. Spencer recalled

> We have often large sectional meetings
> held at half term. For example, we've had meetings
> for caretakers and cleaners with between 400
> and 500 in attendance [1].

If opening up the structures of the branch, that is, democratising it, provided one element of change, a turn to a more active negotiating stance provided another. Ray Gillard, my respondent from personnel management, remembered

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1. Peter Spencer tape 3 [hereafter PS3] side 'a'.

the impact Spencer had on management:

> When Peter Spencer came in, he made a significant
> impact and people didn't know what hit them with
> school strikes. It made a lot of people think
> very hard about the vulnerability of the schools.
> That was the one [the 1979 strike], people didn't
> believe what happened. By God he made an impact.
> It's noticeable now he doesn't have to call them
> out, he just has to talk about it and they sit
> down <2>.

The strike was an undoubted fillip to the branch in
developing negotiations. By the middle of 1979 important
agreements were being concluded for the cleaning and kitchen
staff. For example, in September 1979 a 'procedural
agreement' was obtained concerning the transfer of school
meals workers between kitchens <3>. Also attempts were made
to extend the union's efforts to obtain plus payments;
negotiations took place around such issues as 'the payment
of £5 a week for the maintenance of burglar alarms', 'extra
payment for the cleaning of light fittings' and 'overalls
for kitchen staff' <4>. The branch negotiated to introduce
'doublebugs'- a specialised machine, which allowed kitchen
floors to be cleaned without the workers going on their
hands and knees to scrub them. Not all of these items were

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2. Ray Gillard [hereafter RG] side 'b'.

3 Education manual Workers Local Joint Works, September
1979.
4. These issues are a selection of the type of plus-payments
that Spencer began to negotiate at the Local Joint Works.

obtained, while others took a considerable period of negotiation before management conceded, particularly issues which related to the kitchens. However, there can be no question that the branch leadership was actively negotiating on behalf of all the members. It was not until the end of 1980 that the above can be said to represent a stable form of organisation, as by then a clear pattern had been established where cleaners' and kitchen staff issues were regularly appearing as agenda items for the Local Joint Works Committee <5>. Seen in conjunction with the establishment of regular occupational group meetings this concluded the process of shifting the branch framework to one of institutional centrality.

The reorganised NUPE branch can be characterised as being branch-based, constructed around service level negotiations conducted primarily, although not exclusively, on behalf of occupational groups. These alterations have been shown to have been initiated by the branch secretary, with very little formal membership involvement. The opening up of the branch to the members, however, generated an

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5. As the above has intimated agenda items for these groups began to appear very soon after Spencer became secretary. My reasoning for citing the end of 1980 is that by then the expansion in negotiations had shown a consistency over a period of time rather than an initial burst of enthusiasm only to be replaced by the old routine.

interaction between them and the branch which qualitatively altered the relations within the domestic organisation. Underneath the formal changes, and the role of the branch secretary was a much richer involvement which centred around unofficial spokeswomen. In a far less mediated way than change within NALGO, alteration within NUPE occurred through an interaction of these unofficial spokeswomen with the branch officials, in effect the branch secretary. The unofficial spokeswomen (alongside their counterparts among the caretakers) became the backbone of the branch activist, providing the leaven for the secretary's actions <6>. Within the framework of the altering domestic organisation a tension arose around the role of workplace representatives and who was to carry out the bargaining and regulation of custom and practice; the stewards or branch officers. This tension only arose within the kitchens where a shop stewards committee was formed. This as I will show, was to falter, unable to sustain itself as a self-generating stewards

6. The validation of the existence of these spokeswoman comes from two sources. Firstly their origins are discussed in the narrative around Marie Williams. Secondly I could not understand how Spencer was able to act. On replaying the nearly eight hours of interview material conducted with him and Coral Adeniz a pattern emerged that when they spoke about workplaces they usually did so in terms of an individual. It was that person who played the link role between branch and workplace.

grouping. The tension, as with NALGO, represented an interaction between the problem of evolving workplace organisation within the context of the defeats of branch based militancy - the political settlement of 1981. Unlike NALGO it occurred after the branch had achieved institutional centrality.

Organisation amongst the cleaners

In 1981 cleaners and caretakers took industrial action against council cuts (one of the last ''political'' confrontations between union and council until 1988) <7>. According to Spencer this action, 'unlike the 1979 strike which 'didn't unify the branch, this fight against the cuts in 1981 did' <8>. In deciding to challenge the cuts the branch was confronted with the problem of what type of activity the cleaners could undertake given their economically weak position. The resolution of this arose out of a unity with the caretakers which created the basis of a limited economic power at the workplace. For example, one of

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7. This was the last strike in the wave that had begun in 1979 surrounding the rates and cuts (discussed in chapter seven and eight), hence the political characterization. Between 1981 and 1988 industrial action did occur but of a more mundane nature, for example the 'Area two' social services strike of 1984 over office accommodation.
8 Peter Spencer tape 4 [hereafter PS] side 'a'.

the tactics adopted was to send the cleaners into schools
without supervision, this according to Spencer saw head-
teachers:

> pulling their hair out. Heads were sending
> cleaners home because they weren't prepared to
> stay in the schools until the cleaners were
> finished <9>.

The joint action won the reinstatement of the cuts for
the cleaners but not the caretakers where upon the cleaners
took solidarity action, a decision which surprised Spencer.
If the cleaners' victory had provided the immediate fillip
for their solidarity it was, as with the original decision
to take industrial action, premised on a substantial level
of organisation, built up within the branch during the
preceding years.

Two factors had preceded the industrial action which
made it possible. The cleaners had seen the emergence of
their bargaining agenda which by 1981 was firmly
established, as was the practice of sectional meetings. With
these meeting a collectivity developed which altered the
situation from the one which surrounded the lead up to the
low pay strike. By 1981 not only was the branch secretary
able to play a leadership role but also unofficial
spokeswomen existed who were looked to for leadership. It

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9. PS4 side 'a'.

was these unofficial spokeswomen who would, by and large
have become the activists during the industrial action
proving the link between branch and workplace. The
industrial action highlights the substance of the new
domestic organisation; the existence of an interaction
between branch and members based on a collectivity of the
occupational group.

In the dispute against the cuts the branch and members
reaped the benefits of the alteration set in train by
Spencer. There were however limitations to this new domestic
structure. What did not take place was the evolution of the
self-selection process, from the level of unofficial
spokeswomen to official union representatives. This failure
arose from both the cleaners' and the branch leadership's
avoidance of confronting the problem of status and hierarchy
within the workplace. Once the branch began to alter, the
patronage relations between cleaner and caretaker, involving
the cleaners' time bonus became debilitating obstacles to
the emergence of cleaner shop stewards. As far as I have
been able to ascertain, there was no demand from the
cleaners for representation from among their own number.

Spencer recalled the fate of the one cleaner who became a steward:

> I think we had one school cleaner elected as a
> steward cleaner. One of the big secondaries.
> She had a real hard time, a real hard time.
> Caretakers seem to resent a cleaner more
> than anybody being elected as a shop steward <10>.

The cleaner challenged the core of the hierarchical relations at the workplace; the relations between cleaners and caretakers. This exemplifies the argument put forward in the preceding chapter about the conflict between the councils' and the unions hierarchies. This also represents further evidence for the Fryer et al <1978> understanding of transposing job hierarchy to the union:

> to such an extent that the majority of the
> membership have difficulty overcoming the
> dominance of their supervisors within the
> union <11>.

To this problem it is necessary to add another debilitating factor - the branch secretary. As a direct consequence of his job he already had a detailed knowledge of the cleaners' labour process, which he was able to transpose to his trade union work. This technical ability to

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10. PS4 side 'b'.
11. Fryer, R, H., Fairclough, A, J., and Manson, T, B.
<1978>: 'Facilities for female shop stewards: The Employment
Protection Act and collective agreements', <u>British Journal
of Industrial Relations</u>. Vol XV1, No2, p. 160-174, July. The
ability to show a similar development in NALGO tentatively
points to a substantial relationship between job hierarchy
and union relations.

understand and negotiate around cleaners' issues meant that there was no necessity to draw on the cleaners expertise in evolving a negotiating agenda. Spencer's knowledge of the substantive negotiations issue, and the time bonus, provided the basis for his attitude where he neither saw the need for, nor believed the cleaners wanted cleaners stewards.

The experience of the cleaner shop steward is an expression of a boundary to the alterations of the domestic organisation. The branch secretary was unwilling to confront the problem of hierarchy and status engendered by the labour process. The failure to do so, and sponsor cleaner stewards ''exposes'' one of his limitations. For both him and the cleaners the heart of the matter was that the potential disruption to the hierarchy between cleaner and caretaker was too great a price to pay for the development of cleaner stewards. The legitimacy of such a view rested on the ability to achieve a collectivity without this level of representation. There was no imperative on either the secretary or the cleaners, to challenge the status and hierarchy within the workplace. To progress beyond unofficial spokeswomen it demanded an extremely conscious act on the part of the cleaner who was willing to confront the dual obstacles of disrupting her working relations and the apathy of the branch leadership. The failure to evolve

cleaner representation, meant that the limits placed on the development of the domestic organisation arose from a recognition that the establishment of cleaner stewards would implicitly challenge the relations of patronage between caretaker and cleaner.

The organisation of the Kitchen Staff

It will be recalled that the major characteristics of the kitchen staff were their inability to achieve a time bonus, an independence from the caretakers and areas of concern such as; the right not to be arbitrarily moved or sacked, to have the correct size rubber gloves, and a machine to clean the floor. It is then not surprising that the documentation shows the major area of contention in establishing institutional centrality was among the kitchen staff. By the spring of 1979, if not before, the branch secretary confronted the Senior School Meals Organiser:

> you start going to meet the senior meals organiser
> who was a problem. You begin to realize that,
> Christ you are going to have to organise against
> this one, if you are going to get anything done.
> So you say we'll have a meeting of school meals
> workers, which start highlighting the
> problems <12>.

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12. PS3 side 'a'. The senior School Meals Organiser left at the end of 1980 facilitating the process of normalising relations between branch and management. Adeniz during her second interview intimated that the activities of Spencer and the support he obtained from councillors helped to squeeze her out.

This confrontation was in council terms a very bitter conflict. It was over whether the union had the right to use sanctions on the labour process. Thus obtaining a procedural agreement which gave mutuality over transfer of kitchen staff was not an easy matter. Management did not readily give up the right to arbitrarily move workers around. It is indicative of the period that these negotiations, which took place towards the end of 1980, were difficult and conducted by senior personnel management. As Spencer recalled

> We spent ages and ages negotiating with personnel to get it taken out of their contract, because officers don't have it <13>.

The impact of Spencer's approach led to an unorthodox response from the senior school meals organiser who tried to mobilise 'her ladies' against the dangerous militant who had come from Fords Dagenham. To counter this Spencer had:

> a very private, very secret meeting with George Meehan and Niki Harrison (two leading councillors) about that. I said you'd better do something about it <14>.

Spencer's ability to by-pass the managerial structure is an example of the existence of an informal political network.

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13. PS2 side 'b'.
14. PS3 side 'a'.

This network was one where the branch was increasingly able to utilise the emerging political alliance with the Labour Group to overcome management's unwillingness to concede ground. These confrontations between the union and the organiser were in general resolved in favour of the union. To a far greater extent than among the cleaners these conflicts helped generate unofficial (and unseen) spokeswomen.

The emergence of unofficial spokeswomen

Unlike Spencer's relations with the cleaners he lacked any understanding of the substantive negotiations issues, or any intimate knowledge of the day to day problems in the kitchens that confronted members. The latter problem was only to be tackled with the formation of a shop stewards committee after 1982. The former was overcome at the beginning of 1979, through the use of the national union's publication, 'A Recipe for Action' <15>. The importance of

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15. National Union of Public Employees. <1979>: <u>A Recipe for Action</u>. NUPE, London.

this pamphlet, was how Spencer used it:

> it told me what to do in school meals. There
> was all sort of things which we had to go
> for. It taught me the basic rules of
> calculating hours in kitchens and dining
> centres. It helped us locally to formulate
> items for meetings. We tried to implement 'A
> Recipe for Action'. This is how unions work,
> things happen nationally and we have to
> implement the dam thing, make sure they
> happen. In the early days perhaps I was more
> aware than now of initiatives we were taking
> nationally <16>.

It was possible just to use the booklet as a guide to

negotiations, however it also served the role as an

organiser for the branch. A meeting was called for school

meals workers around the booklet with the Local Government

National Officer, Rodney Bickerstaffe as the speaker:

> We had a evening meeting where about eighty
> people turned up, late on in '78 or maybe
> after the strike early '79. I remember saying,
> we'll give him ten minutes, and then give him
> questions, he spoke for an hour and half, typical
> Bickerstaffe. The women were extremely interested
> in the publication <17>.

The fact that eighty attended shows the sort of

dramatic impact the branch was able to have once it started

to address the issues of direct concern to these workers.

In this instance the branches ability to do so was a direct

product of the national union putting school meals on the

agenda. It was not just that the branch had finally become

16. PS2 side 'b'.
17. PS2 side 'b'.

concerned about the kitchens, it had became relevant to the
members through the implementation of this pamphlet. If the
meeting with Bickerstaffe was the most dramatic, it was not
to be a one off occurrence; rather it was the start of
sectional meetings which developed around specific issues.
Very soon after the Bickerstaffe meeting, a second evening
meeting was held in May 1979. This set in train a formal
connection for Marie Williams with the branch <18>. It was
'the beginning to get to know Peter', and was also where she
raised the problem of her victimization 'I had been asked to
move and felt it was unfair and I asked for a trade union
representation to argue my case with me' <19>. The meeting
was held jointly with the G@M called over the council
reducing kitchen staff hours <20>. Williams recalled that at

18. Marie Williams was briefly mentioned in chapter four,
she had started work just after the low pay strike. Williams
had been active in the trade union and women's movement
since the early 1970s. She stated that she had explicitly
sought out the NUPE branch because of the union's national
record of militancy. She had no prior knowledge of Spencer.
19. The steward sent along to deal with her case nearly led
to her coming out of the union, the shop steward sided
'totally with the supervisor'. It was this experience which
provided the common bond between Williams and Adeniz. In the
end she 'sorted things out' herself.
20. A discussion on the reduction of hours took place at the
May Branch meeting which resolved to call the evening
meeting. Branch Minute Book Two May, 1979.

the meeting Spencer:

> encouraged some form of action, the
> recommendation was, a work to rule, He then
> left the floor open to debate, whoever wished
> put their hands up and put their viewpoint
> about it. In retrospect a work to rule was
> pie in the sky. I recognise that doesn't work
> in the kitchens <21>.

The meeting voted for the work to rule which had none of the implications that had surrounded the low pay strike, the issue being both local, and defensive. In spite of these qualifications, just a few months after the caretakers strike, the school meals workers had embarked on their first industrial action, which they lost.

The work to rule raised a number of problems, which centred on the lack of workplace representation. Who was going to monitor it given it could only be carried out by the workers in each individual kitchen. It was this problem which Williams confronted. She recalled:

> The effect in the kitchen was a very positive one,
> because we started discussing certain issues.
> Everybody got together, and discussed how we'd
> carry out the work to rule. The supervisor tried to
> get heavy handed about it, and some of the women
> found it difficult to cope. I'm not saying they
> couldn't, they just found it difficult. Through I
> wasn't a shop steward, I was asked if I would go
> and talk to her about it, so I went and said, it
> was a trade union directive and she had no right to
> intimidate the women in that way.She apologised and
> from then on I was an unofficial spokesperson <22>.

21. MW side 'a'
22. MW side 'a'

Williams assumed this role in her kitchen, as a direct
consequence of the work to rule, a role she was to maintain
until becoming a shop steward in 1982. The objective
problems faced by the workers in policing the action would
have seen a similar process take place in other kitchens. It
was the start of the process of creating spokeswomen in
individual kitchens, the beginning of a link between the
branch and the workplace; at this stage, to anyone outside
of the workplace, a hidden development. In spite of the
changes within the branch Williams's experience was that it
was very difficult to carry out this informal function:

> What I tried to do was, without being too pushy,
> to try and get the women to value their viewpoint.
> One of the ways I did that was to stick my neck
> out, I wasn't totally dogmatic but, I did stand
> up for my rights and brought out the issue of good
> employment practices. Because I wasn't a shop
> steward I couldn't stand up and object to a woman
> doing something, what I did was   talk to the women
> personally, and then go to the union about
> it <23>.

The emergence of these spokeswomen was at first unknown
to the branch secretary, falling outside the branch routine
and acting at a discreet level within the workplace. They
began to become known through attendance at meeting and by
becoming an informal contact point for the secretary with
the workplace. It was from among their number that the shop

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23. MW side 'a'

steward committee, which was to be 'sponsored' by the PTO,
was drawn. The first school meals shop steward, however, did
not wait to be sponsored; she was elected soon after the
ending of the work to rule.

The First Shop Steward

In September 1979 the first of the 'unofficial
spokeswomen' become a shop steward, Maureen (whose second
name no-one could recall and who left the council at the
beginning of 1981). In the branch's development Maureen is
the only example from the kitchen staff of someone who was
able to take the step from informal to formal workplace
representative independently of the leadership. I know
nothing about how she was elected, or more importantly the
discussions in the kitchen which led up to that election,
Maureen was the sharpest consequence of the self-selection
process at a time when the formation of unofficial
spokeswomen was still very much in its infancy.

Once elected she was integrated, as far as I have been
able to ascertain, without any problems into the existing
branch structures. Spencer recalled that:

> we did get a shop steward early on, and you are
> then talking to a school meals worker, and she's
> saying this is wrong that's wrong <24>.

24. Peter Spencer tape 5 side 'a'

Maureen was the first official ``toe hold'' the branch
had within the kitchens, where she was used to monitor
agreements. For instance the minutes show that it was her
kitchen where the machine to clean the floor with the
'doublebug', was tested <25>. She must also have been an
invaluable source of information about members' worries, and
a counterweight to the arguments management were putting
forward against the different initiatives from the branch.
It would seem then that Maureen played a very important role
within the branch; one that was understated by the secretary
and unknown by my other respondents. Maureen exemplified the
type of role that the unofficial spokeswomen were carrying
out. That of building up relations between the workplace and
the branch through policing custom and practice within their
workplace. Maureen and the unofficial spokeswomen provide a
picture of an emerging collectivity. They show up a more
complex interaction between members and branch officials and
point to a far wider role than has been put forward for
stewards by Kessler <1982> or Fryer et al. <1978>. Although
largely obscured their role was an essential prerequisite
for the shift to institutional centrality and the ability of

25. Branch minute January 1980.

the branch secretary to act. The formation of this layer of
unofficial spokeswomen and the relations to the branch
represented, albeit limited, a genuine movement from below.
They provided a real substance for the action that Spencer
was able to take and in spite of its more obscure nature can
be favourably contrasted to the developments observed in
NALGO. One of the most important areas in which these
spokeswomen were to be involved was the formation of the
School Meals Working Party.

The School Meals Working Party

As with the unofficial spokeswomen among the cleaners
who were central to the industrial action of 1981, so the
unofficial spokeswomen for the kitchen staff played a key
role in the formation of the School Meals Committee. This
was the branches response to the 1980 Education Act which,
as I have discused in chapter eight, threatened jobs, by
potentially reducing the number of children taking school
dinners and so decreasing the number of staff required. It
will also be shown to represent one of the limitation on
branch based militancy, the formation of this committee

arising out of that weakness <26>. Spencer recalled that:

> Maureen came, me, and an assortment of school
> meals workers. I can't remember how we got them
> involved. As they weren't all NUPE we probably
> had a response from a joint meeting of school
> meals workers <27>.

The main mechanism that the School Meals Committee focused

on for overcoming this was the extension of the choice of

meals around a system called Cash Cafeteria. Both Adeniz and

Spencer were emphatic that this, the main initiative of the

committee came from the workers. Spencer remembered:

> the women who said, 'they're doing something
> called the cash cafeteria in Islington, why don't
> you go and have a look at it <28>.

The workers comprising the School Meals Committee were

still treated as menials by their management, and until

recently had suffered the same treatment from their union

branch. They had however to comprehend that by diversifying

what was cooked then more children were likely to have

school dinners. This opened up the potential of a Cash

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26. The evolution of this committee is followed from a
device for saving jobs into a model of municipalism. See
chapter eleven.
27. PS5 side 'a'

28. Cash Cafeteria was increasingly adopted by Education
Authorities after the Act and one that was welcomed by the
government. See 'Badge of Poverty' <1982> Poverty Pamphlet
55. Child Poverty Action Group. There is no indication from
either the branch or from the council's side that they were
at this early stage aware qof this widespread move towards
Cash Cafeteria.

Cafeteria as the mechanism for diversification. Once this was recognised they worked out in detail how the scheme should be altered to fit their situation. This entailed the committee embarking on what amounted to a substantial reorganisation of the labour process. Here then was an alternative plan of sorts, the type of initiative which is usually associated with the most ''advanced sections'' of the working class. Adeniz summed up the change for the workers:

> I think its added more skill to the job,
> made it more interesting, you do
> different types of things now, the hard
> work comes in because you are thinking
> about three or four different things.
> Where you use to be able to stick thirty
> jam tarts in the oven at a time, now
> your doing four or five different type
> of sweet <29>.

The council's gratitude for this major innovation was somewhat stilted. The union entered negotiations with a substantial claim; the councils response was to offer 'Till workers' fifty pence a week, and four pence an hour to the supervisors. According to Spencer the Till workers told the council to 'stuff it', and the supervisors accepted. Other workers such as Adeniz got nothing. The branch, via Spencer

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29. CA side 'b'.

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29. CA side 'b'.

did not seriously contest the issue, Adeniz commented:

> I don't think the branch had the
> confidence in the school meals workers,
> in the women, that they would do
> anything <30>.

Whether or not they would have taken industrial action over this issue they were never asked.

Towards the end of 1982 the evolving collectivity was formalised from the union's side through the election of shop stewards and the creation of a shop stewards committee for the school meals.

The shop steward elections and the Stewards Committee

Spencer recalled that the impetus for the stewards' committee came from outside the branch:

> We had a change of full time officer, Mike
> Taylor. He said; 'have you got any women shop
> stewards'? I said 'no' he said 'I'd like to go
> round your kitchen staff and see if we can get
> some shop stewards'.[he did not ask to speak to
> the cleaners.] What happened was that I was forced
> to actually do what I had been wanting to do for
> ages. We started visiting kitchens, in some we
> were successful, in others they turned round
> and said, 'why should we have a steward when
> we can ring you up' <31>.

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30. PS\ CA side 'a'.

31. PS5 side 'b'.

It was at this time that Williams became a shop steward. She recalled that Mike Taylor motivated the call to the school meals workers in the following terms:

> He felt it was important they were involved, because they would have more of an idea about what was needed than caretakers. There was nothing said about the particular importance of women, or women's issues, it was more about school meals workers having more information than the caretakers. He asked if anybody would be interested? <32>

Which provided the cue for someone to say:

> 'what about you Marie, you're always shouting your mouth off, would you be interested?'. I said I don't mind. I asked what it entailed, he said, 'that's up to you, you can be involved as much as you want, you need only open the mail and things like that'. I said, I'm not interested in just doing that. I think its an answer he didn't expect <33>.

Fryer et al. <1978> commented on the widespread view within NUPE among activists and full time officers that the 'union's emergent system of shop stewards depends, initially upon the willingness of members to act as a "post-box" in their places of work' <34>. The approach of the Full Time

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32. MW side 'a'.

33. MW side 'a'.

34. Fryer, R, H., Fairclough, A, J., and Manson, T, B. <1978> 'Facilities for female shop stewards: The Employment Protection Act and collective agreements', <u>British Journal of Industrial Relations</u>. Vol XV1, No 2. p.160-174, July.

Officer several years after the post-box concept had been formulated points to a failure within the union's steward system to evolve beyond this initial stage. While Taylor was the catalyst, Spencer cites another impetus; the attempts by the national employers to end the school meals retainer.

> That galvanised the school meals service, we really got organised picketed the national joint council, we even went down to Weston Super-Mare to picket them there. We had a one day strike over it <35>.

Adeniz also saw the school meals retainer as being of major importance, for the first time the kitchen staff had taken strike action which had the effect that:

> the school meals workers and the branch now see themselves as much more together <36>.

This issue was undoubtedly of great importance, probably representing the high point of the school meals staff involvement within the branch and it was only after this that workplace organisation was formalised.

I do not consider however, that there was a major causal connection between the activity around the retainer and the election of stewards. What the regional organiser had keyed into was the existing layer of unofficial spokeswomen, as Williams's account of how she was nominated

35. PS and CA 'b'.

36. PS and CA 'a'.

indicates. The official's tour provided a framework for those workers who wished to make the transition from their informal to a formal position. It was from her vantage point of being a steward that Williams developed a critique of the way the stewards' committee began to function and the closing down of the women's section that she had helped initiate.

The role of the stewards

The result of Taylor's visit was the election of six stewards, their main role became one of formulating a negotiating agenda. The basis for this was their detailed knowledge of their labour process. Certainly, as the following comment shows, it was this which dominated Spencer's thinking about the role of the stewards:

> Them early days were smashing, me Dot (a steward who became a supervisor) and the others... we had a committee who gave feed back from a good cross section, of the kitchen staff. You don't want more, its like setting up a working party, you want about six who can sit down and do the business <37>.

The stewards meetings were held in the evening and run in an informal manner where the stewards' knowledge could be

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37. PS1 side 'a'.

talked through. Adeniz recalled that:

> The first problem I brought up was that, sometimes
> you had fish fingers and doughnuts on the same
> menu. I think it took about three meetings to
> get through to him,(Spencer) that it was a health
> and safety matter. As we were straining boiling
> hot oil on the same morning, to be able to cook
> two different types of food in the same fryer.
> I think he started to see how things really
> were in the kitchen, and was willing to do
> something about them <38>.

For Spencer the impact of the stewards was a dramatic one in

expanding the branches bargaining parameters:

> I think that's when we started to get issues on
> school meals that no one had dreamt of. We had
> shop stewards saying I thought for a long time
> that we ought to improve in this or that
> area <39>.

This narrow role for the stewards was contested by Williams

who believed that the stewards' committee had a potential

which was never realised. The reason for this failure was

rooted in her perception of Spencer and Adeniz (who became

branch chair in 1984):

> It began to become very apparent that they
> preferred shop stewards who were interested in
> their own workplace and none of the other issues
> surrounding women and low pay. If you wanted to
> be much more involved and wanted to belong to
> various negotiating bodies it was not encouraged
> it still isn't <40>.

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38. CA side 'b'.
39. PS3 side 'b'.
40. MW side 'b'.

According to Williams the reason for this was because
Spencer and Adeniz were in the process of:

> building themselves an empire and they wanted
> to hang onto it, they began to go very much to
> the right. I think one of the reasons for this
> was full-time release was introduced and that
> created a movement away from the understanding
> of membership needs <41>.

Williams began to view the meetings as:

> beginning to be stage managed and the hierarchy
> system began to become very prominent it was
> like two head teachers and children if you
> like <42>.

By the middle of 1984 the committee had peaked and the
following year it collapsed though this term is disputed by
Adeniz:

> It wasn't that it collapsed but we never got
> anymore, and two or three of them left, we never
> managed to get any replacements <43>.

By the end of 1984 there were two of the original six
stewards left <44>.

The debate over the role of the stewards was the
background to the considerable amount of friction which
surrounded the election in 1984 for branch chair. This

41. MW side 'b'.

42. MW side 'b'.

43. CA side 'b'.

44. Of the other four; one left the borough, one (Dot)
became a supervisor, Williams was seconded to the 'School
Meals Project' and Adeniz became branch chair.

position was contested by Williams and Adeniz, Adeniz being the nominee of the stewards committee, won. The potential for continuing conflict within the branch was resolved in January 1985 when Williams was seconded full-time to the London Food Commission's newly formed School Meals Project.

The reason the shop stewards committee collapsed, or failed to get any replacements, was due to a combination of factors. The most obvious but the least important, were the inbuilt limitations put on it by Spencer which, in broad outline at least, equated to the view of the FTO. The dominant conception of formulating a kitchen workers agenda was a finite process that had by the end of 1983 largely run its course. At no time was there any attempt to develop a negotiating role for the stewards committee. The nearest the stewards got to this was attending the Local Joint Works. Adeniz recalled that:

> None of us were used to formal meetings so he
> started taking us along, to sit and listen, and
> to have an input if school meals were being
> discussed. Then you could say to Peter, no it
> doesn't happen like that, or it does happen
> like that <45>.

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45. CA side 'b'.

What, however, were the alternatives? Fryer et al <1978> put forward three possible modes in which NUPE approached problems; to rely on branch and full time officers, and 'two other methods which have been encouraged' the steward as a post-box and for the steward to act on an area basis. The traditional way around the fragmented workforce in the NUPE branch had been the practice adopted by the caretakers, where the stewards were peripatetic. For school meals staff this presented a considerable problem. Due to the nature of their labour process, the schools meals steward would have difficulty achieving time off for industrial relations. To take the worker out of production meant other workers having to carry out their tasks. If this function was to be carried out in any serious way during working hours it would lead to a substantial amount of her time away form her own workplace. The most likely scenario arising from this would be the creation of an intolerable tension within the workplace between the steward and the other workers <46>. The Fryer el al. <1978> study shows up

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46. Examples of shop stewards working in production and carrying out a similar, although not so geographically dispersed task do exist. For example the bonus steward within the building industry. This job was tied very directly to negotiations.

the lack of industrial relations time taken by the female
steward within Education. They comment:

> They are more likely than their male colleagues
> ... to perform their organisational and
> informational tasks for the immediate group
> with whom they work and without leaving the
> job <47>.

The way in which this issue has been approached
theoretically has been an attempt to redefine the role of
the steward and to alter the bargaining relation to include
women <Byle 1982, Fryer et al. 1978>. This problem was
resolved in Haringey (as it must have in other authorities
during the 1980s) by the election of Adeniz as branch chair
in January 1984 and the development of full-time release.
Adeniz's election meant that the branch now had as one of
its central personnel, a school meals worker who could play
the role that Spencer had in relation to the cleaners and
caretakers. The way was open to formalise the regulation of
custom and practice and policing of agreements from the
stewards to the branch officers. Some time prior to Adeniz's
election Spencer had obtained full time release in 1983, at
most seven to eight months after the stewards structure was

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47. Fryer, R, H., Fairclough, A, J., and Manson, T, B.
<1978>: 'Facilities for Female Shop Stewards: The Employment
Protection Act and Collective Agreements', <u>British Journal
of Industrial Relations</u>, Vol XV1 no 2 p. 160-174, July.

established. His reasons for taking this step where mixed:

> It wasn't working, I never used to think about
> not being a caretaker, not doing my job. I mean
> my time in the trade union movement no one
> would give any bleenin time off, you did it the
> evening, in your own time, that's how I grew
> up. I wasn't use to Haringey their pretty good.
> I had to come to terms with them. Anyway for
> various reasons, one I was doing an 18 hour
> day, and working weekends as well, and being
> the branch secretary, after five years it
> became a bit much, I thought sod this I'm
> going to kill myself here <48>.

By April 1984 Adeniz had also achieved full time release,
and linked with these developments was the setting up of a
union office. For the fragmented membership the
centralization of the branch – the combination of two
officials with full time status, equivalent to seventy hours
a week (excluding evening meetings) the telephone and car –
provided rapid access to the branch official. The formation
of a stable centre for the branch created a similar relation
between members and stewards that Cannon had observed in
NALGO, of members by-passing stewards and going straight to
the branch leaders. Adeniz recalled:

> if there was a problem in the kitchen they
> ring us up. Even if there is a shop steward
> they by-pass them and contact us <49>.

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48. PS1 side 'a'.

49. CA side 'b'.

The strong branch centre allowed for the formalisation of joint regulation of the kitchens between the union and senior management. The council's emerging corporate identity had the effect of centralizing managerial power out of the kitchens and a desire to standardize its functions, seen for example in the shift in recruitment policy which was taken out of the hands of individual kitchen supervisors and centralised as a personnel function. Senior management were now keen for a strong bargaining centre which would facilitate the imposition of a more enlighten municipal ethos among the kitchen supervisors. Adeniz commented that:

> they have regular supervisor meeting and they always check to make sure I can attend. I think I'm a bit noisier than I should be at a management meeting. When management say something they tend to look at me to query it <50>.

Management's consultation with the union went as far as 'if memos or ruling goes out they usually telephone us and check first'. This went hand in hand with a more assertive attitude in the kitchens. Adeniz concluded that:

> the kitchens are beginning to act like the caretakers, they don't go to the toilet without checking first that's beginning to happen in the kitchens now <51>.

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50. CA side 'b'.

51 CA side 'b'.

In spite of the difference in practice between Spencer
and the NALGO leadership a strong parallel exists between
the two branches with both stewards systems faltering in
1984. This points to a similar development where the limits
to collectivity were placed on the branches by the evolution
of the political resolution which had provided the
parameters to the development of the domestic organisation.
Also, as with NALGO the basic negotiating structure of the
branch remained intact, again until the end of the 1980s. As
Spencer pointed out:

> Unfortunately, between you and me we have almost
> gone full circle. When I became secretary we all
> said right that's it, no more one man
> bands. Now its a one man, one woman band. We
> tend to do it all, we pick up the phone, and we
> go down to the workplace. We haven't got the
> sort of shop stewards network I think we are
> supposed to have. I tell you it works. There
> will be people in trade unions who will throw up
> their hands in horror and say you are denying
> your members their rights in their involvement
> in the union, and I'll say to those people, know
> your membership <52>.

As with the NALGO branch the above points to the limits of
collectivity placed on them by the evolution of the
political resolution. It was this resolution which provided
the parameters to the development of the domestic
organisations and also provides an explanatory framework for
the debate between Williams and the branch leadership over

52. PS5 side 'b'.

the Women's committee and her criticism of the stewards
hierarchy. It is the failure to develop a role for the
stewards and divisions among the left-wing leaders which I
now examine in the following chapter.

The Demise of the Branches

The Problematic of success

The extension of workplace organisation within NUPE and
NALGO concluded the substantive alterations to these
branches. This work has shown the development of their
domestic organisation from functioning in the interest of
specific groups of members, through the emergence of the
branch reformers, to the evolution and implementation of
policies to make the branches representative. Placed in the
context of their militant aspirations the reformers'
considerable achievements were only a qualified success.
They had wanted to do more. Broadly speaking the fate which
had overtaken them was that their achievements had
formalised two 'divisions' between members and the
reformers <1>. Firstly, the institutionalization of the
'trade union division', where the leaders took on the
characteristics associated with a quasi-elite, and the
domestic organisation exhibited the archetypal structure of

1. The notion of divisions or gaps between the members and
stewards has usually been seen as a division between the
short term views of the members and the more strategic view
of the stewards. For example Beynon <1973> <u>Working for Ford</u>.
Here I have separated out the divisions into trade union and
political phenomena.

an authority based organisation. Secondly, there was an
expansion of the political gap between members and
reformers. These divisions were to take on a greater
momentum in the aftermath of the borough's campaign against
rate capping in 1984-85, culminating in 1987 with
redundancies. In this penultimate chapter these divisions
will be explored in an account which concludes with the
announcement of the first redundancies.

The crucial period in the branches' development was
between 1979 and 1981, when two possible lines of
advancement opened up. Firstly, there was the syndicalist
model. The basis for this was the emergence of a new level
of collectivity within the branches. This linked into a
broader radicalisation within the Labour Party, where the
consensual framework in which the Labour Group's political
and bureaucratic role had functioned was disrupted, as the
result of independent activity of workers (and signified the
limited emergence of a class agenda.) The potential which
the reformers looked to (like the strikes of 1979) was one
where the existing labour movement institutions, notably the
unions and the Labour Party, would evolve in a direction of
large scale involvement of workers in these organisations.
The dual agenda of the branch-based militants was an element
of this wider development.

This study has shown that events took a more mundane course, where labourism was able to reassert itself, culminating in the rate rise alliance, the second model. The failure of the syndicalist model arose paradoxically from the problems of success; in terms of the core concerns of the branches around job security and economic issues, the rate rise alliance represented a political resolution of these issues, so that the dual agenda woven together by the branch-based militants unravelled.

Prior to the political resolution the branch reformers had brought together the issue of the extension of the bargaining relation to encompass the entire membership, which I have characterised as forming the basis of institutional centrality, with the dual agenda. Underpinning this was the development of a limited collectivity. For the reformers these two sets of issues represented a single entity within their syndicalist framework. The proposition of the syndicalists of an intimate linkage between the extension of the bargaining relation and the dual agenda was shown by events to be incorrect. It is not, however, that the reformers were simply wrong. The substantive issue was whether the tenuous but nevertheless real links, seen in the late 1970s between reformers and members, would have become a stable set of relations based on such militant policies.

This study has shown that they failed. The failure of this model provides a measure of class maturity, and with it the parameters of class formation. Firstly, it shows up the limits of a socialist consciousness among the workforce, as in the face of the rate rise alliance a class consciousness which understood the limitations of that alliance was lacking <2>. Secondly, it illuminates the failure of the branch based militants to develop an alliance with the members. Finally, the rate rise alliance removed any potential drive towards greater class cohesion within the branches. For example, it removed the necessity for the branches to take industrial action over job losses, which is not to say that such a policy would have been otherwise followed.

These limits to class formation provide the basis on which the trade union and political divisions between members and leaders were situated. This argument is not primarily concerned with the question of the organisational form of the domestic organisation but its content. With or without the rate rise alliance the extension of workplace organisation would have continued to follow the functional

2. Given the history of these workers and the limits of change to their working lives it would have been quite remarkable if they had been able to live up to the militants' expectations.

form of local government structures, the bargaining relation
expanding along the lines of the occupational group. The
branch reformers would have still formed into a recognisable
quasi-elite and a political division would have continued to
exist between leaders and members. The content of these
relations, however, would have been potentially very
different as the tasks confronting the branches would have
altered. The implication of this are considered in the
conclusion.

Appropriating change

In the timescale of events it was the growth of
collectivity within the branches and the radicalisation of
the Labour Party which had emerged first. By 1979 an agenda
from below - both from the Labour Party and the local
government unions - had emerged. Part of its strength was
that with a minimum amount of life being breathed into them,
the bureaucratized structures of the labour movement -
Group, Party and unions - were to varying degrees made
accountable. This challenged the hierarchical relations
within and between labour movement institutions, the
exclusivity of the Labour Group and the role of the council
as an administrative arm of government. It was this which
helped to shape a number of issues which can be

characterised as coming from above, primarily from the
Conservative government, and the still to be implemented
aspects of the corporate reforms of the 1970s. The political
ascendency of labourism associated with the rate rise
alliance could not return to the old labour movement
relations nor return to the pre-1979 administrative
relations which had characterized central local relations.
It could, however, appropriate change and in so doing
reformulate itself. This meant addressing the agenda from
below, the central element of which was the rise of
independence within the branches.

The branches organised around three sets of issues:
firstly, the extension of the bargaining relation to embrace
the entire membership; secondly, the expansion of the
branches' regulative role into new areas, and thirdly the
development of a political role. It was the combination of
these three sets of issues which signified a block on the
reconstruction of bureaucratized political relations between
the different institutions of the labour movement, and
precluded their appropriation by the council's bureaucracy.
The prerequisite for a new wave of bureaucratization was
therefore the appropriation of these areas by the Labour
Group. The 'modernisation' of the council had to be at once
the expropriation of the unions.

The rate rise alliance provided the basis for appropriation by facilitating the fragmentation of collectivity. The form in which that fragmentation occurred was expressed in the pattern of development generated within the branches which was centred on the removal of their defensive functions. This opened the way for the council either to alter or appropriate the branches' other roles, creating over a number of years a new set of relations between branches and council in its three aspects: the council in its role as employer and management, the council's own bureaucratic apparatus, and the council as a political entity run by the Labour Group. It was through the dynamic generated by these relations that the bureaucratic and political authority of the council was re-established. The material linkages between the internal changes in the branches and the re-establishment of the council's authority were mediated by relations between management and branches in the workplace.

Managerial strategy and union collectivity

I have argued above that the key issue within the branches was that of collectivity and its fragmentation. Rather than this what has tended to be revealed in previous chapters has been similarities with the 'incorporation

thesis', for example the work of Hyman <1979> and
Terry <1978>. Looking at events as the consequence of the
fragmentation of collectivity the anomalies within that
thesis now become more apparent.

There was neither a desire (on the part of the Labour
Group) nor a mechanism to demarcate the council as a
political entity from its role as an employer. The fusion of
these two roles meant the Labour Group's initial political
dependence on the unions translated itself into the
council's employment policies. As the convergence between
the Labour Group and the local branches developed, it became
increasingly apparent that this alliance impelled the Labour
Group to acquiesce to the branches. To date, I have
discussed this in terms of the branches ceding the 'big'
political questions to the council (chapter eight). This
also involved, however, the council acceding to the demands
of the branches on the more mundane issues of bargaining at
authority level and circumscribing as far as possible the
labour process as an area of conflict. In neither sphere was
this absolute; the unions did not achieve everything they
wanted and workers were still sacked, but during the early
1980s they were increasingly able to have their way on these
issues. Although very uneven, by the end of the rate-capping
campaign in early 1985 this accession to the branches'

mundane requirements had become a generalized phenomenon.
Tony Brockman, who since 1980 has been the secretary of the
NUT and was the ''unofficial'' senior negotiator for the
joint union committees which proliferated in the period of
rate-capping, commented on the relation between council and
unions in the following terms:

> You could ask for the moon and it was there.
> It was even sometimes a question of management
> coming to you and asking if you would like a
> better deal than the one you have got. A most
> bizarre period in trade union negotiations <3>.

The narrative may appear to contradict this argument in that
the branches had a struggle to achieve institutional
centrality. This did not illustrate, however, a combative
relation between the council as employer and the branches,
but the council's lack of controls over its own management.
This point is exemplified by the way in which institutional
centrality was achieved; occupational group by occupational
group rather than branch by branch. If the latter had taken
place, it would have indicated the council's control over
management, but this was not the case in Haringey.

     The second aspect of the relations between branches and
the council was the attempt to sanitize the labour process
as a site of struggle. The basis for this existed within the

3. Tony Brockman tape two side 'b'. [hereafter TB]

disciplinary code of practice which was extremely advantageous to the worker <4>. For example, an ACAS <1982> report on the DLO commented on the 'regrettable lack of discipline' <5> which had arisen through a loose interpretation of the disciplinary code. Probably the DLO represented the extreme among services. The question of discipline was until the late 1980s exacerbated by the growing hands-on approach of councillors in favour of the branches; for instance the departure of the School Meals organiser was due to her being 'squeezed' between the council and the union <6>. This represented pressure on management to take a conciliatory approach to the unions. Undermined by that alliance management and foremen increasingly turned to means other than direct disciplinary practices to assert control and achieve work. These can be characterised as the formal and informal.

The formal means consisted of managerial attempts to utilize stewards and branch officials to act as a disciplinary force over the members; an incorporationist

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4. Haringey Council: <u>Disciplinary Code of Practice</u>
(manuals), revised 1978.
5. ACAS. <1982>: <u>A Report of a Survey into Employee</u>
<u>Relations</u>, ACAS, London. p. 94.

6. See chapter ten.

strategy <7>. For the majority of workers, whatever forms of
joint regulation were introduced, their stewards could not
act as management wanted - as a disciplinary power. The
basis of this understanding is derived from the nature of
the workers' spontaneous struggle around the labour
process,(discussed in chapter two) primarily the time bonus.
Such unofficial sanctions could not be formalised and
therefore regulated by the branches. This made the branches
a weak disciplinary mechanism, therefore management were
impelled towards informality. This involved by-passing the
branches and entering into informal negotiations with
individual workers and work groups and bargaining around
informal sanctions for output and discipline. While the
council's attitude towards bargaining increasingly took on
the character of patronage, the growth of informal
bargaining, as with the ''big'' political issues, led the
branches to cede their defensive role to the council. The
way in which the role of the branches was prescribed by
their resolution with the council provided the basis for the
draining away of collectivity. The main phenomenon generated
by the growth of formal and informal bargaining was an

7. For an elaboration of incorporation see Hyman, R. <1979>
'The politics of workplace trade unionism', Capital and
Class. 8, summer, reprinted in R Hyman, R. <1989>: The
Political Economy of Industrial Relations: Theory and
Practice in a Cold Climate. Macmillan, Basingstoke.

increasing disconnection between branches and members. It was the growth of this separation which has shown up as parallels with the 'incorporation thesis'. This however only functions at the descriptive level. With the growth of institutional centrality went the development of the archetypical authority based structure, generated by the primacy of the occupational group. Alongside this the branch leaders began to exhibit a set of concerns that diverged from the immediacy of the members' demands. The trade union division began to take shape around these divergent patterns of formal and informal bargaining.

With the growth of union centrality it is possible to point to characteristics adopted by stewards and branch officers which equated to Hyman's <1973> 'moderating pressures [that] operate upon the full-time officials' <8>. This can be seen in the emergence of a 'dual loyalty' <9>. For example, the Craft Stewards who monitored the actions of the surveyor and NALGO member Butler, reporting his actions to management; or the NUPE secretary stating that he had

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8. Hyman, R. <1973>: 'Industrial Conflict and the political economy', in R Miliband and J Saville (ed.s): The Socialist Register. 1973. Merlin Press, London. p.114

9. This term was used extensively by Nicholson, N., Ursell, G. and Blyton, P. <1981>: The Dynamics of White Collar Unionism. Academic Press, London.

'moderated his claims on the council because of financial restrictions' <10>. There is also evidence from among the NALGO radicals that their concern for the public acted as an external discipline on their actions <11>. This moderation can be seen as diverging from the actions of the members which occurred underneath it. During the mid-1980s a major renegotiation of order <Strauss et al. 1971> occurred in favour of the workforce. For instance, Haringey had the highest sickness rate of any London borough <12>. Viewing this divergent development as a process of the fragmentation of collectivity (rather then in terms of an inappropriate incorporation thesis) is exemplified by the issues surrounding absenteeism, an activity which transcended race, gender and ''collar''. The reasons for its high level were that local negotiations had achieved full pay for sickness and that the disciplinary code of practice was liberally interpreted. The sickness level reflected the renegotiation of order, a concept which has been interpreted by commentators such as Beynon <1973> and Hyman <1989> as an

10 Peter Spencer tape four [hereafter PS] side 'a'.

11. Without exception all of my NALGO respondents commented on the need to show a commitment to the public.

12. Survey carried out by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities reported in the Evening Standard.

expansion of the arena of workers' autonomy. As Hyman
commented:

> Through the process of negotiation of order
> the 'frontier of control', in each workplace
> is set <13>.

In such a framework the high level of absenteeism would
represent the rational act of a considerable number of the
borough's employees pressing home their advantage. This
rationality pointed to the removal of the branch, and class,
from workplace relations, and the willingness of management
to negotiate individually with the workers.

If Cohen and Fosh <1988> are correct that trade
unionism is rooted in 'the fundamental pressure undergone by
workers in their everyday experience' <14>, the
renegotiation of order in fact attacked the very foundation
on which the branches had emerged in the late 1970s: that of
branch collectivity <15>. This process does not, however,

13. Hyman, R. <1989> 'Trade Unions, Control and Resistance,
in R Hyman, The Political Economy of Industrial Relations:
Theory and Practice in a Cold Climate. Macmillan,
Basingstoke. p.32.
14. Cohen, S. and P, Fosh. <1988>: 'You are the Union: Trade
Union Workplace Democracy', Studies for Trade Unionists.
Workers Educational Association, London.

15. The anecdotal evidence of trade unionists from both the
docks and car factories points to this being a general
phenomena, one which is of obvious importance for
incorporationist theories. Unfortunately though this has
only found scant attention in the literature concerning
manufacturing industry.

present itself as the " fragmentation of collectivity"
rather as the type of issue which the dichotomy between
formal and informal bargaining generated and the form in
which the division between member and branch presented
itself. Indeed this issue of absenteeism shows how the trade
union division evolved; branch leaders acted as a
quasi- elite <16>. As the guardians of trade union principle
they could not condone the "abuse" of sickness, as it put
the substantive negotiation of sick pay into question. At
the same time they could not act against their members who
"abused" the system. All they could do was attempt to act as
a moderating influence. This type of trade union division
proved intractable because although, as Hyman called for,
strategies for the lessening of the gap were adopted, the
problem did not rest with either structure or agency within
the domestic organisation <17>. Rather it was the product of
the limitations to the development of collectivity within
the branches. The inability of the leaders to develop a
response opened the way for the appropriation of the
branches' regulative and political role.

16. The use of this term comes from, Batstone, E. Boraston,
I. and Frenkel, S. <1977>: Shop Stewards in Action: The
Organisation of Workplace Conflict and Accommodation.
Blackwell, Oxford.
17. Hyman, R. <1979> 'The politics of workplace trade
unionism', op.cit. p. 164

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Appropriation of regulation by the bureaucracy

Alongside the challenge to the institutions of the labour
movement posed by the militancy at the turn of the decade,
this work has shown how the functions of the council
bureaucracy - policy formation, execution of council policy,
and mediation between councillors, workforce and management
- were challenged and in some instances supplanted by the
branches. The origins of the retrenchment of the bureaucracy
has been discussed in chapter five around the interaction
between the failure to implement the corporatist reforms of
the 1970s and the pre-existing localised bargaining
relation. On the one hand the undermining from below of this
bargaining relation and on the other the start of the
shifting of power from the localities to the centre under
the Conservative government gave the bureaucracy its
defensive posture during the early 1980s. The expansion of
the regulatory role of the union branches was considerable,
from concerns around equal opportunities to those
surrounding the labour process. Although the impetus for the
branches to take up these issues had not come exclusively
from the shop floor, they had emerged as part of the fabric
of a living movement.

The journey from shop floor demand through to
appropriation by the council bureaucracy is illustrated by
the development of NUPE's School Meals Committee. As chapter
8 showed it arose out of the limitations of branch-based
militancy as part of a defence against government
legislation which breached the defensive wall the council
was erecting around the workforce. As shown in chapter 10
this led in the School Meals Service to a reorganisation of
the labour process, designed to bureaucratically circumvent
government policy. This was overseen by the School Meals
Working Committee which in 1981 had a second tier added to
it creating a formal link with the council, the School Meals
Working Party, the purpose of which was to process the
committee's ideas within the council machinery. The NUPE
Branch Secretary recalled that:

> we formed an informal School Meals Working
> Party with councillors and officers where we
> took all the initiatives which came from our
> committee. We took them forward and said these
> are the things we would like to see happen <18>.

The key was its informality; at that time neither was the
council politically "tuned into" nor the bureaucracy
familiar with the issues being raised. During 1983 the
informal School Meals Working Party began to be transformed

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18 PS2 side 'b'.

into a more formal body. The NUPE Branch chair pointed out that:

> It had already formulated the Cash Cafeteria
> and practical things and the women were coming
> off it; it began to take up issues about healthy
> eating <19>.

The central issue of concern here was the altering substance of the committee; by comparison its formalisation was unimportant, certainly as far as the workers were concerned. For the workers once its real purpose had been served, the protection of jobs, the school meals staff left. It had fulfilled its usefulness. Yet while the workers' goal had been achieved the council had exacted a hidden price; the workers' knowledge of the labour process was now appropriated by the council's bureaucracy <20>. The basis was laid for the committee to take on an autonomy from the branch.

A similar process has been shown in chapt 9 in relation to the impact of the council bureaucracy's appropriation of NALGOs Women's Committee's mediating role over equal opportunities. Inexorably such issues became formalized under the control of the council's bureaucracy, over the

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19. CA side 'a'.

20. Like so many workers, they did not perceive their knowledge of the labour process in such a light. It was just work.

branches and members. This process of appropriation had
started in 1981 with the establishment of the Leader's
Investigation Panel, and continued with such issues as the
council's codes of conduct concerning sexual harassment in
1982-83; the formalisation, in 1983 of the School Meals
Working Party; and contract compliance. This ascendancy was
an inevitable consequences of the defeat of branch-based
militancy. That defeat had seen the workers involvement in
the branch activity recede leaving a vacuum surrounding how
and who was going to organise and control the labour
process. It was the council's bureaucracy which filled this
vacuum. One effect of this expansion of regulatory functions
by the council was to provide social mobility, as the
bureaucracy assimilated trade union personnel; thus a DLO
convener became the borough's first contract compliance
officer, and a school meals steward accepted a post on the
London Health Commission's School Meals Project [21]. By
1984, with the advent of the rate capping campaign the
appropriation of these regulative issues was well on the way
to completion, a process which helped define the branches
political role.

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21. The DLO convener was Dennis McCracken who is now a
teacher; the school meals steward was Marie Williams who is
now a social worker.

The branches' role was increasingly perceived by the members as a political one. In the period up to and including the rate capping campaign council concerns in relation to the workforce were necessarily presented in a political rather than a regulative or administrative framework; a framework that was edging towards a radical municipalism and one with which the branch leaders were increasingly associated. Given this political framework the council-union relations still remained central. This is exemplified in the following examples of the rate capping campaign.

The branches' support for the council's campaign against rate capping conferred a legitimacy on the council and showed up the crucial mediating role for the branches <22>. Although the council had a considerable organisation working around the campaign, it was forced to rely on the stewards' infrastructure as its major support. This is illustrated by the numbers involved in the campaign. At its height the council had just under thirty senior officers working within the services on a part-time basis which represented a major commitment of resources, while

22. All of the council documentation for this campaign shows that the Labour Group's relation to the workforce was carried out either through or in conjunction with the union branches.

NALGO alone had considerably more stewards. The branch
structures acted as a 'transmission belt' from the council
into the workforce for the diffusion of a local government
political culture. Its ethos was a common set of
assumptions, the central element of which was the ordering
of relations between politics and trade unionism. It will be
recalled that during the late 1970s political issues entered
the branches through the defence of jobs <23>. With the
ending of the dual agenda, the relation between trade union
and political questions was inverted: instead of politics
being conceptualised through the trade union struggle, trade
union questions were conceptualised through politics. This
was reflected in the rate capping campaign, as it called on
workers to defend the council in not setting a rate. For the
majority of council workers, particularly blue collar
workers, who were not already involved in 'big' political
questions, this ordering of issues excluded them. On the
other hand, the radicals within NALGO and the NUT who saw
the political importance of supporting the council
represented a ready-made constituency for the campaign. For
instance, the NUT Branch Secretary, who was the chief
steward on the major demonstration of the campaign, observed

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23. In particular see chapter three.

that its composition was:

> mainly middle class, there were lots of
> teachers. I am sure that manual workers were
> not represented <24>.

The branches' political role as agent for the council was formalised through the expansion of time-off for stewards. This is illustrated by the minutes of a meeting between the branches and the Chair of Personnel <25>. The minutes show that the union-side complained to Chair about attempts by some managers to restrict time-off <26>. While supporting the unions he reported that

> he had received that morning applications for
> time-off totalling 110 weeks... further
> applications were being received every day <27>.

The chair nonetheless conceded the time-off due to 'abnormal circumstances'. Rather than overcome the division which had arisen between political and trade union issues, the union policy and the expansion of time-off facilities by the council helped institutionalize the political gap between the members and stewards.

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24. TB2 side 'b.'

25. Minute of a meeting between the Chair of Personnel and a delegation from Haringey Campaign against Rate Capping. September, 1984.
26. ibid.
27. ibid.

From the formation of the rate-rise alliance in 1981 until the ending of the rate capping campaign in 1985 the processes which have been discussed above grew apace. The completion of institutional centrality seen in the light of these three sets of issues - the appropriation from the branches of defensive issues, regulatory practices and political initiative by the council - illuminates both the type of union and political divisions between leaders and members, and why the branch leaders were unable to form anything more than a tenuous link with the members. It was this practice which led to a sense of demoralisation among the branch leaders and activists.

Prior to the campaign against rate capping in 1984-85 the issues discussed above had not yet formed a clear pattern; they represented a number of disconnected threads, due to the continued central role played by the branches. While the regulative and political roles undertaken by the branches began to parallel those carried out by the political radicals within the GLC, the branches were entities independent from the council. For the process of appropriation to be completed the Labour Group had to formulate a political consensus around its ascendancy, to find an entity other than the unions to legitimate its actions, and to activate its own bureaucracy to carry out

its agenda. The final phase in the development occurred through the rate capping campaign and was consolidated in its immediate aftermath when the workers definitively ended their "flirtation" with radical politics.

The formation of a political consensus

The documentation surrounding the rate-capping campaign makes it quite obvious that from the outset the Labour Group was in the ascendancy. It was George Meehan (council leader until March 1985 when he resigned because of the threat of illegality) who set up the campaign's political structures. These consisted of a campaign officer (Adrian Roxan) and a small campaign working group who controlled its central political direction and its £50,000 budget. Under the working group were campaign liaison officers for each council service, many of whom were chief officers.

By September 1984, a month after the campaign began, the Labour Group had won support from the local Labour Party and branches for their policy of not setting a rate and had created their campaign structure. The Labour group from this consensual basis began to centralise political control into their own hands. The Labour Group had established a political leadership, seen in the support for their no-rate policy, and found a cohesion within its own ranks not seen

for a decade. Indicative of this latter point was Roxan's
recollection of how Harrison, the Chair of Education, (who
was identified as part of the moderate alliance in 1981)
carried out workplace meetings:

> ... until she dropped, literally dropped down
> with weariness. It was quite significant that
> someone like Niki Harrison, who for many years
> had been seen as an autocratic chair, went out
> and met all the workers <28>.

This activity at the start of the campaign was symptomatic
of a political shift within the Group, from the dominant
moderate alliance of the early 1980s to one that can be
characterized as a centre grouping. The campaign
consolidated that shift, so that although Haringey achieved
notoriety as a radical borough under the leadership of the
left-winger, Bernie Grant, it was a coalition led and
dominated by the centre which initiated that radicalism.

What had dissolved the moderate alliance was the
corrosive effect of rate rises. At the beginning of 1982,
the moderates had put out a statement calling for unity and
questioning excessive rate rises <29>. They wanted a
manifesto based around no cuts, no job losses and were of
the belief that rate rises had to be curbed otherwise 'we

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28. Adrian Roxan side 'b'.[hereafter AR]

29. Resolution to Haringey Labour Group January 1982.

will be deserted by our traditional supporters' <30>. The
moderates had recognized the growing strength of the rate
rise lobby, whose support for higher rates went beyond the
left problematic of 'buying time' to confront the government
to an expansion of the boundaries of municipalism. By 1984
raising rates had become a limited but proven financial
means of achieving political autonomy from government. This
had fatally undermined the moderates, as a financial
underpinning had been found for the extension of the
council's functions. Either the individual members of the
alliance changed their views, or others from among the
growing consensus for rate-rises would take their place and
administer this expanding surplus.

On the basis of this financial autonomy it is now
possible to see how the radical municipal model of the GLC
fused with the centre grouping on Haringey Labour Group and
the wider labour movement, a process which became apparent
in 1984 with the onset of the rate capping campaign. The
Labour Group assimilated from the GLC two themes: how to
campaign and more importantly how to subordinate the
unresolved political issues concerning opposition to

30. ibid. I take this to be code for the white working
class.

government policy to the development of local social
policies. On the wider terrain of the labour movement this
policy began to gain support in a slightly different manner
to that seen in the GLC. In Haringey convergence between the
political radicals and the activists occurred within the
framework of the local Labour Party, with the activists
shifting their political concerns and conceptions away from
the class based views of the early 1980s to embracing the
views of the political radicals, filtered through the
experience of the GLC <31>. The consensus around rate rises
within the Labour Party and Group can thus be seen to have
come from both the left and right. Implicit within this
emerging municipalism was the need for control of the
council by the Labour Group so that it could act to carry
out policy <32>.

The campaign and its immediate aftermath

Further evidence that the council began the transition
to radicalism under Meehan's leadership is found in the

31. This is evidenced by the Party's documention of this
period particularly the 1986 Manifesto for the local
elections.

32. The structures which centralised Group control were
formalised and put into practice by the left when they took
over the council in 1985 and are explicitly stated in the
1986 Manifesto.

council's campaigning structures which were laid during his tenure <33>. Two months prior to the end of the campaign a new head of the Press and Publicity Department was appointed to build up the department. According to Roxan:

> regardless of the outcome of the rate capping campaign... because the council needed to sell itself... to the public... getting involved in popular campaigns and festivals, the way the GLC had <34>.

After Meehan resigned, and the ending of the campaign, the move to a high profile campaigning council was rapidly consolidated under the new left leadership with the support of the centre. The structure of council-union relations underwent a major expansion, in which an elaborate and labyrinthine range of committees was created linking together the Labour Group and branches. The Press and Publicity Office became the Press and Publicity Unit, its budget increased by 315% and its staff from four to sixteen. A new campaign committee was formed under the title of the Publicity Coordinating Committee (PCC) with equal representation and voting power for the trade unions, the voluntary sector and the Labour Group members. Linked to this committee was the provision of out-reach workers for

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33. This point is derived from Roxan's comments and the dates when both political and campaigning initiatives began.
34. AR side 'a'.

the community and trade unions. Although an advisory body,
the PCC reported directly to the key Policy and Resources
Committee of the council. Prior to the rate capping campaign
the council had set up Women's and Race Equality units; in
its aftermath the number of units blossomed. In the year
1985-1986 there were set up an Under 7s, Lesbian and Gay,
Disabilities, Irish, Police, Health and Environment units.
By the summer of 1985 Haringey already had all the
attributes of a radical municipal borough, which had also
centralised the council's bureaucracy and put into place
through the units a cadre of political radicals directly
accountable to leading members of the Labour Group.

Linked closely to the development of the radical
municipal structures was a notable shift in the basis on
which the Labour Group and Parties legitimated their
actions. These were no longer rooted solely or even mainly
in the unions but, as the following will show, in the
community. In the documents of this period there is
continual reference to "the community", but there is no
clarity as to what the term denotes <35>. Haringey is a
thoroughly cosmopolitan borough: it is multi-ethnic with 23

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35. For example, see Haringey's Labour Party 1986 Manifesto.
There sections are written by black, gay, and woman party
members but these are not done in the name of the Labour
Party but, for example the gay community of Haringey.

mother tongues spoken in its schools; it is multi-religious;
it contains men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals...
The problem with all such social definitions of the concept
of "community" concerns their fit with a political discourse
of "community"; the former presupposes real commonality
among those who belong to a certain category; the latter has
a necessarily prescriptive dimension, one of the functions
of which became that of validating the actions of the
council. Roxan provided a clue to the political meaning of
community, when he noted the more assertive attitude towards
the council which was expressed in the name of community
during the rate capping campaign:

> The community was radicalising; the GLC had a
> very strong part in that, it radicalised people's
> attitudes to what local government was about <36>.

For him the community that was radicalising was in fact the
voluntary sector, the extensive infrastructure of the
borough's voluntary organisations staffed largely by the
political radicals and funded through council and government
grants. Whatever else the community might be, it provided
the conceptual framework in which the voluntary sector was
drawn into local political activity, a process which had

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36. AR side 'a'

been given a major impetus by the GLC and the rate capping campaign.

In the immediate aftermath of the rate capping campaign the process by which the Labour Group was reasserting its authority rapidly became apparent through the use of the council's bureaucracy and the shift in emphasis away from the centrality of the unions to the community. That is, the council was now able to replace the branches' mediating role with its own newly expanded bureaucracy. This did not mean however that the branches were suddenly excluded, rather the council's continued financial autonomy provided the basis for what the NUT secretary characterised as the 'most bizarre' negotiating period. The documentation from the Joint Union Committee shows that the demands of the branches, and in particular the manual unions, for harmonization and equal pay were still met by the council. For example, when the Cash Cafeteria supervisors made a claim for equal pay for equal work, the NUPE Branch secretary found, to his surprise, that the council officers were instructed 'to support the claim' <37>. Along the same lines the DLO workforce became one of the highest paid in the country. These were important developments which should

37. PS5 side 'b'. The claim was settled in 1979: the supervisors received a £75 a week increase.

not be underestimated, but they were the exception to the overwhelming sense given by the documentation of lack of direction within the branches.

The council was now able to act independently of the branches through its own structures; the campaign committees and the special units, and the centralisation of the council bureaucracy and its support for the community <38>. The initiative was now clearly with the council. The council was now secure enough to sever its links of dependency on the unions. A shift began in the basis for justification of the council's actions from that of "defending jobs" to being couched in terms of service to the community. A consequence of this was that the council's high profile political agenda became increasingly estranged form the workforce. The documentation shows that the branches played a subordinate role, that of acting as conduit for Group and community concerns into the workforce. The minutes of the high-powered Publicity Coordinating Committee (PCC) highlight this point; the issues it discussed were almost exclusively agenda items from the Specialist Units or Labour Group <39>. Thus the Labour Group called on the unions to help them in their

38. For example, it is no longer possible to get a job in the borough by turning up at the workplace; recruitment was centralised through the Services Personnel Committees.

39. PPC minutes between March 1985 and January 1987.

campaign to register voters <40>, the Police Monitoring Unit produced a major document for this committee on the police and the community, similarly the Press and Publicity Unit launched a campaign around the new social security laws <41>. The branches had no role except to convey these campaigns to the workforce; in practice there is no evidence to show that the branches did so. My attempt to follow these issues through the branch documents proved fruitless.

In a similar vein the altering political framework is exemplified by the developments surrounding the School Meals Working Party. As I have shown above, once jobs had been protected through the shift to Cash Cafeteria the School Meals Working Party lost its relevance for both the members and branch leaders. This indifference to the Working Party and its control by the council bureaucracy allowed it to evolve an autonomy from its original function of defending jobs. This meant the committee structures still with nominal branch involvement were opened up to other forces such as the London Health Group and local community groups, who attempted to impress their radical agenda onto the workers. By default these actions carried the stamp of branches

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40   PPC minute June 1985.
41. Briefing document for the Press and Publicity Committee, Action on Social Security.

approval which provided a legitimation for these forces
outside the union and provided the appearance of council,
community and union working in harmony rather than the
branch leaderships' indifference <42>. Seen from the
perspective of the workers the altered labour process had
successfully protected jobs but it had also represented
harder but more interesting work for no extra pay. For the
municipal left by 1985 it had become an element in the
experiment of municipal socialism.

The shift in the balance of formal power away from the
branches to the Group largely retained an unstated tension.
Occasionally at joint council union meetings the unions were
berated by councillors (usually Cl Grant) for "blocking the
council's progressive polices". For example it was,
according to Spencer, one of the claims made by Grant
against the Education branch in the "Broadwater Farm
Caretakers dispute" <43>. This was the major instance where
this shift to the community turned into a major conflict.
According to Spencer the caretakers 'entered in dispute with

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42. When asked both Spencer and Adeniz stated their
indifference.
43. The dispute arose from the different interpretations
between the caretakers and the council over the timing of
the ending of a disco held by the Broadwater Farm Youth
Association.

the council over the breaking of a procedural
agreement' <44>. At a meeting with the leaders of the Labour
Group Spencer recalled that Grant's rejoinder was that apart
from stopping the council's progressive polices, the
caretaker 'was racist' <45>. This dispute, probably the most
important since the early 1980s, brought to the surface the
tension between the branches, the council and the
''community'' and although the branch achieved what the
secretary thought was a reasonable settlement, the shock was
considerable as it showed the weakness of the unions outside
of a political alliance <46>.

A number of commentators have made the valid point that
an assessment of radical municipalism is difficult because
the experiment was curtailed by the government <47>. The
above has shown however, that the immediate post-campaign
period concluded the period of the council's appropriation
of branch functions and consolidated the dominance of the

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44. PS/CA 2 side 'a'
45. PS/CA 2 side 'a'
46. Both Spencer and Adeniz went into great detail about
this industrial action and their anger at the council. Part
of this was a feeling of impotence as others, in this
instance the Broadwater Farm youth organisation had the
"ear" of the council.

47. See Briefing March 1988 for a favourable assessment of
Haringey's 'experiment', Roxan on the other hand called it
'gesture politics'.

Labour Group. What had made this development possible was
the way in which the rate-capping campaign ended.

The end of appropriation and the rate capping campaign

If the way in which the rate capping campaign had been
constructed around support for the council had not
facilitated the branch membership's involvement, the way it
ended turned passivity into indifference. After eight months
of the workforce being told that rate-capping was
'Armageddon for council services', the council found the
£20m shortfall between their proposed spending level and the
Government's assessment <48>. The basis for this creative
accounting (which the council called 'financial defiance')
was the utilization of various devices to divert capital
resources to revenue and then reconstituting the capital
account, the most important of those methods of
reconstitution being deferred purchase agreements <49>. The
impact of the council's ability to close the £20m gap is
revealed in this typical report by one of the council's

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48. Paper presented to the Labour Group by G Meehen (leader)
and A Love (chair of finance): <u>A Balanced Budget</u>. March
1985.
49 'The 1986 rate', <u>Leaders Briefing Paper no. 7</u>.

liaison officers:

> Staff feel they have been used and let down.
> They find it difficult to believe the last
> minute budgetary manoeuvres could not have taken
> place much earlier and some cast doubt on the
> truth of statements of the Council's financial
> position at the beginning of the campaign. A
> general air of disillusionment obtains and it
> is quite clear that it will be impossible to
> motivate staff again next time <50>.

This anger at being ''duped'' rapidly turned to indifference
— a judgment by the workforce who ruled a line under the
need or desire to lend support to the council. This view was
amply confirmed when the council found that financial
defiance could continue (Haringey borrowed £60m from
Guinness Mahon in a deferred purchase agreement) <51>. By
1986 the gap between council revenues from rates and grants
and its expenditure was £46m <52>. The council's radicalism
was based around the redistribution of an expanding surplus
underwritten by city loans. The council's finding of the
money had a qualitative effect on branches' relations to
their members, particularly so with the white collar unions,
who explained their inability to confront redundancies in
1987 by reference to the demoralization caused by the ending

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50. Extract from, <u>Report of Rate Capping Liaison Officer for
Town Hall staff</u> to Council leader, April 1985.

51. 'The 1986 rate', <u>Leaders Briefing Paper no. 7</u>.
52. ibid.

of the rate capping campaign <53>. In reality this was the
conclusion of a process that had begun in the early 1980s as
a consequence of the defeat of branch based militancy.
Up until the end of the rate capping campaign, the evolving
divisions between leaders and members, which was the
manifestation of the ebbing away of collectivity, was the
dominant trend, but one that it was possible to reverse. For
that to occur however would have demanded that the workforce
take centre stage, which could only have been achieved
through strike action <54>. Instead the campaign had
represented a watershed, definitely breaking up the
collectivity achieved in the early 1980s. This decline in
the branch's collectivity being matched step by step by the
council's appropriation of the branches' or workers' role.

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53. Without exception all of my relevant trade union
respondents cited the rate capping campaign as the reason.
54. The scepticism within the literature about the
willingness of the councils to break the law over rate
capping, for example Stoker <1988>, is well founded. However
from the perspective of 1984, strike action seemed quite
possible. Firstly at the beginning of that year there had
been mass demonstrations in Liverpool over their budget.
Secondly the unions' national research departments were
producing publications which made a direct equation between
rate capping and job losses on a large scale. For example
see NALGO <1984> Fact Pack on Rate Capping. It appeared both
that the mood of the workers had altered and that the issue
of cuts and job losses had finely come together.

In doing so the Labour Group reconstituted itself as the dominant body within the local labour movement <55>.

The conditions under which the campaign ended pushed the fragmentation of the branches' base to an extremity; the subordination of the branches to the council was its reflection. On the one hand, the campaigning structures of the council pushed the branches into a political role; on the other, council support for the branches further undermined the branches' relations to the members. The members could see the political role played by the branch officials and shop stewards, but disorientation arose over who was the guarantor of the members' rights: the branches or the council. This is typified by an incident concerning NALGO members in which sometime after midnight at a Christmas party male staff were abusive to female workers; a meeting of the section called on the council - and not the branch - to invoke their disciplinary code of practice <56>. There was a pattern of awareness among the branch leaders, shown in the joint union documentation, of their

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55. The workers, by removing themselves from activity, had handed over the defence of their interests to the council, a process which empowered councillors and which was part of the broader ascendency of the Kinnock leadership within the Labour Party. To pursue this point see Lankly, S., Goss, S. and Wolmar, C. <1989>: <u>Councils in Conflict The rise and fall of the Municipal Left</u>. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
56. These events were related to me by Wilf Sullivan.

malaise <57>. They saw a growing divergence between the
branches and the council as well as an ambiguity about their
own role. The ending of the rate capping campaign led to
strong criticism from nearly all quarters that the unions
'had followed the council rather than having an independent
presence' <58>.

The trade union leaders were however powerless to offer
an alternative. The trade union and political divisions
between leaders and members were now firmly established
which can be viewed as a irresolvable problema of
powerlessness. By late 1987 their lack of power became all
to apparent when the Labour Group under financial pressure
abandoned the radical 1986 manifesto and united with the
Labour Party around a document based on retrenchment <59>.
With its publication, 'this most bizarre negotiating period'
ended in redundancies; the problematic of the political and
trade union division between worker and branch were resolved
by other forces. The branches' inability in Haringey to
resist showed that they were no different from their
counterparts in the rest of the country.

57. It is the lack of initiative in the documention which
illustrates this point. Also among my respondents the
attitude summed up by Brockman's statement about management
'asking if you would like a better deal'.
58. Haringey Joint Committee against Rate Capping minute
March 1985.
59. Haringey Labour Party document, A Strategy for 1988-90.

Conclusion

Understanding Change

In this concluding chapter I take up the central theme of this study: the relationship between trade unionism and politics. I shall attempt to answer what I consider to be the major question arising from this work: change and continuity within the union branches. The interesting issue for me is why it was that the reformers lost their momentum, after the initial ease with which change came about, when the old structures and shibboleths seemed to melt in the face of reform. The branch reformers substantially altered the relations between branches and their members - which I have called the 'domestic organisation' of the branches - through shifting the bargaining relation from sectional to institutional centrality [1]. Yet continuity has been summarized by the NUPE branch secretary's comment 'we have gone full circle'. This observation reflected the reformers' increasing subordination to the existing forms of local government workplace trade unionism: the primacy of occupational groups and the subsequent institutional divisions between workplace and branch. If change occurred

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1. Within this use of Batstone, E. Boraston, I. and Frenkel, S. <1977> concept of 'institutional centrality', I have insisted that the form in which the branch organises is a reflection of how the economic power of the branch is used. This has been shown in how and by whom the bargaining relation is conducted.

mainly through altering the bargaining relation, its limits were set by the reformers' inability to overcome the problems presented by the local government production process and by their failure to come to terms with political relations with the wider labour movement.

This work has attempted to show that an understanding of workplace organisation is found neither in the traditional view of workplace structures and bargaining relations <Flanders 1977, Kessler 1985, Batstone 1977> nor solely through the labour process <Thompson 1990>. Rather this work has concentrated on the interaction of these different levels, as well as relating them to the political, thus forming a multi-dimensional picture of the authority-based structures. A further aspect of this work addresses the relation between the theory and practice of the branch reformers. They were not passive victims of impersonal forces but captives of their own theoretical misunderstanding.

To understand how this complex relationship functions, I shall review what, for want of a better term, I have called 'the radical paradigm' of the labour movement. This is important for two reasons. The first is that it offers an overall framework for explaining the dynamics of trade unionism and in this case the failure of the reform drive.

The second is that the radical paradigm provided the framework within which the branch reformers themselves functioned and served to shape their response to events. I shall argue with the tendency in this paradigm towards an idealisation of a model of industrial militancy based on the manufacturing shop stewards of the 1960s and an explanation of deviations from this model through the concept of 'incorporation'. Theories of trade unionism within this tradition have evolved in terms of sophistication and breadth, but I shall argue that they have not fundamentally broken from the limitations of its syndicalist foundations. My critique of the radical paradigm is carried out in the same spirit that David Coates prefaced his 1980 work on 'Labour in Power'; addressing the Labour left he wrote that his criticism arose ' not because I reject their aspirations but because I share them' <2>.

The syndicalism of the Radical Paradigm

The radical paradigm, which idealises the manufacturing model of shop steward organisation, comprises a considerable body of theory. It has produced a sustained critique of mainstream industrial relations <Hyman 1972, 1985>, an incorporationist theory of the evolution of trade unions in

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2. Coates, D (1980) <u>Labour in Power?</u> p. viii, Longman, London.

the 1970s and 1980s <Terry 1977, Hyman 1973, 1979>, a

conception of participatory trade union democracy

<Fairbrother and Waddington 1989,Fairbrother 1989, 1990> and

a prescriptive view of union good practice <Cohen and Fosh

1989>. <3>.

The syndicalist premises of this paradigm are

exemplified in a number of ways. For example, Hyman <1984>

constructs an ideal type of trade unionism based on the

manufacturing steward, suitably updated to incorporate race

and gender. He argues for the unions to take up the question

of the home-work division, pointing out that the dominance

of the capitalist is not solely found in the labour process.

Addressing the unions, he states that:

> The manifold but interconnected sources of
> hegemony and subordination will yield only to a no
> less integrated challenge <4>.

In this extreme case Hyman's recommendation verges on being

a recipe for a trade union to assume the functions of a

political party. This is a hallmark of syndicalism. Whatever

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3. I am unsure whether the authors cited above would be
pleased to be placed in the same paradigm. It is certainly
the case that during the 1980s the work of Hyman, its
academic founder, began to break from its syndicalist roots,
while on the other hand the work of Fairbrother has tended
to chart a path back to a more fundamentalist syndicalist
view of the unions, seen in his conception of trade union
renewal.
4. Hyman, R. <1989>: 'The sickness of British Trade
Unionism', p.185 in The Political Economy of Industrial
Relations Theory and Practice in a Cold Climate. Macmillan.

other difference on the trade union question existed between
Marxists, the one area of major agreement was that the
unions should not substitute for political parties <5>.
The most penetrating critique of syndicalism remains that of
the early Communist Party and Communist International
<Murphy 1922, 1924, 1972, Rosmer 1971, Lenin 1963> and their
summation by Pearce and Woodhouse <1975>. There were three
areas in which they challenged syndicalism: its equation of
workplace organisation with socialism (see also Tasca's
critique of Gramsci <1978>), its opposition to party
politics and its abstention from the battle to control the
unions. It is this final point where the syndicalist premise
of the radical paradigm is most clearly to be found: in its
concept of 'autonomous workplace organisation' and its
relationship with the 'larger union' beyond the workplace.
Hyman <1979> states:

> The proximity of shop stewards organisation to the
> shop floor represented a key defence against the
> incorporation of the national organisation; for if
> the official leadership were to compromise too far
> (by collaborating, for example, in government wage
> controls) they would be faced by a rank-and- file
> revolt spearheaded by the stewards' movement <6>.

5. For example, see Marx's debate with the Lassallean-based
trade unions of Schweitzer in Hal Draper: Karl Marx's Theory
of Revolution. Vol. 2. ch. 4, Lenin's What is to be Done,
Trotsky's 'The Errors in Principle of syndicalism', in Trade
Unions in the Imperialist Epoch, New Park, 1968.
6. Hyman <1979>:'The politics of workplace trade unionism',
op.cit. This article marked Hyman's shift from the views

Hyman's conception of the role of shop stewards'
organisation bears a close similarity to Woodhouse's
characterization of the classic period of syndicalism before
the First World War. Commenting on the 'Miners Next
Step' <1912>, Woodhouse argued as follows:

> Essentially, the aim of such a movement was to
> encourage the rank and file to assert control over
> the apparatus of the union and direct it to
> their own ends. The official leaders would become
> subordinate to an unofficial executive of
> rank and file members from whom the policies of
> the union would flow in accord with the wishes
> of the memberships. In practice this form of
> syndicalism was in the last analysis the purest
> 'rank and filism'; it confined its attention to
> agitation among the rank and file on a ginger
> group basis, on immediate issues, with the
> aim of pressurizing the existing union leaders
> into the adoption of specific polices <7>.

It was this role of ginger group that Hyman ascribed to the
autonomous workplace organisation in relation to the larger
union. In its current form this rank and filism has provided
a theoretical underpinning for not confronting the trade
union bureaucracy: either the rank and file are strong

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expressed in the above quotation which he saw as an
oversimplification. My argument is that in spite of a range
of alterations his syndicalist core has remained intact.
7. Woodhouse, M. <1975>: 'Marxism and Stalinism in Britain',
in Essays on the History of Communism in Britain. New Park,
London, p.30. This critique of the 'Miners Next Step' should
be seen in the light of its use as good practice in the
radical paradigm.

enough to circumvent the leadership or too weak to do anything <8>.

The conceptions of the radical paradigm were buttressed by those commentators who can be classified as the orthodox industrial relations theorists. The links between the two exist at a number of levels, not least in Hyman's sustained critique of orthodoxy < Hyman 1973, 1975, 1978>. Yet looking back on these debates in the decade of the rediscovery of the labour market, product markets and mass unemployment, as Streeck <1988> has commented the 'very idea of a unified, strategic interest of the working class as a whole is as such becoming difficult to conceive' <9>. These debates have taken on an almost historical quality. The edifice of industrial democracy created by such pluralist writers as Clegg <1975>, Flanders <1967, 1970> Fox and Flanders <1969>, seem just as out of date as the militant shop stewards it was intended to incorporate. Yet it was precisely the image of the militant shop steward which drove both radicalism and orthodoxy and provided their common point of reference. The axis around which the debate revolved reflected the reality

8. This view is found in the presentday political practice of the Socialist Workers Party; see, for example, my article in Socialist Organiser on the 'History of the left in the CPSA', June 1987.
9. Streeck, W. <1988>: 'Editorial Introduction', p.315, in Economic and Industrial Democracy. Vol 9, No 3, August, Sage London.

of shop steward militancy which stood outside the post-war corporate structures. The common ground of radicalism and orthodoxy lay in their mutual articulation of the militants' practices, in one case as advocates and in the other as detractors. The consensual knot between orthodoxy and radicalism was tied by Donovon's view of two industrial relations systems <10>. Arguments in support of or against the stewards were either premised on the rank and file being a problem for the trade union leaders or the possibility of the rank and file placing limits on the actions of the union leaders; the concept that working class power could be

10. See Hyman <1979> for his use of Donovan to buttress his conception of the classic manufacturing model. In the 1969 article by Fox and Flanders - 'The reform of collective bargaining from Donovan to Durkheim', BJIR. vol 1, no. 2 - the division between the official and unofficial movements was conceptualised in terms of anomie, which they translated as normlessness. As Hyman <1972>, Goldthorpe <1974>, Fairbrother <1990>, D Coates <1988> have subsequently commented, this breakdown was to be cured by giving power back to the union officals. As David Coates states about Fox and Flanders, 'they knew too that what was at stake here was much more than a simple question of wages' (p.26). It is not necessary to agree with Fox and Flanders Durkheimian framework or their commitment to capitalism in this ideologically motived work. Yet the problem it raises for its detractors is its recognition of the breakdown of class. Speaking about the informal system, Fox and Flanders wrote that it 'hardly merits this title when the absence of any integrating principles is [its] most outstanding feature' (p.163). What the radicals counterposed to this view of class was an abstract conception of the militant worker. Fox and Flanders posed their own concept of a reformed industrial order, while the radicals' ideal of militancy allowed for no alternative order.

expressed in any other way than that of rank and file militancy was not considered. What was lost from the radicals' side and accepted, no doubt thankfully, from the other was the lack of a political dimension open to this rank and file.

The origins of the contemporary radical paradigm lie in the rise of industrial militancy in the mid-1960s. This militancy defined a considerable amount of academic literature, and provided the basis for Marxists to counterpose this independent development to the prevailing bureaucratic conceptions of the Communist Party. They linked the activity of the shop floor militants to their syndicalist predecessors <Holton 1976, Hinton 1973> and rediscovered an array of concepts which had their origins in the Communist renaissance in the aftermath of World War One and the Bolshevik revolution <Hyman 1972, 1975>.

In the first instance this syndicalist heritage was adopted by the political left as a way of understanding the links between the problem of the Communist Party, the building of the 'revolutionary party' and the rise of industrial militancy. At a later point these political

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In the first instance this syndicalist heritage was adopted by the political left as a way of understanding the links between the problem of the Communist Party, the building of the 'revolutionary party' and the rise of industrial militancy. At a later point these political

concepts were appropriated within academic debate <11>. For
example, Gramsci's contrast between the union being a 'power
for workers' and 'power over workers' are found in every
theoretical and political article by Hyman since the early
1970s which I have read. Yet even at its height industrial
militancy in post-war Britain was never akin to the factory
council movement of Turin of 1919. The problem is that
Gramsci's ideas, in being transposed onto the very different
terrain of post-war Britain, have been given an autonomy
from the politically insurgent working class which first
gave them life. It was from these revolutionary strands,
combined with the shop steward militancy of the 1960s, that
the radical paradigm arose. This raises the question of the
relationship between the theoretical paradigm of the
radicals and trade union practice: a relationship which goes
far deeper than one of individual influence.

Practice and theory - the Woodhouse thesis

An understanding of this is found in a present day
parallel with Woodhouse's thesis <1975> on the relationship
between Marxists and the working class prior to the
formation of the Communist Party. Starting from the

11. A number of articles acknowledge their links with the
work of the International Socialism (IS); see Terry <1978>
and Hyman <1979>. Many of the contributors to this paradigm
had also been supporters of IS; for example, Sheila Cohen,
Richard Hyman and Peter Fairbrother.

traditional Communist critique of syndicalism, Woodhouse
argued that the Marxists - the British Socialist Party (BSP)
and the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) - avoided confronting
the problems posed by the evolution of reformist working
class organisations, the Labour Party and unions, and the
attendant bureaucratisation of these organisations. Instead
of engaging with this development, they attempted to annul
it; thus their refusal to form tactical alliances with
'reformists' and their belief that their party was the
beginning and end of all wisdom.

In spite of these attempts they empirically mirrored the
'reformist' division between trade unions and politics, as
each party reacted to the emerging labour movement by taking
up one of its dimensions - the industrial for the SLP and
the political for the BSP - as the key which would unlock
the door to the working class.

> Both were an intuitive recognition of the
> need for mass work at a time when the working
> class was only beginning to develop an
> awareness of its separate class interests,
> but because the two tendencies [the SLP and
> the BSP] were completely separated...the two
> aspects of mass work in the Labour Party and
> the trade unions were not united in an
> overall revolutionary perspective <12>.

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12. Woodhouse, M. <1975>: 'Marxism and Stalinism in
Britain', op.cit. p 32.

This was one reason why forces other than the Marxists shaped the early development of the labour movement. Consequently syndicalism cannot be seen as a spontaneous reflex action of workers turning away from parliamentarianism to industrial militancy. It was also a practice which marked a level of Marxist comprehension of working class development which reflected what Miliband has called 'the cycle of labourism' <13>. Syndicalism as a political practice was given ideological and political coherence by the Marxists.

An analogous development is found in post-war British Marxism, with the added complexity of having to come to terms with the theoretical legacy and, until the mid-1970s, the industrial power of the Communist Party. The two poles of the labour movement – the trade union and the Labour Party – were mirrored on the left with its own divided emphases <14>. The radical paradigm replicated this division by justifying the practices of trade unionists who spontaneously replicated the division between unions and

13. Miliband, R <1961>: _Parliamentary Socialism_. Merlin Press, London.
14. In the early 1960s there were numerous examples of the division between those who looked towards the Labour Party or the unions as a road to the working class, illustrated in the debates in the _International Socialist_ in 1965-66. See also the articles from this period by Ken Coates in his anthology, _The Crisis of British Socialism_.

politics, making an empirical adaptation to one of the
dimensions of the labour movement. Any attempt to understand
the dual structure of the labour movement was distorted by
this one-sided view.

Theorising syndicalism.

The major characteristic of the radical paradigm is a
divorce between its ideal type of trade unionism and the
reality of actual unions. Since syndicalism is theoretically
incapable of explaining this division, the radical paradigm
draws on a range of sociological and Marxist concepts so to
do. The gap between the model and reality is typically
analysed in terms of a theory of bureaucratisation, which in
the classic manufacturing model functioned to explain the
'incorporation' of shop stewards. For example, Terry <1978>
Hyman <1972, 1973, 1979 1984> view the approach of the
Donovan Commission as the intensification of the attempt to
'incorporate' workplace trade unionism, by exerting similar
pressures to those experienced by the unions at the national
level.

In the wake of the 1974-1979 Labour Government's
ability to curtail industrial militancy, the concept was
extended to explain the success of the social contract
<Hyman 1979, D Coates 1980>. and provided one of the major

threads to the discourse surrounding corporatism <Panitch 1979, 1980, Crouch 1979, D Coates 1980, 1988>.

On the micro level this study has shown similar sociological characteristics ascribed to the stewards to those of the incorporation thesis: the reformulation of steward hierarchies, the emergence of areas of joint regulation and the making of procedural agreements. This has, however, provided a descriptive but not an explanatory framework of analysis. It may well be that the stewards in Haringey were incorporated, but the causal relations which led to that incorporation were complex and occurred after the decline of the reformers' project. Incorporation was one of the consequences rather than the cause of the reformers' demise.

It might be argued that the theory of incorporation was developed in relation to manufacturing and was historically specific <Fairbrother and Waddington 1990>. I have, however, in the previous chapter alluded to the similarities between the 'problematic of success' within the borough and in core areas of manufacturing militancy - docks and cars. This points towards the division between what I have attempted to do - place events in a political framework - and an analysis based on the syndicalist view of incorporation.

The syndicalist assumptions behind the radical paradigm become more apparent at the macro level. For example, Jeffries' <1979> discussion of the last Labour Government can be summarized, not too unkindly, by the idea that if only the rank and file had been that bit more militant and their leaders not so base, the world would be a different place.

A more considered argument is seen in the work of D Coates <1989>. In his account of industrial militancy during the 1960s and early 1970s, he correctly notes a shift in the strike pattern from unofficial to official stoppages. With the Industrial Relations Act the TUC was prepared to countenance 'for the first time since the 1920s limited Industrial action in pursuit of a general political goal' <15>. It was a development which he concludes, citing Hyman <1973>, was only taken under pressure from the membership. Although the trade union leaders were a more differentiated group than Coates portrays, the basic description is correct and the importance of these industrial struggles is given due weight as 'being possibly the most important domestic event ... in post-war

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15. Coates, D <1989>: <u>The Crisis of Labour: Industrial Relations and the State in Contemporary Britain</u> p.64, Philip Allan Publishers, Oxford.

Britain' <16>. He concludes that among the 1974 Labour
government's options was to harness that militancy for
radical political ends, but that the tragedy was that there
was no party willing to do so.

For Coates the linkage between this period of militancy
and the subsequent period of the social contract is made
through the incorporation / corporatist thesis. This
provides a description of events but leaves unexplained why
the stewards were incorporated and the Labour Party and
union leaders were able to play the role they did. I would
argue that, starting with the seamen's strike of 1966 and
reinforced by the struggle against 'In Place of Strife' in
1969, more political issues began to enter the agenda of the
rank and file, with which they were unable to come to terms.
Far from militant industrial action enabling the rank and
file to circumvent trade union and Labour leaders, the
leaders themselves played a mediating role and were
accordingly able to re-assert their control over the
members. The central reason why the protracted struggle
between leaders and the rank and file was concluded in
favour of the former was that the questions which confronted
them demanded political solutions which were not available
in a rank and file frame of reference.

16. Ibid., p.67

An explanatory framework is possible and necessary
which unites the political and industrial history of the
working class. The stewards were adequate for periods of
economic prosperity but ill equipped to deal with
unemployment or take up the other political questions posed
at the end of the 1960s. Such questions were addressed by
the Labour Party leadership and trade union bureaucracy in
their own 'corporatist' fashion. The radical paradigm had no
conception of the internal cohesion between the Labour Party
and unions which was expressed through 'the cycle of
labourism'.

The concepts of 'incorporation' and 'corporatism'
constitute the core of the radical paradigm. Their function
at the interface between the rank and file and officials
within the unions and between the unions and Labour Party is
to sustain the syndicalist view of rank and file militancy
and trade union primacy. The descriptive power of these
concepts provides a basis upon which other theories can be
written into the analysis; for example, Hyman's view of
bureaucracy as a social relation <Hyman 1979> or Coates'
view of the hegemonic project of Thatcherism <Coates 1988>.

In the cold climate of the 1980s a Marxist concept of
class has been used to buttress the ideal type. This is a
view of class as a pre-formed revolutionary entity which is

split asunder on the one hand by a host of 'external'
divisions and on the other by the 'internal' false
consciousness of its members. The use of this theory is seen
in a number of articles dealing with the dual structure of
the labour movement. Fairbrother <1990> has attempted to lay
the theoretical foundations for a return to a more overt
syndicalism. To achieve this, he has to address the dual
structure, which he does by utilizing Clarke's <1988> view
of the capitalist state in its liberal democratic form, in
which a separation between economic and political spheres is
institutionalised, 'thereby expressing the specificity of
class exploitation in such societies' <17>. Fairbrother
argues that this liberal democratic form of the capitalist
state underwrites the unions as economic interest groups and
attempts to secure the exclusion of labour from the
political sphere.

Such a view is open to the criticisms that the concept of
the 'liberal democratic form' is indeterminate: thus the
dual labour movement structure was far more evident in
Bismarckian Germany than in contemporary Britain <18>.
Second, this argument leaves no room for political autonomy

17. Fairbrother, P. <1990>, 'Union democracy and socialism',
p. 11, unpub.
18. See the discussion of Marx and Engels' debates with
German socialists on this issue in Draper, H. <1978>:
op.cit., Vol 2, chapter five.

either in the ruling or working classes. The view that
capitalism has been able to 'tolerate the rights and
liberties of citizenship ... because they are abstracted
from the distribution of social power' <19> by-passes the
whole issue. Doubtless the ruling class seeks to deceive
workers, but this hardly explains the separation between the
political and the economic! This separation represents a
real terrain of struggle which constitutes the premise for
understanding the working class. Thus in Britain more than
in any other country, at least from the time of Bagehot, the
political question of an overwhelmingly proletarian country
with the vote has proved a problem. Both Bagehot and Marx in
opposite ways were haunted by the spectre in the 1860s of
the workers exercising their vote in their own
interest <20>.

The basis for this mix of voluntarism and determinism
would appear to rest on the most solid of theoretical
foundations. Fairbrother, after Clarke <1977, 1978, 1988>
uses the Marxist categories of appearance and substance,
form and content. Clarke has argued that the theory of

19. Ellen Wood <1990>: 'The uses and abuses of "civil
society"', Socialist Register, p. 72
20. Bagehot, Walter <1922>: The English Constitution. Kegan
Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, London, especially the
introduction. For Marx and Engels, see the discussion in
Draper: op. cit., ch. 5.

fetishism, derived by Marx from his analysis of capitalist relations of production, is an explanation of social relations and not merely a theory of ideology; it should explain why appearances are misleading or false in the sense that they conceal their origins but not deny the materiality of these appearances themselves. As B Fine <1984> commented:

> The imagery of form and content is quite different from that of illusion and reality: the surface form of an object is no less real than its inner content, but it can be explained only by reference to its inner content <21>.

However, the theory of fetishism may be used in another way altogether: to deny not only the fetishised theory but along with it the reality which this theory captures. This inversion is present in Clarke's work <22> but in the radical paradigm becomes less equivocal. Thus Fairbrother

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21. Fine, R. <1984>: Democracy and the Rule of Law. Pluto Press, London. p.98.
22. What is important about Clark's work was that, amongst others, he overcame the structural functionalist analysis associated with the Althusserian school of "Marxism". In overturning the certainties of the Althusserians he abolished the structural divisions by which they had conceptualised and departmentalised society - ideology level etc Although successful in this critique by reestablishing the capital-labour relation and the concept of social relations, the forms generated by capital-labour relation rather than having a materiality constantly veer towards being appearance. For example see Simon Clarke <1990>: 'New utopias for old: Fordist dreams and post-Fordist fantasies', Capital and Class. 42, Winter 1990 and Clarke <1980>: 'Althusserian Marxism'. in One Dimensional Marxism. Allison and Busby.

employs this theory of fetishism to deny the reality of the
dual structure. He states:

> the state underwrote a separation between the
> industrial and political aspirations of the
> working class, signified by the
> inistitutionalisation of working class political
> parties... Secondly unions are recognized and
> procedural and substantive forms of Industrial
> relations generalised to cover all unionised
> workers. This legitimated particular forms of
> unionism and union activity...<23>

It is one thing to refute the reification of the dual
structure, but another to refuse to recognise its
existence <24>.

The same tendency to abolish the materiality of the
labour movement is to be found in Hyman, though he is both
more circumspect in his conclusions and comes to them from a
different and paradoxically more sociological starting
point. In his major critique of pluralism <1989>, for
example, he defines his aim thus:

> to examine how far certain affinities in terms of
> orientation and underlying assumptions have
> shaped the academic analysis of Industrial
> Relations <25>.

23. Fairbrother, P. <1990>, p.12
24. The view of Fairbrother is in line with those who
perceive the Labour Party primarily as a transmission belt
for bourgeois ideology (discussed in chapters 1 and 2) into
the working class.

25. Hyman, R. <1989>: 'Pluralism, Procedural Consensus and
Bargaining', p.54 in The Political Economy of Industrial
Relations Theory and Practice in a Cold Climate.

While such a critique can identify anomalies and limitations in pluralist theories, it cannot explain their efficacy. In treating pluralist theories as ideological, the critique is premised on the view that it is pluralism which determined industrial relations rather than industrial relations which determines pluralism. The reader is left with a tautology: why should pluralism be so pervasive? because people have a false consciousness; why do they have a false consciousness? because of pluralist ideology. The key to the emancipation of trade unionists lies in understanding the dangers of pluralism and throwing off their false consciousness. Reality is abolished through the power of ideas. <26>

Representation and mediation

On the question of union organisation debate within the radical paradigm has been cast in terms of bureaucracy versus democracy and representative versus participatory democracy <Hyman 1971, 1975, Nichols and Beynon 1977, Beynon 1973, Regalia 1988, Muller-Jentsch 1988, Jahn 1988, Waddington and Fairbrother 1990 and Fairbrother 1990>. The strength of these works lies in their implicit support for Gouldner's <1965> argument against the 'pathos of pessimism'

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26. There is much more to be said about Hyman's theory of reification and bureaucracy as a social relation, but this would take us away from our central theme in this work.

and his assertion that there can be no iron law of oligarchy
... unless there is an iron law of democracy' <27>.

It is in keeping with their general presuppositions
that the radicals should see the importance of union
democracy and argue against the dominance of administrative
rationality. The central problem, however, can be summed up
thus: should attempts be made to abolish the unions'
mediating role or not. Muller-Jentsch <1985> has argued that
viewing unions as a mediation between capital and labour
reinforces bureaucracy in the unions; Beynon's sensitive
account <1973> of the gap between shop floor leaders and
members reveals his unhappy resignation in the face of the
necessity of that division. What such arguments do is posit
another role for unions, for if unions do not mediate
between workers and employers and workers and the state,
then they would be an entirely different entity. Recognition
of what unions are does not represent an acceptance of the
'pathos of pessimism', but it opens up a different
perspective on the issue outside of the radical paradigm.
This may be formulated as the recognition of mediations.

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27. Gouldner, A.,W. <1965>: 'Metaphysical Pathos and the
Theory of Bureaucracy', in L A Coser and B Rosenburg (ed.s):
Sociological Theory. p.114. His view is historically valid
- seen in the context of periodic revolts of the rank and
file.

The concept of mediation points to the necessity of institutional structures mediating relations between capital and labour. Branch structures, for example, represent a form of mediation between workers and management. All union mediation is premised on the representation of individuals workers by a collective agency, the corollary of which is the separation between members and representatives. The institutional form of mediation structures but does not determine how representatives act within them: as arbitrators between workers and management, advocates of workers, etc. The concept of mediation differs from that of bureaucracy, which defines a specific form in which the union's mediating role is carried out, which has its roots in the dichotomy 'between administrative and representative rationality' <28>.

The dynamics of workplace organisation necessarily involve the working out of relations, often conflictual, between members and representatives. Such problem-solving within the collective represents the basic building block for class formation within a given workplace organisation. The development of class formation necessarily entails confrontation with existing forms of trade union mediation

28. Child, J., Loveridge, R., and Warner, M. <1973>: 'Towards an Organisational Study of Trade Unions', Sociology, 7,1.

as well as with their existing content. The argument is not about abolishing structures in the name of 'immediacy' but about control over those structures as the way to develop collectivity.

The importance of the radical paradigm goes beyond the relatively small group of academics I have identified within the paradigm. The naturalisation of the key concepts of this paradigm and their roots in the actual experience of militant trade unionism have made it difficult to move beyond its syndicalist parameters; the contemporary pressures to do so, however, are becoming far stronger.

The limits of proletarianisation

The fallacies of the radical paradigm are based on the practices of militant trade unionism, but their assumptions also helped shape these practices. In this sense theory became an active element in the dynamics of radical unionism. In Haringey the theory of the branch reformers, located well within the radical paradigm, informed their response to substantive issues.

Starting with the Prices and Incomes report No 29 in 1969, the policy of successive governments has been to attempt to increase levels of productivity and alter working practices. The proletarianization thesis - and its counterpart 'deskilling' - purport to explain this change.

For example proletarianisation of local government white collar workers has been discussed by the CDPs <1974, 1977>, Cockburn <1977>, and most fully by American writers like O'Connor <1981>. O'Connor linked the decline in white collar workers' pay with an increase in bureaucratization and managerial control designed to routinise work.

The proletarianisation thesis provides a crucial bridge between the 'classic' manufacturing model and its application to local government work; though within the radical paradigm there seems to have existed a curious division of labour between those who focus on incorporation and those who focus on proletarianisation. I have argued, however, in line with Walsh <1982>, that the proletarianization thesis is invalid in explaining change in local government branches. For different reasons both elements of the thesis are flawed.

The problem surrounding the depression of wages is apparent from its origins. Oppenheimer <1985> has explained how the proletarianization thesis in relation to the depression of wages was developed in Germany in the aftermath of World War One <Croner 1928, Engelhard 1939>. It referred to the economic collapse of the middle classes. To make a comparison between the proletarianization of white collar workers in Weimar Germany, however, and the local

government wages cycle in Britain in the 1970s-80s is to
make nonsense of the thesis. The decline in wages was
central - though they were subsequently increased - but it
cannot equate to proletarianization in the Weimar sense.

The second part of the thesis is the most important,
rooting change in the increasing bureaucratization and
regulation of work tasks. In spite of the formal development
of productivity deals and corporate management during the
1970s, this work has shown there were no detrimental
alterations to the workers' labour process. Indeed the key
characteristic of the different struggles observed in this
work is that they were without exception external to the
type of control exercised by management over the labour
process <29>.

If an audit were carried out of the councils'
production process over a period of time, considerable
technological innovation, harmonization of work and
deskilling would be shown to have taken place; for example,
the shift from coal to oil and gas central heating for

29. Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) has to a large
extent overcome the corporatist defence against market
intrusion, relocating the council worker in a market
environment. This has led to considerable alterations in
labour process discipline and underlines what Hyman <1989>
and Terry <1988> have drawn attention to, the importance of
product markets. CCT, however, has not overcome the problem
of managerial control, still representing formal rather than
real subordination.

caretakers, the technological alterations to dust-carts
(cited by Sheldrake <1981> as an element in the failure of
early productivity schemes), computerisation of housing
services and the attempt to divide carpentry work in first
and second fixing (the latter demands the greater skill).
These technological innovations had little impact, however,
on this study because in general they had little detrimental
impact on workers. This points to a need to distinguish the
appropriation of the workers' skills from their use against
the workers in the production process. These are two
logically separate elements. It was the inability of
management to link deskilling to greater control of the
labour process which explains why attempts to get workers to
work largely failed. From this perspective, the experiments
in radical municipalism may be seen at least in part as an
ideology for subordinating the worker to the labour process.
For example, the comment aimed at workers by the leader of
Hackney council, Puddephatt, who remarked that 'inefficiency
is organised theft from the working class' <30>, was about
exerting a moral pressure on the worker; it should be viewed
as part of the attempt to shift the balance of power away

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30. Cited in Lansley, Stewart., Goss, Sue., and Wolmar,
Christian <1989>: <u>Councils in Conflict: The rise and fall of
the Municipal Left</u> p 93. Macmillan, Basingstoke.

from the producer to the consumer and to introduce a form of
discipline over the workers <31>.

In this case study the tendencies associated with
proletarianization were halted by the response of the labour
movement. It meant that a substantial level of continuity is
found arising from the lack of direct managerial control
over the labour process. I argued that the impossibility of
direct supervisory control arose because occupational groups
carried out the same tasks at many workplaces; this implied
a reliance by management on worker co-operation and its
ceding a level of control over the labour process to the
workforce <32>.

31. This was the rational core of radical municipalism; as
such the ideology which has accompanied it, for example, the
notion of non-hierarchical ways of working and of
accountability to the community, should be treated with
scepticism. For example, Adeniz' comment on cash cafeterias
being harder but more interesting work. One of the
extensions of the school meals project was the idea to get
the community to supervise the kitchen staff - this did not
take place. Such working methods point to a potential social
democratic development where control of the labour process
is carried out in a similar manner to Friedman's <1977>
concept of 'responsible autonomy'.

32. Although this represents a different context it points
to a similar conclusion to that of Elger <1979>:
'Valorisation and "deskilling": a critique of Braverman',
Capital and Class. 7. Here he has argues that deskilling
must be situated as a tendency within a historically located
theorisation of the transformation of the capitalist labour
process. By removing what can be seen as an absolute in
Braverman <1976> - the total domination of capital in the
workplace- Elger has provided the theoretical basis for
reconstituting workers struggle at the workplace.

Without the tendencies associated with proletarianization one of the core roles of the branches, that of mediation between management and worker over the labour process, is if not entirely absent, severely curtailed, since the form of control exercised over the labour process remained the property of the worker or workgroup rather than the branches. In a number of areas custom and practice evolved on this individualistic sub-trade union basis, exemplified by management-worker trade-offs over time for work. Hence a perimeter fence was erected, making it impossible for the branches to engage fully in the day to day affairs of the members. 'The union' remained in all essentials an external agency. Its externality placed limits on the overcoming of sectionalism; for example, in spite of the way in which the NUPE Education branch was unified, the caretakers still had their private bargains at the workplace.

Politics and the branches

Although the branches' inability to assert their mediating role over labour process was rooted in production, the issue is not reducible to the labour process. Closely linked to the limits of collectivity posed by production, was how the branch reformers acted in relation to their

political success in preventing redundancies at the turn of
the decade. The second dimension of the limits to change was
political.

I define the concept of the 'political' as referring to
those issues external to the immediate worker-employer
relation which affect workers as citizens of both the local
and national state. The workers as citizens had the right
and felt that they had the right to discuss and affect
government and council policy, particularly as it affected
what I have called 'the political economy of labour', that
is, their fate as employees and consumers.

There were three stages in the political development of
the branches. First, a direct correlation has been shown
between the alteration in government policy towards local
government expenditure, the cuts of 1976-77, and the
emergence of politics in the branches. Second, these
political issues were articulated within and subsumed under
the branches' defensive role as protector of jobs, so that
the fusion of political and economic aspects of the cuts
became a property of the branches . Third, this apparent
unity of the economic and political within the branches was
shown to be extremely fragile as from 1979 the political and
economic separated out.

In this work I have characterised the political and economic issues which emerged in the mid-1970s as the 'dual agenda'. Its backbone was economic, the decline in wages, with the caveat that the political agenda was potentially of far greater importance. It was the result of the first major governmental push against the political economy of labour which for the first time turned non-industrial unions into a national force. Although the Haringey branches have their own particularities, the emergence of politics within local government trade unions was a general phenomenon <33>.

The shaping of the branches' political agenda had the strengths and weaknesses of militant trade unionism. Its strength was that it represented a militant defence of the workers' jobs. Its weakness lay in the reformers' understanding of overcoming the division between the economic and the political - both were encapsulated in the economic. Given the political nature of the employer, the council, it seemed that the branches had appropriated the political in so far as the council acceded to their demands. In reality the situation represented a primitive stage of politicisation, one that matured between 1977-1981. The

33. See Fryer <1979> for the history of this struggle nationally. For examples of this politicisation process, see Nicholson et al. <1981> and Smith et al.'s <1987> respective studies of Sheffield and Norwich NALGO branches.

settlement which emerged from this period was one in which
the Labour council defused the opposition of the unions by
embarking on a programme structured around their defence and
funded by the rate rises. The political was unified with the
economic inside the unions, but far from by-passing
labourism through militant trade unionism, as the reformers
believed, the reality was precisely the opposite. The
struggles and their settlement resulted in the conversion of
the branches into an interest group lobbying the council, as
against the more universal approach of the reforming
leaderships. Unlike the labour process, where the branches
failed to fully establish a mediating role, here the branch
leaders found that they spontaneously gained a role of
mediating between their members and the council.

The fallacies of the radical paradigm

In the light of what concludes this work - the start of
redundancies in 1987 - it is tempting to see events as
inevitable and certainly after 1982 a level of fatalism is
justified. What invalidates such an assessment prior to 1982
is that the actions of the reformers were based on their
particular notions of radicalism and would have been
different if they had different ideas. It is doubtful that
this was the case after 1982. This is not to say that the

political resolution of 1981 would have been avoided if only
the reformers had a different theory; but in the light of
the actual evolution of the branches the theory of the
reformers acted as a disorienting factor, providing yet
another limit to change.

The basis of this disorientation was that the reformers
could not come to terms with two interconnected
developments <34>. Firstly, there was the question of class.
The working class is not a pre-formed revolutionary entity
but an uneven and developing formation. In the local
government context it evolved from the stasis of the post-
war consensus to a reformed collectivity, manifested in the
reformers' challenge to sectional domination and the
fragmentation of occupational groups within the branches.
What was significant was not an abstract concept of what
this collectivity ought to have been but rather what it was.
This discloses two types of relation between members and the
branch; first, there were relations based on a fragmented
membership and its attendant hierarchies, and second, there
were the forms of organisation associated with the branch
collectivity which the reformers sought to introduce. A
dominant theme observed in this work is the lack of active

34. These criticisms of the branch reformers are equally
applicable to the Labour left (and for that matter other
left-wing political forces within the borough).

involvement by workers in the branches <35>, which meant
that one party to any interaction between members and
leaders - the members - withdrew from active participation.
With that withdrawal came the loss of the necessary tension
I have associated with the progression of collectivity. The
reformers' theoretical assumptions led them to concentrate
on the problems of fragmentation; the latter issue found the
reformers ill prepared. The fact that the branch members
found it unnecessary to participate actively in their
organisation did not mean that such a state of affairs was
permanent. When they did need their organisations, they
could only find fragments of a defeated and confused
leadership.

This withdrawal of members gave rise to the second
problem for the reformers: the gap between representative
and members. The heart of the reformers' demise was not that
the tension between members and leaders was lost, which was
unavoidable, but that they were incapable of coming to terms
with the limitations this placed on change. In particular,
they were unable to cope with their representative role
becoming bureaucratized and regulative. The consequent

35. Apart from those shown here there are a range of other
reasons why workers may not involve themselves in a
workplace organisation. For example, because of the unions'
weakness at the workplace.

disorientation was expressed in the divergent attitudes of actors: on the one hand, those who refused to accept these developments were rapidly marginalised; on the other, those who accepted them were unable to balance their militancy with their regulatory role. This fault line is shown in the ambivalence of my respondents' explanations of the demise of the branches, in which they expressed their respective ideological biases: for some it was a problem of gender, for some a problem of bureaucratisation of the branch, for others a function of the backwardness of the members. These diverse views arose from the same point: the defeat of their aspirations to construct a branch-based militancy.

For the reformers, the radical paradigm appeared to provide the most resolute conception of class but in reality offered an imagery of monolithic mass militancy which substituted for a conception of class. The working class turned out to be not what it was meant; once below the imagery it was class which contradicted their theory.

The modernisation of labourism?

From the late 1970s a view began to emerge within the literature that labourism had reached an impasse <Milliband 1983, 1986, Panitch 1986, Coates 1983, 1988>. Although commentators lay different emphasis on its nature, the

argument's core was that the era of Keynesian economic management was over and with it the economic base of labourism.

It has been axiomatic for Marxists that the capitalist system enters periodic crises symptomatic of the 'crisis-ridden tendency of capital accumulation' <Clarke 1988>. The correlation between the crisis and working class resistance has, to say the least, been disjointed and sporadic. Although the class struggle has on occasions reached a white heat, most notably in the miners strike of 1984-85, the working class imprimatur is the exception rather than the rule. What it is not possible to point to from the latter part of the 1970s is economic crisis manifesting itself in terms of what Middlemas <1979> called 'a political crisis of the state'.

The impasse argument rests on a conceptual slippage from a crisis of capitalism to a crisis of labourism. A more accurate view would be to assess this as a crisis for socialists, whose very concept of socialism has been challenged. Labourism, as an ideology structured around the dual structure of the labour movement and the need for a parliamentary as well as trade union mediation between labour and capital, has emerged from the fray intact - far more so than the socialists. What has gone is the specific

form in which labourism was played out - the post-war corporatist structures.

The failure of the left was a major contributory factor in consolidating the rise of radical municipalism. The turning point for the Labour left was the early 1980s and what was to become radical municipalism was in fact an aspect of the defeat of the Benn movement for radicalising labourism. This study has been able to show an aspect of how the reformulation of labourism occurred. The events portrayed in this case study are a microcosm of working class evolution from post-war corporatism to post-corporatism. This work has straddled a period in working class development which can be characterised as an interregnum - between the ending of the post-war corporatist structures and the beginning of what would appear to be a new consensual framework based on market principles. This has revealed a corresponding shift in the ideology of labourism <36>.

The key alterations seen in the Labour Party can be conceptualised as the attempted 'modernisation of politics':

36. It is among labour movement activists that belief in the absolute necessity for a labour government is at its strongest; a view summed up by Peter Spencer's comment that 'I have to have a labour government if the jobs of my members are to be protected'. The power of his argument is that a governmental solution is necessary to save jobs. That is the power of Kinnockism or new realism.

a shift from an ideology based on post-war corporatism to
one based on the emergence of a more diverse pluralism.
Radical municipalism was a transitional ideology between the
corporate and post-corporate working class. It is difficult
to know how far the frontiers of working class organisation
will be pushed back and exactly how a new social democratic
version of post-corporatist consensus will take shape. With
the old structures of working class organisation still
fragmenting, the problem of its re-formation is unresolved.
In areas such as Haringey it is mediated through the post-
corporatist imagery of "community", in which the council
acts as gatekeeper for scarce state resources. Thus radical
municipalism dovetailed into Kinnocks new realism. Whilst
this form of reconstituted labourism is able to rely on
substantial support (even from the "left" of the trade union
leadership) while the desire to avoid a fourth consecutive
Labour defeat is overwhelming, the experience of Labour in
power may serve to shatter this fragile unity.

Methodology appendix

Discovering research

As with many first research projects, the core of this study arose out of my own experiences as a trade union and political activist. A short biographical sketch centred on the background to this work will illuminate the relation between this study, my background and the research material. I was born in Hornsey and have lived in Tottenham most of my adult life. I worked as a labourer on Haringey council from 1979 until starting this project in 1986 (briefly returning in September 1989 until January 1990) <1>. I have been a member of either Hornsey or Tottenham Labour Party since 1973, serving on the GMC and EC of both parties as well as holding such positions as education and TU liaison officer. I joined Socialist Organiser in 1974. From 1980 I was a shop steward and from 1982 senior steward for my section. I have sat on a range of borough and London-wide shop steward committees, including setting up and being the first chairperson of the London-wide local authority workers joint shop steward committee - London Bridge.

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1. Several years later the foreman who hired me told me the following: 'A few weeks after you started, Mick, someone came down and said, get rid of O'Sullivan, he's a trot. I though about it but as you're a Gemini and Gemini are nice people, I decided not to sack you.

This work has had a long gestation period. Its origins go back to the mid-1970s and my dissatisfaction with what the left was saying about trade unions and by implication the working class. This dissatisfaction came from two sources: one was class and the other was politics.

My own working class background is sociologically impeccable - my father is social class five and my mother social class four. For myself, however, as someone who obtained 'A' levels then a degree, it has never occurred to me to consider myself one of the 'lads' <2>. It was not until the early part of the 1980s that I began to become conscious of class. To explain this rather strange sounding claim, I have to go back to my late teens. I was fifteen in 1968; then it seemed anything was possible and that my background and school experiences (a large secondary modern with at the time the largest immigrant population in the country) were universal. My assumption was that when I spoke to my contemporaries, I was conversing with people from a similar background. It was only through experience, for which I have to thank the Labour Party, that I began to

2. The concept of 'the lads' to my knowledge is used by two groups of people, trade unionists and sociologists. It is used to designate working class men, as in trade union speech 'the lads will consider the offer' or in sociologese 'the lads considered the offer'. Working class men do not describe themselves as the lads - which the computer thesaurus equates with 'boy', 'child', 'junior', 'immature'.

understand class. The way in which the majority of members talked about the working class was as object and as a mediation for their own lives. This made me conscious of my background. I observed a middle class concern (one that in my experience extends throughout the left) which generated a dichotomy between workers as they should be and workers as they really are, a dichotomy which has been transposed to sociology <3>. I began to conceive of my background as providing an anchor for myself where workers should not be used as a mediation for the middle class to understand the world. Becoming conscious of this situation allowed me to understand that I had a view of two worlds: a working class world which was not mine but one I had inherited through my parents and the world of the downwardly mobilised middle class which was of course my world <4>.

Secondly, in the wake of the decline of industrial militancy under the 1974-79 Labour government, I began to assimilate from Socialist Organiser a theoretical understanding of this based on a conception of the unity between the industrial and political wings of the labour

3. In his comment on participant observation this was summed up by Jacobs thus <1970>: 'the presumption of social distance between the researcher and his subject vitiates that which he seeks to understand', p. viii
4. One of the upsetting things about this relation was that I became in part a conduit for an understanding of the working class.

movement. From the mid-1970 I became convinced of the need
for an inter-disciplinary linkage between the unions and the
Labour party rather than treating them as separate entities.
In the 1980s the way in which the revolutionary left acted
strengthened this belief and it became more grounded as I
not only observed left activity but participated in events
surrounding the rise of municipalism.

These two aspects of my development, an understanding
of class and a view of the labour movement, remained at a
conscious level separate until the mid-1980. It was a
gradual convergence between my understanding of class and
the labour movement which formed the backbone to this work.
It was the context in which I theorized radical
municipalism. I watched in amazement as the left lost
integrity, political culture and purpose. As a comrade of
mine commented, radical municipalism saw the birth of the
'me generation' in British politics <5>. What I have tried
to convey is applicable to ''any town'', although the detail
of this work resides in my relationship to my source

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5. A small illustration of this occurred in 1985 over the
surcharging of Lambeth and Liverpool councillors. At a
national shop stewards meeting I chaired, instead of
addressing the question 'can we deliver some form of
action', the entire meeting was taken up with the SWP and
Militant stewards arguing about whether they should be in
the Labour Party.

material. This relationship can be itemised under the followings points:

i) I was able to ''read the labour movement sub-culture''. Each area of social life can be regarded as a subculture with its own values and procedures. Sharrock <1975> discusses the relationship between a corpus of knowledge (in this instance that belonging to the labour movement) and the activities of its members. He states that:

> the name is never intended to describe the persons amongst whom the corpus has currency but instead to specify the relationship which that corpus has to the constituency, a relationship which seems analogous to that of ownership <6> .

A knowledge of the labour movement then belongs to those of the labour movement who will be conversant with its procedures (as any priest would be with the church of Rome, or a steam train enthusiast with the protocol for observing their chosen object of desire). There would be no technical barrier to their formal understanding of the documentation or conversing with respondents: a case of 'interviewing one's peers' <Platt 1981>. For example, a basic procedural difference between trade union and Labour Party documentation is that the utterances of trade unionists are more likely to be considered due to their representative

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6. W W Sharrock (1975): 'On owning knowledge', in R Turner (ed.): <u>Ethnomethodology</u>. Penguin, Harmondsworth, p. 49.

responsibilities. In this research my knowledge was amplified by my former participatory status which meant that I was not only conversant with the procedure but also the substance of the material. If an analogy with a map can be used, I recognised the map like anyone else conversant with the labour movement, but also I had the key to understanding the specific contours which made up the Haringey labour movement. It is not that either of these could not be learnt; it is just that I started this work with an understanding of the substance of that corpus of knowledge.

ii) I had a ready made network of labour movement contacts both within and outside the borough, whose knowledge I was able to draw upon. This can be illustrated in a number of ways: for example, I had to piece together from the network a set of the anti-cuts committee documents; or over a secondary issue in reviewing one of the local papers I was able to check up on why in the early 1980s the paper's attitude changed to one of hostility towards the council. Was it because of a real sense of outrage over the rates? The paper's reporters were 'networked' into the branch leadership, so I could ask them informally if they knew the answer. The replies I received led me to believe that this change was also to do with the internal problems the paper was going through at that time, which was to lead to the

sacking of the NUJ members on the paper. This network meant that it was always possible to go beyond my official sources and check up on issues.

iii) I had unlimited access to archival material and respondents. In many cases respondents were colleagues and in two cases close friends. I had decided from the outset that my main respondents would be the central people within the branches (originally instead of two branches I have studied I was going to look at four); the work was never intended to be directly about the branch members. I also made a conscious decision that I would not interview anyone from either the Labour Party or the Labour Group in connection with either the Labour Party's development or the rate-rise and cuts debates. The reason for this was pragmatic. My focus was on the unions; to start a process of interviewing Labour Party members would have been to open up a substantial (albeit very interesting) ``can of worms''. The choice of interviews was narrowed in only two instances, firstly my decision not to interview Harry Lister. Secondly I was told, in no uncertain terms, that I would not obtain an interview with those who initiated NALGO's black caucus. The failure to interview Lister is a major shortcoming. In the case of the black caucus, although at the outset of this work I was unaware of its importance, I had already realised

that I would be unable to follow through on both race and gender and had decided to concentrate on gender. The reasoning behind this was that gender, unlike race, had arisen in the branch as part of the emergence of the non-aligned left.

Alongside this relationship to the material I brought to the research a number of preconceived ideas, the most important being that in carrying out research I was - whatever else I might be doing - engaging in a process of social mobility. I concluded that it would be self-delusion on any researcher's part not to understand that: however much they may wish not to, the very act of research is "talking to the natives" and bringing back the findings to the middle class world of the university. However sensitively this is carried out, for example James <1984>, and whatever motives are used (and everybody's motives are always for the best), non-recognition of this relationship by the researcher is bound to perpetuate the illusion of equality and ultimately patronize the ''natives'' <7>. In my case I was caught in

7. It is difficult to convey the alarm with which I first read methods texts. In the pre-1980 texts, which showed the link between ethnomethodology and anthropolgy, the talk was of spying on the recipient (in British texts) and covert operations (in American texts). The later texts tended to conceal this through their relativism and by adopting the 'English' attitude of being 'terribly nice'. See, for instance, Janet Finch <1984>: '"It's great to have someone to talk to": the ethics and politics of interviewing women',

the unedifying situation where the price of potential entry into the sociological community was not my views but my experience - a piece of working class life.

The obvious course for this work would have been an ethnographic study. Although ethnography may well be part of a 'humanistic sociology', it is also the quintessence of looking at the natives. I had no wish to be a window though which workers spoke. The problem for me was how to distance my work from this kind of anthropology; the one way this could not occur was through proclaiming a special status for myself. A part of a Ph.D. is coming to terms with what sociology is and how it acts with the world. How was it going to be possible for me to overcome this problem and marry the theoretical and practical concerns of this work? This points to wider considerations in formulating a research design.

My second proposition was that it was patronizing to respondents to believe that you can conduct an interview 'on an absolutely equal footing' <8>. Goode and Hatt <1952> were

in C Bell and H Roberts (ed.s): Social Researching: Politics. Problems. Practice. RKP, London, pp. 70-87.
8. This comes from F Zweig's <1949> study of Labour, Life and Poverty. Gollancz, London, cited by A Oakley <1981>: 'Interviewing Women: A contradiction in terms', in H Roberts (ed.): Doing Feminist Research. RKP, London. Oakley uses Zweig as an instance of how to talk with respondents as equals, but the question remains how this Communist Party

right to assert that 'the interviewer's role is essentially
middle class' <9>. There are a number of different levels at
which this inequality operates, the central point being that
interviewers appropriate what is usually considered the
mundane knowledge of the respondent and transpose it into
their intellectual corpus of knowledge. For example, in this
work my concept of 'time bonus' is drawn from the
respondents' mundane explanations of their working lives. If
equality exists, then give the tape recorder to the
respondents and let them do the research!

Finally I was concerned that there should not be an
ideological bias in the interviews. There are two approaches
to the problem of bias in the literature: the removal of it
through controlled interviews <Goode and Hatt 1952, Hyman et
al. 1955> or in the opposite view <Bell and Newby 1977, Bell
and Encel 1978, Oakley 1981> acceptance of the idea of 'all
research being political' <10>. The concern I had was more
mundane; it is a problem found, for example, in
Wainwright <1986> where she discussed the Sheffield labour
movement. She wrote that a number of its 'leaders' were the
children of prominent labour movement dignitaries; she was

intellectual could have an interview on an equal footing
with his working class respondents.
9. W J Goode and P K Hatt <1952>: Methods in Social
Research. Allen and Unwin, London, p. 188
10. Oakley, op. cit. p.54

extremely affirmative in her response to this and supportive
of the actions of these leaders. Now leaving aside the novel
idea of socialist support for dynastic leadership, a limited
knowledge of the Sheffield labour movement would show that
these leaders were left Labourite and Stalinist. I am not
passing judgment on this or Wainwright's support for them,
but it should be flagged in the work. Without the
ideological starting point of the respondent being flagged
by the researcher, the reader is left to wonder where and
how the views of people were formed. It is the height of
naivete to believe that those active within the labour
movement have somehow formed their views in a political
vacuum. From the outset I conceived of the labour movement
activists addressed in this work as public figures. They
were all political actors, even if the process by which they
assimilated their ideas was one of complete osmosis.

Putting the jigsaw together

Six months into this study the concerns mentioned above
represented a set of unresolved dilemmas and loose threads;
as with many Ph.D. students this represented the dilemma of
how to make the transition from the general notion - I am
going to undertake research - to the specifics of research.
In this instance the transition from vague methodological

precepts to a clearer conception under which this work was actually carried out, took place in a completely empirical way. My hesitations and concerns were to remain but once the specifics of the research got underway, I surprisingly found that they rapidly resolved themselves.

Getting the research underway meant beginning to read around my subject and assembling a chronology. A chronology seemed to me both an essential and a safe starting point (as it committed me to nothing). It was, however, no small matter; not only did it stretch over a quarter of a century but I found that I was in fact writing up no less than eight chronicles of events: two unions, the local Labour Party, the rise of municipalism in London, the Haringey anti-cuts committee, the borough's inter-union committees, the demographic alterations in the borough and the council's evolution.

From being no small matter, once started the sheer volume of material involved in assembling these chronologies began to dictate the research method. This occurred in two senses: first, it began to show that I was assembling fragments of a political map of the borough: of vertical relationships within the institutions and horizontal relationships between institutions. This, however, also

showed the limits of this documentation; as Mann <1967> commented:

> a mere record of what is said, accurate though it might be, would tell only a small and rather misleading part of the full story <11>.

What this meant was that in assembling, say, the chronology of the NALGO branch, certain trends emerged such as the rise of a political agenda. To understand this, to get the 'full story', entailed cross-referencing my ''reading'' of the documents with the secondary literature, other primary sources and the interviews of my respondents. Thus the forming of a chronology provided the structure around which an interaction between myself, the documentation, respondents' interviews and secondary sources was to evolve. This interaction of elements was to constitute my methodological framework.

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11. P H Mann <1968>: <u>Methods of Sociological Inquiry</u>, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 61

Using the documentation

The documentation entailed the assembling and chronology of the following records:

Table 13:1 Major documentation

Institution	type	period
NALGO	Minutes, correspondence, major negotiations	1965-1987
NUPE	Minutes, correspondence, major negotiations	1965-1987
NUT	Minutes	1978-1987
Craft Committee	Minutes	1975 1987
Union-Council consultative committee	Minutes	1978-1981
Haringey cuts committee	Minutes	1979-1981
Haringey union campaign against Rate-capping	Minutes @ correspondenc	1984-1986
Haringey Joint Union committee	Minutes @ correspondenc	1985-1987
Labour Party Tottenham } Wood Green} Hornsey }	GMC, LGC, selected wards minutes and publications	1975-1987
London Bridge	Minutes	1984-1986
Haringay Council	A range of documentation	1965-1987

These records represented the core documentation used in this research. Alongside them I also used: the GLC Statistical Year books, census reports, the borough's own statistical records, the local newspapers and the files of left-wing papers such as London Labour Briefing. The vast bulk of this documentation was extremely mundane. It comprised public but workaday, practical texts. These public documents were not written for posterity, the authors never perceiving them as archival material. In my opinion it was only possible for me to deal with this bulk of material because I was already conversant with the corpus of knowledge of which it was part. To step even fractionally outside, as I had to when reading the official council documentation, was to enter if not an alien world, certainly a strange country.

The vast majority of this documentation is primary data gathered at first hand. Only in exceptional circumstances was it possible to cross-reference documentation with other sources. For example, the decision in March 1985 of the council during the anti-rate capping campaign to set a rate is documented in a number of texts, such as Stoker <1988> and Lensely et al. <1989>. The way in which I used the documentation can be classified in three ways. Firstly, using the material concerning the profile of the borough, I

was concerned to give the reader a sense of change as
background to this thesis. I brought together an eclectic
batch of indices — from statistical data to Labour Party
documentation - to make this point; it was not my concern to
show that Haringey is 'an outer London borough with inner
city problems' <12>. This set of documentation provided the
context in which I explored change within the branch; in the
two following sets of documentation it was the reverse: the
documents only achieved substance by my ability to
contextualise them.

The major division, however, was between the
documentation concerning the core union branches under study
and the various elements of the Labour Party and council.
This division had less to do with the quality or type of
documentation than the different relationship in which I
placed these documents. Due in part to my decision not to
interview Labour Party or Labour Group members, I was forced
to rely entirely on archive material to construct events
surrounding the Labour Party and the council within the
borough. The difficulty in researching debates concerning
rate rises at the London level was partly alleviated in
relation to the GLC by utilising interviews which I had done

12. This is the phrase (which is correct) that the council
uses on every conceivable occasion; it has become a bit like
the borough's motto 'Progess with Humanity'

for a previous study. In giving the reader an interpretation
of those events I was concerned that my own views about
municipalism and my participatory status within these
debates should not dictate outcomes.

Through assembling the documentation and literature on
municipalism, it became rapidly apparent that juxtaposing
the documents to this literature, particularly that on
radical municipalism, revealed a major divergence. Thus the
basis for my refutation of municipalism was not my
subjective viewpoint but one grounded in the documentary
material. The contrast between the findings of this study
and the existing body of work helped provide a focus for
this part of the research. However, tensions continually
arose when I constructed scenarios as to the ''meaning'' of
the documentation. I am thinking particularly of the rate
rise debates within Haringey. This is one of the major
dangers of familiarity with your material. I found it was
all too easy to project through the documents a series of
ideas and start ascribing them to the writers of the
minutes. Part of the discipline of dealing with these
records was not to read more into them than they actually
stated. This problem did not exist with the trade union
documentation.

The third category of documentation concerned the unions. Much more than the other documentation, this was flagged and referenced by my previous participation. These were always more difficult to 'read' than the Labour Party documents in regard to what they meant for the relationship between union representatives and their members. The documents could only reveal broad generalities - for example, in whose interest the branches were run - but could not reveal why this was the case. The working up of this primary documentation provided the basis on which I was able to overcome the pressure to do a participant observation thesis. It provided the basis on which I could re-contexualise both the respondents' statements and my own knowledge and in so doing advance the research process.

Interviews

The following table provides a breakdown of the
interviews undertaken for this work:

table 13:2 Break-down of interviews

Number of respondents	Number of interviews	Time	Total hours
9	1x9= 9	9 x 1hour	9
5	2x5=10	2 x 1hour	10
2	3x2= 6	6 x 1hour	6
1	4x1= 4	4 x 1hour	4
1	7x1= 7	7 x 1hour	7
1	8x1= 8	8 x 1 hour	8
group of two	3x1= 3	3 x 1 hour	3
Total 18	46		48

This table shows a breakdown of the interviews carried
out for this work. The tapes of my respondents can be
classified into two categories: thirteen respondents from
the case study union branches, ten from NALGO and three from
NUPE, who were the ``core respondents''; and five
``background respondents'' of whom three were activists from
outside the borough.

Apart from my general conceptions about interviewing, I initially did not know what to make of access to this resource. It was only through the limitations of the documentation that one of the purposes of the interviews emerged. I started the interviews as a process of cross-referencing documentation; after my first interview I realised that here was another powerful source of material. For example, being informed by one respondent about the (undocumented) Duke House group, I was also told by him about the existence of its secretary and he smoothed the way for my interview of her. These two interviews provided the basis for the entire Duke House section, supplemented by cross-referencing with other relevant respondents.

A second strand subsequently emerged in the interviewing process; I was not out to 'discover men and women' <13>, that is, what lay behind the mask of their public lives, but rather their views and knowledge as public actors. This did not overcome the unequal nature of the interview relation but it overcame my worry about

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13. Cited in B Burgess <1988>: 'Conversations with a purpose: the ethnographic interview in educational research', in <u>Studies in Qualitative Methodology</u>, vol. 1, pp. 137-155, JAI Press. Because of my relationship with my respondents I knew a great deal (though I am sure just the tip of the iceburg) about their private lives, but they had no major impact on this study.

patronizing respondents. The point was by confronting respondents as a resource I was freed from the necessity of accepting as valid the immediacy of their utterances; I was able to treat them as rounded political actors. For me it opened the way to a substantial dialogue, as evident in utterances from myself and respondents such as 'rubbish', 'nonsense', 'you've got to be kidding', 'you're wrong on that one' and a liberal sprinkling of 'well, I never knew that'. All these expressions denote argument and discovery and arose from pushing my respondents to ''think things through''. Thus from the need to cross-check the facts a much more substantial picture began to emerge in relation to the unions through my respondents telling me their part of the story. As such the interviews took on a dual character; they were both a technical resource concerning what happened and they were a forum for dialogue and discussion. My interviewees were both respondents in that they provided ''raw data'' to be interpreted, and informants in that they offered their understanding of the data. It was the relations between the documentation and the interviews which generated what I believe to be the heart of this work. For example, it was through my reading of the NUPE branch minutes, which from the caretakers' stand-point just did not

add up, that I 'pushed' the NUPE secretary into revealing at least some of the caretakers' perks.

Technique, location and characteristics.

Because no individual had a complete picture of events in their union, let alone the wider issues under study, it was impossible (desirability apart) to have a standardized interview format. Although it meant that I did not have an interview schedule, unlike Cottle <1978> - who had 'no pre-arranged questions, no ... interview schedule. It is a conversation in which I engage...' <14> - I did have what can be viewed as two sets of questions: firstly, concerning queries or anomalies which arose from knowledge prior to the interview, and secondly, concerning the respondents' work experience. Because of the type of respondent this fell in nearly every case into three broad bands: their experience prior to working for the Haringey, their 'rise' within the branch, which usually fused with their experience in office; and finally the situation after they had left office. The specific and the general tended to interact with each other; as I became more proficient I did tend to front load the first set of questions concerning queries and anomalies.

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14. T Cottle <1977>: _Private Lives and Public Accounts_. New Viewpoints, New York, p.7.

However, if there was a spark in the interview, I would let it run on around any given issue.

Carrying on from the premiss that interviews are an unequal relationship, the agreement by a party to be interviewed does not necessarily mean that they 'will come up with the goods'. Of course, I am not implying that the function of the interview is to get someone to tell you what you wish to hear; the point is rather that agreement to be interviewed does not guarantee the scope and depth of the reply the interviewer may wish for. I am sure I am not alone in quietly fuming at the respondents' passive resistance to questioning. Putting the respondent to work is the responsibility and task of the researcher. Hence a range of stratagems have emerged for transposing acquiescence to be interviewed into a productive interview <Burgess 1988, Oakley 1981, Finch 1984> <15>.

From this starting point I evolved a number of different interview strategies. I was as deferential as possible about where to carry out the interviews which took

15. My point is that if the unequal basis of the interview contract is not recognised and the strategy of how to make the interviewee talk is elevated into a seemingly equal contract, then the implicit danger arises of patronizing the respondent; for example, I find it strange that Oakley <1981> is unable to see the request for information from her respondents as arising from a power relation.

place in a range of locations: offices, my flat, pubs, the
trade union centre. Breaking the rule about conducting
interviews in private was a problem in terms of extraneous
interruptions. A more substantial drawback was that on
occasion the lack of privacy clearly inhibited the ability
of the respondents to talk freely <Burgess 1988>. Where this
happened I re-interviewed. The most uninterrrupted of the
interviews were the ones conducted in the pub, because there
was no telephone. At their homes or offices, the respondents
always had the option of answering the phone or not.
Certainly it was a measure of success when an ansafone was
put on.

     I very rapidly noticed some characteristics of the
interviews which pointed to a pattern in spite of their
unstructured nature. Without exception no-one could remember
either dates or the chronology of events. One of the few
stock phrases I started to say was 'don't worry about the
dates, no one can remember them'. Second, whenever
respondents were speaking about themselves, there was a
considerable emphasis on the 'I', that is, their own
activities; and whenever an adverse option was given on a
fellow trade unionist, the voice was lowered, emphasising
the private nature of the interview regardless of location.

I utilized a range of techniques from the passive to the deferential to the aggressive. The basic point of this, inside my notion of a dialogue, was to give the interviewee someone they could empathise with or hate, as long as they talked. Knowing the majority of my respondents meant that this was simply a matter of transposing my pre-conceptions. For a number of reasons this did not always work; for example, my more exuberant persona did not combine well with the most pedantic of my respondents; it was a clear error of judgment on my part which led to a bad interview. The biggest failure I encountered, however, was with a respondent whom I had worked very closely with in relation to the London Bridge joint shop stewards committee; he had now become a full time officer of his union. Through passive resistance and selective amnesia I noted after the interview that he wished to forget the entire set of events and his role within them. This problem also impinged on some other core informants.

None of the above would have been possible without the respondents being recruited to my project (a point seen most clearly in the case of non-respondents). My respondents had two characteristics which made them responsive to the work (over and above any relationship with me). As with most

people, the lives and activities of my respondents normally go unrecognised <16>; in their case they were the unpaid 'NCO's' of the labour movement. Also as with most people in public life, they (we) are opinionated. This rather simple conjunction provides a proclivity to talk. In line with Burgess <1988>, Finch <1984> and Oakley <1981> I had the pleasure of respondents saying that the interviews had acted as a kind of therapy and 'let them understand things better' <17>. In my view, the impulse behind the respondents' cooperation lay in their desire to understand why events had turned out the way they had.

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16. Finch op.cit. p. 72.
17. It would an interesting exercise to see what the common denominators are in soliciting this response.

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Interviews (unless otherise stated in Haringey)

Peter Spencer (Branch Secretary NUPE Education): 21/1/87, 7/5/87, 15/5/87, 19/5/87, 23/5/87, 8/11/87, 9/6/88.

Coral Adenis (Chair NUPE Education): 15/5/87, 23/5/87, 3/9/88, 22/9/88.

Spencer and Adenis: 6/8/87, 15/3/88, 23/3/88.

Marie Williams (Shop steward NUPE Education): 25/10/88, .

Mary Corbishly: (ex-Shop Steward NALGO) 15/11/86, 9/2/87, 17,2/87.

Jim Hopper (ex-Branch Secretary NALGO): 15/11/88

Jeff Rudin (Shop Steward NALGO): 23/11/86, 7/1/87, 21/1/87, 4/4/87, 15/4/87, 5/12/87, 3/2/88.

Joan Munroe (community worker): 12/6/88

Roger Roles (ex-National Executive member NALGO): 4/2/88

Bob Hatherway (ex-Branch Secretary NALGO): 12/10/88, 1/3/88

Richard Cotton (ex-Branch Secretary NALGO): 20/8/88

Wilf Sullivan (Branch Secretary NALGO): 10/11/88, 27/11/88.

Sue Cannon (ex-Branch Support Worker NALGO): 29/9/88

Adrian Roxan (Shop Steward NALGO): 15/10/88

Ray Gillard (Senior Personal officer): 19/1/88.

Tony Brockman (Secretary NUT): 29/3/88, 2/6/88, 22/6/88.

Jim Fitzpatrick (FBU Regional Official): at NE London Regional HQ of the FBU 28/3/88

Ed Hall (Secretary London Bridge): at Lambeth Town Hall 3/3/88.

Kevin Veness (GLC outreach worker): 7/2/88.

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