

SECTION TWO. OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM AND LOCAL POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SECTION.

In this last third of the thesis the aim is to bring Operative Conservatism and political change into crisper focus by comparing and contrasting their impact not only on the Conservative party and the working class in different parts of the North West but also in relation to some of the issues we looked at in the last chapter. We shall be looking at Parliamentary politics in different parts of the region at different times, and at the vital question of local political leadership. But we need also to keep in mind the nature of politics as we move across the region in time and space. As we stated in the last chapter, Dr Nossiter's three political 'idioms' may be somewhat restrictive and indeed inappropriate for the greater part of the hypothesis being tested here in the North-West, but there will be occasions when what is being discussed may appear very close to the politics of influence or the politics of the market. One such occasion is the subject of the next chapter; the county and market towns. Here we shall examine briefly the towns of Chester and Clitheroe, and in more depth the town of Lancaster. We shall attempt to discover the amount of working class involvement not only in Operative Conservatism but also in the respective towns' politics generally.

We shall look at the salient issues in the towns; at parliamentary and local politics, and at the types of political leadership on offer in the three towns.

We suggest the fact that Nossiter's politics of the market and of influence may be more apparent in these three traditional market and country towns should not provoke undue surprise (Nossiter himself suggests the probability) nor, importantly does it significantly undermine this thesis. For in historical terms no set of categories are universally true neither are they totally false. Certainly as Dr Nossiter and Professor Gash maintain, influence and corruption can be detected long after 1832 in specific places at specific times, we suggest however, that this is more likely to occur in the old borough's where for various reasons - which we shall subsequently examine - the traditional political customs and practices were strongest and were retained the longest.

However, one of the chief themes of this thesis is to attempt to show, that in the North-West at least this was a characteristic which was rapidly becoming less prevalent overall as we move from 1832. However of course the region had its variations; economic, political and social, and we must examine these variations in order to judge the various reasons and the levels of support working people gave to Conservatism.

The core theme of the thesis about the changing attitudes to politics is important, for it highlights, in historical terms, the changing political culture of the region, especially with regard to the working class. Political culture is a somewhat contrived term to describe political attitudes held by a society both with regard to political principles and institutions and also the wider society in which these principles and institutions operate and affect changes upon. This is why the political party is interesting and useful to the historian and political scientist,

for it is both an institution and a vehicle of political principles. In the North-West region we have seen in chapter 3 that before 1832, not only were the established political parties not interested in the working class; on occasions they were hostile to them. In their turn, the great majority of the working class were either hostile to Conservatism or apathetic. We have seen that after 1832, attitudes on both sides began to change. The conservatives attempted to cultivate a sense of traditionalism and paternalism, extolling the virtues of the constitution in terms of its prescriptive features, and highlighting the dangers of unwanted and unrequired progressive reforms - reforms which, once enacted, would directly affect the existence of many working people. They called on sections of the working class to support the Conservative party both as an institution which would represent the interests of working people, and as a set of comfortable and safe traditionalistic principles.

The fact that, in the past, as we saw in chapter five, the Conservative Whigs and Tories called on the loyalties of working people simply as a reserve army - to be used to defeat the extreme Jacobins and Radicals and then discarded - seems after 1832 not to have discouraged thousands of working people from joining the party as fully fledged members, and thousands more from giving their support.

However, in these chapters we intend to compare the levels of support and the political attitudes of working people in different parts of the region in relation to the local political elites. The main focus of this discussion will be centred mainly on the Conservatives, but at times, as in the case of Lancaster we shall also examine the Liberal responses. This is because at Lancaster - unlike other parts of the region where it was the Conservatives who took the political lead - it was the Liberals who seem to have been the main instigators of political change involving the working class.

We stated earlier that the main focus of these comparative chapters will be Parliamentary elections, but we shall also be examining local issues and other features of political activity which the working class (and other social groups) became involved in at various times in different parts of the North-West. Essentially the region may be broken down into three categories of political locality in the period under discussion. These are; firstly the market and county towns; secondly the old type of borough operating an open franchise both before and after 1832; and thirdly the post-1832 type of borough operating with a restrictive franchise.

The method being utilized here is both diachronic and synchronic: the former in that we shall compare and contrast the various political idioms occurring in the North-West across time and the latter in that we shall be examining the different political, social and economic factors operating at the same point in time but in different parts of the region. Let us begin by looking in some detail at the market and county towns of the region examining developments in Clitheroe and Chester, but concentrating most of our attention on the town of Lancaster.

CHAPTER EIGHT. THE COUNTY AND MARKET TOWNS.

One of the sub-themes of this thesis is that various aggregations of interests became increasingly politically important after 1832. As we noted earlier this fact was of major concern to both Whigs and Tories, both during the Reform Crisis and in the years which followed. Most obvious amongst the various assemblage of interests was that of class. However, as we are arguing in this thesis, this was by no means as determined a phenomenon as some social scientists maintain. In the politics of the North-West, working class interests did not always find expression in the widespread support of radicalism. although there were occasions- for example during the Reform crisis or the early Chartist years- when radicalism did gain a mass working class following. But again, as we suggested in the previous chapter, it could be argued that even amongst the Chartists there were strongly traditionalistic sentiments to be found.

In the decades following the 1832 Act - the interests which many people of varying social standing regarded as being politically salient were often linked to their economic activity and the activity of their locality. Thus we see traditionalistic Conservatives highly suspicious of industrialism, especially if the industrialists happened to be Liberals. Conversely, the progressives ridiculed the yokel mentality of the agricultural lobby. It certainly seems worthwhile to pursue the line of

enquiry that in regional politics, the political character of a locality (in terms of leadership, the wielding of power, and the call for, and giving of support) can be determined to a greater or lesser degree by the economic activity prevalent in a given place. Thus when considering the political variations of the different parts of the region we must also consider the specific social and economic character of a locality which may have fashioned local political attitudes.

I THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND.

In the main the typical nineteenth century county and market towns were non-industrial. But this did not necessarily mean that their economies were based solely on servicing agriculture. No doubt there were towns in the nineteenth century whose economic existence was based largely on the weekday markets and the fortnightly auctions and the providing of the attendant facilities needed in an agricultural region. But these mainly tended to be in the smaller type of market town situated largely in those parts of the country traditionally known as agricultural regions. Those market and county towns with populations of over 2,000 persons generally tended to have a mixed economy. This was certainly so in the towns we are examining in this section; Lancaster, Clitheroe and Chester. None could be considered large, even by early nineteenth century standards. Yet Chester,, at nearly 28,000 in 1851 was of substantial size. The population of Lancaster in 1821 was 10,144; by 1851 it had risen to 16,168, a rise of some 58%, which, although large in itself was not as rapid as elsewhere in the region more dependent on the factories and industrial capitalism. Clitheroe, on the fringe of industrial East-Lancashire, grew more rapidly. Its population in 1821 was 3,213 and in 1851 was 7,244, a rise of over 125% over the thirty

year period. Part of the reason for the difference in the rates of growth was that Clitheroe began to attract industrial manufacturing much earlier and in greater volume than its larger neighbour to the north.

Lancaster had a truly mixed economic base in the mid-nineteenth century. It had mercantile commerce thanks to the Lune estuary; the port of Glasson and the rapidly growing port of Barrow to its north. It was also an administrative centre, especially with regard to the magistracy, the quarter sessions; its county prison and hospital facilities. Also it functioned as a market town with all the facilities noted above, and it did possess some manufacturing industry. Traditionally it made mahogany furniture and upholstery, sail cloths and heavy cotton and worsted yarn, but also had a small silk weaving factory. By the 1830's there were five cotton factories producing finished cloth, all equipped with power-looms. However, although the trend throughout Lancashire was of an expanding cotton industry during the early Victorian period, there were pockets of the North-West region where the industry did not flourish. Such was the case with Lancaster, and more so with the county town of Chester. Although the industry did not flourish in Lancaster this does not mean it was of no importance to the town's social and economic foundation. In Lancaster we see that by 1851, out of a total population of 16,168 there were 1,279 engaged in the manufacture of cotton goods.¹ If we remove from the total figure those children the census designated as scholars, (2,635) those males who for various reasons were without employment (90) and the wives and widows who were similarly designated as having no occupations (2,164),² we arrive at a working population of 11,279. Thus we see that just over 11% of Lancaster's total working population were engaged in cotton manufacture. Although this figure may be less than in major centres of the cotton industry,³ it did represent the single largest source of employment for both males and females at the time. There were also other branches of industry like that of the

traditional craft of the furniture trade and a small proportion of dock labourers. But the occupational sectors numerically nearest to the textile industry were agricultural workers and domestic servants.⁴ The town's main manufacturers were John Graham, at Bridge Lane, who kept a weaving shed for both power and hand loom weavers; Jackson and Barber who owned a power-loom factory in Bulk Street, as did Swainson, Birley and Turton in Sun Street. There appears to have been four spinning factories belonging to Thomas Mason in Penny Street, Samuel Greg on Moor Lane, William Jackson at Canal Side and Thomas Robinson in Market Street. The only engineering factory of any size was that belonging to the ironfounders, Heaton and Whewall in Market Street.

Throughout the 1830's, 1840's, 1850's and 1860's, the town seems to have been detrimentally affected on the one hand by the rapid economic development of the region south of the River Ribble. Prior to the advent of steam-based mechanization, there appears to have been several sites in and around Lancaster which developed small scale water-powered silk and worsted factories, but these appear to have declined in the 1830's and 40's.⁵ Meanwhile another feature retarding Lancaster's industrial development was the relative absence locally of accessible coal deposits, which meant that fuel costs were higher than in other parts of the region who had coal deposits literally on their doorsteps. This was an important factor in the 'take off' of industrialization in the 1820's and 30's before the advent of the cost cutting benefits which the railways brought. Similarly the Port of Lancaster, whose merchants did give investment impetus to the textile industry at the end of the eighteenth century failed to compete with the deep water port of Liverpool to the south. This occurred despite the building of a canal and the docks at Glasson to assist the passage of raw materials and finished goods. Thus the benefits of improved and competitive distribution facilities fell to those towns further south.

Thus Lancaster had a mixed economic infrastructure with no dominant economic interest; be it agricultural or manufacture, able to politically dominate the rest by its sheer size and local importance. As we shall shortly discover, this mixture of influences allowed the traditional forms of political behaviour to be maintained in Lancaster several decades after 1832, in ways which we do not find in the more economically developed parts of the region.

II DEVELOPMENTS IN CLITHEROE AND CHESTER.

Clitheroe was traditionally a market town, which, like other towns in the region had developed a domestic textile industry in the late seventeenth century. Its political importance to our thesis was that it not only possessed the status of a parliamentary borough before 1832 - as of course did Lancaster and Chester - but also that it retained both its parliamentary status (it lost one of its seats under schedule B) and its character, as a market town in the decades following the first Reform Act.

The fact that Clitheroe remained essentially a market town, despite some limited industrialization, is borne out by the census of 1851. Although the figures only apply to male and females of twenty years of age and upwards it is nonetheless clear that agricultural employment was a vital element in Clitheroe's economy. Over 35% were classified as agricultural workers compared with 30% working in textiles.⁶ So again, as with Lancaster, we see that in Clitheroe no single economic interest was dominant. This meant that there were no substantial blocks of the powerful manufacturing elites emerging to press their political interests, as they did in the new boroughs or as they did at Preston and Wigan. Thus the mixed economy of small scale

manufacturers and agriculture maintained the traditionalistic type of economic existence so typical of the market town.

In the far south of the region, the county town of Chester was in 1851, even more bereft of large scale industrialization. There was no textile manufacturing, no metal industry and no coal mining. The largest employer in a population for Chester parish of 27,766 was the land in the case of males, with the next largest being the railways.⁷ For women it was domestic service, with 3,888 being described as wives with 'no recorded occupation'. Chester appears to have been stifled of economic development for the opposite reasons to that of Lancaster. In the case of Lancaster it was its relative remoteness from the great port of Liverpool, as in the case of Chester it was its close proximity. As one contemporary commentator put it, Chester was "fed, in great part, from the crumbs which fall from the towns of Liverpool's table...being of little importance in comparison with the latter great city."⁸ However Chester did maintain its right to return two members to Parliament after 1832, but once again, as we shall discover, it seems to have conducted its political affairs in much the same manner as in the pre-Reform era. If there was any dominant interest applicable to Chester then it was the land, and, from the 1840's, the railways, but this latter interest was of short duration given the growth of the railway town of Crewe some twelve miles to the south-east in the 1850's.

Thus the first point of contrast with many other ports of the region is that the county and market towns of Lancaster, Chester and Clitheroe appear to have retained the traditional type of economic framework even after the consolidation of industrial capitalism in many other parts of the region. When viewed in political terms these towns also seem to have remained faithful to the old type of political activity. Prior to 1831 all three were at various times nomination boroughs, or boroughs under the influence of a dominant patron.

Arthur Aspinall in *English Historical Documents*⁹ tells us that one of Lancaster's seats was under the influence of the Lowther family, the Earls of Longsdale in pre-Reform days, both of Chester's seats were firmly under the influence of the Earl of Grosvenor and that one of Clitheroe's was the property of the Earl of Brownlow and the other, the property of Viscount Curzon.

What appears to have happened in the old boroughs - and here Nossiter's idioms are of use - is that a multiplicity of politico/economic interests and influences developed alongside an ideology of political reform. Also due to a heightened sense of political respectability after 1832, overt methods of venality and corruption could no longer be safely engaged in or tolerated. There were of course examples of lively confrontations between political rivals and their supporters - as at Preston in 1837 or Wigan in 1832 and 1835 - but this type of partisanship, it could be argued, was apparent precisely because interest in party politics, and in what the various parties and their candidates stood for, had been heightened. Of course elements within the working class could be bought through various treats, and non-electors and electors intimidation and violence undoubtedly existed, especially in closely contested boroughs, but this does not necessarily preclude the possibility of opinion-based politics existing in such places.

One of the alternatives to the politics of opinion was the politics of influence in those places where there was little excitement, or indeed contests. This suggests that the older system was holding out the longest. For if electors and non-electors had little opportunity to exercise their rights because the national parties, and the local elites felt the contest was useless or because deals had been arranged, then there was little chance of opinions being formed or political consciences being raised.

At Chester this certainly appears to have been the case. Here the grip of the Whig/Liberal Grosvenor family was virtually total. As the Marquis of Westminster owned extensive lands and property in and around Chester and the deference extended to this family by the local population verged at times on idolatry. Between 1832 and 1859 the Whig/Liberals totally dominated the two seats returned by Chester's electors. It was one of the very few places in the whole of England where no Operative Conservative Association existed and not even a branch of the North-Cheshire Conservative Association. Of the twelve parliamentary elections fought at Chester between 1832 and 1859, seven were unopposed by the Conservatives; in the rest the Conservative vote was derisory.¹⁰ Indeed, up until 1880 Chester remained firmly in the grasp of the Liberal party. This was also true of local politics with the Conservatives never gaining more than one-third of the seats on the borough council between 1836 - the year of the town's incorporation under the terms of the 1835 Municipal Reform Act - and 1860. If modern politics can be defined as the open vying for power by opposing political groupings, in which policies and opinions are exchanged and discussed with a view to implementation, then Chester remained firmly attached to a traditionalistic and decidedly antiquated form. Those members of the labouring classes who were involved in political developments between the 1830's and the 1860's seem to have followed the two established political parties, with the overwhelming majority falling in with the Whig/Liberals. There appears to have been no working class radical activity whatsoever. The radicals - what few of them there were in the town - were drawn exclusively from the small manufacturing artisan class made up predominantly from the tailors and shoe makers. Thus in the case of Chester, any model of political development which attempts to find evidence of political change in terms of any transformation of the functions of political parties after 1832, and the growing relevance of social and economic sectional interest will discover little by way

of support. Indeed, if taken in isolation, towns such as Chester would find the continuity thesis (that little changed in political life after 1832), as argued by historians such as Norman Gash or H J Hanham, essentially correct.

If the market and county town of Chester continued to be dominated by the Whig/Liberals in the decades after, as well as before 1832, then the same was true of Clitheroe. As noted above, before 1832, Clitheroe had possessed two seats, both of which were under nomination. After 1832 the nomination status of Clitheroe was ended and it lost one seat. However, its Parliamentary boundary was increased to take in most of the neighbouring town of Whalley and the small villages on its parish borders. This meant that its Parliamentary area in terms of circumference had increased from 3.6 miles prior to 1832 to 25.3 after the Reform Act.¹¹ Thus more of those involved in the land who, formally would have held the freeholder county franchise were brought into the borough franchise. This should have been advantageous to the Conservatives with their long tradition as the party of rural interests, but, during the 1830's, this was not the case. In fact, in these years, the politics of Clitheroe were dominated by the local radical squire, John Fort. This suggests that Fort and the radicals were either guilty of corruption, playing on former loyalties, or exerting some form of influence. The answer probably lies in a combination of all three possibilities. The Conservatives certainly believed that Fort was using dubious tactics. Writing in 1840 one local Conservative summed up the position.

...since the period when the Reform mania raged and a temporary frenzy took men's judgement by storm, the borough of Clitheroe has been in the hands of the Whig Radicals. Various attempts have been made to rescue it from this degradation; but heretofore such attempts have failed. We will not inquire into the causes of those failures - some of them may have been corrupt and wicked, and some of them the result of erroneous political views and delusive hopes.¹²

Much of Fort's support during this period seems to have come from the lower middle class shopkeepers and small manufacturers within the township of Clitheroe. The overwhelming majority of this grouping was Radical reformist in political character, a trait which was also to be found in this particular part of East Lancashire from the early 1830's until the 1850's; indeed the borough continued to return Liberal members up to 1868, when, like the rest of the Lancashire mill towns it turned Conservative.

Although the parliamentary boundaries were widened after 1832, the constituency remained small: 306 electors in 1832 and only 438 in 1865. After the second Reform Bill, the electorate rose to 1,595 - and another member of the local gentry was returned under the Conservative banner. In fact, although radical up to that date, Clitheroe always returned a member of the local gentry - which suggests that local influence held sway here as in Chester. The type of Radicalism most evident in Clitheroe was moderate: Fort and his eventual successor M Wilson were both 'advanced' Liberals which usually meant in the jargon of the day that they were in favour of extension of the franchise and the secret ballot but no more. This certainly was true with these two members.

In Chester no issue which directly affected working people seems to have played any part in swaying local opinion. In Clitheroe, however, working class concerns - which manifested themselves in political issues - were centred around the imposition of the county police in the mid 1830's, the imposition of the New Poor Law and the Chartist agitation up to 1843. After that date little appears with reference to Clitheroe, either in the Northern Star or the National Convention Minutes.

Although the majority of Clitheroe's working class appear to have been radical this does not tell us how many were politically apathetic. What we know is that the Liberals and Radicals appear

to have held sway over the majority of working people who expressed any political opinions throughout the 1830's. For, although there was by 1841 a fairly well established Clitheroe Conservative Association, dominated, as in other parts of the North-West, by the gentry and bourgeoisie, there was not an Operative Conservative Association in the district. There was, however, by 1837 an Operative Reform Association, which does suggest that the Liberals held the advantage in this particular area.

However, in 1841, the controversy aroused by the County Police and the New Poor Law, political alignments within the local working class began to shift. The actual imposition, and the psychological impact it had on the minds of working people, should not be under-estimated. The New Poor Law was perceived by many working people as a curtailment of their traditional rights to public welfare in hard times. Moreover, such opinions were held by all types of working people, be they the industrial urban workers or the rural wage labourers. At Clitheroe, the Poor Law's imposition in 1837 allowed the local Conservatives to mount a popular campaign based upon an issue which affected the majority of people residing in the Union. Clitheroe was a large Union geographically, though small in terms of overall population. In 1841 it numbered only 23,000 people, but in area covered some 130,000 acres. The first Board of Guardians was elected at Clitheroe in 1837 and 35 Guardians were to represent 33 townships. The dominant Liberals were confident of success on the basis that the old relief system had been maintained, and promised that, regardless of rumours surrounding the harsh measures included in the Act, the poor of Clitheroe would be maintained as before.¹³ As we noted earlier, Clitheroe was rare in that it was primarily a rural constituency returning to Parliament a succession of progressive Liberals, primarily on the basis of the concentration of its industrial population inside the Clitheroe township itself. However, after 1837, even before the actual imposition of the New

Poor Law, the situation began to change. In 1837 the Conservatives won control of the Board of Guardians, a position they were to hold until 1848. The township of Clitheroe however, still remained in Liberal hands. This suggests that on the one hand that the working class Liberals of Clitheroe were relatively moderate, and on the other, that in the rest of the Union the Conservatives successfully exploited the issue of the New Poor Law.

With regard to the factory question, the other great working class issue of the 1830's, in the North-West, Clitheroe, unlike other parts of the region was relatively quiet. The earliest sign of any activity in the town on this front was in 1849, and this does not seem to have lasted beyond four years.¹⁴

In August 1840 Clitheroe Conservatives were given an added boost when they acquired the services of Edward Cardwell as a prospective candidate. Cardwell was the rising star of the sober-minded bright young men that Sir Robert Peel on occasions bestowed his political blessings. Cardwell was in many ways an ideal candidate. Although his family now resided in Liverpool, they were originally from the East Lancashire locality; they had links with the cotton trade but, in the 1840's, were Liverpool merchants. Cardwell was a young London barrister with a first from Oxford, and came to Clitheroe with all the backing of the Carlton. On August 13, the Clitheroe Conservative Association held a festival to welcome Cardwell to their town. In his speech Cardwell exhibited the classic sentiments of Peelite Conservatism, suggesting that agriculture and commerce were 'inseparably intertwined'¹⁵ and should be considered in harmony.

In the election of 1841, Cardwell was defeated by Matthew Wilson, a prominent Leeds Liberal, but only by five votes. In the petition that followed Wilson was unseated on counts of treating and bribery: thus for the first time the Conservatives secured

Clitheroe. Cardwell did not stay long however. In 1847 he became the Member for Liverpool, and, in the resulting turmoil of the Peelite split, the local Conservatives could find no candidate to bridge the gap between the Peelite and Protectionist wings. It is true that by the early 1850's the Peellites were in the ascendancy in Clitheroe's politics, and, in 1853 returned J T Aspinall, a member of the local gentry, as member. However, this, apart from the success of Cardwell, was their only victory before the conservative landslides in Lancashire in 1868 and 1874. For the rest, the Liberals maintained their superiority.

Thus again, we see a market town, operating in political terms seemingly very much in the traditionalistic mould, with little changing from the pre-1832 situation. In Clitheroe there were few working class electors, the vast majority of voters coming from the ranks of the small manufacturer and shopkeepers, who appear to have been Whig before 1832, and reforming Liberals in the years which followed. Working class pressure seems to have been minimal, apart from the question of poverty and insecurity, which, for a brief period, offered the Conservatives hope. Most of the town's manufacturers appear to have been Liberal and the lack of any extreme radicalism - apart from a brief flirtation with Chartism between 1839 and 41 - suggests that the town's working class were either Liberal or politically apathetic.

A slight trend does seem to be appearing. In both Chester and Clitheroe, traditional political practices and electoral rituals appear to have been maintained after 1832. This suggests that Nossiter's concepts of influence and market politics are applicable in these market and county towns. However, at this stage, before attempting an overall analysis and appraisal let us consider our third example, that of Lancaster.

III DEVELOPMENTS IN LANCASTER

As we saw above, Lancaster also possessed a mixed economy with no single dominant economic interest able to impose its political will. Up to the 1820's the town had returned one Tory and one Whig, essentially under the influence (but not the direct nomination) of the Earls of Longsdale and Derby respectively. However in 1820's the tendency was for even this moderate form of influence to disappear.

After the Act of 1832 Lancaster returned its M.P.'s free of aristocratic influence. Indeed even in the 1820's none of the three families of influence in Lancaster - the Lowther's, the Stanley's and the Dukes of Hamilton - appear to have maintained their political links.¹⁶ Thus even before 1832 we can suggest that this type of aristocratic influence was in decline at Lancaster. The Stanley's did maintain some influence in both North and South Lancashire, but Lord Stanley's choice of Preston rather than Lancaster in 1830 suggests that the family, through their influence, was more certain of a return in the southern town than in Lancaster.

In fact, the first two contests under the terms of the 1832 Act returned members unopposed, and indeed both the Conservative Thomas Greene and the Whig Patrick Maxwell Stewart, were the sitting members from the pre-Reform period. This suggests that, if Lancaster did not have a reputation as a borough of influence, then it may have had one as being an expensive political arena with regard to treats and the like, or that it was one in which the two sides were evenly matched - which again could prove to be expensive.

National questions do not appear to have played a great part in Lancaster's local politics and local questions - such as the need for Parliamentary Acts of Improvement - did not figure largely in the Parliamentary contests. This factor suggests that some form of political control was operational. There might be various reasons why the two aspects of political activity - the local and the national - could be so easily separated. These include the maintenance of the older political culture, the role of the local political leaders in the Corporation, the use of local patronage, the control of the political agenda, and the activities of the local opinion makers. In the North-West many of these areas shall be analysed in the course of our next few chapters, but the initial point to note is that, when we compare all these three market and county towns with the newer boroughs, the most striking feature is how tight the controls are in the former with regard to the handling of opinion and issues and, in the 1830's and 40's at least, how wide and various the crossover of local and national opinions were in the latter, and how much this ranged across a wide section of social classes. More will be said of this in due course but it is worth making the point here that differing types of political culture seem to be developing in differing localities. In the market and county towns the older form of recruitment and attitudes to politics were maintained longer compared to those localities where dynamic and new social, political and economic forces were shaping political activities. In each type of locality we shall be examining varying patterns in the actual conduct of politics appearing in the first two or three decades after 1832. Of course in the period after 1867 most historians agree that modernization occurred in British political life. The interest here is to see how that modernization actually took place by comparing the diversity of political behaviour in the period after 1832 up to the 1860's throughout the region as a whole.

In Lancaster, much of the political focus of its population was

centred on the Town Council and the Improvement Commission, possibly, because prior to 1832 Parliamentary contests were rare, and they continued to be so after that date. The main economic and social interest was that of the small manufacturer and shopkeeper - what might be conveniently termed the tradesmen's interest. This centred largely either on local manufacturing goods or agricultural produce, with its chief customers being, in addition to the local population, the various gentry and professionals who came to the local assize and magistrate sessions. This appears to have made this crucial grouping extremely conservative in either their Whiggery or their Toryism. It also meant that the retention of the Lancaster Assize was of vital economic importance to them and of relevance to the town's status overall. In the 1830's, the retention of the Assize became a vital local issue between the minority group of radicals and the majority group of conservatives - the former advocating its removal to another site in order to break the stronghold of Tory/Whig elite in the Council, and the latter proposing its retention at all costs in order to maintain the town's status and their own local political stronghold. As we noted above there were, in the 1830's and 1840's, very few centres of industry in Lancaster. This meant that a strong proletarian interest bloc did not exist either in terms of numbers or the articulation of a differing political interest. This negative trend was reinforced both by the dominance of the tradesmen's interest and the proximity of Lancaster Castle, with its large prison facility acting as visible and permanent deterrent to potential disturbers of the peace.

One area which political scientists have focused their attention on as an indicator of the type of political culture in operation at a given time or place is that of political recruitment. In Lancaster, both before the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 and after, political recruitment came not through the vehicle of the political party - which, we shall subsequently discover was a

vital agent of recruitment in some other localities - but through the local Corporation, and, as was the case in the pre-1832 period, through the local magistracy. The latter agency was far more important as a vehicle for the recruitment of parliamentary candidates than the former but the Corporation was vital to the recruitment and decision making processes in the town itself. Before 1835 the Corporation was a typically exclusive body. It consisted of a Mayor, seven aldermen, twelve capital burgesses and twelve common council men. The mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses were self elected. The common council men were chosen again by themselves from a list of the free burgesses. The capital burgesses and the common council men were each headed by a bailiff and the two together with the financial officers of the corporation, formed the central core of the town's decision makers. The council was almost totally dominated by the local elite. In 1831/32 for example the sixteen common council men were made up of four members of the gentry, four manufacturers, four attorneys, one doctor and one tradesman. The exclusive nature of the council was again reflected in the social composition of its entrants. Between 1819 and 1835 out of a total of 48 entrants, only fifteen were the sons of non-freemen, and the majority of these were members of the professions recently arrived in the town.¹⁷

The Radicals of Lancaster, led by the future Free Trader, John Greg, revealed their innate conservatism through their limited demands during the assize issue. Their chief point was that the corporation and hence the local government of the town was essentially rotten and, given the exclusive nature of its composition and patterns of election and recruitment, they were correct. Their case received the attention of Henry Brougham as early as 1817 when he characterized the council as possessing a 'dangerous congregating spirit.'¹⁸ He called for the election of the council by the whole body of the town's freemen and the radicals of the town stuck to this limited end throughout the

whole of the campaign up to 1835. It was limited in the sense that it stopped short of household suffrage or a low property qualification which the radicals in many other north-western towns were claiming.¹⁹

The Radicals then attempted to organize the freemen voters at large but with little success. The Tory arguments that the town would lose its Assize privileges, its Parliamentary rights and its county status appear to have swayed the important lower middle class service sector. There is little evidence of any working class involvement in this issue. It was one between the two established political groupings; the Tory majority and the Whig/Radical minority. Indeed, there was little working class activity throughout the period whilst the rest of the North-West region was witnessing widespread displays of disaffection - in 1819, for example or during the police riots of 1824, or Luddism or indeed the 1831/2 Reform crisis itself.

During the Reform crisis the two traditional groupings petitioned Parliament and the King - the Tories against Parliamentary Reform and the Radicals in favour. Neither group thought it necessary to give any political importance to the working class.²⁰ The probable reason was that the working class themselves showed few signs of political interest. The vast majority were not freemen. This was certainly so in respect of the semi and unskilled members of the working class. Some of the artisans may have been freemen but this factor again mitigates against working class political activism in Lancaster for, elsewhere in the North-West, much of the impetus for early working class involvement in politics came from two sources - firstly from the disaffected craft workers like hand loom weavers, and secondly, the skilled artisans.²¹ These groups offered the much needed leadership and the initial articulation of political aims and objectives whether through early attempts at Trade Unionism or the simple explanation of political realities. The fact that in Lancaster many of this

group may have been freemen²² meant that they were probably under the influence of the two main political groupings - the Tory corporation or the Whig reforming radicals. Indeed, during the reform elections, there appears to have been no working class activity; there were no demonstrations and no examples of exclusive dealing.²³

Similarly there was no trades union organization, only Friendly Societies who were strictly non-political existing for the most part for the sole purpose of offering their services as assurance agencies.

After 1832/3, and the widespread disillusion and disaffection amongst many of the working class of the North-West about the Reform Act and its results, the working class of Lancaster again appear to have been quiescent. Even during the slumps in business in the 1830's the working class did not demonstrate their feelings. We know little of their church attendance but this does not appear to have been particularly high throughout the 1830's and early 1840's. However, their inherent respectability is perhaps indicated by their involvement with the Temperance Movement. The membership of the Temperance Association in Lancaster was put in 1835 at 1,332²⁴ and, in the same year the membership of the Total Abstinence Association was said to be 2,000.²⁵ Also the acquiescence of the working classes to the authorities and elites of Lancaster appears to have been rewarded by the maintenance of old eighteenth century style Tory paternalism.²⁶ Both public and private charity seems to have been plentiful or at least adequate for the needs of the poor during times of industrial recession; the poor were given free access to the large Lancaster Dispensary and Lying-in Hospital and, even the New Poor Law, was introduced into Lancaster without a murmur of dissent.

Another reason for the apparently peaceful relations between the various classes in Lancaster was that the population in the 1830's and 40's appears to have been either static or in actual decline. This suggests that it was on the move, migrating to the places of South and East Lancashire where employment opportunities were better. This was certainly so after the continued decline of Lancaster's West India trade after 1815, and the failure of the Council to maintain the town's port in the later 1830's and early 1840's.

Of the town's two main political groups, the Conservatives were in the ascendency for most of the period. Prior to 1835 and Municipal Reform, they controlled the Council in two of the three wards (in Queens and Castle) while the Liberals could expect a majority in the largely lower middle class/upper working class St Ann's ward. This pattern continued after 1835, with a slight hiccup between 1836 and 1840 when, for the first and only time between 1820 and 1865, the Liberals controlled Lancaster municipal politics. After the 1835 Act the Municipal Burgess Roll stood at 827 electors, 29% lower than the 1,161 Parliamentary electors listed in November 1836. Only a minority of the Municipal Burgesses (278) qualified as 10 pound householders which the Lancaster Act required as a qualification for the vote, the rest of the parliamentary electorate were made up of freemen. However these 278 new electors were mainly of the trading lower middle classes and it was this element which tipped the political balance over to the Liberals in Municipal politics. This was achieved mainly on the cry of 'dear rates' and of the Liberal pledges of retrenchment.²⁷ This was the first incidence of opinion based politics.

However the Liberal success in Municipal politics were not reflected in Parliamentary politics. In 1837 and 1841 the Conservatives took both seats - mainly on the basis of their superior organization of the Registration contests. In September

1837 the Conservatives won acceptance for 66 out of 89 voters' names submitted, while the Liberals successfully defended only 30 out of the 115 names submitted.²⁸ Similarly a year later the Conservatives won 37 of their claims while the Liberals won only 4 of theirs.²⁹ Much of this Conservative success was due to the national unpopularity of the Whig government, but improved organization of the Conservatives was also a factor.

The Lancaster branch of the Conservative Association was known as the Heart of Oak Club. It was formed in November 1835 and set out its aims in a manner typical of the narrow nature of Lancaster politics. There was no mention of the need to involve the working classes or anyone else other than the Conservative middle class. The only concession they made to the changing nature of politics in the 1830's was that they did expect their Conservative M.P.'s to support Lancaster in Parliament, whilst retaining their old, traditional independence from 'pledges', but this again came last in their shopping list of principles:

...to secure the return of members for the borough of Lancaster, who without giving any of those pledges which are so highly to be depreciated, will, nevertheless, be steadfast supporters in Parliament of those who diffuse principles of loyalty and attachment to the throne,...to maintain inviolate the present connexion between Church and State and other Conservative principles, and finally, to watch over, protect and foster the town and trade of Lancaster and its local and foreign interests.³⁰

This statement again reflects the retention of traditional 'no issue' and 'no pledge' politics so prevalent in eighteenth century British politics. But it also reflects the fact that the Conservative party organization in Lancaster was of the individual representational type of the middle class dominated 'Conservative Associations' as opposed to the more social integratory Operative or Tradesmen Associations. This says something also about the nature of Lancashire politics - apart from its

continuity of style - in relation to the political recruitment of the local elites. Obviously the closed clique of the freeman dominated Corporation was a channel of selection and recruitment in the towns local affairs for those who were regarded fit and proper persons. But, as we have noted, this group had traditionally little involvement in the recruitment and selection of parliamentary candidates, this was so even immediately after 1832. Power was still in the hands of the county gentry located in the immediate vicinity of Lancaster.³¹ The introduction of the clubs - the 'Heart of Oak' and the 'Reform Association' reveals, in the case of Lancaster the formalization of this feature. In other areas we shall argue these developments in a sense opened up the political process to a limited extent, but in Lancaster, the initiation of the clubs had the effect of closing or formalizing the existing political system and method of recruitment.

The Lancaster Heart of Oak club contained the names of all those Tory families who had been for several decades prior to 1832 the chief members of the town's elites; the Marton's, the Green's, the Garnett's, the Braddyll's, the Wilson's and others of agricultural areas of Longdale. Partly because the Heart of Oak club was made up chiefly of members from the rural districts surrounding Lancaster, making regular attendance difficult, and partly because the Club functioned mainly as a party of 'individual representation', composed mainly of the middle classes and lesser gentry, it had not the desire or need to constantly proselytize its membership. Nor did it provide the kind of amenities for its members that were to be found in the working class based associations elsewhere. The Lancaster club usually met monthly, but one of its members, the future M.P. for the town George Marton, warned that although much good had been achieved by Conservative clubs; they must not be merely the type of dining clubs of the pre-Reform period, "that...it was not by dining together and drinking Conservative toasts... they would best consult their interests by sending another Conservative member to

Parliament."³² There was therefore a formalized aspect to the running of the Lancaster club which, although it has to be said was totally middle class based, was a departure from the pre-reform period. The Heart of Oak club appears, however, to have maintained the separation of Local and Parliamentary politics. The recruiting of prospective candidates for Parliament was left, as was the case in pre-Reform days in the hands of the Longsdale elites. But the club also functioned in Local Politics. By 1837 for example, ward branches of the Heart of Oak club had been formed.³³ Before offering a description of how local politics operated in Lancaster let us briefly chart the Parliamentary developments.

It seems that by the mid-1830's the Conservative elites of Lancaster believed a Liberal challenge to their position of political dominance to be imminent. This is why the Heart of Oak club became an important organizing body in the locality. As we noted above, prior to 1832, the two Lancaster borough seats were divided between the Tory nominee of the Longsdale family or the Duke of Hamilton, and Whig nominee of the Earl of Derby. The men of manufacture and commerce of Lancaster town appear to have resigned themselves to controlling the Corporation and local politics generally. After the passing of the 1832 Reform Act, and the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 and the formation of a Reform Club in Lancaster in 1836, the grip of the old Corporation was finally challenged and the Conservatives felt that it was merely a matter of time before the Liberal elites of the Gregson's, the Armstrong's and the Greg's challenged for Parliamentary power; which they subsequently did in 1837. However, by 1838 the impact of the new Conservative organization appears to have made their immediate future secure. This we know because in that year Hornby Castle, one of the leading estates situated some nine miles North East of Lancaster, was sold to Admiral Tatham, a friend of one of the leading Conservatives of North Lancashire, Admiral Sir Robert Barrie. Early in June 1838, Barrie was dining with the then First

Sea Lord, Lord Minto at the Admiralty in London when he was asked by Minto if Hornby Castle was of any political worth and whether there were any votes for the county members on the estate. This was a question of significance for the Whigs given the fact that the new owner was one of their number. According to Edward Gorst, one of the Vice Presidents of the Heart of Oak Club, "Sir Robert then frankly told Lord Minto that there certainly were a number of votes, but the whole of them had been gained over to the Conservative interest, through the influence of the Heart of Oak Club and the North Lancashire Conservative Association."³⁴

IV ISSUES AND LATER POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LANCASTER.

As we noted earlier, working class issues did not feature significantly in any of Lancaster's Parliamentary contests. Nor did they in the politics of the town until the later 1840's and early 50's and then only with regard to the expression of fears as to Lancaster's industrial decline and the public health question. Increasingly Lancaster's Parliamentary politics became a struggle between two sets of elites; the Conservatives of the traditional families, and the Liberals of the new manufacturers; the Greg's, the Armstrong's and the Gregson's. The Conservatives held on successfully throughout the 1830's and the early 1840's. It was not until 1847, and the Peelite/Protectionist split, that the first Liberal member was returned for Lancaster, and then Samuel Gregson the Liberal manufacturer was unseated for bribery on a petition brought by the local Conservative Association. Gregson was re-elected in 1852 and subsequently held his seat until his death in 1865. At that by-election in 1848 (called because of the unseating of Gregson) the Liberals successfully defended the seat and returned another manufacturer, R B Armstrong in the place of Gregson. In 1852 the Liberal ascendancy continued when they won

both of the Lancaster seats. But again in this election the Conservatives lodged a successful appeal unseating Armstrong on a charge of bribery.

After 1847 and the Conservative split, it was the Peelite wing which suffered - with the continued dominance of the independent Tory candidates. However the split in voting terms was enough to let in the Liberals and to dash any hopes of the continuation of the Tory squirarchal monopoly of both of Lancaster's seats. Also we can see from 1847 the Liberals in the shape of Gregson and Armstrong assiduously wooing the Lancaster electorate by pressing the issue of the need to stem the decline of local industry. This was a tactic and an idiom of politics which the Conservatives - no matter how paternalistic and anti-industrial their private sentiments may have been - could not afford to ignore. However throughout much of the 1850's the Parliamentary politics of Lancaster followed the national trend in blurring party political differences. In the ensuing contests after 1847 the Tory Longsdale gentry and the Lancaster Liberal manufacturers took one seat each. After the retirement of Thomas Green in 1857 his place was taken firstly by a Palmerstonian Conservative, W J Garnett of Bleasdale Tower. In 1859 Garnett was ousted by a Palmerstonian Liberal, E M Fenwick a barrister of Burrow Hall, who in turn kept his seat until the disenfranchisement of the borough in 1866

The smallness of the borough's parliamentary electorate - a mere 1,419 in 1856 - the balance of the two main political parties, the absence of a serious radical threat, the resilience of the old political traditions, the corruptibility of the freemen (who made up two thirds of the boroughs electorate)³⁵ opened the way to fierce contests in the later 1850's; and early 1860's, and indeed to open and flagrant corruption. Increasingly in the 1850's Lancaster, due in large part to the narrowness of its electorate, became a very attractive proposition for rich candidates. But there were surprisingly few outside candidates or carpet-baggers

after 1832 continuing a trend that was evident before the Reform Act. The notable exception to this trend was the 1865 election which placed the politics of the market once again dramatically to the fore and witnessed the end of Lancaster as a Parliamentary borough, at least for the period under discussion here.

At this election the Conservatives spent 1,129 pounds and the Liberals 1,400 pounds on corrupt practices.³⁶ The two candidates were both outsiders. On the Conservative side was Edward Lawrence a prominent merchant and Mayor of the city of Liverpool, and for the Liberals, Henry William Schneider a large scale merchant and iron master from Barrow. What in fact transpired at Lancaster in 1865 was not so much a political battle between the two main political parties as a conflict between the extreme North and South of the North-West region and their respective economic interests.

Barrow in Furness had been an industrial centre for less than a decade in 1865, and two of the men who helped place it on the industrial map were the seventh Duke of Devonshire (who was the main ground landlord) and his son the Marquis of Hartington, both business associates of Schneider.³⁷

Schneider's promises to re-develop Lancaster have to be considered in the light of the fact that it was to Barrow that both he and Hartington looked with a view of gaining for the far North-West some of the mercantile traffic then travelling through Liverpool. As early as 1862 the Duke of Devonshire had visited Liverpool with a view to building similar dock and warehousing installations at Barrow. The docks at Barrow were built between 1864 and 1867 with the chief capital being provided by the Furness Railway Company and the Duke. As we noted earlier Barrow possessed no parliamentary franchise, thus Lancaster, its nearest neighbour a mere twenty miles to the South - looked an ideal prospect and one which would bring economic prosperity, ultimately to both towns.

The view from Liverpool was, not unnaturally one of animosity to the Whig Duke and his Barrow venture which, as we noted above, if successful would have had the effect of drawing trade away from Liverpool and towards the upstart further north. At the same time undoubtedly the growth of the port at Barrow added to the already great economic power of the House of Cavendish, and Barrow as a town tended to be overwhelmingly Liberal in its political allegiance during the second half of the nineteenth century. Schneider was also Liberal and ambitious, but the new town had little immediate hope of Parliamentary representation and, elsewhere in the north of Lancashire and West Cumberland, the Conservative houses of Lowther and Stanley were still strong and influential. Between the years 1860 and 1865 Schneider was on the look-out in his own words 'for a nice little seat in Parliament.'³⁸ He had already been M.P. for Norwich between 1857 and 1859 but had been unseated as a result of the 1854 Corrupt Practices Act, but this seems to have increased his ambitions rather than dampened them.

The death of Samuel Gregson in the winter of 1864/5 left a vacancy at Lancaster and Schneider was returned unopposed at the ensuing by-election. But Conservative opposition was provided in the General Election of 1865 in the form of Lawrence, who as well as being Mayor of Liverpool, was also similarly a representative of that city's ship owning interests. The issues of the campaign were again the need to regenerate Lancaster's industrial base on the back of a prospering new port at Barrow. However wider questions were also raised in open debate between the two parties. Schneider and Fenwick in the Liberal camp were in favour of a 'large concession' to the 'growing intelligence of the working classes' whilst Lawrence and the local Conservatives were opposed to an extension of manhood and rating suffrage.

Thus we see towards the end of our period a mixture of the politics of the market with the vast sums both sides spent on

treats; the politics of influence with the power of the Cavendish family, but also importantly, the politics of opinion with the need to present policies and issues to the local electorate.

As we noted above the Conservatives had lost some of their former power in Lancaster town itself in the later 1840's. However in the later 1850's they had begun to reform the old Heart of Oak club now called the Lancaster Conservative Association - but still as a purely middle class and lower middle class body - and they had managed to hold on to one of the M.P.s in the person of W J Garnett. They attempted to counter the Liberal claims to populism by their own brand of patriotism focusing specifically on what was best for Lancaster rather than elsewhere. They also attacked the Liberals for their apparent refusal to come to terms with the recent local public health question,³⁹ of which more shall be said below. The Conservatives, with Lawrence at their head, began to promote the Lancaster Shipowners Company with a view to rescuing what was a dying branch of Lancaster's commerce. The Liberals responded by suggesting that such tactics constituted bribery. But this was just a prelude to a torrent of accusations and counter-accusations. The Conservative Lancaster Gazette angrily denied charges of election trickery and suggested that anyone who could bring trade and prosperity to Lancaster ought to be applauded. They also portrayed Schneider as a dangerous democrat who 'had shaken his purse strings vauntingly in our faces.'⁴⁰

But the real business of the election was not being conducted on party platforms but in public houses. On July 1 the Lancaster Gazette alleged that "nearly all the public houses were in the service of the radicals",⁴¹ and it is fairly clear that during the several weeks preceding the polling day on July 12 drunkenness raged throughout the town. This at any rate was the conclusion of the Royal Commission who examined the conduct of the election later.⁴² It was accepted by the Commissioners that Schneider had

boasted that: "It shall cost them (the Conservatives) 10,000 pounds", and that Lawrence's most influential supporter, the local shipowner, H T Wilson had sworn "to fight Schneider with his own weapons."⁴³ For his part Schneider wrote to Lord Hartington, "Lancaster is the most fearfully corrupt place I was ever in. I think we shall win the election but we cannot rely on our canvass, and if money will buy it Lawrence will succeed."⁴⁴

It is obvious that the 'politics of the market' were very much alive in Lancaster as late as the mid-1860's. However it seems there is something more to the situation than the mere buying of political support. What was developing in Lancaster was the linking of the economic fate of the town with party political confrontation. On the one hand the Conservatives argued that with the Parliamentary assistance of Lawrence - a proven administrator and entrepreneur in Liverpool - the down turn in Lancaster's economy would be halted. They also argued that Schneider and the Cavendish connection was merely using Lancaster purely for the benefit of Barrow, personal gain and Whig superiority. The Liberals, on the other hand argued that Conservatism was politically and economically regressive in terms of the towns interests, and the growth of Barrow would also assist Lancaster's economic recovery.

The scene of this conflict was neither Liverpool or Cumberland but the neutral ground of Lancaster, in Parliamentary terms traditionally a Conservative stronghold, but in recent decades leaning more towards reformism if judged in terms of the success of the Manchester School Liberals such as Greg, Gregson and Fenwick, all, incidentally firm supporters of John Bright as well as of Palmerston. To the electors and to the general public, this contest was given the flavour of a mighty battle between two strong combatants. not only as we noted in party terms but also in geographic ones, with the implication that the fate of Lancaster itself was at stake.

This situation led to a significant example of what political scientists have subsequently termed 'cohort theory'.⁴⁵ Here rival political groups are arraigned against each other not so much as parties in political debate but more like the supporters of modern football teams, with rituals and traditions linked to territorial defence and pride. To a limited extent this element was picked up by the Royal Commission when it investigated the 65' election at Lancaster, one part of their concluding remarks ran, "Among voters (of the lower classes) - (Commissioners parenthesis) the whole affair was regarded as a contest between Barrow and Liverpool. If Lawrence was wealthy so was Schneider. There would be a great advance in the price of votes..."⁴⁶ As polling day grew near the price began to approach 10 pounds for a single vote. Political debate was by this stage meaningless for the contest was between two great moneyed interests seeking prestige. Schneider for his part had the advantage of a sound credit standing with the Lancaster Banking Company and the administrative help of his Barrow Ironworks staff who collected together quantities of sovereigns and sent them, through the Ironwork's manager to Schneider's agent for illegal expenses at Lancaster.⁴⁷

The Commissioners, after scrutinizing what they described as grossly falsified election accounts, concluded that Schneider and Fenwick on the Liberal side had spent 7,459 pounds 12s. 4d. between them, the larger part of which had found its way into the pockets and then down the throats of the grateful freemen of Lancaster.⁴⁸ The Conservatives spent almost as much as the Liberals and the organization of the election does reveal that the older political associations were indeed used in this election-that is to say there is a link between the political clubs of the 1830's and the 1860's, even in a county town like Lancaster, before the Second Reform Act which most historians have hitherto asserted heralded the tight political organization of the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's. According to one source.

The borough was divided into districts over each was set a captain, who drew money from the local party organization, and passed it to sub-captains who toured the smaller localities with canvassing teams.⁴⁹

The Royal Commission concluded that, "out of a total of 1,408 electors, 843 were guilty of bribery thereat by receiving money or other valuable consideration for having given, or to induce them to give their votes; that a further number of 139 persons were guilty of corrupt practices at the said election by corruptly giving or promising money or other valuable considerations to voters for the purchase of their votes... and that of the said 139 persons, 89 were electors and 50 were not voters for the borough."⁵⁰ Practically all the freemen, numbering about 900, had apparently been placed on committees, and some received legitimate payments for their services, but it does seem that the conclusions of one historian writing earlier this century were valid when he wrote that all the evidence points to the fact that drinking was the only business accomplished."⁵¹ In such circumstances vital political questions of social policy, reform or democratic choice could have little real significance. The point is that powerful economic interests were still willing to engage in corrupt practices in places where they believed such practices were the norm, and long after they had come to be seen as disreputable elsewhere. Lancaster was an old corporate borough and as such, we argue, was more likely to maintain its traditional political culture. It appears that the participants in this election knew this - as Schneider's letter to Hartington reveals. But it also suggests that local party organizations were in the forefront of the operation and that these party organizations had changed little in Lancaster from the period after the first Reform Act. Similarly in this county town the political culture of the market, which had been such a notable feature of the pre-Reform political world, continued to operate until the very end of the period under discussion - a period which as we shall discover later, as far as

the North-West was concerned, was more in tune with Nossiter's politics of opinion and to a lesser extent the politics of influence.

The result of the 1865 election was a narrow victory for the Liberals of Lancaster, but the Royal Commission ruled that both Schneider and Fenwick be unseated, and even worse was to follow when, under the terms of the 1867 Reform Act it was decreed that Lancaster was to be disenfranchised completely on the grounds that, "the place was felt to be incurably rotten and had to be excised from the body politic."⁵² So although electoral corruption was not a criminal offence the levels of treating at Lancaster were thought to be so high as to be unacceptable. in the age of high Victorian respectability.

MUNICIPAL POLITICS IN LANCASTER.

Let us conclude this chapter by briefly looking at Lancaster's municipal politics with a view to examining their organization and possible working class involvement, in turn, and the relations between the local Conservative party and the working classes of the town. If the working classes found little influence in Lancaster's Parliamentary politics, their docility was rarely disturbed by excursions into questions of local political significance. In the period under review, only two major issues were raised in local politics - the first. as we noted earlier was the struggle to retain the Lancaster Assize and to keep the old style corporate structure and the second the public health question. This latter issue was the only question which can be judged to have any bearing on working class political orientation and general well-being. Although the Conservatives argued that the loss to the town of the Assize would lose it business which in

turn would affect the working classes, it was the public health question from 1847 which they as a party focused on as having a direct effect on the working class of Lancaster.

However before we look in detail at the party political battle surrounding this issue it may be useful if we relate the changing basis of municipal politics in Lancaster in terms of the electors and the brokers of power. The Burgess Roll was a list of all those entitled to vote comprising of both freemen and rate-payers of two and a half years standing who were also resident householders within seven miles of the borough. Rates might be paid on either a home, counting house, warehouse or shop and failure to pay one's own rates meant an automatic disqualification. This rendered many of the working class ineligible because firstly the great majority of them were not freemen, and secondly because their rates and rent were compounded, and thus were not paid by themselves but by their landlord.

After 1835 there were 827 Burgesses which was 29% lower than the 1,161 Parliamentary electors listed in 1836. This incidentally may be explained by the high number of put-voters in Lancaster's Parliamentary list which in turn explains the persistence of treating, as travel costs were one of the oldest forms of electoral inducements. Only a minority of municipal burgesses, some 278, qualified as £10 householders. By 1850, the municipal electors had fallen to 689, while the number of Parliamentary electors had risen to 1,393. This fall was due to the non-payment of poor rates by some 242 electors in 1849/50 who were not qualified for the 10 pounds parliamentary franchise. Later in 1850 the franchise was extended by virtue of the enactment of the Small Tenants Act which gave the vote to compounded occupiers of property over 6 pounds rateable value and non-compounders under that figure. The result was that municipal voters rose from 689 in 1850 to 1,828 in 1853/4. After the mid-1850's the number of

electors again began to fall - to 1,155 in 1860 - a decline due in part to a possible lack of interest in local politics and more substantively to the decline in Lancaster's local industries and the subsequent outflow of population. Further reductions in the property qualification and the full operation of the Small Tenement Act in the 1860's saw the electorate rise once again, and by 1870 the figure stood at 2,098. In terms of wards, Queen's had increased by a third, Castle by half and the working class dominated St Ann's ward by 100%. However, unlike Preston, which we shall examine in the next chapter and where corruption in local government was rife in the 1860's, Lancaster's moves towards greater participation in politics did not appear to result in the increase of venal practices. Possibly the loss of its Parliamentary franchise had served as a means of cleansing the local politicians of Lancaster as well as those of the county.

With regard to recruitment and the wielding of local power the occupational breakdown can be seen from table I).

TABLE I

GROUPED OCCUPATIONS OF ENTRANTS TO LANCASTER TOWN COUNCIL 1835-1870.

	MANUFACTURERS	MERCHANTS	CRAFTSMEN TRADESMEN	SOLICITORS	MEDICAL MEN	OTHER PROFESSIONALS	GENTLEMEN	MISCELLANEOUS	TOTAL
1835/40	9	5	13	4	5	2	5	0	43
1841/50	3	5	2	8	4	2	2	1	27
1851/60	4	4	11	1	3	2	1	0	26
1861/70	1	2	5	2	2	1	0	0	13
TOTAL	17	16	31	15	14	7	8	1	109
%	15.9	15.0	29.0	14.0	11.2	6.5	7.5	0.9	100

This reveals a steady move towards the greater lower middle class

representation immediately after the imposition of the Municipal Reform Act in 1835. Their figure of 29% was impressive but the positions of power i.e. Aldermen and Mayors were still in the hands of the manufacturing and commercial elites whose combined figure amounted to almost 31%. It is also worth noting the influx of the professions in the decade 1841/50 which was significant for the public health question, as we shall shortly discover. Political allegiance can be seen from Table II.

TABLE II.

POLITICS OF ENTRANTS TO LANCASTER TOWN COUNCIL 1855-1870.

	CONSERVATIVE	CONSERVATIVE/ LIBERAL	LIBERAL	NOT KNOWN	TOTAL
1835-1840	10	1	24	0	43
1841-1850	19	9	7	0	27
1851-1860	12	0	14	0	26
1861-1870	5	0	6	0	11
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TOTAL	46	10	51	0	107
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%	43.0	9.3	47.7	0	100.0
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This reveals a decided trend away from Conservatism between 1835 and 1840 towards the Liberals coming mainly from the tradesmen/craftsmen social grouping. However, this has to be qualified by the fact that the Liberals made no headway in Parliamentary contests as their double defeat in 1837 and 1841 testifies, due in part to a different electorate and the unpopularity of the Whigs nationally.

After this and the decline of what radical feeling there was in the town after the debacle of the second Chartist petition, the

heat went out of municipal elections and very few were ever contested between 1841 and 1847 when the Conservatives were once again in control. The Liberals gained control of the Council between 1847 and 1849, but in the election of 1849 the Conservatives once again won chiefly by appealing to middle class opinions over the public health question. This lasted until 1853 when, due to the Small Tenement Act, the Liberals once again began to win seats and eventual control. The complicatory factors here were the intermediate interest groups like the Freeman's Protection Association and the Ratepayers Association which sprang up in the mid-1850's and who could ally themselves with either of the town's two main parties on condition that some issue - like the preservation of freemen's rights or the lowering of rate - be taken up. In the main this tended to ally the Freemen to the Conservatives and the Ratepayers to the Liberals, although it has to be said that both groupings were extremely fluid in terms of allegiance.

However both of Lancaster's main political parties did attempt to integrate target social groups into their respective orbits. The Conservatives in 1836 for example formed a branch of the Heart of Oak Club especially for Tradesmen, who in turn were expected to bestow a message of paternalism as well as a purely political one as the President, the Vicar, Rev T Mackreth said. "The societies aim was to retrace our steps and take back the labourer into the social chain."⁵⁵ However, only in the mid-1840's did the Local Conservatives come to terms with a genuine working class issue and this came in the form of the Conservative Lancaster Gazette's rather lukewarm support for factory reform in the winter of 1843/4.⁵⁶ But, in the main, the Conservatives confined their activities to the Anglican tradesmen and to the freemen. With regard to this large tradesmen section, the Conservatives attempted to obtain, for those favourable to the Conservatives, the status of freemen through their control of the Court of Admission, which in turn was under the patronage of the Mayor.

This was the chief recruiting device in the Local Conservatives political armoury rather than the Heart of Oak Club which remained primarily a county clique for Parliamentary politics.

The Liberals for their part attempted to politically integrate sections of the working class only once. This was in February 1839 when a local manufacturer, John Greg tried to form an Operative Anti-Corn Law Association.⁵⁷ But, as the Gazette derisively asserted, it was made up of "principally the servants and dependents of the manufacturers."⁵⁸ Indeed this attempt seems to have ended in failure for the body met only once and no further references to the organization can be found in the Gazette or the Liberal Lancaster Guardian. The Chartists too fared little better. In June 1839 the Radicals held a camp meeting at Green Acre near Skerton, but only 50 persons turned up.⁵⁹

The Liberals in the council did give their support to the Anti-Corn Law League under the leadership of Gregson and Greg, but importantly would not support the Chartists alleging that this group were not representative of the Lancaster working class and were led by outsiders from Preston. However, despite the lack of support from the middle class radicals, the 'outsiders' (mainly from Ashton under Lyne) were successful in producing strikes at all three of Lancaster's mills in 1842. Nevertheless only briefly, did the local working class radicals, led by the weaver Jonathan Earl, appear to have directed their venom not at the Liberal manufacturers, but more towards the local working class for 'cowering to the Local Conservatives.'⁶⁰ It does appear that Chartism had little success in Lancaster due in equal parts to the paternalism of the local Conservatives, the antagonism of the Liberal radicals and the smallness of the towns working class which meant that the politically and numerically important shopkeeper and tradesmen sections of the local population were less reliant on working class custom thus less likely to succumb to exclusive dealing should it be attempted, which, incidentally

it was not. This gave the tradesmen class a greater variety of customers and more independence than in most Lancashire towns.

The battle for power was therefore, in the case of Lancaster, not primarily associated with issues which affected the working class. Nor were the parties overly concerned about gaining a broad basis of political support which included all sections of the local population, which would have bestowed a sense of legitimacy to the council through the appeal to popular support. Rather, the party battle appears to have been one fought between the town's elites to gain the support of the tradesmen class. By the late 1830's and 40's the conflict was between the elites representing old money, commerce and the land - the Conservatives - and those of the new money represented by the professions and industry; the Liberals.⁶¹ It was only the advent of the Small Tenements Act and the relatively rapid expansion of the working class electorate which forced the elites to shift their attention away from the tradesmen class and consider other groups - mainly the working class - and make firm commitments on policy which could be construed as being possessed of a party political content.

Between 1835 and 1848 and the onset of the public health question there was little actual involvement by the town council in the economic and social problems of the town. Both the borough council and the police commission discussed problems such as drunkenness, petty lawlessness, market improvements, improved communications and the lack of adequate sanitation, but fought shy of any realistic attempts at municipal policy favouring instead a negative approach which at its worst was little better than the reconciliation of private interests.

The Liberals controlled the council from 1836 to 1841. In 1842-reflecting their national triumph - the Conservatives again took the council, but not the Improvement Commission which remained firmly Liberal. Throughout the period 1835 to 1842 the

Conservative Gazette expressed its disgust at the political and religious views of the radical Liberal councillors, while the Liberal mouthpiece, the Lancaster Guardian, after its foundation in 1837, saw the new breed of radical councillors as a welcome power, much more vigorous than its Tory predecessor. The Gazette resented the extent to which the Council Chamber was becoming the political organ of the reformers, with the flood of petitions calling for a repeal of the Corn Laws and the Secret Ballot. Thus the Gazette was relieved at the Conservative revival in the early 1840's:-

The Council Chamber is no longer a forum for the displays of party bitterness and fatuous intolerance, but a place of business...as was the case before the blessing of Reform fell amongst us...⁶²

The actual 'business' conducted in the Council Chamber was hampered by several factors. Firstly, there was the Liberal domination of the Police Commission which negated many of the powers of the Borough Council and the potential for decisive action of both bodies. Secondly municipal initiative in community problems was paralysed as much by the psychological rejection of such a role as by the legal restriction imposed by one over the other. Thirdly, both bodies were preoccupied by a determination to prove the superiority of one party over the other. This was especially so in the attempts to prove the worth of the new municipal system itself by their ability to balance their respective budgets, keeping rates down to the lowest possible level by incurring the minimum amount of expenditure. Finally the fact that neither body was particularly successful in achieving this latter goal did not make matters any easier.

The basis of the public health question was that the local Conservatives were in favour of raising expenditure from the rates and the Liberals were not. The Conservatives argued that it was imperative that all classes in the town be safeguarded, especially the working class from whose districts the disease

would spread to the rest of the town and on the evidence of the day were most at risk.

TABLE III.

AVERAGE AGE OF DEATH OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN LANCASTER UNION
1838-1844.

	AVERAGE AGE OF ALL SUBURBS			AVERAGE AGE OF ALL OVER 21 SUBURBS		
	TOWN	RURAL	TOTAL	TOWN	RURAL	TOTAL
GENTRY, PROFESSIONALS & FAMILIES	50.26	49.59	49.94	61.30	65.25	63.07
TRADESMEN AND FAMILIES	30.22	33.63	31.38	52.01	56.06	53.49
FARMERS AND FAMILIES	50.66	46.39	46.71	70.36	65.25	65.57
ARTISANS AND FAMILIES	26.04	30.84	27.28	53.24	54.55	53.62
AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS & FAMILIES	33.05	32.61	32.77	52.81	55.74	55.58
GENERAL LABOURERS & FAMILIES	23.01	24.87	23.37	55.64	54.92	55.49
FACTORY HANDS AND FAMILIES	15.34	13.77	14.80	39.67	43.12	40.65
PAUPERS IN THE WORKHOUSE	40.18	49.28	43.38	60.29	68.95	63.51

SOURCE: DR R OWEN 'REPORT ON THE STATE OF
LANCASTER' HEALTH OF TOWNS COMMISSION 1846.

The figures above for the 'average age of all' conceal the infant mortality rate but taken together they reveal the stark gap between the various social groups with regard to the health of the town. However, the Conservatives also argued that the town's stature was being tainted by the slur of being unhygienic and that this was discouraging moves by the new rich of South Lancashire to Lancaster. The presentation of Lancaster as a villa town for the South Lancashire bourgeoisie was the Conservatives' answer to the towns dwindling population and probably underlay their attempts to exploit the public health issue as much as any attempts to care for working class health. However, they did make such claims and whilst they were not directly aimed at the working class, the Conservatives were engaged in courting local public opinion and thus the issue is of significance to our thesis as well as being an interesting example of the local politics of a county town during the period in question.

The Liberals meanwhile countered by saying that the death rate in Lancaster was no worse, indeed probably much better than in many of the newer industrial towns of South and East Lancashire and they relied for their evidence on the town's density of population in relation to other towns in the North-West.

TABLE IV

DENSITY OF POPULATION OF SIX NORTH WEST TOWNS 1831/2:

PERSONS PER ACRE

PRESTON	16.8
MANCHESTER	67.71
LIVERPOOL	47.79
CHESTER	7.09
CARLISLE	2.67
LANCASTER	10.17
LANCASHIRE	1.20

SOURCE: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
1833 VOL.XXXVI POPULATION pp286-305

The table shows the fact that population density in Lancaster had for several years run way below Manchester and Liverpool and significantly below Preston which underlay the Liberal claims that the situation did not warrant municipal attention. The Liberals also asserted that Lancaster should not have been included on the list of boroughs whose death rates exceeded 23 per 1,000, which, under the terms of Lord Morpeth's 1848 Public Health Act required statutory action.

Another bone of contention was precisely which of the two municipal bodies was responsible for what was regarded as the prime cause of the public health question, the so called 'Mill Race'. This was the main sewerage outlet for the town as well as its main water supply, and, as it was tidal, as well as being in urgent need of repair, it was frequently found to be 'backing up'

bringing the effluvia with it. The Liberal dominated Police Commission charged the Council with ownership of the Mill Race and thus with the main responsibility for the purity of the town's water supply.

However the Conservative controlled council denied responsibility, and, as well as charging the Commission with ultimate responsibility, also campaigned against the Liberal owners of worker dwellings - most notably the solicitor Thomas Lodge.⁶³ They also utilized the findings of Dr Robert Owen (figure III above) to show that the poor classes housed in the worst housing were most at risk. As we noted above, the Liberals claimed that from the evidence of population density (figure IV above) Lancaster was not as bad as other North-West towns save Chester and Carlisle, who they pointed out had not even the limited industrial basis which Lancaster possessed.

What was not in doubt was that in certain parts of the town, close indeed to the Mill Race, the housing was poor. There were few cellar dwellings, but there were examples of gross overcrowding. For example, in Hargreaves Court, there were 54 persons living in five cottages, and there were similar patterns of overcrowding in the Irish dominated Lucy Court. The Liberals again countered by saying that Lancaster's ratio of doctors per-head-of population was again better than other towns in North Lancashire. They cited the following figures in support of their case; Lancaster one doctor per 400 of the population, Blackburn one doctor per 915 and Preston, one doctor per 761.⁶⁴ Thus the two sides became locked in political conflict in which both produced evidence for their case, and each claimed the other was responsible for the one cause which both agreed required local statutory action.

The leader of the public health movement in Lancaster in the initial stages was the Peelite Conservative, Doctor Edward De Vitre. He had been elected to the council in 1841, then became an

Alderman and eventually Mayor. In 1844 he joined the Health of Towns Association along with Dr Arnott of Lancaster Infirmary, Richard Owen and Edwin Chadwick. In these early days De Vitre's answer to the problem of working class health was to attempt to improve their moral as well as their physical well-being. He advocated a tighter regimentation of the poor to provide labour to whitewash worker houses, a halt to intemperance, universal vaccination against smallpox, encouragement of the use of savings banks as opposed to friendly societies or clubs and the extensive use of voluntary teachers to instruct the working class in moral and religious subjects. Thus in these initial stages of the campaign De Vitre followed the Liberal line of voluntary improvement rather than direct intervention by municipal authority.

As we noted above by mid 1845 the Police Commission began to blame the Town Council for the state of the town's water supply and sewerage outlet. The Commission also blamed the Council for authorising the covering over of the Mill Race thus making its cleansing virtually impossible. In August of 1845 the Town Council replied that the Mill Race was the responsibility of the Commission as it was deemed a common drain. This dispute as to precisely whose responsibility the Mill Race was ran through 1846, whilst at the same time the Council set up a special committee to investigate the precise ownership and responsibility of the Mill Race.

On May 5 1847 the Town Council Committee on the Mill Race reported its findings and it was confirmed that it was indeed owned by the Corporation and thus its responsibility. It proposed that its cleansing and refurbishing should be undertaken by the Council and that this would require a rate increase of 6d to 9d in the pound. The Council vote was split on the motion - with the Conservatives voting unanimously in favour and the Liberals against. This motion was however lost on the casting vote of the Liberal Mayor.

The opposition to sanitary reform was led by John Richardson, head of Gillows the furniture makers, and Thomas Wise, the manufacturer of railway carriages. Both were political economists of the Manchester school and representatives of the small ratepayers of St Ann's Ward. Throughout the early years of the 1840's the Public Health question was growing in significance, but the loss of the crucial vote and the mounting opposition of Richardson and Wise, spurred the Conservatives into action, when, as a united party they fully backed the idea of direct municipal intervention over the state of the town's water supply and sanitation. It was from this time - the middle of 1847 - that the party political battle really began. The Lancaster Guardian defended the actions of the Liberals in their defence of the small ratepayers, whilst the Conservative Lancaster Gazette stressed the need to cleanse the town to preserve law and order - a demonstration of the classic Tory device to couch a question in terms of it being crucial to law and order and the stability of society.

However, as was the case throughout the period, the local (or national) question of public health was not raised in the Parliamentary election held in July 1847, which resulted in a Liberal victory with the splitting of the Conservative vote between Peelites and Protectionists. The arrival of the Cholera in the Autumn of 1847 and the rapid increase in the number of out-patients of the Dispensary once again stirred the sanitary reformers into action.

A special meeting of the Council was called in late October 1847, and the Conservatives demanded that a memorial be sent to Parliament to sanction a special rate and this should be signed by the entire population of Lancaster.⁶⁵ This reveals a strengthening in the development of opinion/interest in politics in the town. These were Chartist-style tactics used on a question of local social reform and it ensured that the Conservatives gained a majority of seats in the Council elections of November

1847.⁶⁶

This Conservative majority meant that resolutions in favour of action on sanitary reform were now carried in Council and this resulted in the forming in 1848 of a voluntary Local Board of Health. The Board of Health proposed an entirely new sewerage system and a new waterworks and was empowered by the Council to prepare a report to outline cost and feasibility. This was duly prepared by an engineer, Robert Rawlinson, sent by the Health of Towns Commission and he reported his findings in December 1848.⁶⁷ The total cost was estimated at a minimum of 45,000 pounds, a phenomenal sum which appeared to place the cost of sanitary reform prohibitively high. But the report also appeared to be political in that in the interests of efficiency it proposed to transfer the powers of the Police Commission to the Town Council thus enabling the town to borrow money and levy special rates. These proposals were defeated by 22 votes to 20,⁶⁸ with the Peelites defecting to the Liberals.

The lines were now drawn between the Conservative sanitary reformers (the so called 'Whites') and the Liberal retrenchers (the so called 'Blacks'). The largest single group in the Council were the Conservatives, next largest were the Liberals but the power lay in the casting votes of the three Peelite Conservative/Liberals. Although both sides maintained that they championed working class interests neither group attempted to actively engage their active participation.

The interest for our thesis is that for the first time in the study of Lancaster, opinion politics were tentatively emerging but, importantly, although the issue deeply affected the working class, no one made a serious attempt to involve them in the campaign. This was very typical of Lancaster politics in the period we have examined.

The Liberals, led by Wise objected to the cost the improvements on cottage property owners who had to pay the combined rates of all property valued at 5 pounds or less. This, they maintained, would mean raising the rents of the poorest working class. Not surprisingly, the two heaviest investors in cottage property were leading Blacks - the building contractor Wise, who owned property to the rateable value of 450 pounds per year and John Lodge, a solicitor with 305 pounds worth of property. But there were also some 'White' property owners - for example - Edward Sharp owned over 100 pounds worth of property.

As we noted above, in August 1848 Morpeth's Public Health Act became law and this produced yet another local Enquiry, this time under the superintendence of a Public Health Inspector, John Smith. The Liberals objected to it on the grounds that there had been no petition by the inhabitants of the town and thus it was uncalled for. They also asserted that, at no time in the previous ten years, had Lancaster's death rate been over 23 per 1,000, the figure laid down in Morpeth's Act above which statutory action was required. But the Conservative case was strengthened by the authoritative views of two local men. The first was Superintendent Registrar, James Grant who maintained that mortality rates were increasing and the second John Smith who, after a preliminary survey announced that the local water supplies were heavily polluted. De Vitre also attacked the building standards of the Liberal cottage owners and their reluctance to sanction the measure on the basis of the increased costs of their 5 pounds per year rented cottages even though the returns on these investments could be as large as 10 to 12% annually. Wise rejected such claims, revealing his economic motives for public action with unusual frankness by suggesting that if the Conservatives owned as much property as he did, they too would be opposing the reforms.

But the Liberal Police Commission still successfully blocked any

immediate reform. Smith's full report went to press in June 1849 and closely followed its predecessors estimates.⁶⁹ He concluded that the Death Rate was in fact over 26 per 1,000 and had been so for the previous seven years. He backed Rawlinson's proposals, adding the need for a public cemetery, the removal of the slaughter house to the suburbs and the drainage of the Town Moor as a recreation area. His costings for the water supply and drainage system came to 30,000 pounds. On the 7th of July 1849 a public meeting called by the Liberals rejected his report.⁷⁰ Both the Town Council and the Police Commission rejected any application for a statutory Board of Health to be established in Lancaster, the former because it envisaged the interference of a central body in local affairs, and the latter because its establishment would effectively end the life of the Police Commission. However, both bodies were reminded by Smith that Lancaster was legally obliged to adopt the Public Health Act by August 1849.

Late August saw the return of cholera resulting in the deaths of 48 persons. The Conservatives once again fought the local elections on the public health issue and had a resounding victory: for the first time since the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 they had an overall council majority. The Liberal case was finally scotched in May 1850 when it was discovered that a petition of 1,954 signatures, raised by them, contained the names of only 992 rate payers. An Act of Parliament was finally applied for in 1851. It was passed in 1853 and work began in April. The project was finally completed and opened amid all the usual nineteenth century municipal pomp and affected grandeur in June 1855.⁷¹

The interest in the public health question for our thesis is that it was a test of local leadership and of power relations between the two political parties, both of whom geared their arguments towards working class welfare without actually politically mobilizing them as a social group to defend their respective

parties position. Increasingly the question became one in which the arguments hinged on whether the town would take its instructions from a small group of professional men, some of whom were relatively new to the town and whose position on the town council and in the local Conservative party seems to have influenced the party on the issue. Alternatively, was the town to be led by a large number of small tradesmen who, the Liberals argued, were being asked to shoulder the lion's share of the increased rates burden, and whose voice were heard loudest on the Police Commission. The leadership of Edward De Vitre and Edward Sharp locally, and Edwin Chadwick nationally provided much of the catalyst for political action. But also crucial was the decision of the local Conservatives to back a local issue for the first time as a single united party. The final coup-de-grace was when the cotton manufacturers on whom the town was increasingly economically dependent stepped into the debate and backed the sanitary reformers. This may indicate that working class opinion, in so far as it existed was led by the important industrialists, a situation, as we shall shortly discover below, which was similar in other parts of the region at this point in the period under scrutiny.

However, the public health question is also interesting because it reveals the contrasts in the nature of party politics up to 1847 in the sense of the relative lack of party spirit in municipal politics previous to the emergence of the question, the absence of any direct working class involvement in politics and, overall, the relative shortage of imaginative local political leaders, especially on the Conservative side.

For the urban historian the public health question in Lancaster offers a classic example of the weakness of mid-nineteenth century political institutions in a traditional county town; the paralysis caused by the Police Commission and the Town Council effectively cancelling each other out. The issue was also interesting in the

way the Conservatives, particularly, mobilized support through the local press, utilizing the Lancaster Gazette as an extension of the local party apparatus. The fact that it was the Conservatives who were cast in the role of reformers and the Liberals in that of resisters should not provoke undue surprise, for, as we shall discover when we look at other areas of the North-West, this was familiar, in social questions particularly. What is of interest in the case of Lancaster is that the Conservatives began to operate in such a way so tentatively and so late in the period. For again, as we shall discover in other parts of the region, this was occurring from the mid-1830's. This reveals the longevity and the resilience of the traditional political system and culture in Lancaster. It could be that the Liberals seem to have developed into the chief resisters to change in later political developments in Lancaster. But also it does seem the party political consensus seems to have been virtually identical between the two parties for most of the period in this part of the region. There does not appear to have been any contrasting party lines in national terms or in any area of local government policy. Thus the scope for unlimited local party political opportunism was very narrow in Lancaster for most of the century.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have looked at the market and county towns. We have attempted to examine the prevailing political culture of the period by looking at how politics were organized; how issues were handled and how much working class involvement there was. We noted that particularly in Lancaster, but also in Clitheroe and Chester, that the old ways of conducting political business - both local and Parliamentary - were virtually unchanged from the pre-1832 period to that which followed the Reform Act. Thus in many

ways this chapter has a negative contribution to make to the overall thesis. It seems to reinforce the position of the gradualists like O'Gorman, Gash and others, and also suggests that Nossiter's idioms of influence and the politics of the market held precedence over opinion/interest politics, especially with regard to working class orientated political developments and issues. However we did note that opinion/interest politics did appear to be strengthening from the later 1840's especially with regard to the economic prospects of the town in Parliamentary politics and public health in its municipal affairs. We noted that working class involvement in politics was minimal, there were few working class leaders at any time in the period and issues like constitutional reform, opposition to the New Poor Law or the Factory Questions received scant attention by either of the two main political groupings. This further reinforces the point that the elites dominated the town's affairs in terms of their own political interests with only rarely considering the wider local community. We saw also that attempts at politically integrating the working class were rare up to the 1860's, and, in the case of the Conservatives did not involve the working class at all in the organization of the party. Let us now compare this situation of the market and county towns with that of another type of locality within the North-West: that of the old scot and lot borough of Preston.

1. Census for 1851.

2. Ibid.

3. At Preston the total population was 69,542, the total non-working population was 18,041. Of the total working population of 51,501, 18,148 were engaged in cotton manufacture. Census of 1851.

4. Census for 1851.

5. For more information on the economic development of Lancaster see P J Gooderson. 'The Social and Economic Development of Lancaster, 1780-1914', Lancaster University PhD thesis 1975, or D M Clarke, 'The Economic and Social Geography of Rural Longsdale', M.A. thesis, University of Liverpool, 1968.

6. Census for 1851.

7. Census for 1851. See also J A Armstrong's study of York. Stability and Change in an English County Town, London 1974.

8. Sir G Head, A Tour Throughout Manufacturing Districts of England, 1835, Reprint 1968 pp.59/60.

9. A Aspinall (Ed), English Historical Documents, Vol IX, London 1971 pp.224/236.

10. In 1832, out of an electorate of 2,088 the Conservatives polled 499 votes compared to the two Whigs, 1,169 and 1,053 respectively. In 1837 this had fallen to 352. With the collapse of the Conservative party after 1846, and the growth of reaction and protectionism under Derby, the Conservative vote began to climb; 645 at a by-election in 1850, and 1,110 in 1859, and the only occasion in thirty years the Conservative won a seat at Chester.

11. Parliamentary Papers 1859 vol.23 p.121.
12. Blackburn Standard 19/8/1840.
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13. Blackburn Standard 5/4/1837.
14. This was a branch of the Feilden Society in 1849, and eventually by 1853, became a branch of the Labour League of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire.
15. Blackburn Standard 19/8/1840.
16. See English Historical Documents, ed. A Aspinall and A Smith Vol IX p.224/237.
17. Gooderson, P J. A Social and Economic History of Lancaster. Unpublished PhD. Lancaster University 1975.
18. Johns, T. An Address to the Freemen of Lancaster on the Subject of their Charter, Lancaster 1817 p.7.
19. See for example the Blackburn Mail of 8/9/1826. Or the Preston Chronicle 24/11/32.
20. Gooderson op.cit. or Armstrong op.cit., for the similar situation which existed in York at this time.
21. I Prothero, Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London, Folkestone 1979. And D Bythall, The Hand loom Weavers, Cambridge, or E P Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class.

22. Gooderson op.cit.p.123.

23. Lancaster Herald 1/4/1831.

24. Lancaster Gazette 31/1/1835. There were a mere 240 Methodists in the town in 1839. (Returns of the Lancaster Wesleyan Methodists, 1839. Lancaster Reference Library, nor was the figure particularly high in 1850, see 1851 Census. Parliamentary Papers.

25. Ibid 5/9/1835.

26. Gooderson op.cit. p.158.

27. Lancaster Gazette 9/1/1838.

28. Ibid. 30/9/1837.

29. Ibid. 29/9/1838.

30. Preston Pilot 5/12/1835.

31. This point was reiterated and made clear from George Marton to Sir Robert Peel then Prime Minister in 1841 requesting that his name be placed on the list of newly created Baronets. He said "Lord Stanley (the sitting member for North Lancashire) had kindly undertaken to mention this to Mr Marton". His letter also reveals that in the two elections fought in 1837 and 1841, he 'spent a great deal of money on behalf of the cause'. British Library Ad Ms 40494 ff 327/9. Peel Papers, Marton to Peel 1841.

32. Lancaster Gazette 27/4/1857.
33. Ibid. 14/1/1837.
34. Preston Pilot 30/6/1838.
35. Lancaster Poll Book 1865, Lancaster County Library.
36. Lancaster Election Petition 1866. Parliamentary Papers Vol.27 part two.
37. Such feats of aristocratic entrepreneurship were not unusual, for example in the 1830's and 1840's, the M.P. for Preston, Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood had built from scratch a fishing port and a middle class retreat in the marshes of the River Wyre endowing the town for posterity with his own surname.
38. Barrow Herald 18/2/1865.
39. Lancaster Gazette 18/2/1865.
40. Ibid 10/6/1865.
41. Ibid 24/6/1865, 1/7/1865.
42. Report of the Lancaster Bribery Commission, Parliamentary Papers 1867, Vol.27 p.12.

43. Ibid and Lancaster Gazette 24/4/1866.
44. Devonshire Ms, Chatsworth House, Schneider to Hartington 11/7/1865.
45. For an examination of this theory see D Butler and S Stokes, Political Change in Britain, London 1976 edition, or P Norton and A Aughey, Conservatives and Conservatism, London 1981 pp.178/9.
46. Report of Bribery Commission p.XII.
47. Ibid p.VIII questions 26,660 - 26,999, 653 et sq.
48. Ibid.
49. C Seymour, Electoral Reform in England and Wales, Yale 1915 pp.392-393.
50. Report of the Bribery Commission op.cit.
51. Seymour op.cit. p.421.
52. Seymour op.cit. p.421.
53. Lancaster Burgess Rolls, Lancaster Public Library.
54. Lancaster Burgess Rolls, Lancaster Public Library.

55. Preston Pilot 10/7/1836.
56. Lancaster Gazette 13/1/1844.
57. Ibid. 4/2/1839.
58. Ibid. 9/2/1839.
59. Ibid. 8/6/1839. See also Lancaster City Library 'Political File'.
60. Gooderson op.cit.p.324.
61. For more on this see D Fraser, Power and Authority in the Victorian City, Oxford 1979.
62. Lancaster Gazette 8/10/1842.
63. Gooderson op.cit. p.287.
64. Parliamentary Papers 1863 vol.53 pt.2 Population.
65. Lancaster Gazette 30/10/1847.
66. Lancaster Gazette 7/11/1847.

67. E Sharp, A History of the Progress of Sanitary Reform in Lancaster, Lancaster 1876.

68. Ibid.

69. J Smith. Report to the General Board of Health of a Preliminary Survey into the Sewerage, Drainage and Sanitary Condition of the Town of Lancaster, 1849.

70. Lancaster Gazette, 14/7/1849.

71. Lancaster Guardian, 20/6/1855.

CHAPTER NINE: OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM AND LOCAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. THE OLD INDUSTRIAL BOROUGHES, PRESTON 1820-1870

In the last chapter we looked at three of the county and market towns in the North-West region. We noted the lack of any significant working class involvement in Conservatism or in local politics generally. We also noted how little the local parties -the Liberals as well as the Conservatives - attempted to integrate sections of the working class into their respective political orbits. We also saw that there were few issues which can be said to have been either of direct concern of the working class or indeed orientated towards them. The only exception to this was the public health issue in the later 1840's and even here although the Conservatives attempted to influence wider public opinion over the issue they did not attempt to involve the working class in the organization of the party political battle surrounding the question. Overall we concluded that in the market and county towns Nossiter's politics of the market and of influence do appear more appropriate than the politics of opinion or free conscience, and that the proponents of continuity (O'Gorman, Gash, Cannon, etc.) do seem to be on strong ground when we examine these older and traditionalist type of constituencies.

But one of the chief reasons why the North-West is so interesting to the historian is its diversity. By the

1830's it was dominated by capitalistic industry and the factory system. However, it was not universally the case. It contained also a mixed and fluid population in all senses - religious, economic, demographic and political. It contained several types of political constituency.

In the last chapter we saw that the market and county town constituencies appeared to be the least susceptible to changing influences in terms of political culture. In a later chapter we shall examine the new towns which emerged as constituencies as a result of the 1832 Reform Act, and, in the final chapter, we shall compare political developments in the region as a whole.

However, in this chapter the focus of attention is a constituency which appears to our thesis to be potentially the most interesting and revealing. For Preston, before and after 1832, enjoyed virtually a rate-payer franchise very similar in type to the 1867 Reform Act: it was a borough which possessed a householder franchise which meant that the majority of its electors - although the numbers steadily declined in the 1840's - were made up of the working class. This gives us an ideal opportunity to compare the findings of the foregoing with that of a largely industrial town which, although having all the old political traditions, also had the added advantage (for us at least) of possessing a largely working class electorate. This was especially true between 1832 and the mid-1840's,

when many working people who held the franchise before 1832 were still on the register. After the mid-1840's many of the old franchise holders were struck off for non-registration or removal, or being in receipt of poor relief or, ultimately, death.

We shall firstly examine the industrial and economic background of Preston. Then we shall briefly outline the overall changes in Preston's political climate between the 1820's and the 1860's concentrating initially on the activities of the working class and the early radicals. The important point here is to note the changes in the town's political culture and the attitudes of the working class which range from the seemingly mass appeal of popular radicalism of the early 1830's, through to political sectionalization of the later 1830's, and the 1840's and 1850's. This leads us to an examination of the Conservatives and how they endeavoured to integrate sections of the working class into their political orbit. This will necessitate looking at patterns of local leadership, and the salient political issues, especially those of obvious importance to the working class; ie. the New Poor Law, factory reform, industrial disputes and so on. We shall also need to look at local responses to questions of social and political reform, for example, pressure group activity, particularly relevant in Preston because of Joseph Livesey, the pioneer of the nineteenth century Temperance Movement. We shall then examine

Preston's local government with particular reference to the shifts in political power, the Conservative Party and the working class presence. Also we shall offer an appraisal of class relations and party political developments bearing in mind the three idioms of the politics of the market, influence and opinion.

1. Economic and Social Developments 1800-1870

Preston, like Lancaster, had for most of the eighteenth century an economic make-up which, although mixed, relied strongly on its status as a major centre for the marketing of agricultural produce. It possessed a similar corporate structure to Lancaster, and, although it did not have the latter's status as a centre of the full quarter sessions, it possessed a court of common pleas. On the face of it, therefore, as the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth, there appear to have been important points of similarity between the two towns. The chief differences in the case of Preston were firstly the maintenance of dramatic industrial growth, and secondly its remarkably open franchise. In order to give context to the political developments in the town it is important that we examine Preston's economic social development as compared to the somewhat irregular pattern of industrial change characterizing the market towns we looked at in the last chapter.

As elsewhere, factory development began in the spinning section of the textile industry. The first spinning mill to be established in Preston was built by Collinson and Watson in 1777 at the corner of Moor Lane and Warwick Street in St Peters Ward. Developments on the weaving side began in 1791 with the arrival of John Horrocks. Between that date and 1802 John, and his brother Samuel, built six factories, mostly in the south east of the town in Fishwick Ward.

Thus Preston's social and economic development at the end of the eighteenth century can realistically be compared to both Lancaster and Chester. But importantly, for the town's immediate development, the Horrocks family had begun their enterprise as we noted above. However, in 1800 like Lancaster and Chester, Preston was a town of mixed economy but predominately one where the various outlying agricultural interests were served. It was, like Lancaster and Chester, a major administrative centre and was also at the hub of the communication and transit links between the north and south of the country. Throughout the eighteenth century, whilst Preston was not a major textile centre (though it did have a linen industry) its central location and its administrative convenience gave it the ability to surpass Lancaster as a centre of respectable and polite society later in the century. The town provided the same type of urban amenities to cater for the expectations and tastes of the affluent permanent and temporary residents of

rising middle classes. There were parks and promenades, a corn exchange for commerce and a Town Hall for local social and public functions, and, every twenty years, the celebration of the Preston Guild brought especially fashionable gatherings and elaborate festivities to the town. There was horse racing on Preston common and the Town Hunt was well attended and maintained. As was the case of both Lancaster and Chester, all this helped to stimulate the luxury and service trades - the innkeepers, gardeners, tailors, barbers, confectioners, tobacconists, goldsmiths and booksellers - whilst the town's administrative functions attracted lawyers and other professionals.

What working class there was in 1800 was either engaged in these service industries, in the developing textile industries or in the primitive construction and engineering industries. There were few amenities designed for them, as Joseph Livesey pointed out. Looking back in old age he wrote:-

In (that) period there were no national schools, no Sunday Schools, no 'Mechanics' Institutions, no Penny Publications, no cheap newspapers, no free libraries, no penny postage, no temperance societies, no tea parties, no Young Men's Christian Association, no Peoples' Parks, no railways, no gas, no anything that distinguishes the present time in favour of the improvement and enjoyment of the masses.¹

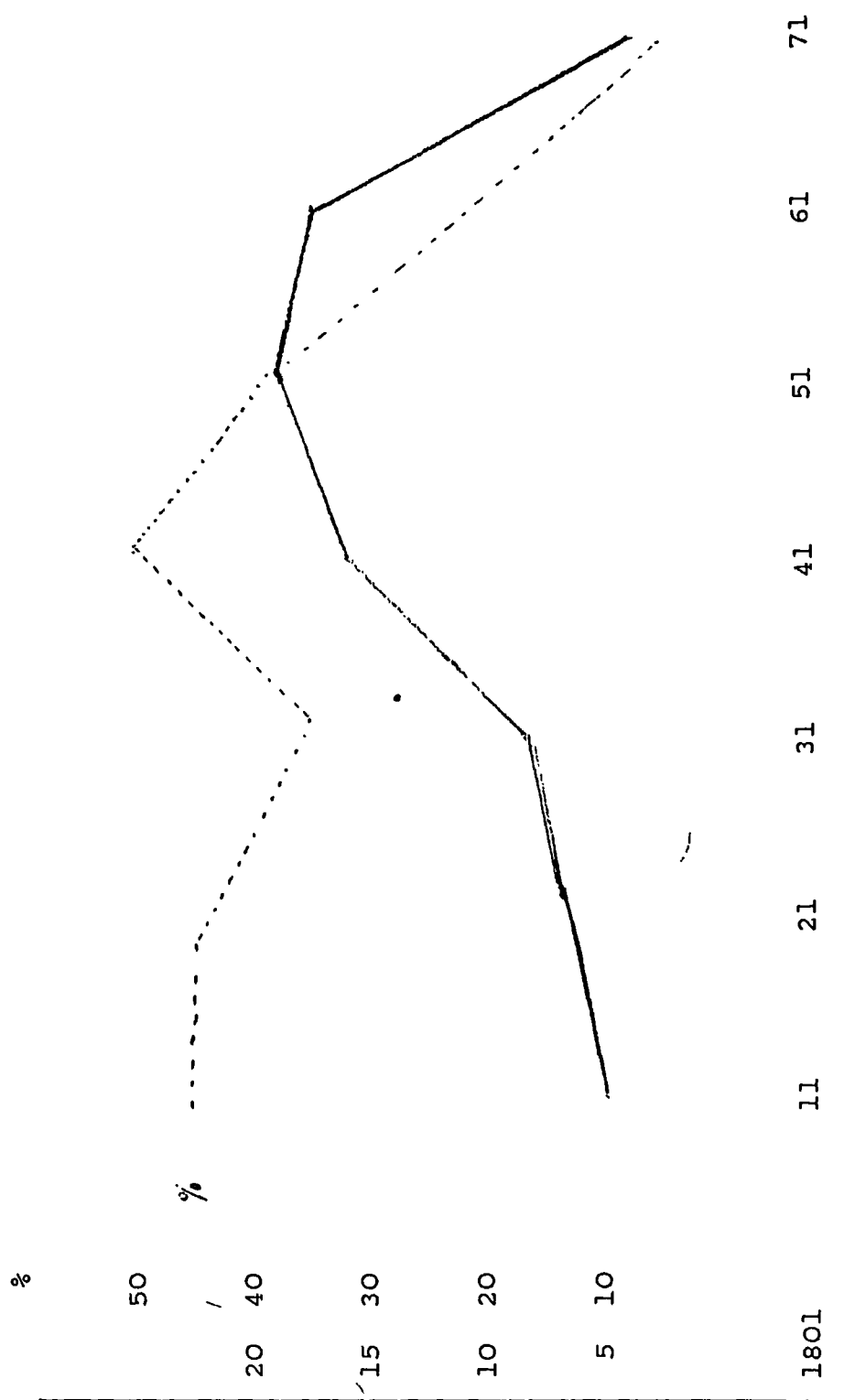
- Although Livesey's list is selective it is indicative of the societal and cultural changes which many of the middle

classes regarded as vital for the moral and spiritual regeneration of the fastest growing social grouping throughout the industrial north-west in the period under discussion. That Preston responded faster than Lancaster in the provision of such amenities for its working class was due in part because it was forced to do so by the sheer size and speed of its population compared to the market and county towns. The population of Lancaster was 9,030 in 1801 and 17,245 in 1871, the population of Preston in the corresponding period was 11,887 persons in 1801 and 83,515 in 1871², or, put in percentage terms, Lancaster increased by 89% in seventy years but Preston by 700% in the same period. On any scale of analysis this is dramatic growth but a graph of the intercensal change reveals that in absolute terms Preston grew at its quickest between 1831 and 1861, as the graph overleaf reveals.

These years between 1831 and 1861 imposed great strain on the physical resources of the town in terms of the employment, the paying of wages and poor relief, housing, water supply, waste removal and burial grounds, on education, and, of course, on public order and social control. This period was probably the key one in terms of the development of the commercial and industrial enterprises which fed, clothed, housed, warmed, shod, transported and instructed.

GRAPH ONE

RATE OF INTERCENSAL GROWTH OF THE POPULATION OF PRESTON,
1800-1871.



It was probably a good time to set up in business at the peaks of the trade cycle, but alarming in the troughs. It was also the period of dramatic change in the structure of Parliamentary and local administration with all the main organs, institutions and agencies in position and consolidated by 1860. The census of 1851 reveals that Preston was bigger than Salford, Oldham and much bigger than Blackburn and may therefore provide useful material for analysing a town in the middle of a transition from an old style mixed economy to that of a fully developed industrial society. This is underscored when we consider the mixed nature of Preston's occupational structure, the continuation of spinning and weaving, the varied factory size, and also the patterns of mobility, and the sex and age distribution of the town's population. The demographic analysis reveals that it was predominantly a young population, 46.6% (32,372) of the population were under 20. Moreover, there was a distinct surplus (3,706) of females.

•

This surplus was almost entirely accounted for by the needs of cotton manufacture and domestic service. Another possible explanation of this demographic imbalance may have been the outward migration of young men due to changes in the town's industrial structure, the most salient of which were a decline and collapse of machine making at a fairly early stage of its development, and the steady trend from spinning to weaving. Their awareness of this fairly youthful population may have underlain the attempts made by

Preston's political elites to sway sections of the working class away from radicalism and recreational excesses towards what the 'respectable' classes believed were the correct behavioural attitudes of local society, a point we shall return to in due course.

According to the census of 1851 more than half (52.5%) of the population were born outside the borough, and amongst the adults (those over 20) 70% were migrants. This suggests that the traditional practices of the town, in say political activity, and the bestowing of familial or community political allegiances, would probably not have affected these migrant groups as they did Lancaster's more stable and less migrant population. Preston's incomers would have brought their traditions and social mores with them, but they would have been drawn to others in the town in a similar situation who could offer support, be it psychological, spiritual or material. This factor again may prove to be significant when we come to analyse the political changes in Preston over time.

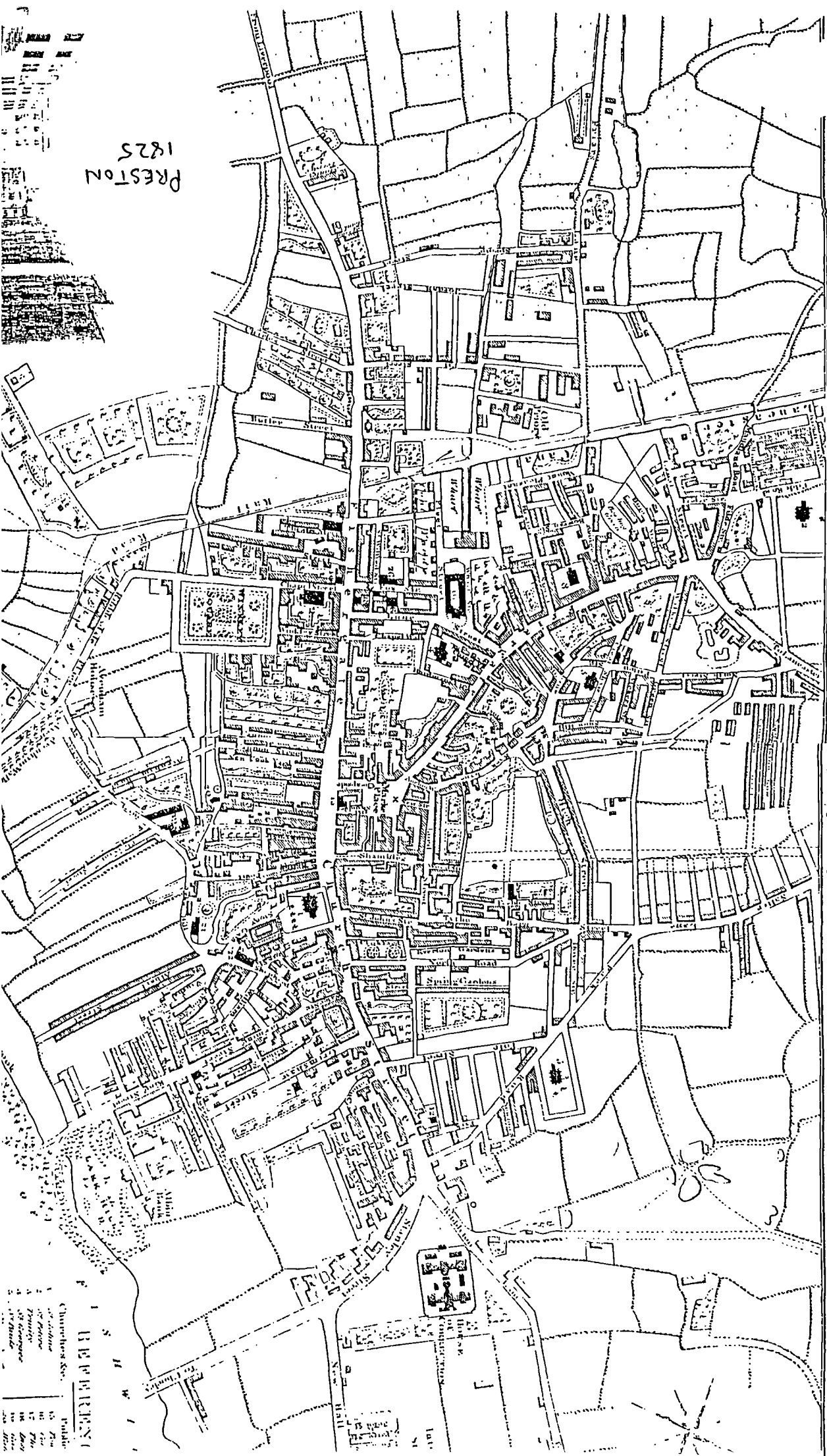
Population density may have also been a factor in political change for it is an important dimension of the local experience of life. Some work has been done on this in the case of Preston by K.M. Spencer³, but there is little comment on how the pattern as a whole affected local society. Briefly, the town was small and becoming very crowded. A comparison of the town plan in Baines's History

of Lancashire in 1825 with the first Guich Ordnance Survey Map of 1844 reveals little extension beyond the medieval pattern of streets and lanes. Effectively the built-up area hardly changed whilst the population had roughly doubled. As we shall see in the next chapter, the development of mill-owner housing was relatively late compared to Bolton and especially Blackburn. At Blackburn the key period was 1835 to 1850, but at Preston this only began after 1847. Before then only three areas of obvious expansion are evident, all of them modest: a small group of houses to the west of the canal and on the edge of town. To the north west of the town centre, a sectilinear pattern of streets along the line of Brook Street and Adelphi Street had been partially developed and partended the further development of an estate by the local millowners, Tomlinson, after 1847; finally, to the south, seven straight lines of terraced streets stretched a couple of hundred yards eastward from the boundary of Avenham Lane.

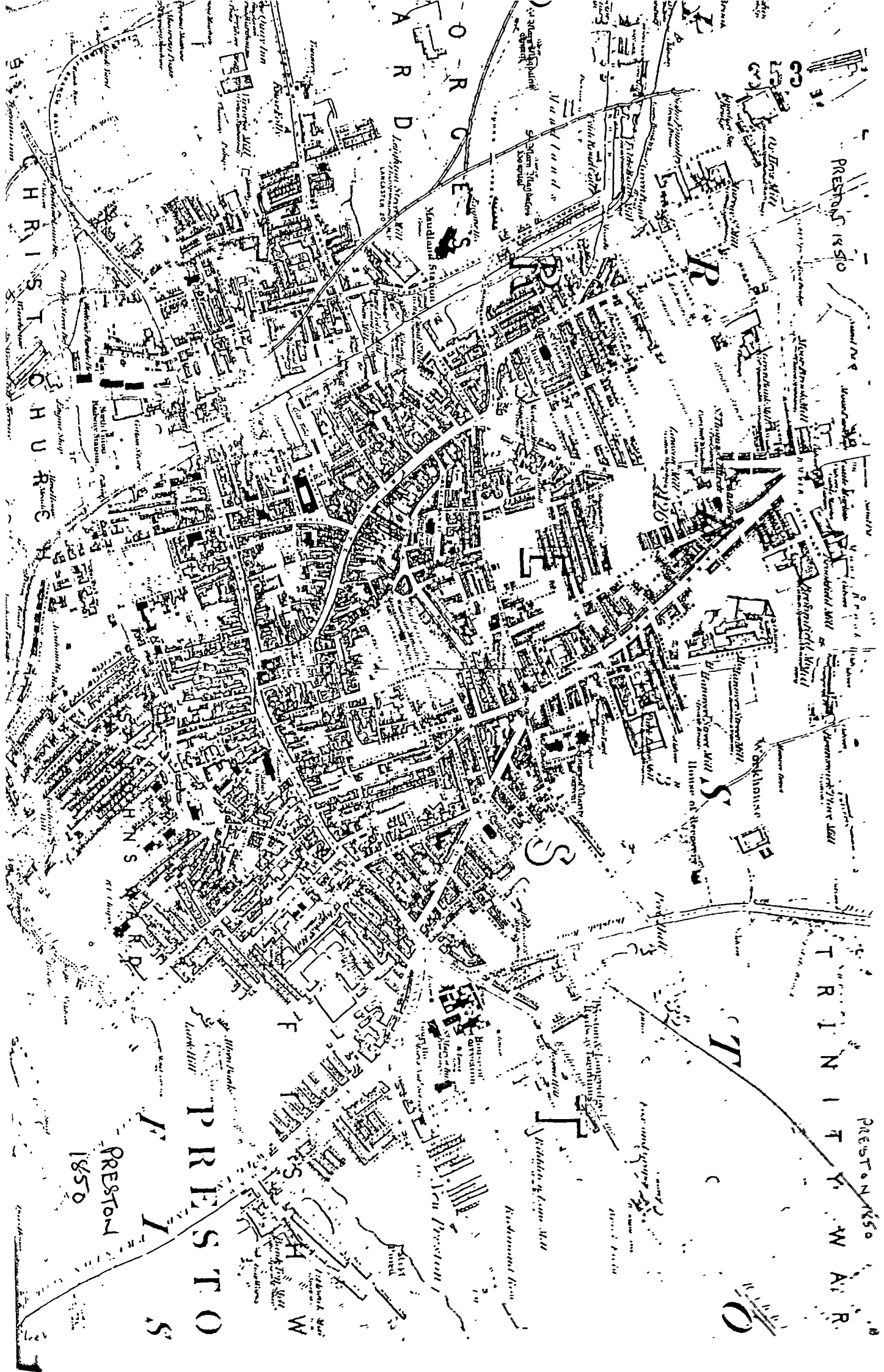
Apart from a number of factories and the few beginnings of streets close to St Pauls and St Ignatius churches along the north east side of Park Lane, there is no sign prior to 1847 of the later huge gridiron of factory districts in the east of the town. A simple graph of population to houses shows how the experience of crowding for the town as a whole rose to a peak in 1851.

PRESTON

PRESTON
1825



- LEGEND
- | Character | Symbol |
|---------------|--------|
| Churches &c. | ☙ |
| Public | ☙ |
| 1. of Police | ☙ |
| 2. of Police | ☙ |
| 3. of Police | ☙ |
| 4. of Police | ☙ |
| 5. of Police | ☙ |
| 6. of Police | ☙ |
| 7. of Police | ☙ |
| 8. of Police | ☙ |
| 9. of Police | ☙ |
| 10. of Police | ☙ |
| 11. of Police | ☙ |
| 12. of Police | ☙ |
| 13. of Police | ☙ |
| 14. of Police | ☙ |
| 15. of Police | ☙ |
| 16. of Police | ☙ |
| 17. of Police | ☙ |
| 18. of Police | ☙ |
| 19. of Police | ☙ |
| 20. of Police | ☙ |



PRESTON 1850

PRESTON 1850

PRESTON 1850

PRESTON

LANCASHIRE

CHRIST CHURCH

TABLE VI PERSONS PER HOUSE 1811-1871: PRESTON⁴

1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871
4.74	5.87	-	5.02	6.04	5.4	4.5

Spencer's useful work confirms this pattern of density⁵, and reveals the highest densities in the enumeration districts in the developing manufacturing districts of St Peters and St Mary's to the north and eastern sides of the town. What appears to have happened was that unlike some other parts of the region, Preston's population was accommodated without the early intervention of the manufacturers. As we saw the sheer size of its growth marks it out from Lancaster and Chester, and gives it a pattern of development like that of the larger conurbations of Salford and Manchester up to 1850. This placed enormous social and political pressures on the community and the local elites respectively. The clear message is that a large number of people were living in a relatively small town, and their density was increasing. As any school teacher or supporter of popular sport is aware, overcrowding usually raises levels of excitement, tension and dramatizes events. The working class of Preston became literally huddled masses. The objective reality of their position coupled with a heightened subjective awareness or consciousness of their experiences as a class, created severe potential problems

for the forces of authority. Moreover, what makes Preston so uniquely interesting for our study is that a significant proportion of the town's post-1832 electorate was made up of the male members of this huddled mass.

Certainly contemporary commentators were concerned about working class living conditions. At the very end of our period a contemporary writer offered a retrospective impression of Preston's poorer districts.

Smokey workshops, old buildings, with windows awfully smashed in, houses given up to 'lodgings for travellers here', densely packed, dirty cottages, and the tower of a windmill ... Pigeons flyers, dog fanciers, gossiping vagrants, crying children, old iron, stray hens, women with a passion for sitting on doorsteps, men looking at nothing with their hands in their pockets ... And the mirage of perhaps one policeman on duty constitute the signals of the neighbourhood (Trinity Ward). Townwards (from St Augustines Catholic Church) you soon get into a region of murky houses, ragged children, running beerjugs, poverty, and as you move onward ... the plot thickens until you get into the very laws of ignorance, depravity and misery.⁶ .

It is noteworthy that although the writer pours scorn on the habits of the working class and presents a lamentable picture, which could be reproduced in most of the large towns in the north west, he does not appear to fear a decline in social stability. However, back in the 1830's - as we shall discover - many were concerned about the social and political consequences of the dramatic and unregulated growth of industry. Yet before we examine the political development and integration of Preston's working class we

must look at two further areas of contextual relevance: firstly economic development and secondly the overall political changes in Preston from 1820 to 1870.

In order to fully understand the working class of a developing industrial locality like Preston in the early to mid-nineteenth century, one must examine the connections and interdependencies, and even the geographical locations of a wide variety of occupations, just as we did with the county and market towns in the previous chapter. As in Lancaster, lawyers of various kinds were numerous in Preston - more so than in the 'new' boroughs like Bolton, Blackburn, Bury or Oldham. Little of political and economic importance in nineteenth century British life can occur without lawyers being involved. Builders and joiners made and built the physical fabric of the town; surveyors and land agents were also important. So too were machine makers and coach makers who were partially dependent on the custom of their social superiors whilst at the same time possessing high levels of trade craft and skill and thus a certain freedom in relation to their actual market value. Also of interest are the numerous tradesmen who were dependent on other social groups for their custom, butchers, grocers, drapers, tailors, cloggers, hatters and milliners, for example; there were also coal merchants, carters and others too numerous to mention. There were also, as we have noted, the respectable classes (though not all were by any means regarded as 'respectable'), lawyers

and other professionals, medical men, teachers, large scale manufacturers and those of independent means.

However, our attention must focus primarily on the textile industry which accounted for 48% of the total recorded labour force in 1841, and 50% in 1851⁷, and more than a quarter of the entire population of the town between 1847 and 1862. Preston's dependence on cotton is clearly evident towards the end of the period during the cotton famine of the early 1860's. A report sent to the President of the Board of Trade by H.B. Farnell of Preston in May 1862⁸ found that there were 10,633 textile workers out of work in an industry which employed 25,000 out of Preston's total population of 81,058. This massive dependence on cotton steadily increased from the 1830's despite key labour saving improvements within the industry itself.

**TABLE VII TEXTILE WORKERS OF PRESTON IN RELATION
TO POPULATION**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Textile Workers</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>Source</u>
1841	10,716	21.4	1841 census
1847	13,851	22.0	Poor Guardians
1851	18,148	26.0	1851 census
1862	25,000	31.0	Cotton Famine Report

Figures for earlier dates are harder to come by due in part to the occupational instability of handloom weavers. But the poll book of 1830 does reveal that, out of a total electorate of 7,122 there were 2,032 spinners and weavers eligible to vote; some 28.5% of the electorate. Trade recession and the terms of the Reform Act meant that holders of the old franchise tended to disappear from the register due to removal, failure to pay rates or the receipt of poor relief. Thus the number of spinners and weavers qualified to vote in parliamentary elections declined. Nevertheless, this group still counted for 21% of the total electorate in 1838 and 18% in 1841 but gradually falling away throughout the later 1840's and 1850's. Thus it is fairly safe to assume that from the 1820's roughly one-quarter of Preston's population were involved in the textile industry and that they were potentially a salient feature of electoral politics.

Analysis of the development of Preston's textile industry is complicated by a number of factors. Firstly, some millowners owned several mills and others held partnerships in branches of the trade - for example, cotton finishing - which makes it difficult to say categorically and precisely which cotton master controlled which set of employees. Secondly, during the 1830's particularly, not all of Preston's cotton factories were fully mechanized, and several still put work out to handloom weavers.⁹ A third complicating factor was that the industry itself was in a

state of constant change with firms adjusting to the state of the market by combining spinning and weaving or, at other times, concentrating on a specific branch of the industry.

The actual growth of the cotton industry in Preston during the period under discussion here can be seen from Table VIII drawn mainly from the trade directories and the local press.

TABLE VIII NUMBER OF COTTON FIRMS IN PRESTON 1815-1862

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total No. Firms</u>
1815	31
1821	29
1825	40
1834	43
1835	35
1844	30
1847	46
1851	55
1854	54
1861	69
1862	71

Patrick Joyce¹⁰ in particular has suggested that levels and

trends of worker deference and employer-inspired paternalism may be detected from the size of the factory units, especially from the period after 1850. He suggests that larger employers tended to be able to exact deferential attitudes from their employees in a way that was impossible for smaller employers. We feel that this analysis may have a bearing in our study of the slightly earlier period for the industrialized parts of the region especially in relation to the political allegiances of the working class. Thus it is important to establish the pattern of economic and industrial development in Preston from the 1830's in order to appreciate the relationship between the cotton manufacturers and their employees. It is important to know how many were employed and by whom. Also we must look at the speed of change noting what proportions of masters and men retained the older work practices. Thus if we can discover that in Preston capital was concentrated amongst a few large-scale manufacturers - as was the case in Blackburn (the chief source of Joyce's research) then Preston may provide a useful source of comparison.

It appears that at Preston the textile industry was mixed. It contained small and large manufacturers who both put work out to handloom weavers. One manufacturer, James Park,¹¹ reported to the Handloom Weaving Enquiry of 1838 that 'at his own dandy loom concern weavers attended from 6.00am to 7.30pm'¹², a significant amount at the time. One reason

for the dramatic growth of Preston could be the maintenance of this industrial diversity, a feature which was not to be found at Lancaster for example. Even though by the 1830's handloom weavers had become extremely impoverished there were still estimated to be 3,000 in the town itself and another 10,000 in the district, although the witness, Robert Crawford, said that this was 'less than 15 or 16 years ago'¹³. Even individual businessmen could show a very diverse set of economic interests as the auction of the effects of William Dixon, a bankrupt tea dealer and grocer reveals. Included in the sale was a 'counting house, warehouses behind the same, also two large buildings containing 159 self-acting looms.'¹⁴

As the textile trade was expanded and consolidated this mixture of the traditional and the new was continued. In July 1836 the Preston Chronicle reported that

the demand for handloom weavers generally was scarcely ever so brisk ... manufacturers are hawking their work from house to house.

The most serious setback came not from the boom/slump cycle but also from the spinners strike of 1836/37 when the major advised handloom weavers to seek other employment. Even in September 1847 the Guardian reported that

Amidst the depression connected with mill work in the cotton business ... handloom weaving is unusually brisk.¹⁵

Handloom weavers were still plentiful and politically significant enough to warrant particular mention by one of the candidates at the 1852 election.¹⁶ It would seem that handloom weaving survived partly because of the growth of power loom factories, providing a conveniently elastic outlet to be expanded or contracted as the market dictated without unduly disturbing the loyalties of the regular mill hands. However, it must be noted that these handloom weavers were still essentially waged factory workers operating in 'dandy sheds' attached to, or close by, the powered plant. Their status, earning capacity and numbers did decline but they fiercely retained a level of independence which could not be found in the powered workshops. This substantial group may be relevant when in due course we examine the independent nature of working class political affiliation in Preston during the early 1830's.

The growth of cotton mills in Preston followed the trade cycle almost exactly in the first half of the nineteenth century. There was an initial spurt between 1815 and 1826, then a slump from 1827 to 1836. After 1836 there was a gradual recovery and a tremendous boom in the mid-1840's.¹⁷ S.D. Chapman explains that this was due to the extra abundance of credit facilities.¹⁸ But in Preston the period between 1826 and 1845 corresponds almost exactly with the continuing presence of the small -non-mechanised concerns and the handloom weavers noted above.

Firstly Horrocks's and then Horrocks, Miller and Co. dominated the cotton industry of Preston, not only in size, number of mills, capital invested, and number of hands employed but also in their connections with others involved in the town's industry. Many millowners of the 1840's and 1850's gained their expertise as former employees of the Horrocks's, the most notable examples being William Taylor, or John Bairstow, who left Horrocks to become members of Preston's capitalist and commercial elite, whilst some bankers such as Richard Newsham profited as a result of their involvement with Horrocks's. The scale of the Horrocks enterprise compared with others in the industry was vast. Balance sheets for 1836¹⁹ for example show a total of both capital and profits of £432,485, and a net profit of £30,432 to be distributed pro-rata amongst the five partners; Thomas Miller, with £128,044 in the firm collected £13,009 while the junior partner, S Horrocks Jnr, was given £2,891 on his existing share of £3,623. It is revealing that the trade cycle was still fluid in that the following year the total profit was a mere £460.13.0d, so Thomas Miller had to be content with £146, while his son and future sole proprietor gained just £41.17.7d. probably the 1839 profit of £16,662 was more typical than either 1836 or 1837. Their success was based not only on their domestic reputation for standard quality long clothes, but on their extensive overseas connections, which ranged from Batavia, Bombay, Calcutta, Manilla, Singapore, Rio de Janiero and Valparaiso. These exports rose from 99,457

pieces in 1840 to 132,827 in 1853, by far the largest quantities going to the Indian sub-continent. But as we noted above, Horrocks, Miller and Co. were not at all typical of Preston's mill owners. Out of 30 mills valued for rating purposes in 1844, Horrocks's were rated at £61,376, Catterall's at £18,000 and a further 21 at under £8,000.²⁰

Horrocks employed over 2,000 workers, two other factories over 1,000; 9 others more than 500, and 19 employed fewer than 150. The average size of the cotton mills in Preston was 300.²¹ Preston's main and quickest period of growth took place in the 1840²²'s. The factory inspector, Leonard Horner, reported in 1845 that there were 'many new factories now building or being completed'.²³ At this time there were eight, and his statistics reveal that capital had been invested in ten new factories between July 1844 and March 1845. This separates Preston from Lancaster where no such growth took place, and indeed from Blackburn and Bolton where the growth of the 1840's was a consolidation on existing plant and buildings.

In fact, Preston's social and economic growth was remarkable even by the standards of the time. The chief reason was possibly the town's proximity to the two great mercantile and commercial centres of Liverpool and Manchester. Similarly, Preston was favourably placed with regard to the key industrial raw materials, labour and

power. The town may also have been attractive for migrants not only because of work opportunities but also because of its reputation for religious toleration - it had, relative to its size, the largest Catholic population in the whole of the north-west and political reform.

We have thus laid the background of the social and economic growth of Preston. This is important because it enables us to examine one of the central themes of our thesis, namely that of working class political development. It also helps us understand the wider political organization in a burgeoning industrial area where, in the initial years after 1832, the majority of males were allowed to vote. The relatively late development of industry in Preston may have been partly due to the desire to maintain the attitudes of the traditional market town. It is clear that Preston's very mixed economic experience provides us with an opportunity to examine a largely working class electorate subject to a wide and changing mixture of influences: forces of community and employer paternalism may have pushed it towards deference politics; market influences may have pressed towards 'corruption'; whilst new impersonal capitalism, allied to the survival of handloom weaving, may have bred independence and thus opinion politics.

These questions will be addressed later but we must first look briefly at Preston's religious make-up and its general

political trends between the 1820's and the 1860's.

2. Religious and Political Change 1820 - 1870

Assessing religious composition is difficult for any locality in the nineteenth century but one fact which is clear in the development of Preston is the relatively large number of Catholics in the town. However, the Anglicans seem to have possessed the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the town's leading citizens. In 1827, the Clerks of the Peace, Gorst and Birchall tried to obtain figures for the nonconformist sects of the town. They found ten places of worship occupied by Independents, Primitive Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Huntington's Connection, Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, and Independents, which added up to a total 3,160 souls. The Catholics at this time amounted to 10,900 at Fishergate and Friargate chapels in the town centre. This was approximately one-third of the 1831 population. By 1851 the census recorded that Catholics had declined to 10,200 persons or 15% of the population in spite of large scale Irish immigration. However, they remained an important and well-represented feature of the town's political life. As we shall discover in due course there were outbreaks of sectarian trouble especially in the 1850's, but generally the Catholic population were relatively well integrated in Preston if one compares the situation with Wigan or

Liverpool. Some of the most respected families in the town were Catholic.

Let us now turn to an overview of political change in the town. Prior to the 1855 Municipal Reform Act there were three separate governmental bodies. Preston's corporation was the most constitutionally visible, but really this self-electing body had only marginal powers which barely affected the lives of the ordinary citizens, its only real powers being control of the markets and the borough magistrates. Responsibility for the condition of the streets and their policing and lighting lay with the Improvement Commission, a body which was only open to ratepayers, and owners of property worth £100 per year. Responsibility for the poor lay with the vestry which was open to all ratepayers. Both the Improvement Commission, which was made up of the elites, and the vestry - composed chiefly of the masses - had the power to levy rates. Older forms of commercial wealth were predominant on the Council from the 1800's, a situation which was similar to Lancaster. Aside from four cotton spinners the majority of the Council from 1825 for example was made up of 6 attorneys (including Horrocks and Thomas Miller), 3 bankers, including Pedder, a doctor, a surveyor, a furrier, a draper, and several other tradesmen. There was little influence of the older county or agricultural money - such as corn or flour dealers - whose relative numerical strength in the trade directories is so apparent. This

again bears out the findings of Derek Fraser.²⁴

Even before the advent of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 the situation locally was perceived as being in urgent need of reform. One petition sent to the House of Commons read:

... praying the House to pass such a Bill as will relieve the present Mayor's and Aldermen of the Municipal Corporations of their magisterial duties ... will prevent the Corporation property from being wasted and misapplied, and will vest the election of all the members of Corporations in persons entitled to vote at elections of (M.P.s), so that Corporations may be placed under vigilant popular control, and because, what they were in fact intended to be, for the benefits of the inhabitants at large.²⁵

This suggests a far more direct involvement in the arena of local government by the ordinary citizens than took place at Lancaster. For, although the Preston Corporation did not associate itself with the freemen and burgesses in this petition, it had willingly cooperated with the Municipal Corporation Commission when it took evidence in Preston in September 1833, which was not the case at Lancaster.²⁶ Indeed the remarks of the Mayor, John Addison, were those of a man welcoming the prospect of relief from antiquated and restricting traditions. The Council, he maintained, 'might be considered a self-elected body. This was not satisfactory.'²⁷ It would seem that many members of the Corporation were not adverse to a measure of reform, but, although the Tory Addison wished for reform, he did not want the open franchise operating as in the Parliamentary

elections. As he stated in 1833, he considered it desirable that harmony should exist in the institutions of the country, and should therefore prefer giving the power of election to the same class of voters ... as the Reform Act ... namely the £10 householders.

The case of Preston confirms the conclusions reached by Derek Fraser²⁸ that moves for municipal reform and parliamentary reform, 'were but two horses in the same harness'²⁹ It would appear that public meetings on Corporation reform were like those on parliamentary reform but on a reduced scale. The debate began at the Corn Exchange in June 1835 and was continued when the Municipal Corporations Bill was checked in the Lords. The leading radicals and reformers present included Robert Segar, Joseph Livesey, Robert Ashcroft and Joseph Mitchell. There appears to have been little differences between the spokesmen of the working class popular radicals like Mitchell and the middle class Liberal reformers - like Segar - over the question. It was the Conservatives who, whilst agreeing to a measure of reform, wished for a £10 franchise and drew the opprobrium of both the middle class reformers and working class radicals. The leadership drifted more to the radical left in the Autumn of 1835, with the chief issue being the refusal of the Conservative Mayor, Thomas Troughton, to allow the use of the Corn Exchange for meetings. This prompted Richard Arrowsmith, a Roman Catholic banker, to remark that the Conservatives

'did not want anyone of those present to become a mayor, or an elderman,, or a councillor.'³⁰

suggesting that the Conservatives would retain power by any means possible.

The reformers had two main objectives. The first was to gain political recognition for the rising power of the new rich and the upwardly mobile 'professionals'. As Richard Arrowsmith put it,

'He saw many at the meeting who had raised themselves to stations of eminence from their industry, integrity, and uprightness ... These were the sort of men ... who were the most proper persons for them to choose to manage their local affairs.'

A second objective was a more efficient administration and a wholly new type of relationship between the Corporation and the rapidly growing urban community. As Robert Segar put it, if the Corporation was in debt, as indeed it was:-

they should sell off the Corporation's farms and pay off their debts ... and their patronage would be wholesomely diminished. If their local affairs were well-regulated, many improvements might be effected out of the Corporate fund, without perhaps the heavy taxation imposed by the Police Commissioners. They might then, perhaps, be able to build a new market if they wanted it; to keep the streets clean, without the present amount of police taxes; and put some other streets in repair besides Fishergate lane and some other fashionable thoroughfares (hear, and a laugh) which were attended to while others, equally important to a large class of the community, were left even without sewers and neglected (hear, and cheers). He should expect, indeed, a general improvement in the conduct from the new Corporation whom they could elect, and if not, could turn them out.

These hopes were a clear statement by the radicals and reformers in favour of representative local government based on effective political administration and on the opinions of a broadly based electorate. But in fact the 1835 Act made little immediate difference to the responsibilities of the Corporation, with the important exception of the transference of the powers of the Improvement Commission, thus allowing the Corporate bodies to levy a watch rate. The magistrates bench also ceased to be the exclusive preserve of council members, but the council did continue to send forward council candidates for the Magistracy to the Home Office.

Locally, the impetus for reform had come from the popular radicals and the reformist wing of the emerging Liberal Party, personified by the leadership of Mitchell for the radicals and Segar and Livesey for the liberals and, importantly, these people do seem to have held a working class following. As to the franchise, the new Act made the distinction between the 'burgesses' and the rest of the inhabitants.

'The burgess role ... was limited to occupiers of rateable property in the borough residing within seven miles of it, who had paid rates for the previous two and a half years.'³¹

This meant that recent immigrants to Preston were unenfranchized so were those whose rates were compounded and paid by their landlords - which applied to most rates

TABLE IX THE RELATIVE SIZE OF PRESTON'S MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE, 1835-1860

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Burgesses</u>	<u>% of population</u>	<u>% of Adult Males</u>	<u>% of Parliamentary Franchise</u>	<u>% of Rate Payers</u>
1836	2,369	5.8	33	63	31
1852	1,892	2.7	14	65.7	Unknown
*1853	4,484	6.1	31	158	"
1857	4,385	5.6	28	160	"
1859	5,728	7.3	37	209	"

* Introduction of Small Tenement Act

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under £7 - until the Small Tenements Act of 1853. It is at once clear from Table 1x that the working class of Preston suffered an absolute decline in their involvement in local politics from the introduction of the Municipal Corporations Act to 1853. These figures also show the municipal electorate in Preston was small, similar in fact to what E.P. Hennock found in Leeds and Birmingham³³, if one takes the whole population. But the figures reveal as many as a third of adult males able to participate in 1836 and only 14% in 1852. This must have been due to the restrictions placed on compounders written in to Preston's new municipal charter of 1836/7, and the fluidity of Preston's population with people moving in and out of the town, and as many moving about within it, especially after the building of new housing in the mid-1840's.

Perhaps the most striking contrast is with the Parliamentary franchise. As we have noted, Preston up to 1832 was its householder franchise, which meant that every male householder of 21 years of age and upwards, who had resided in the town for six consecutive months immediately preceding an election, and who were free from pauperism and crime, could hold the parliamentary franchise.³⁴ The imposition of the £10 property qualification under the terms of the 1832 Reform Act reduced the Parliamentary electors of Preston 'as they fell in their graves'.³⁵ Thus the municipal franchise between 1836 and 1853 was less representative of the working class, comprising less than

two thirds of the Parliamentary electorate for most of the intervening years. After 1853 for every ten who could vote for MPs, 16 could vote for councillors. This situation was, of course, redressed after the 1867 Reform Act when once again Preston gained a householder franchise.

There were six wards created under the terms of the 1835 Municipal Reform Act: St John's, Trinity, Christ Church, St George's, Fishwick and St Peter's. The Burgess Roll reveals that the most concentrated working class wards - whose average rateable value per house was £5 or less between 1835 and 1838 - were St Peter's, Fishwick, St George's and Trinity. These were the main focus of factory development. The wards with the highest number of 'respectable' working class members, whose rateable value was put between £5 and £10 were in St John's, Trinity and Christ Church. And the highest percentage of middle class ratepayers, valued at £10 or over, were in Christ Church and St George's. The deference thesis gains some limited credence when one considers that according to the Poll books for 1832 and 1835 District 6, Christ Church ward, pulled over 80% Conservative in those years.³⁶ This embraced most of the new factory district, and three out of the four mill owners, Messrs. Rodgett's, Clayton's, Hinckman's plumped Conservative, with only George Corry splitting for the Liberals³⁷, and this at all elections up to 1847. A further implication could be that the ruling Conservative Corporation attempted to confine the

electorate most traditionally hostile to them and containing both the Liberal shopkeepers and the radical or catholic working class in St Peter's and Fishwick wards. Thus even if the electors of these two wards returned 16 radical councillors and aldermen, they could do little against the Conservative superiority in the four other wards. These factors coupled with the high property qualification for candidates (real or personal property of £1,000 or occupation of premises of £30 rateable value), the structure of Preston's local politics were heavily biased against direct working class involvement and in favour of respectable 'safe' government by the elites.

The level of electioneering over the twenty five years 1835-1860 reveals a clear three phase pattern. The initial excitement of 1835/36 was followed by three years of intense activity. There was then a long, quiet period with few council contests. The only significant change was the admission of a few of the politically active Liberal cotton manufacturers; George Smith, John Goodair and John Hawkins; and the Liberal attorney James German, to a council dominated by the established manufacturing and professional elite.

The Conservatives held power for most of the period, the main Liberal challenge coming in 1847/48. Finally, with the increase in the voters in 1853 there was a marked revival in political activity, with a growth in treating

and popular electioneering.

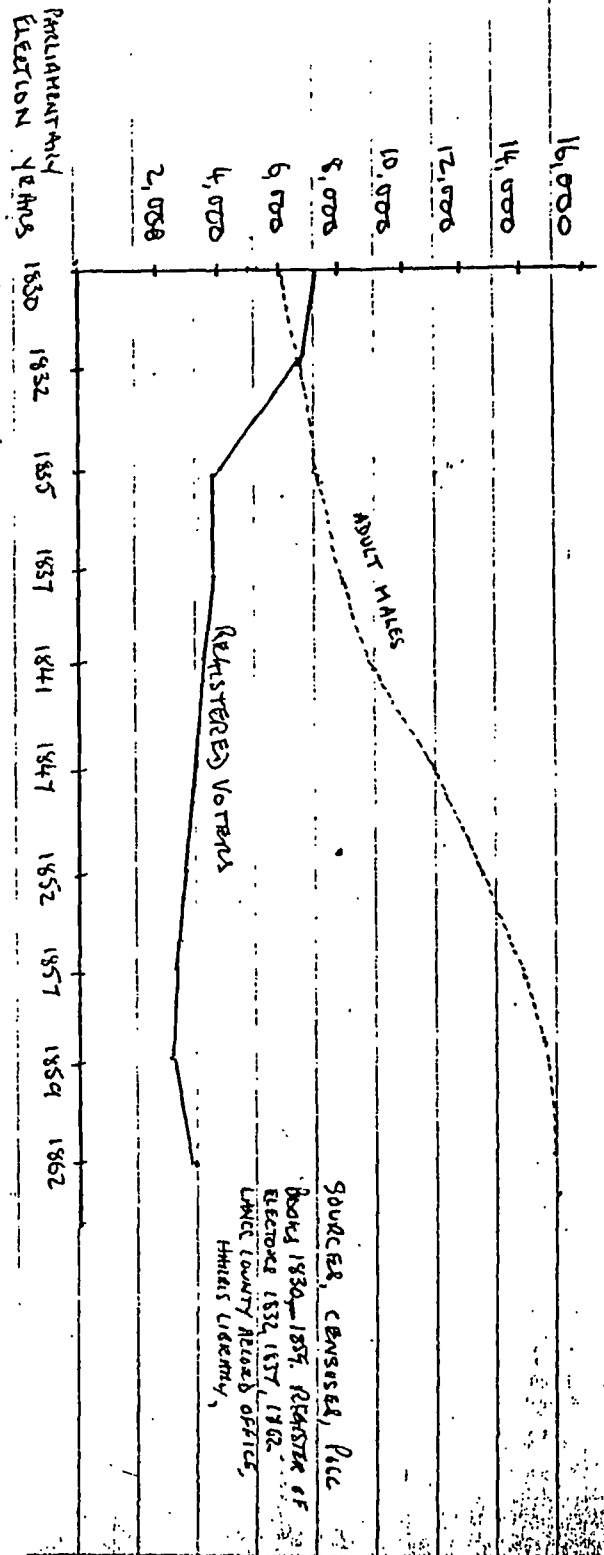
If we now turn to the development of Preston's Parliamentary politics it is worth noting three general points of contrast with the county town of Lancaster. First, at Lancaster local questions were confined to municipal politics and national issues to the constituency, whereas at Preston they often overlapped. Secondly, the Preston Corporation was involved in parliamentary politics unlike Lancaster. Thirdly, in Preston there appears to have been considerable working class involvement, especially in Parliamentary politics, which was not the case at Lancaster. Thus it would seem once again that the points made by Derek Fraser when referring to limited working-class involvement in parliamentary politics is also true in the case of Preston.

Let us consider Preston's parliamentary electorate in a little more detail. The effect of the 1832 Reform Act is shown overleaf. The great divergence between the adult male population and the registered voters fulfilled the predictions of the local radical Joseph Mitchell, and national figures as diverse as William Cobbett and Sir Robert Peel. Whereas, in the election immediately following the Act, every male person of full age could vote; by 1859 only one in five could do so. Under Clause 31, existing voters retained their franchise. However, the terms of the retention under the old franchise in Preston

GRAPH TWO

THE ELECTORATE OF PRESTON 1832-1862

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was six months residence in the borough prior to 7 June 1832. By 1857 only 8% of those qualified in 1832 remained on the register. However, by far the biggest loss - and the one most serious for our study of working class political behaviour - occurred within ten months of the Reform Act. Following the Court of Revision in October 1833 the number of voters under the old franchise had been almost halved; of the 6,291 able to vote in 1832 only 3,412 (54%) were left.³⁸ The Preston Chronicle ascribed this partly to apathy and the cost of the actual registration:

'... to the poor man who reckons his earnings by pence (text's emphasis) ... a shilling is a very serious and important amount.'³⁹

One of the practical functions of the operative Conservative Association was to 'pay the annual registration fee on behalf of their member', and it could well be that this was one of the inducements which attracted some working class supporters possessing the right to vote under the terms of the old franchise, to their ranks, a point we shall return to.

Many working class electors were forced off the register for several other reasons. One may have been that in 1833 the middle class regained control of the vestry and the new overseers may have been zealous in striking out radical working class electors. Also many may have been struck off for moving house, or claiming poor relief. The table

overleaf illustrates the development of Preston's electorate over a thirty year period.

Unquestionably it was the working class who were most affected by this change, and we shall cover the occupational and voting trends later, but enough of the working class electorate did remain, we would argue, to make a meaningful analysis of their voting behaviour worthwhile. Before we do this, let us briefly outline the basic trends and shifts in the representation of Preston.

According to T H B Oldfield writing in 1816⁴⁰, one of Preston's seats was under the nomination of the Earl of Derby. The other appears to have been dominated by the Tory Corporation. This meant that through the 1820's one seat was given over the Whig House of Stanley and the other to the Tories. It is worth making the point that economically dominant manufacturers, the Horrocks family, were also dominant in corporate and parliamentary politics with one of the brother's, Samuel Horrocks, being an M.P. for the town from 1804 to 1826. This shows that the new manufacturing elite were active in Preston from an early date.

The election of 1826 saw of a real working class political presence in the town. This was probably due to the appearance of William Cobbett as one of the candidates; it

TABLE X SIZE OF THE ELECTORATE OF PRESTON 1832-1868 IN RELATION TO OLD AND NEW FRANCHISE

ELECTION YEAR	TOTAL VOTERS	OLD FRANCHISE	NEW FRANCHISE	% OF OLD FRANCHISE LEFT	% OF OLD FRANCHISE TOTAL
1832	6,325	6,291	37	100	99
1835	3,744	3,354	828	53	90
1837	3,738	2,785	973	44	75
1847	3,054	1,570	1,463	27	51
1857	2,742	806	1,936	13	29
1862	2,834	504	2,330	8	18

Source: Register of Electors, Lancashire County Records Office

was also due to the revival of Parliamentary reform and the economic crisis felt by many working people coupled with disgust at the imposition of new work practices and machinery. At this election Derby's son and the future Prime Minister, E G Stanley, came top of the poll; a moderate reformer, John Wood, came second; the Corporation's Tory choice, Capt. Barry and the radical Cobbett being beaten respectively into third and fourth place.

In 1830, in a three cornered fight, the radical favourite, Henry Hunt came third with a creditable 1,308 votes, but still over 1,000 votes below that of Wood. But in that same year Stanley accepted the post of Irish Secretary in Greg's government. This meant a by-election and Hunt came forward once again to oppose Stanley. This was therefore a straight fight between moderate Whig reformism and popular radicalism; it also saw the culmination of working class radical organization in the pre-Reform era. However, it has also to be noted that the Tory hatred of Whig influence meant that many leading local Tories threw their weight behind Hunt and the popular radicals.⁴¹

Hunt's eight man committee is revealing⁴²: it was made up of John Irvin, shuttlemaker; Richard Leaver, painter; J Huffman, shoemaker; John Eames, porter seller; and John Johnson, Henry Wallis, Edward Jacobs and Edward Grubb, all tailors. At the election of 1830, not surprisingly, all

plumped for Hunt. However, if we trace the political allegiances of these extreme radicals we find that in 1847 for example of the five still alive, three split with the two Liberal candidates, one plumped Conservative, and one, John Hamer, split his vote between the radical and the conservative candidates. This reveals that among this very small sample of extreme radicals, political opinions were indeed fluid. But it is interesting to note that in the fifteen year period only one retained his radical opinions, and he split with the Conservative.

Returning to the 1830 election, the result was a victory for radical organization and Hunt. This so angered Stanley that he severed all ties with Preston, never visiting the town again, thus ending almost two hundred years of influence. Although the Corporation still nominated one seat, the other was open and during the reform crisis the radicals strengthened their hold on local popular politics.

As we shall see, this surge of popular radical support was not peculiar to Preston, but occurred in many industrial boroughs of the north-west - at Blackburn, Bolton, Oldham, Bury, Wigan and Rochdale. But it is interesting to see who was leading these local radicals. At Manchester and Bolton, for example, the working class threw off the lower middle class leadership, but at Preston this does not seem to have happened. The two main radical leaders at this time were Joseph Mitchell, a draper, and Joseph Livesey.

But even at this early date difference in popular radicalism can be detected; Mitchell was a thoroughgoing Paineite radical, Livesey more a 'philosophical' radical, prone to the tactic of pressure group politics, his greatest crusade being the cause of temperance. However, both claimed a large working class following. The poll book for this election reveals a strong working class feeling towards radicalism. The table below shows the voting pattern of the 2,032 textile workers on the register at the 1830 by-election.

TABLE XI VOTING PATTERN OF SPINNERS AND WEAVERS AT THE 1830 PRESTON BY-ELECTION

	STANLEY (WHIG)		HUNT (RADICAL)		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	
Spinners	184	32.7	378	63.3	562
Weavers	239	16.3	1,231	83.7	1,470

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This shows that Preston's mill hands if left to themselves would vote radical in this early, pre-reform period. It also arguably reveals that the weavers were marginally more prone towards radicalism overall than the 33% of the spinners who voted for Stanley. One possible variable was Tory support for Hunt, but this can be explained by the fact that Stanley was one of the hated members of the Whig

government who drew up the Reform Act, and as there was no Tory candidate, this support can be viewed as an act of protest against Stanley and the reforming Whigs.

However, the first elections held under the terms of the Reform Act reveals that the opponents of popular radicalism had become more organized. The Conservative dominated corporation brought forward Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood, a member of the lesser aristocracy and large landowner on the Fylde coast. The reforming Whigs chose as their candidate H.T. Stanley, the future earl of Alderney, and the Liberals, Charles Crompton. Hunt stood again for the popular Radicals, and a fifth candidate was Joseph Fortes who shared many of Hunt's radical principles.

Back in 1830 the Conservatives had realised that working class radicalism in Preston was a considerable threat to the maintenance of their power, constitutional stability and local harmony. The Conservative paper, the Preston Pilot, put the onus of blame on those manufacturers who shirked their responsibility to lead their employees:-

... the fact is, that men in this town are actually forced into the ranks of radicalism by the want of due consideration in those with whom rests the power of preventing such desertion. For example, we will suppose the employer of two or three hundred men to express for some months, or weeks, or days just previous to an election, an intention of holding himself neutral during such election. What follows? The people, finding their master feels no interest in directing them one way or the other, consider themselves at liberty to parade what, in the excusable pride of human nature, they are pleased to call their

independence. This we may be sure is done in all tap-room coteries, and, as in such assemblies, there are never wanting discontented spirits to take advantage of moments favourable to their wishes, it is soon trumpeted abroad that the such-a-one and Messrs so-and-so have determined on taking no part in the election, by which the radical faction become embolden to look out for the most notorious demagogue they can find in order to seize the golden opportunity.⁴⁴

Thus we can see from an early stage Preston Conservatives were aware of the need to attempt to politically direct and contain the working classes. The working class tendency towards extreme radicalism in the first four years of the 1830's only served to reinforce these predispositions. It has to be said that Preston was not unusual in this respect amongst the industrial towns of the north-west. Throughout the region the politics of Reform, coupled with a high level of infra-class awareness and consciousness, raised the fortunes of the popular or extreme radicals. But Preston was noteworthy for the tight grip the lower middle class radicals held on local politics in the first years of the 1830's though there were schisms among their ranks as we shall discover.

From the basis of their Parliamentary success, the popular radicals of Preston moved in on local politics particularly the Vestry. This assault was led by Joseph Mitchell but at a time when his own popularity had suffered a slump following a dispute with Hunt. This was not, however, a local split, it assumed national proportions.

It was begun in 1831 when the extreme radicals, such as Mitchell and John Irvin locally and for a time Hunt himself nationally, pressed for economic and physical force to gain a radical constitutional reform. The more moderate lower middle class radicals - known as the 'ten pounders' or the 'Russell Rads' because of their adherence to Lord John Russell's proposals in the Second Reform Bill - were led locally by Livesey and Robert Segar who were genuinely frightened by the turn of political events.

Mitchell continued his violent oratory, attempting to stir up mass passions. In December 1831 he spoke of fires burning in six countries,

'... and how did they know they might come nearer to home? Particularly as he had heard that ... six and twenty factories were about to be stopt (sic) for the purpose of destroying the trades union.'⁴⁵

The implication being that if their opponents were using economic weapons (though there is no evidence to suggest they were at this difficult time in the trade cycle) then so should the radicals. In such a climate the moderates began to distance themselves from extremism (as, indeed, did Hunt). Earlier in 1831 the Pilot had reported that:

'Fellows of the most notorious stamp struggling to divest themselves of the taint of radicalism ... our Russell Rads - the ten pounder people - recoil from contact with their old play fellows.'⁴⁶

In September, Hunt's supporters in Preston placed Mitchell on 'trial' at four open air meetings for 'having gone off from Hunt'⁴⁷, and attempting to bring in William Cobbett in his place; it would seem that Mitchell had gone over to moderation.

It is often overlooked by historians of the period - especially those of the Marxist school - that, although class consciousness would seem to have been high among working people, there was still political sectionalisation. The Tories and Conservatives were indeed held to be responsible for blocking the Whig measure and received the wrath of the masses for their pains; but so too did many moderate reformers and Liberal radicals. The radical leadership was in disarray for much of late 1831 and 1832 and this gave their opponents the opportunity to regroup. Extreme radicalism dismayed many of the middle classes and those professing 'respectable' opinions.

It would seem that at this time there were three main political groupings in Preston. There were the rapidly re-organising Conservatives backed as they were by the Corporation. There were the moderate reformers and radicals led by Livesey and Sagar who backed Russell and called for step-by-step reform over several years. Finally, there were the extreme radicals led now by John Taylor and John Irvine, who called for total and complete reform including universal suffrage and the ballot. At

this time, as we shall now suggest, this latter group held the majority of working class support with the moderates holding the lower middle classes, and the Conservatives gaining support from various social groups who were rapidly becoming disillusioned and frightened by the discord and acrimony.

It was in this climate that the Conservatives began their long campaign to regain the political initiative and they were undoubtedly assisted - unwittingly - by the radical leadership.

On 5 November 1831 Hunt arrived in the town shortly after dusk. The old political rituals were to be seen - chairing the favourite, a procession of flaming tar barrels; smoke, lights, songs and music. He went to Taylor's house in Lune Street, and from the window directed all his venom not at the Conservatives but at his Radical enemies, at Mitchell who 'had lent or sold himself to the Whigs', and to Wilcockson, the editor and owner of the reformist Preston Chronicle. His advice to his audience was intimidation in that they should point out Mitchell and Wilcockson in the street and hiss them.⁴⁸

What followed was the closest the town came to a general insurrection in the period under discussion. Following Hunt's address a mass meeting was held on Gallows Hill, beside the Garstang Turnpike, three-quarters of a mile from

the town centre.⁴⁹ Following speeches made by Irvine and Taylor, a mob of several thousand methodically began stopping the factories of Sleddon's, Ainsworth and Catteralls, Riley's, Sherrington's, Swainson and Birley's, and finally, as a climax, Horrocks's factories. They then assembled at the House of Correction to defy the Governors '18 pounder charged with grape', before returning to Gallows Hill.⁵⁰

The town was described as being 'in a state of great alarm' and its ten constables were quite unable to deal with the situation. The authorities must have been taken by surprise because the military - three companies of the 80th Regiment - did not arrive until the following day. This together with the observation that a considerable number of strangers had been seen among the mob suggests sophisticated organization and secrecy.

Although the radical leadership was split they maintained their hold on the popular support in the town and, as we noted above, their ability to mobilize their supporters is indicative of some power, both in terms of action and organization. This is underscored by the fact that they had their own newspaper in the shape of Addresses from one of the 3,730 Electors which ran from January 1832 until the end of the Reform elections in January 1833. Its tone of class antagonism was in marked contrast to the Liberal Preston Chronicle or Joseph Livesey's occasional sheet The

Moral Reformer.

The popular radicals also set the precedent in the town for efficient mass political organization in the form of the Political Union. This was formed expressly for organizing the radical party in the run-up to the first Reform elections at the Blackamoor's head on 4 June 1832. According to the resolutions passed, the body favoured universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments and no property qualifications for M.P.s. They then began their system of organization.

'Each district', ran the report in the Address, 'was to be divided into classes and each class was to have its own leader, the classes to pay equal proportions to a small fund to be placed in the hands of "The Council"'.⁵¹

When the representatives of the various classes of the Union met the following week they refined the organization by resolving that there should be a general meeting of the Union once a month, to which no one should be admitted who could not produce his 'red card', which was his membership card signed by the secretary of his class district.⁵² This form of localised organization was not new; it had been used by the Methodists and Friendly Societies in England, and O'Connell's Catholic Association in Ireland, but two points are worth noting. Firstly, this was the first time such tactics had been used in mainland Britain for party political and electoral purposes. Secondly, the use of the

term 'class' suggests an awareness of social divisions existing at the time^o and the possibility that they could be turned to popular radical advantage.

The Political Union seems to have been an immediate success, for at a meeting at the Roast Beef Tavern on 18 June, the place was 'crowded to excess' with applications flooding in to form new classes apparently giving credence to the boast of the Address that 'hundreds, nay thousands (were) binding themselves together in one common bond having in one view one common object.'⁵³ To accommodate this increase in interest and membership it was necessary to take a larger room for general meetings, and, more interestingly, for 'each representative to be provided with a list of the names and residence of each individual in his class', a precaution which reflected not only the size of the membership but also the infiltration by spies or opponents. This use of the list is interesting for it reveals that in Preston, at this early date, face-to-face community contact was disappearing and that there was an increase in the traits of anonymity associated with modern urban social life. It also enhanced the degree to which new forms of political organization and association based on class or interest aggregation would be required and a subsequent decline in the older, more traditional forms of political operation.

But radical divisions contrived in the run-up to the

elections of December 1832. The Political Union was unashamedly Huntite in character and condemned the more Tory-Radical Cobbettites, as one report ran:-

... in consequence of the prevalent report of Cobbett being put in nomination at the approaching general election, we wish it to be generally known that we would feel ourselves disgraced as radical reformers and as men for having anything to do with him or his self-interested partisans.⁵⁴

For their part, the Cobbettite radicals were equally vitriolic in condemning the Huntite Political Union. The Preston Chronicle reported that the Political Union was an anathema, and its methods, if truthfully reported, were abhorrent:

The Political Unions are now organizing plans of intimidation, which are disgraceful to the parties concerned in them. We denounced this system, with all our force, when it was confined to the higher classes ... We now protest, at all risks, against the same infamous conduct when practised by the lower.⁵⁵

At the same time it would seem that as the local Tories and Conservatives reached their nadir in terms of support, and as the old system began to crumble, they became united as a party in their opposition to reform. Also, as we shall shortly discover, they began to adopt the political tactics of their opponents. But the above quote does reveal the divisions existing amongst the radicals and reformers at this time. Some were uncompromising in their demands and were doomed to oblivion as the 'respectable' political

parties reasserted themselves and as local methods of political containment and control were put into place. Others were backward looking, like Cobbett, Sadler, Oastler, who wished for former privileges and rights to be returned. These people were attacking those reformers who wished to move forward and progress, a group who became the developing Liberal Party. So what we are seeing at this stage of historical development is the formation of parties and ideologies, with the radicals momentarily in the ascendent, but about to be torn apart into moderate Liberal progressives, radical Tories, and an extreme radical rump. This last group was to grow again during the Chartist years, but as we shall discover, by the end of the 1830's and the beginning of the 1840's the party political system had begun to modernize and the radical extremists posed nothing like the threat they had in the 1830's.

The Reform election itself reveals the splits in the radical camp. There were two candidates drawn from each of the warring sides, Hunt himself and a Captain Forbes, who made advances to the Cobbettite faction. The middle class Liberals produced Charles Crompton, the son of Doctor Crompton, who stood unsuccessfully for the town in the 1818 election. Meanwhile, the reforming Whigs brought forward the Honourable H.T. Stanley and the Conservatives, the Peelite Peter Hesketh Fleetwood. The three-way radical split of Huntites, Cobbettites and Liberal progressives assured the fairly comfortable election of Hesketh

Fleetwood (3,372 votes) and Stanley (3,273 votes). Hunt was placed third (2,054 votes), Forbes fourth (1,928 votes) and the Liberal Crompton pulled a mere 118 votes to finish bottom of the poll.

The voting reflected a fairly clear divide between the working classes and the rest, as the Pilot made plain in December:

'The lower orders are notoriously for Hunt and Forbes ... as to the higher, the whole (are) pledged to either Mr Hesketh-Fleetwood or Mr Stanley.'⁵⁶

This was an impression confirmed by the Preston Chronicle in its inquest on the failure of the Liberal Crompton. The paper reported that any feeling for Crompton:

'... was completely overpowered by the strong determination entertained by one class of voters to throw out, and by another to bring in, Mr Hunt.'⁵⁷

Amongst the Preston working class trades it was the weavers who were most solidly radical in terms of voting patterns at this election, as the table overleaf reveals.⁵⁸

It could well be that the spinners were more directly subjected to influence by their employers, an explanation which is given credence by the fact that 53 (75%) of the 71 spinning overlookers voted for the Conservative and Whig, and only 10 (14%) for both radicals. The overlookers were

more obviously dependent upon the millowners for their relative superiority of status, as well as their jobs. However, it can be seen that there were independent spirits here also as evidenced by the fact that of the 10 who voted for the Radicals and the 14 (20%) who split between radical and another party, this suggests that influence or coercion was not an unsurmountable obstacle to free voting or to the emergence of 'opinion' politics even amongst this elite group of working class operatives.

If the main strength of middle class politics was in the trading district of Trinity ward in the centre of town and the genteel housing area of St George's ward, then in terms of geographical spread, the main area of working class radicalism was in St Peter's ward on the northern fringes of the town. Here 55% of the spinners and 82% of the weavers voted radical, and here the employers were evenly split between Whig and Conservative. If this gives little support to the notion of employer influence, even less support is given by Fishwick ward to the south east. It was here that the Conservative Horrocks might be expected to be greatest. Yet 75% of the weavers and 40% of the spinners voted radical. It would appear employer influence or coercion played little part in the way that the working class polled in this election.

TABLE XII THE VOTING PATTERN OF THE SPINNERS AND WEAVERS OF PRESTON, 1832

	<u>Weavers %</u>	<u>Spinners %</u>
Voted for Whig or Tory, or Both	197 = 22.75	159 = 53.36
Voted for Radicals (Hunt and Forbes)	699 = 72.25	139 = 46.64
Total:	866 = 100%	298 = 100%

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But there was a disparity between the strength of radicalism amongst the spinners on the one hand and the weavers on the other and one explanation could be that the spinners were more used to industrial factory system than the weavers who, in recent past, had revealed a marked resistance to the factory system and the men who controlled it, as we saw in chapter three above. Thus it is possible that more of the spinners would identify their interests with the traditional political parties than would the weavers, if only from a sense of resignation about a system which appeared impossible to change by mere politics. It could well have been therefore that the spinners perceived their political interests in different ways from the more recalcitrant and independently orientated weavers.

It would seem that the key factors, even at this early stage, were organization and leadership and in relation to the working class the radicals - even though they were split - possessed these two important elements in 1832/33 in both local and national politics.

As we noted above, the strength of radical feelings amongst the working class must have been worrying for both Whigs and Conservatives, for if it could not be contained they both could be affected by an organized working class voting in unison against them, even after the effects of the Reform Act had begun to reduce the collective strength of this class in the electorate. This form of 'political'

working class activity profoundly disturbed moderate middle class opinion who, previously to 1832, believed that the 'lower orders' were only capable of spontaneous violence or being led by zealous, self-interested demagogues. The example of 1830 and 1832 alerted the middle classes to the dangers of extreme radicalism amongst the working class. They were, of course, assisted by the terms of the Act itself. Here D C Moore's point⁶⁰ that the Act was more of 'cure' than a concession and that it served to stabilise the system by imposing tighter controls on precisely who was allowed into the political contract, seems reasonable. However, in Preston this was to be a long term effect. In the short term the working class were still the largest single social group on the electoral register and attempts had to be made to steer them away from the dangers of extreme radicalism.

In other industrial towns, as we shall discover, various methods were utilized - either wittingly or unwittingly - to contain the working class, through tighter middle class leadership, control of welfare provision, education, or heightened levels of dependency on the middle class manufacturers. However at Preston the levels of dependency remained fairly low until the mid-1940's. Therefore other methods were attempted and it is here that party political organisation, political integration and the perseverance of working class based issues became important.

3. The Role of Issues, Leadership and Party Political Organization After 1832

What is noticeable about Preston, marking it off both from its own previous political history and from the market and county towns examined in our previous chapter, is the extent of working class political involvement in the early 1830's and the uncompromising nature of that group's radicalism did not in the long term auger well for the Liberals and Conservatives. Similarly the national picture appeared to bode ill for the established political groups. The reforming Whigs held a majority but little was known about the loyalties of the independent radicals in Parliament or the nationalistic radicals. The Conservatives and Tories had been decimated securing a mere 150 seats in the reformed House of Commons though their control of The Lords was apparently safe. Overt coercion on the part of the authorities had worked in the past - indeed was continued in the agricultural counties of the south - but the growth of industrialisation and the densely packed urban centres were seen as impossible to control by the force of arms. It was in this atmosphere that new methods of party political control were attempted in the decade after 1832.

If Preston's radicals failed in 1832 then the progressive Liberals suffered an even more disastrous result, their candidate, Crompton, polling a derisory 118 votes. However, in many ways this is a false picture because, in

both national and local politics, advanced Liberalism and reforming Whiggery were becoming identified as being but two wings of the same party; a party that by 1836-7 was to be formally organized with local branches much in the way that the Conservatives began to do in 1833-4. However, in Preston the formation of the local Conservative clubs and associations took place rather later than in other industrial boroughs in the north west. Part of the reason may have been the solid middle class support given to Conservatism in 1832 plus the confidence of the Conservative Corporation and their ability to maintain their influence in Parliamentary politics. This involvement of the Corporation in constituency politics was, as we noted in the previous chapter, absent in Lancaster but in Preston had been a permanent feature since the eighteenth century. However, if the Conservatives of Preston did not organize as speedily as in other towns - Bolton or Blackburn, for example - they did attempt to attract working class support at the expense of the Whig reformers and progressive Liberals, doing so through the use of issues.

One issue which was strong in Preston - due in large part to the leadership of Joseph Livesey - was temperance. Here, from an early date, Conservatism's characteristic defence of popular working class pastimes, customs and traditions emerges at an early date as this report of a Temperance meeting in the Preston Pilot reveals:-

... the water worshippers, who assembled in considerable strength as before; and, as before their arch enemies and relentless tormentors, the anti-hypocritical party, took post in still greater within fair talking range. According, on the one side the air was vent with the loud bellowings of the fanatics, and on the other was to be heard the continuing shouts of holiday mirth mingled with the incessant sound of escaping corks.⁶¹

It was also at this early stage that religious sectarianism and politics became inextricably linked in Preston. In mid-1832 a Protestant Conservative Society was formed in Ireland.⁶² By 1833 branches of this overtly Orange order had been formed on the mainland, and there was a strong suspicion that they were linked to the local Conservative organizations. The Preston Pilot enthused openly:-

Some money was given to poor protestants imprisoned as a result of electoral rioting, to be given bail. Herein we see the usefulness of this most excellent society. Before time poor protestants have been obliged to sit down with their grievances for want of some organized means of defence against oppression, but now they have only to complain to their Conservative Society, and their wrongs are redressed.⁶³

It mattered little that the paper had only recently condemned the newly formed Liberal Mechanics Institute as 'injurious to the public'.⁶⁴ It is clear that party lines were drawn from an early date in Preston, and that the Conservatives sought to attract support from many quarters including the non-Liberal non-conformists, and the non-temperance working class as well as those Anglicans who were overtly anti-Catholic.

Between 1833 and 1836 there were regional developments in party organisation. The South Lancashire Conservative Association was formed in early 1833. However, in Preston itself there appears to have been little activity on this front. As the election of 1835 approached there is evidence to suggest that older and more traditional political rituals were being fused into more overtly opinion-based tendencies - as this letter from the then Conservative M.P. for Preston, Peter Hesketh-Fleetwood reveals:-

On my way to Preston today, when at some distance from the town of Kirkham, I beheld a procession of persons coming towards me. I observed that they had a banner, it was not what one would call a splendid one, to me, however, nothing could be more so - it was a shawl of true blue colour, they had also some instruments of music. On approaching my carriage they insisted on taking the horses from it, and thus having the opportunity of escorting me themselves ... Respect like this could not be given I think from any other motive than a respect for my public principles ... I said also that I would vote for a repeal of the Poor Law Amendment Act and toasted England's greatness; Capital and Labour.⁶⁵

This was a popular display of traditional eighteenth century political ritual, but now beginning to be linked to issues in a 'modern' way.

As the 1830's progressed, working class issues fell loosely into two broad categories. Firstly there were those questions which the middle classes deemed relevant to working class existence; for example, education, religion, improved standards of moral behaviour, health and the

dispensation of both public and private charity. Arguably some of these areas - like health and charitable aid might be seen as something which any sane person would desire. However, the point is that in the main there were areas which, in the 1830's and 1840's were policies which were deemed good for the working class but which the latter did not seem to have perceived as being central to their interests. This brings us to the second category of issues which were those which the working class themselves believed to be important, often quite independently of the middleclasses. These questions included political rights, the New Poor Law and a range of issues which centred on the place of work and the community. However, in a sense it is a test of relative working class and middle class power to see which sort of issue became part of the political agenda at any given point. It is also important to see who caused it to be so. It does appear that local politicians -and some national ones - pursued working class questions to further their own and their party's fortunes. This is not meant to be a cynical judgement but one which suggests that opinion-based politics were emerging - in the industrial districts at least - as the salient factor in political life in the post-Reform era.

The Preston election of 1835 was a particularly vicious affair, with feelings of religious bigotry and party animosity running high and spilling over into riot.⁶⁶ The Radicals did not fair well: although a predominantly

working class electorate survived until 1847 they suffered because of the improved organisation of other movements in the town. Even by 1835 the popular radicals were being squeezed between the two established parties. These parties began to establish a commanding influence over the voters and successfully - even during the bulk of the Chartist years - diverted attention away from the Radicals' sweeping political aims, which seemed beyond hope of realization in the post-1832 political world, and towards the more mundane, but realizable issues connected with the material interests of the working class, and, in the case of Preston, religious sectarianism. In terms of the broad political spectrum the popular radicals can be viewed as operating on the left of Preston's politics with the moderate reformers, made up of an alliance of the Anti-Corn Law League and prominent Roman Catholic leaders, occupying the area slightly to the left of centre. The right wing became identified with the zealous Protestant squire of Cuerden Hall, Robert Townley Parker, who managed from an early date to exploit the sectarian and anti-Irish feelings of a section of the working class of Preston.

In the 1830's the chief Conservative issues were the defence of Protestantism and the opposition to the New Poor Law. The Liberals possessed an able leader in Livesey and their fortunes were enhanced by their use of the factory question and the issues of cheap food. It was not until the 1840's and the decline of Charism and the growth of

working class suspicions of the Anti-Corn Law League, that Preston Conservatives took up the factory questions with any gusto. This was not the case in other industrial north western towns, as we shall subsequently discover. Livesey was unquestionably a powerful leader of working class opinion in Preston, and the Conservative chief tactic was to ridicule his moral self-righteousness as we noted above. However, they also utilized a more practical avenue of political control, and this was the annual registration of electors. They did this in two ways. The first was through their control of the overseers deriving from their domination of the Corporation and its appointees. The second was through the Conservative Associations.

In Preston by 1837 there were three Conservative party clubs in operation; the first was the North Lancashire Conservative Association, the second the Preston Operative Conservative Association and finally the Conservative Registration Society. Before we discuss the role of issues in more detail let us examine how the local Conservatives began to organize themselves.

The North Lancashire Association was formed as an affiliate to the South Lancashire Conservative Association but was based in Preston and catered for the organizational needs of the party outside the Parliamentary boundaries of the boroughs. This body was also the controlling Conservative organisation in the Northern half of the region and on to

which all other party bodies - including those in the boroughs - were subservient. It was formed in Preston in June 1835.⁶⁷ The Association usually met biannually with a General Meeting held in September of each year. It was composed of a General Committee of 115 powerful members of the party drawn from both the county and the boroughs. The President was Lord Skelmersdale; the chairman Sir Thomas Darlymple Hesketh; the treasurer was the Preston banker James Pedder; and Charles Buck and Edward Gorst were joint secretaries. As a body the Association was essentially Peelite in character rather than Tory, as Hesketh made clear at the outset.

... the protection of property is the principle upon which all Conservative Associations are founded ... We not only own that we must go along with the spirit and temper of the age, but declare our willingness to countenance and co-operate on every useful reform of abuses.⁶⁸

The assembly was told in no uncertain terms what the precise purposes of the Association. According to Hesketh it was

'... to give the whole weight of your influence to furthering the spread of Conservative principles, and thus arrest the spirit of innovation and destruction with which all interests are being threatened or disregarded.'⁶⁹

The General Committee was split into regions and linked to the various local associations in a given town or borough and a management committee retained an office in Preston

which received information about new members and information concerning the various registers throughout the region. This was then forwarded to Bonham, the Conservative's national agent, at the Carlton in London.

Initially, the formation of this Association in North Lancashire was viewed with deep suspicion by Lord Stanley, one of the members for that division, he believed the association undermined his independence as a member and usurped his influence. In a letter to Stanley, a future Prime Minister, Hesketh spelt out in no uncertain terms what the objects of the Association were:

Our object is not that of 'weakening', but of protecting 'the prerogatives of the crown'. Not of 'undermining' but of maintaining 'the independence of the House of Lords'. Not of 'controlling' but the restoring and securing 'the freedom of the House of Commons', enslaved as it now is under the domination of the IRISH AGITATOR AND HIS SATELLITES.⁷⁰ (Hesketh's emphasis)

For their part the Liberals acted swiftly to this increased organization on the part of their political opponents. On 27 June they formed the Preston Constitutional Reform Association which, in terms of the locality, completed the symmetry of the political organization of the established parties and further squeezed the popular radicals of the working class between the two main party groupings. The Preston Constitutional Reform Association called for the secret ballot, biennial parliaments and the formation of a committee 'whose especial responsibility it would be to

take care of the registration'⁷¹.

At this moment the Conservatives formed the second and third of their local association. In February 1836 they created the Preston Operative Conservative Association⁷² and somewhat later, the Preston Conservative Registration Committee.⁷³ For the purpose of our study the Operative branch was the most important, but before we outline its functions we must note that the existence of a separate Registration Committee meant that the Operative branch - although it was expected to contribute registration information - was not merely a middle class inspired device to crudely exact registration information from the large working class electorate, but was intended from the start as a separate working class based branch with separate objectives and functions. The Registration Committee acted as an overall co-ordinator of registration information for the whole borough in both Parliamentary and municipal politics, but in any organizational terms was a separate body.

The Operative branch had an initial membership of around 200, and from the composition of its 15 man committee does genuinely appear to have been representative of the working class. Of the committee whose occupations can be traced there was one grocer (George Addison), one clerk (Edward Vardy, Vice-President), four spinners (Robert Hart, Thomas Baxter, John Barrow and Richard Chadwick), and four weavers

(William Ambler, John Walmsley, John Fletcher and William Alanson). The Association's first President, Philip Addison, was a shopkeeper. Membership was free but the wealthier members were encouraged to pay subscription in 'shares' (2s) and 'half shares'. Out of these funds the annual voters registration fees of one shilling was paid by the society for its members and they were enroled into the party's building society.⁷⁴ It was alleged at the time that this superior organization had been a major factor in the party gaining both of the seats for the town in 1837, with Hesketh-Fleetwood being partnered by Robert Townley Parker. At this election Parker stated that he would vote for a repeal of the New Poor Law and oppose the principles of political economy.⁷⁵ The party's success was analysed in a subsequent article in the Preston Pilot:-

Who can doubt for a moment that the triumphs obtained in the late borough elections - viz -, though of Liverpool, Preston, Lancaster, are attributable in a very great degree to the Conservative feeling infused into those towns through the operations of the respective Conservative associations in them ... We trust therefore that the advantages which have resulted from these associations will be kept carefully in mind, not however to be merely remembered as things past and no longer of further use, but rather as an encouragement and stimuli for future unremitting exertion in increasing and employing those means, ... which have been so productive of such important advantages.⁷⁶

Parker himself acknowledged the work done by the Operative Association,

'... the services rendered to the late elections by these bodies of men have been felt to be of the highest importance.'⁷⁷

However, he was quick to point out that the operative members of the party, and those working class electors who voted Conservative, had not been influenced by their employers.

'It had been imputed', said Parker, 'that their support had been under the slavish feeling of subserviency to the dictation of their masters, but I will repel such slanderous imputations with the most unqualified denial. The operatives had given their consent first, and then consulted with their masters afterwards, regardless of any attempts which might have been made to prevent them from proving their determination.'⁷⁸

What is interesting on this evidence is that they should consult at all, but further that they should do so when they had made up their minds.

By 1837-38 the Preston Operative Conservative Association numbered over 500⁷⁹, by the summer of 1839 it was placed at 650 members. To gauge the significance of these figures we can compare them with the working class membership of the Preston Radical Association, the governing body of the local Chartists. On the eve of the 'Sacred Month' in July 1839 the Chartists claimed a membership of 400⁸⁰ which suggests on the one hand that in terms of actual working class membership the Conservatives were more than equal of the popular radicals, and on the other that working class

support for the Charter and the Sacred Month was not great. This last point was illustrated in a letter from the President of the Radical Association, Robert Walton, and its Secretary, George Halton, to the Chartist National Convention in London in late July 1839.

I am directed by the Committee of the Preston Radical Association to inform you that they have communicated with eight of the principal trades of the town and with the exception of two or three they are decidedly against the Sacred Month. Our Association numbers about 400 members, many of the members possess influence over their brethren and are very determined but the Committee conceives that there has not been the organisation for a successful struggle.⁸¹

The Conservatives claimed that the proposed general strike had been a complete failure in Preston and suggested that one of the reasons was that working class support for constitutional principles had grown as a direct consequence of the efforts of the Operative Conservatives.⁸² Thus by the end of the 1830s and growth of popular radicalism 'which was rife in places of no great distance'⁸³ one of the chief aims of setting up operative branches - that of containing the growth of political extremism among the working classes - seems to have been effective in Preston.

The operative branch of Preston's Conservative Association functioned in a way typical of these early political clubs. It was divided into ward organizations which met at best twice a month to receive new members, but more frequently during local or national elections. In the town centre

there was a central clubroom⁸⁴ with discussion classes, reading rooms and social facilities. There were tea-parties, fetes, outings, a brass band, a sick club (from 1838)⁸⁵ and as we noted above, a building society. All these benefits served to bind the member closer to his party, and, in turn, benefitted the party by showing to the world that it catered to the needs of all social groups and not merely the elites. This meant that by 1838 Preston's Conservatives had organizationally outpaced the radicals and Liberals. In terms of local power, this effectively took four related forms. Firstly the Conservatives had increased their grip on the apparatus of power by effecting a breakthrough in the development of the formal party structure by integrating the support of a section of the working class. Secondly, they began to outstrip their opponents in the various contests for local power. From 1837 to 1841 the Conservatives returned both of the town's M.P.s and had a council majority. Thirdly, the Conservatives expanded the sources of their support and thus the sources of their power. Fourthly, the structure of power in terms of the issues the party allowed to be discussed, particularly those issues which affected their members' direct interest. This brings us directly to the role which issues played in the restructuring of Preston's politics after 1832 and the integration of sections of its working class effectively on equal terms.⁸⁶

As we shall see in the next chapter, in the north and east

of the region radical Toryism played a significant part in working class political orientation. But in Preston it does not appear to have been a major feature. This is probably linked to leadership. In Preston the Conservatives began to take the lead in the Poor Law question from 1836-37, but they were not particularly radical. They adhered to the law and focussed their efforts on gaining a majority on the local Board of Guardians and administering the Act with the least possible pain. The opinion of the Operative Association was put forward in March 1838 thus:

... there cannot be any question that some of its provisions are of a character not only repugnant, but, more properly speaking, revolting to the best feelings of human nature ... the most reasonable conduct would seem to be, preserve a course of opposition, but still in a temperate and legal manner.⁸⁷

This course of action appears to have been followed, but the Conservatives also displayed their resolve keeping popular issues within the political orbit when, in April 1838, they managed to gain the chairmanship of the Board of Guardians from Livesey, who had mounted a strong campaign that year.⁸⁸ They also suggested that Operative Conservatism and hostility to the New Poor Law were synonymous and that Townley-Parker's election to Parliament in 1837 was greatly assisted by his appeasement of the working class and his opposition to the New Poor Law. The editor of the Pilot saw this as a major turning point in the town's political history:-

The present appeared to be a remarkable annal in electioneering matters, for on all former occasions the higher orders were always in advance, but at Mr Parker's election the operatives took the lead. There was now no forcing the votes of the operatives ... The first man to put his name to the requisition inviting Mr Parker to stand was an operative.⁸⁹

This is, I believe, an example of opinion politics, but one of the problems with opinion politics for the politician is that if he heads opinion or offers pledges and fails to deliver, the electorate can subsequently turn nasty. This indeed happened to Parker in 1841 when, in the election of that year, he was defeated by the popular radical, Sir George Strickland. This erosion of Parker's working class base was probably less to do with his own record on the question of poverty as with the fact that the Liberals had now set up their own Operative Reform Association in 1841, and that issue itself was seen as less important than the factory reform issue which, as we shall see in due course, was under the control of Livesey and the radicals, at least until the early 1840s. The Conservative split of 1847 had a dreadful effect in Preston. As we shall discover shortly this was not the case in other parts of the north-west, but in Preston the small Peelite fringe effectively wrecked Parker's attempt at a political comeback in the election of 1847. Nevertheless, Operative Association continued to function even if its membership was being seriously eroded, and working class support for Conservatism seems to have been steady throughout the period 1841-1851. For example, if we take the ward in which most of the mills

were concentrated (Christ Church) in 1841 we see that Parker pulled 211 votes to Fleetwood's (the eventual winner of the contest overall) 180, and Strickland's 174 votes.⁹⁰ The situation is difficult to precisely assess because of the serious decline of the old franchise holders who tended to be working class. Furthermore, the defection of Hesketh-Fleetwood to the Liberals just prior to the election of 1841 was especially hurtful to the Conservatives. But by 1852 Parker had returned to be top of the poll in the election of that year. His links with the working class were stressed, but his incitement of religious bigotry coupled with rising tensions in this area were also contributory reasons for his success.⁹¹ There was a Conservative Club in operation in 1852 which boasted 'considerable working class support amongst its ranks'.⁹² Between 1847 and 1850 there were few mentions of Operative Conservatism in the Preston press but by 1852 they are once again in evidence. Indeed the ward branches are still operational as a meeting held by the operative Conservatives of Fishwick ward testifies.⁹³ This was a meeting held by the members of that ward branch to offer a vote of thanks to Samuel Oddie, a weaver, for his work in the ward on behalf of Townley-Parker. Elsewhere throughout the 1850's Operative Conservatism continued to be a major force, as in the case of Wigan⁹⁴, but at Preston the Conservatives began to utilize another weapon apart from organization and religious intolerance in an attempt to win working class support. From the later 1840's the

Conservatives of Preston began to become increasingly involved in the factory question. In other parts of the region they had done so from the 1830's but in Preston at this time the issue had been dominated by the leadership of Joseph Livesey. But in 1841 Livesey had joined the Anti-Corn Law League, announcing that capital and labour 'mutually and reciprocally acted for each others advantage' and that 'the repeal of the wicked bread tax was emphatically a WORKING MAN'S QUESTION'.⁹⁵ However, many working people were highly suspicious of the political economy of the free trade Liberals and Livesey began to loose his following within the local Ten Hours Movement.

This left the way open for the Conservatives to begin to concern themselves with the questions. In July 1849 they invited the elderly Richard Oastler to speak in Preston in defence of the 1847 Act and against the machinations of the 'Manchester League' who were in the process of attempting to get the Act repealed. This merely served to confirm to Oastler and to many others that 'the League' was synonymous with the Liberalism of the political economy school. In his speech Oastler issued a scarcely veiled attack on the former friends of factory reform - like Livesey and Mitchell - who had now deserted it. He said:

Now we have some of our leaders, as they call themselves, those whom we formally trusted ... advising us to take the law and unsettle it; and they advise to put on again those chains which have just been taken off ... I do not like snakes in the grass. I would rather face the League.⁹⁶

The Preston Pilot, the mouthpiece of the non-Peelite Conservatives, put the issue in a more basic way. What the working class required of the law was a measure of protection against unscrupulous (Liberal) millowners; to protect them

'against avarice and tyranny, and oppression - protection against their own wants and their own weakness' - and this through the unbridled lust and love of gain, that seeks its own end and pursues its own object, unchecked and unrestrained by any case at what cost to those below them.'⁹⁷

Even before the 1847 Act one Conservative millowner, Robert Gardner, had adopted an eleven-hour day without cutting wages and maintained there was no fall in production; his 700 workers' happiness and productivity had both increased and he would adopt a ten-and-a-half hour day 'without the slightest fear of suffering a loss'. When John Bright challenged Gardner's figures and assertions, Gardner's workers defended him.⁹⁸ Later, in 1850 an address appeared in the Conservative Pilot from the 'factory operatives of Preston' to the mill owners of Preston. It began:

Gentlemen. We the factory workers of Preston beg leave to tender you our sincere and grateful thanks for the fair and honourable manner in which, as a body, you have acquiesced in the recent law for the regulations of factory labour.'⁹⁹

At approximately the same time, in the national context, Disraeli was making his 'state of the Nation' speech in the House of Commons. Here he attacked the Liberals record

vis-a-vis the working class, and further attacked the New Poor law demanding to know why the number of paupers had increased by 74% since 1846 while expenses on the poor were up by only 25%.¹⁰⁰ But it must be said that in Preston the Conservatives - the New Poor Law apart - were slow to pursue working class issues. In the 1830's and later in the 1850's the Conservative manufacturers attacked strikes called by the working class in as vehement terms as the Liberals, and those strikes were, at times, particularly bitter.¹⁰¹

Later Developments in Preston

The Conservatives of Preston attracted the support of sections of the working class by a combination of means. As befits an old borough, deference and paternalism were still in evidence, as were the older rituals of political activity - some merely for show and others for direct gain. They also utilized the deep religious differences between the majority Protestants and the minority Catholics, continuing thus in the 1850's and 1860's with the added ingredient of hostility to the Irish. They attracted some support by their 'down-to-earth' approach and attitudes of toleration towards working class pursuits like gambling and drinking, whilst at the same time debunking the pretensions of the moral crusaders like Livesey. But they also organized effectively, and, as we have seen, from an early date, they utilized issues and working class opinions,

particularly with regard to poverty - stressing the old responsibilities of wealth and paternalism. They organized acts of private charity, they built Sunday and day schools in the parishes of the poor, but at the same time they stuck to their principles by maintaining the Church Rate and objecting to voluntarism.

However, what marked Preston out was the substantial working class vote in the town and its continuing involvement in politics - particularly up to 1847. It would seem that Preston was a mixture of the politics of opinion and of influence. The size of the electorate worked against the widespread use of market politics yet there were electoral riots and intimidation. All the same the overall trend was more towards the appeasing of electors and non-electors through the force of argument and opinion, and this was much more apparent than in Lancaster or the traditional market towns. After 1832, moreover, the Corporation attempted to put an end to the old disruptive political rituals and traditions. They banned the use of traditional party colours, the use of musical bands, and the chairing of candidates. This was carried further by the Bribery Acts of 1854 and possibly also because of the disappearance and increasing age of the working class electorate. Preston was developing a 'respectable' political character. In 1857 the Mayor, Lawrence Spencer, told the electors at the end of the poll:

I believe that this is the first election within my memory for the borough of Preston at which the electors and non-electors have had an opportunity of listening to the sentiments of (the) candidates ... (you listened to them) and it goes to show that whatever pains have been taken in your education, whatever advantages you may derive from society, on occasions like this, when you would be expected to be excited to a great degree ... without drink ... without bribery, corruption or violence ... you have elected the members.¹⁰¹

It would appear that by the end of the 1850's the electors and the working class of Preston could be contained and controlled by the established political parties. Let us briefly recall the general political trends in Preston. We began this look at Preston with the working class extreme radicals in the ascendent. At the election of 1832 the radical split allowed the Whigs and Conservatives to share the seats. This was repeated in 1835. In 1837 the Conservatives claimed both seats, but Hesketh-Fleetwood - one of the members - was on the verge of defecting. In 1841 the Conservatives lost, and the Liberals gained both seats. The refusal of Townley Parker to make any overtures to the Peelites cost him the election of that year, but he still played on Protestant sympathies, and attacked the 1834 Poor Law. At this Parker attacked the Liberals over their reluctance to support the Health of Towns Bill and linked this measure and public health generally to the needs of the working class.¹⁰³ This contest also occasioned what the Pilot termed 'most dreadful rioting'¹⁰⁴ between the Conservative and Liberal working classes, the Peelites, incidentally were effectively leaderless and ineffectual in

Preston.

The Conservatives once again gained a seat for Townley-Parker in 1852, and for his successor R.A. Cross in 1857 and 1859. The election of 1862 was a by-election caused by the resignation of Cross. The Liberals brought forward a Liverpool merchant, George Melly, but Conservative candidate Sir Thomas Hesketh won the seat easily. In 1865 the Conservatives returned two members unopposed, the only uncontested election in the whole of the period under discussion. The working class once again became the greatest electoral group after the Second Reform Act in the elections of 1868. The conservative candidates on this occasion were Hesketh once again, and the head of the massive Horrocks' textile business, Edward Harman. Religion was again the chief issue of debate with the Conservatives opposing Irish disestablishment as a precedent for English subservience to Rome. Harman came top of the poll with Hesketh second, a Conservative success which was to be repeated in many of the mill towns of the north west as we shall subsequently discover.

Thus the Conservative Party in Preston managed to counter the growth of Liberalism for most of the period under discussion. Only in the early and mid-1840s did they fail when the Anti-Corn Law League was at its height, especially with regard to its appeal to the lower middle classes, led as they were by the redoubtable Joseph Livesey. But

Livesey, by moving closer to Manchester School Liberalism, alienated much of his working class support through his abandoning the Factory Question, and here the Conservatives took advantage, especially after 1847. This trend of the Conservatives, alternating or for the most part sharing power with the Liberals, cannot be detected in the arena of local politics during this time. Throughout the 1820's and the early 1830's the Tories and Conservatives controlled the Corporation. In the years following the imposition of the Municipal Reform Act they literally dominated local politics, as Table XIII overleaf clearly demonstrates. I would suggest the main reason for this was their increased level of organization and the fairly extensive powers given over to the Liberal dominated Improvement Commission leaving the Conservatives to control the Council. However, with regard to this first point it should be noted that even after the Small Tenements Act in the mid-1850's which gave the municipal franchise to the working class, Table XIII shows that the Conservatives maintained their control of the council.¹⁰⁶

In terms of local politics, the progressive Liberals do not seem to have been popular with the working class before 1870. This was probably due to their record in industrial relations. In both major disputes of the period, the spinners strike of 1837-37 and the '10 per cent' dispute of 1853-54, it was the Liberal employers who resisted the demands of the working class and came in for the most

Table XIII Political and occupational analysis
of Preston town council, 1835-1860

Year	Political					Occupational				
	Cons.	Libs.	Rad's.	Majority		Textile Mfrs.	Prof's.	Merchs. and Shops.	Others	
				Cons.	Libs.					
1835	29	13	6	10	-	16	10	16	6	
1836	32	11	5	16	-	16	12	14	6	
1837	35	9	4	22	-	17	13	11	7	
1838	39	7	2	30	-	19	13	10	6	
1839	42	6	-	36	-	20	11	13	4	
1840	42	6	-	36	-	20	11	12	5	
1841	43	5	-	37	-	19	12	12	5	
1842	43	5	-	37	-	18	15	12	3	
1843	42	6	-	36	-	19	15	12	2	
1844	43	5	-	36	-	18	16	13	1	
1845	41	7	-	34	-	20	16	10	2	
1846	38	10	-	28	-	17	19	9	3	
1847	35	13	-	22	-	19	17	10	2	
1848	34	14	-	20	-	18	16	12	2	
1849	35	13	-	22	-	16	18	12	2	
1850	37	11	-	26	-	18	16	11	3	
1851	38	10	-	28	-	19	16	10	3	
1852	39	9	-	30	-	18	16	11	3	
1853	39	6	3	30	-	16	14	15	3	
1854	40	5	3	32	-	13	18	16	1	
1855	40	7	1	32	-	11	14	19	4	
1856	39	9	-	30	-	10	16	18	4	
1857	38	11	-	27	-	12	15	15	6	
1858	36	11	1	24	-	13	13	16	6	
1859	33	14	1	18	-	15	12	16	5	
1860	32	15	1	16	-	16	12	15	5	

Sources: Preston Pilot, Preston Guardian,
and the Preston Chronicle

criticism from the working class leaders.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, in the '10 per cent' dispute the strike leaders asked Robert Townley Parker to act as their 'umpire' in the dispute.¹⁰⁷ The Preston Pilot appeared to support the working class:

The operatives had no other choice left to them at present but (to) strike to resist the tyranny of the manufacturing class, and to force, to some extent, a modification of their demands upon their employers.¹⁰⁸

Thus in local politics the Conservatives appeared to be united and the Liberals less so, and, importantly, the Conservatives had superior organization. It was common for local politicians in the first half of the nineteenth century to play down party conflicts in the council chamber whilst maximising them at elections. The Preston Conservatives were masters of this tactic. In 1837 for example they utilized the power of the Operative branch of the party to full effect as the following passage reveals. According to the editor of the Pilot the municipal contests in 1837 were 'set up from political motives' which he stated as 'an object altogether foreign to the purpose of securing the most efficient guardians and managers of the corporation's funds'. In Fishwick ward a Liberal cotton spinner with two years experience on the council was defeated by the President of the Operative Conservative Association, Philip Addison. The Pilot positively gloated.

But he (Barton) is a cotton spinner, and has his mill in the ward, and that is an accidental circumstance of no mean advantage on the occasion of an election where local influence and interest are much needed.¹⁰⁹

The man he lost to was

the President of the Operative Conservative Association, without the local influence of Mr Barton or his experience in municipal affairs.¹¹⁰

Some may have desired that municipal politics be free of party political battles, but not so the Conservatives. Resolution Seven of the Operative Conservative Constitution ran

... that this Association holds itself pledged in all elections, borough or municipal, to use all its energy in returning Conservative members, and each member individually to delineate as much as possible the principles of this society.¹¹¹

Two things of note here. Firstly, that the operatives were aiming at winning elections for the party and secondly that they were supposed to extol the policies and principles of Conservatism.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at an old borough with - up to 1847 - large working class electorate. We have seen that the old traditional means of political activity did continue in the post 1832 world. But we have also seen how the opinions of this largely working class electorate were courted and how the local Conservatives came to terms with the post 1832 situation much more successfully than the

Liberals. We have seen how extreme working class radicalism was nullified and how the two established parties sought to gain working class support and how they attempted to integrate sections of the working class the steer them away from the damages of extreme radicalism. The political history can be seen as a mixture of the old form of political activity and of the new. By 1860 opinions and the influence of interest groups were the mode of political contests. The Conservatives had come to terms with the knowledge that in return for support and votes something had to be given in return. The interests of the working class had to be considered. This may appear to be a tautological statement but in terms of the analysis of power and the politics it represented was a significant departure from the pre-1832 situation. In these early years the working class were viewed as a mob, and the fact that they possessed the vote in Preston was seen as an anomaly. By the 1860's this was not the case. Preston's interest to the historians is that it had a large working class electorate that the elites attempted to control and direct. What of the boroughs created by the Act of 1832? Here the working class were mainly non-electors, but as we shall discover this did not mean that they had no political muscle or were not involved in the political affairs of their towns.

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2. Censuses for 1801 and 1871.
3. K.M. Spencer, A Social and Economic Geography of Preston, 1800-1865, unpublished MA thesis, University of Liverpool, 1968.
4. Census Returns 1811 - 1871 in Parliamentary Papers.
5. Spencer, op cit., pp. 199-200, Fig 6.3.
6. Attilus, Our Churches and Chapels, Preston, 1869, p. 12.
7. Spencer, op cit., pp. 75-7.
8. Parliamentary Papers, Cotton Famine Reports 1867, vol. 49, part 1, 1862, pp. 90 seq.
9. For a fuller description of this see (i) Bythell, The Sweated Trades, London, 1980 or (ii) J A Schmiechen, Sweated Industry and Sweated Labour, London, 1981.
10. P Joyce, Work, Society and Politics, Brighton, 1980.
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12. Assessment of Cotton Mills 1844, Harris Library, Preston, p. 677.
13. Parliamentary Papers 1834, Report on the Select Committee on Handloom Weavers Petitions, Question 5862-5.
14. Preston Pilot, 15.02.1832. '
15. Preston Guardian, 18.09.1847.
16. Preston Pilot, 26.06.1852.
17. See V A C Gatrell, 'Labour, Power and the Size of Firms in the Lancashire Cotton Industry in the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century', Economic History Review 30, 1977.
18. S D Chapman, 'Financial Restraints on the Growth of Firms in the Cotton Industry 1790 - 1850', Economic History Review 32, 1979.
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20. Assessment of Cotton Mills 1844, Harris Library.
21. Preston Guardian, 24.04.1847 and 8.05.1847.

22. Factory Inspectors Report quoted in Spencer, op cit.
23. D Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England. See especially Fraser's analysis of the social composition of Leeds Council, pp. 129-132. See also Baines's History of Lancashire and Whittle's History of Preston.
24. Commons Journal, 15.06.1835, p. 339.
25. See Chapter 8 below.
26. Preston Chronicle, 28.09.1833.
27. D Fraser, Power and Authority in the Victorian City, London, 1979.
28. ibid, p. 5.
29. Preston Chronicle, 15.08.1835.
30. ibid.
31. Quoted in E.P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, London, 1973, p. 16.
32. Burgess Lists, Census, Newspapers, Pull Books, 1837, 1852, 1857, Harris Library, Preston.
33. Hennock, op cit.
34. A Hewison, History of Preston, Preston, 1883, p. 129.
35. One of Sir Robert Peel's objections to the Reform Bill was that it would deny these traditional elective rights, and he cited Preston as an example. See Hansard, 14 October 1831.
36. Poll books, Harris Library, 1832, 35, 1847. See also Appendix 3 below.
- 37.
38. Register of Electors, Lancashire County Records Office.
39. Preston Chronicle, 19.10.1833.
40. T H B Oldfield, Representative History of Great Britain and Ireland, vol VI, London, 1816.
41. Preston Chronicle, 24.07.1830.
42. ibid, 31.07.1830.
43. Pollbook, Preston, December 1830, Lancs Record Office.

44. Preston Pilot, 14.08.1830.
45. ibid, 11.12.1831.
46. ibid, 18.06.1831.
47. Preston Chronicle, 3.09.1831, 10.09.1831, 17.09.1831.
48. ibid, 12.11.1831.
49. ibid.
50. ibid.
51. Address from one of the 3,730 Electors, 9.06.1832.
52. ibid, 16.06.1832.
53. op cit., 23.06.1832.
54. op cit., 16.06.1832.
55. Preston Chronicle, 11.08.1832.
56. Preston Pilot, 1.12.1832.
57. Preston Chronicle, 15.12.1832.
58. Poll Book 1832, Preston Reference Library.
59. Preston Poll Book, 1832, Napier and Goodain (Liberal/Whig), Catteralls (Liberal Whig), Birley Brothers (Conservative), H and A Dawson (Conservative).
60. D C Moore, '"Concession or Cure". The Sociological Premises of the First Reform Act.' Historical Journal, 1966.
61. Preston Pilot, 22.06.1833.
62. First noted in Preston Pilot, 14.04.1832.
63. ibid. 26.01.1833.
64. ibid. 6.10.1832.
65. Reprinted in Preston Pilot, 24.01.1835.
66. Preston Pilot, 28.03.1835, the result was a victory for Hesketh-Fleetwood (2,165 votes) and Stanley (2,092 votes), the radical T P Thompson pulled 1,385 votes and the Liberal T Smith 789 votes.
67. Preston Pilot, 6.06.1835.

68. Preston Pilot, 6.06.1835.
69. ibid.
70. Hesketh to Stanley, 13.06.1835, Derby Papers.
71. Preston Pilot, 27.06.1835.
72. ibid, 6.02.1836.
73. ibid, 7.10.1837.
74. Preston Pilot, 26.03.1836.
75. Preston Pilot, 29.07.1837.
76. ibid, 5.07.1837.
77. ibid, 12.08.1837.
78. Preston Pilot, 5.07.1837.
79. British Library Ad.M.s. 34245B, vol II, General Convention of the Industrial Classes - 1839, ff. 119. Walton and Halton to Lovett.
80. ibid. Nor was support within Preston itself particularly strong in the next phase of Chartism, the strikes of August 1842. According to the Preston Pilot most of the disturbance was created by activists from outside Preston. Preston Pilot, 13.08.1842.
82. Preston Pilot, 17.08.1839.
83. ibid.
84. In Cannon Street, Preston Pilot, 20.01.1838.
85. Preston Pilot, 10.02.1838.
86. Preston Pilot, 30.06.1838. At a dinner in June of this year the Pilot was pleased to observe such gentlemen as Joseph Bray, John Latteral and John Armstong 'sitting familiarly side by side with the respectable operative members'.
87. Preston Pilot, 31.03.1838.
88. Preston Chronicle, 14.04.1838; Northern Star, 14.04.1838. The chief theme of the Conservative campaign was the moderate operation of the New Poor Law in Preston.
89. Preston Pilot, 28.04.1838.
90. Poll Book for 1841, Preston Reference Library.

91. Preston Pilot, 3.07.1852.
92. Preston Pilot, 20.3.1852. His committee of 1852 consisted of the Vicar Parr, E Pedder, H Pedder (manufacturer), J Paley (banker), R Threllfall (manufacturer), J Heywood (seedsman) and T Walmey (weaver).
93. Preston Pilot, 9.10.1852.
94. ibid. 5.06.1852.
95. The Struggle, December 1841, pp. 1-8.
96. Report of the Public Meeting held at the Exchange Rooms, Preston, on the Ten Hours Act. Preston, 1849, p. 19.
97. Preston Pilot, 9.03.1850.
98. Quoted in J.T. Ward, The Factory Movement in Lancashire 1830-1855, Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 1965-66, p. 196.
99. Preston Pilot, 27.04.1850.
100. ibid. 14.09.1849.
101. In 1837 there was a bitter strike of spinners which lasted for over three months and the '10 per cent' dispute in the mid-1850's.
102. 1857 Preston Poll Book. Further evidence of this climate of political respectability comes from one of the candidates of the 1857 election. In March of that year the prospective Conservative member for Preston and future cabinet minister, R.A. Cross, wrote to the Liberal solicitor Henry Hall regarding the Bribery Acts. He asked four questions relating to (a) the hiring of printers, writers, canvassers, messengers and attendants (this was legal); (b) living rooms (this was regarded as hazardous as it may sway the owner's vote); (c) hiring transport to convey voters (answer as in (b)); and (d) could he pay for shop assistants for shopkeepers who wished to give their time in his cause. Answer, 'This is too hazardous to be allowable and should not be adopted'. Apparently the radical Strickland had dismissed all his paid canvassers. British Library, AD MS. 51269, ff.42, Cross to Hall, March 1857.
103. Preston Pilot, Preston Guardian, 24.07.1847, 31.07.1847.
104. Preston Pilot, 31.07.1847.

105. It is interesting to note that the Conservative Preston Pilot covered the Corporation meeting with the traditional thoroughness of the nineteenth century press but scarcely mentioned the Police Commission. With the Liberal Chronicle the reverse is true.
106. See H.I. Dutton and J.E. King, Ten Per Cent and No Surrender. The Preston Strike of 1853-54, Cambridge, 1971, *Passim*.
107. Preston Pilot, 1.10.1853.
108. ibid, 8.10.1853.
109. Preston Pilot, 4.11.1837.
110. ibid.
111. Rules and Constitution of the Preston Operative Conservative Association, Preston Pilot, 7.10.1837.

CHAPTER TEN. OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM AND LOCAL POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS: THE NEW BOROUGHES, BOLTON AND
BLACKBURN 1820-1870.

In the last chapter we looked at working class politics and Conservative party development in one of the old boroughs. In this chapter we intend by way of comparison to examine similar development in some of the North-West boroughs created by the Reform Act of 1832. We shall be focusing attention chiefly on the Blackburn area but also the general trends occurring in Bolton and we shall finally be looking briefly at developments in the region's largest and economically most important city, Manchester, and also Salford and radical Oldham. Thus hopefully, by the end of this chapter, we shall have a comparatively balanced study on which to base some analytical conclusions on the nature of party development and working class political integration in the decades before 1860.

Let us begin by moving in geographical terms some twelve miles south east of Preston to the town of Blackburn.

I GENERAL TRENDS OF WORKING CLASS DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW
BOROUGH BEFORE 1832.

A) BLACKBURN AND EAST LANCASHIRE.

As we saw in the last chapter that radicalism and working class political consciousness grew in Preston from the mid 1820's to 1832, but became less effective after this date due to the leadership splits which in turn split the working class radicals. Working class developments in Blackburn appeared to have followed a similar pattern, with some important qualifications. The first is that at Blackburn working class consciousness reached a very high level before 1826 and during the trade disputes of that year and secondly that by 1837/8 working class radicalism in Blackburn was not simply split, but rather scarcely may have existed at all. Another important difference is of course, whereas in Preston the great majority of working class males enjoyed the franchise before and after 1832, Blackburn was not enfranchised prior to the Reform Act, and afterwards only those holding property of 10 pounds rateable value were given the vote. Thus the working class were effectively left out of the political contract. In terms of local politics these voting rights are of less comparable importance in the case of Preston where working class were effectively disenfranchised with the adoption of a property qualification, and in the case of Blackburn the town did not become an incorporated borough until 1851. But as we shall see this did not mean that the working class never participated in local politics.

The occupational and economic structure of Blackburn is interesting. It differed from both Lancaster and Preston in that its populations was far larger than the former and smaller than the latter in the 1820's. Neither was it at the geographical centre of a major road network in the way both the others were.

It was predominantly a weaving town with a few manufacturers - the Feilden's, Hornby, Eccles's, Hopwood's - expanding their concerns to include spinning and the finishing of cotton goods. There were some coal mines in the area but in the main Blackburn was a cotton weaving town, with women becoming increasingly involved in the spinning of yarn, and hand loom weaving the preserve of the males. But there were several types of weavers in Blackburn in the 1820's. In Preston by the middle of the 1820's the weavers had switched over to power very peacefully and quickly, and, it should be remembered that there were other large scale industrial enterprises in that town - such as machine making - not to be found in Blackburn. Conversely, what could be found in Blackburn in the mid 1820's was a large proportion of hand loom weavers still operating in the town centre or within a couple of miles of the town itself. There were within the town several employers who operated hand-loom weaving sheds. Here anything from 10 to 30 weavers operated small 'dandy' looms making high quality shirting and other fabrics. By the middle of the 1830's, and certainly by 1840 this group of town centre weavers had disappeared and their work had been absorbed into the power loom weaving system.

However this was not the case with a second type of hand-loom weaver operating around Blackburn. These worked in the putting out or, as it was known locally, the 'fested' system. Here the weavers lived in small communities anything from 3 to 6 miles from the town centre working in their homes in areas such as Stanhill, Wendsley Fold, Shadsworth, Little Harewood, Whitebirk, Knuzden and Mile End. The cottage weavers unlike their textile counterparts in the woollen districts of Yorkshire, were not small self employed manufacturers, but wage earners, working a piece-rate system on rented looms and in rented cottages. These 'fested' weavers would be signed up to a cotton master, who would also operate a factory in the town centre. Robert Hopwood was one such employer, as was George Briggs, who maintained, at one period, he had eight hundred such weavers on his books.¹ In 1800, within a

three mile radius of the town there were said to be about 20,000 hand-loom weavers operating the fested system. By 1838, however, there were under 7,000 and their numbers were said to be decreasing daily.² In Blackburn, unlike Bolton where the remaining hand-loom weavers wove the 'fancy cuts' - quilting and the like - the weaving was made up of heavy jackonettes, the staple cuts, checks and heavy shirting. This was particularly demanding, hard work, and by 1836 most was fully automated. One reason put forward why the mechanized employers maintained hand-loom weaving colonies was that in times of depression, they could maintain an outlet for quality goods - an interesting observation in the age of economies of scale.³

Throughout the period from 1815 to the onset of the Reform agitation, the hand-loom weavers of Blackburn appear to have been extremely militant and politically radical. By 1818, for example, as we saw in chapter three above, even the normally passive women in Blackburn had taken up the issue of reform.⁴ But by far the most serious display of militant radicalism and violent behaviour by the weavers came in 1826. What is interesting about this dispute was that all of Blackburn's textile workers - power loom weavers, spinners and hand-loom weavers - appear to have acted in complete harmony, with high levels of class and political consciousness being displayed and little sign of occupational intra-class status differences. Evidence for this comes from the existence of a trades committee which co-ordinated the dispute and was made up of all three sets of textile workers in the town and was in effect a general⁵ association of textile workers - led by the working class themselves - which remained united throughout the dispute. It may be worthwhile to briefly recall the key developments. The dispute itself lasted from May to the end of July and coincided with a sharp depression in trade. But it was the employers of female power loom operatives, Houghton's and Eccles' - both Whig/Liberals - who were singled out for attack, the object being to break the looms. But in fact the entire

factories were destroyed by an ingenious form of bazooka made up of gas pipes filled with explosives and pointed directly at the boiler houses and loom sheds.⁶ The leader of this attack was a hand-loom weaver called Christopher Gifford - known thereafter as 'The Gas-Pipe Fusilier' - who promptly fled the town only to return in 1839 as a chartist organizer.⁷

The damage to the factories destroyed in 1826 was estimated at over 14,000 pounds but what was more alarming to the propertied middle classes and the manufacturers was the apparent unbending resolve, organization and militant radicalism of the working class in the Blackburn area. From late April mass meetings had been held throughout the area. At one held on the 24 April the delegates met at Enfield equidistant from Accrington, Burnley and Blackburn. 10,000 persons were assembled to await their deliberations. Afterwards they all marched to Blackburn as a show of strength. The Blackburn Mail wrote "They came in good order and quietly into the town; about 500 were armed with pikes, several with firearms (these were called 'captains'); some with large hammers, and the remainder with various weapons."⁸ It was the mill owners who were the object of working class anger as the reporter from the Preston Chronicle observed. "The mob supposed to be about 10,000 had rather a terrific appearance as they marched through the streets, about 300 having pikes on their shoulders, many said to the shopkeepers who were shutting up their shops 'never mind yer shops folk, we shallna meddle whe yo.'"⁹

At the beginning of May a series of demands were issued by the working class to the employers of Blackburn: they were centred essentially on three points. Firstly they demanded that a list of prices be drawn up which would be applied consistently to power-loom weavers, hand-loom weavers and spinners. Secondly, the use of power looms was to be limited to the manufacturing of non-intricate cuts, its status being down-graded to that of semi-skilled work suitable for women and children, the idea here being

to control the access to skilled work. Thirdly, it was suggested that the state should allow the levying of a local tax on all power looms driven by steam, this, in order to equalize the conditions of competition, and it was further suggested that some part of the proposed tax could be held in trust for when the weavers suffered privation due to the downturn in the trade cycle. The tax also had a sense of symbolic justice about it in that it seemed as though the manufacturers were escaping from their obligations of paying tax, whilst the operatives in their turn were taxed on a whole range of items indirectly, as well as the direct burdens of the poor rate and church rate. On this occasion all of the demands were refused by the manufacturers, and when the magistrates amongst them announced that on that very day news had arrived that the King had given a donation of 1,000 pounds to the relief fund, for his pains the magistrates were stoned.¹⁰ The working class of Blackburn then began their systematic orgy of destruction on the mills of the 'progressive' manufacturers.

Before we look at these developments in terms of leadership and its political significance for the working class of Blackburn we should contrast this by noting that there were regional variations regarding tactics among the weavers. At a meeting in Manchester held on Saturday April 29, a weaver named Jonathan Hodgins from Stockport urged moderation without violence,¹¹ another weaver from Bolton named Aitkins pursued the same line arguing that petitions and memorials would serve the weavers interests better in the long term than direct action. The general moderating tenor of working class leadership may go some way to explaining why there was relatively little violence at Stockport or Bolton at this time. But it also makes the important point that the working class seem in the 1820's to have been led by members of their own class and that in the main they did not - in the localities at least - look to the middle classes and the lower middle class for a leader to articulate their demands as was the case in London.

The major point worth noting, in spite of the regional differences about tactics, is the apparent harmony within the working class between the various textile crafts - hand loom weavers, power-loom operatives and spinners. Indeed, the spinners throughout the region maintained a strike for two months after the disturbances of May/June over the issue of a uniform price list for all textile workers. As we noted above, in Blackburn it is interesting to note the apparent lack of occupational status differentiation during the disputes of 1826. It would seem that the hand-loom weavers did not wish to eradicate the use of power-looms in competition. Their enhancing of their bargaining position reveals that this was not mere Luddism and is evidenced by the fact that at no time was the mechanized spinning equipment touched. Some of the ideas of the Blackburn workers seem to have come from the example of Preston where a uniform list of prices was already in operation in the mills which utilized both power and hand-looms.¹²

There are two points of note which are important to our discussion of working class development and of class consciousness. The first is that at this point in their development the working class of East Lancashire seem to have been operating on a will to act around questions which were organized and formulated within the class itself and not from any outside agencies - such as middle class inspired pressure groups or, indeed political parties - the latter agency, as we have noted at this stage in its evolution did not get involved at all in working class based issues. Secondly, the harmony of the Blackburn weavers suggests strong leadership from within the working class themselves. Evidence for this comes from a memorial sent by the Mechanics of Blackburn to the first Sir Robert Peel. It reveals that the two chief causes of working class action firstly the loss of independence brought by the factory system and also the frequent breakdown in that system which created such widespread privation. The language is important for it suggests a heightened sense of awareness of one

body of workers for the plight of another. The memorial ran:-

No adequate idea can be formed of the sufferings of those who are unemployed, of whom there are upwards of 7,000 in this town and neighbourhood. Were a human man, Sir to visit the dwellings of four-fifths of the weavers and see the miserable pittance which sixteen hours of labour can procure divided between the parents and the little ones, he would sicken at the sight and blush for the patience of humanity.¹³

It could be thus argued that two powerful forces were at work on the consciousness of the working class of Blackburn. The first was a loss of independence - especially among the hand-loom weavers, but shared in practical terms by those actually engaged in factory work. The logic of the situation appeared to the working class that if one entered the factory one's former independent status disappeared, and coupled with this was the fact that there was still no guarantee of job and wage stability as the trade slumps bore witness. In crude terms where was the value of entering the factory, becoming utterly dependent on that manufacturer when those workers inside the factories appeared just as prone to the trade cycles as those weavers outside it. This leads to a second factor, namely the appalling poverty which occurred in Blackburn in the mid-1820's. Indeed, the situation of the Blackburn weavers prior to the outbreak of the disturbances became so bad, that it gained national prominence, and support for them came from parts near and distant; from Liverpool, London, and the weavers of Yeovil in Somerset organized meetings and collected money specifically for the weavers of East Lancashire.¹⁴ Given this situation and the level of local working class unity, organization and leadership an explosive social atmosphere prevailed.

The spark was produced by the attitude of the employers of Blackburn and East Lancashire. The manufacturers remained adamant in their refusal to discuss the joint weaver/spinner demands.

This was unlike the situation at Bolton,¹⁵ Preston,¹⁶ or Stockport, where discussions and meetings were held between the various antagonists, and serious disturbances were averted. A further worry for the local and national authorities about the worsening situation in East Lancashire was that on occasions, the only form of solace for the weavers came from a most unlikely source: the military - as Thomas Duckworth, an apprentice weaver from Haslingden recalled as a witness at the Lancaster trials:-

That morning we set off to the loom breaking. When we had got on the road we saw the horse soldiers. There was a stop then, the horse soldiers came forward, their drawn swords glittering in the air. The people opened out to let the soldiers get through. Some threw their pikes over the dyke and some didn't. When the soldiers had come into the midst of the people, the officers called out, 'halt!' All expected that the soldiers were going to charge, but the officer made a speech to the mob and told them what the consequences would be if they persisted in what they were going to do. Some of the fellows from the mob spoke. They said, 'What are we going to do? We're starving. Are we to starve to death?' The soldiers were fully equipped with haversacks and they emptied their sandwiches among the crowd. Then the soldiers left and there was another meeting. 'Were the power looms to be broken or not? Yes, it was decided, they must be broken at all costs.'¹⁷

What happened next is recorded in a letter from a cavalry officer to Home Secretary Peel, its tone is reflective of the panic on the part of the forces of the state when confronted with a determined, organized and violently disaffected civil populations.

At Haslingden yesterday, notwithstanding the vicinity of a troop of cavalry, a mill was attacked and the machinery destroyed... Colonel Kearney went to Haslingden this morning to endeavour to see something of the state of things, and as early as seven o'clock the population were in movement to the number of almost 3,000 and successfully destroyed the power-looms at three mills. Having been applied to most earnestly by the proprietors of two other mills for protection, the Colonel got together a piquet of 15 dragoons of the Bays with 20 men of the 60th Rifle Corps, when the first

Riot Act was read by a magistrate and every means used to prevail upon the mob to desist, but without effect, the military were consequently put in a position to defend the mill at Chadderton, belonging to Mr Aitkil, when they were immediately assailed with volley's of stones, which placed the Colonel in the necessity of ordering them to fire. Several of the mob were killed (the actual number was six), and it is to be feared from the incessant firing, which was kept up for more than a quarter of an hour, that a considerable number must have been wounded. Between 500 and 600 shots were fired. The populous then dispersed gradually, but with the avowed intention of returning with overwhelming force. The obstinacy and determination of the rioters was most extraordinary, and such as I could not have credited had I not witnessed it myself.¹⁸

In the end the forces of the state acted. The county magistrates swore in large numbers of special constables, who, under the cover of darkness began to round-up suspected leaders, who were immediately sent to Lancaster gaol. David Whitehead, a manufacturer from Rawtenstall described the scene in his locality in another letter to Peel.

The inhabitants were all in amazement, one telling another that such and such had been fetched out of bed... This method of arresting them and taking them away completely put a stop to the breaking of power looms... The rioters were so frightened that a-many durst not go to bed in their own houses. Some left for the country, others hid themselves for weeks, some in one place, some in another, some in local pits - some who few, if any, would have thought would have been guilty of such a crime.¹⁹

Report after report makes the same point that the disruption caused by mechanization was turning moderate sober-minded individuals into insurgents and 'radical demagogues'. This seems to be indicative of the homogenous nature of working class consciousness at this time. However, a further question is whether the working class of the North-West were displaying any political manifestations and aspirations prior to the 1830's?

We have already noted that there appears to have been a widespread perception of the denial of industrial and political rights held by the majority of the working class themselves and by the lower middle class popular radicals. This can be detected in both the actions of the working class and what they said throughout the North West industrial region, especially from 1818. In a sense the process of industrialization and the perceived loss of working class independence had led the working class to a raised level of class consciousness which now envisaged the necessity of wide-ranging political reforms. The popular radicals utilized this disaffection amongst the working class as evidence of their popular support 'out of doors'. The very point is that both the moderate, respectable middle classes and the authorities believed them. However, the violent disputes of 1826 were not overtly political in the sense that the struggle was mounted directly for the purpose of recovering lost political rights. But the political element lay just under the surface, as the Blackburn Mail bore witness when it referred to those involved in the 1826 dispute as "the disciples of Paine and the blasphemies of Carlile."²⁰

The logic of the situation also suggests a strong political element in that here were a large section of people suffering appalling privations due to trade recession and industrial rationalization and the state appeared not to be acting in their interests but in the interests of that group who the working class believed were the cause of their problems; the industrial manufacturers of nascent capitalism. Not only this, but the government seemed unwilling, indeed hostile to combating the high food prices by the allowing into the country cheaper foreign grain and sticking rigidly to the 1815 Corn Laws.²¹ The realization on the part of the working class was that the government was protecting one group in society at the expense of another. It is thus only a short step - as was the case at Blackburn in the 1820's - from being able to recognize one's objective class

position in economic terms, to forming a political consciousness which identifies the source of the problem as that of the states' inability or unwillingness to act or to legislate on behalf of those who feel they are being repressed. It is also worth reiterating the point we made in chapters three and four that no efforts were made by the agencies of governmental or manufacturing opinion - like for example political parties - which could have acted as a countervailing corpus of understanding against the views held by the working class. In effect the popular radicals had the field to themselves. The obvious solutions which developed by the late 1820's were that on the one hand the working class had to organize collectively into trades unions and that they had to gain working class representations within the institutions of local and national political control. In the local context this was focused on those ancient institutions of local politics - the open vestry and select vestry - and in the national sense on the growing realization of the necessity of the reform of parliament to include more representatives of the working class interest. These feelings were strongest in those boroughs denied representation before 1832.

One point which needs stressing regarding the disputes of the 1820's - and these did not end with the 1826 disturbances - is the homogeneous nature of the class response. Evidence for this comes in the nature of the developing theory of general unionism and in the way the various trades were able to co-operate with each other. We have already observed that in East Lancashire the hand-loom weavers, power-loom weavers and spinners were able to work together on equal terms. But throughout the region as a whole many other artisans were involved in pre-Reform Act working class politics; shoe-makers, hatters, tailors, mechanics, builders, joiners, etc, etc, all of high status in occupational terms and mixing quite freely and equitably with those - such as power-loom weavers - of a lesser occupational grade in terms of status. This seems also true of the period of Parliamentary Reform.

In Blackburn particularly the Reform agitation galvanized local working class radicals into a concerted call for the remedy of a range of working class grievances. The public meeting was one source of the dissemination of information and the recruiting of supporters, but the popular radicals of Blackburn also utilized the vestry as a focus for their political agitation. Here they were led by George Dewhurst (a reed maker) Robert Withington (a weaver) and George Meikle (a bookseller and distributor of the unstamped press).²² At this time the Whig/Liberals came in for less vitriolic abuse than the Tories - not surprising considering that in the national context it was the Tories who were perceived as being the group who were most resistant to constitutional change. The Blackburn Political Union met at the Ebenezer Chapel the home of Primitive Methodists. One resolution passed during the 'days of May' crisis suggested that the names of local Tories would be read in public "in order to show that they may be exposed to the detestation of their fellow townsmen."²³ But as soon as the Bill was passed and notification came through of the two seats Blackburn had been given by the Act - the views of the Ultras were diverted by the conciliatory attitude adopted by the Conservatives to the new electorate. One proposed candidate, John Fowden Hindle - a member of the county squirearchy - issued a public address at the end of May in which he said:-

...I shall always be found among the advocates of every constitutional reform, having for its object the happiness of the community... In particular I shall be a zealous advocate for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, for a Careful Revision of the Corn Laws, of the Charter of the Bank of England, of the East India Monopoly, and every other exclusive privileges which cramps the energies, and depresses the manufacturing industry of the Country.²⁴

Thus, in the new boroughs, the Peelite element of the old Tory party were endeavouring to present a face of moderate

conciliation, and this seems to have had an effect: one member of Blackburn's Political Union, as early as October, stated publicly that he was intending to cast his vote for Hindle.²⁵ This suggests that opinions were important from an early stage in the new Parliamentary borough. Two other pieces of evidence give credence to the assertion that at Blackburn the local elites were attempting to place politics on a more advanced level. One comes from the fact that John Bowring, one of the radical candidates, pledged that no treats would be given to electors or non-electors, and this pledge seems to have been honoured as he and his supporters were known as the 'Dry Party'.²⁶ A second came from a ban on 'chairing' and the wearing of party ribbons. This suggests that the magistrates were attempting to cleanse the town of the political traditions and rituals of an earlier age.

The election at Blackburn in 1832 did not however manage to conform to all the principles of advanced purity. At the nomination there were three candidates, William Feilden, the local Lord of the Manor and a Peelite Conservative, John Bowring a Utilitarian and William Turner, both reforming Whigs. Both Feilden and Turner were local manufacturers, the third local man, Hindle retired on the eve of Poll after the canvass revealed Turner in a strong position. Thus Hindle would only be splitting the Conservative share of the vote. Bowring managed to alienate the popular radicals - of both the working and lower middle classes - with his repeated exposal of the principles of political economy and numbingly tedious lectures on his notions of developing the economics of India, Greece and China. These may have been highly sought after in the salons of the philosophic radicals but were hardly suitable to an audience of hard-bitten textile workers whose chief concern was their own welfare, education, political rights, and the apparent avarice of the progressive Liberal manufacturers. That this was so is highlighted by the fact that of the two working class radical leaders who possessed the franchise - Dewhurst and Meikle - both

voted for Turner and not for Bowring.

Even before the election - as we noted above - the Conservatives were making overtures to the working class, the vast majority of whom in Blackburn were non-electors. William Feilden for example had the nerve to enter the Ebenezer Chapel and address some of the meetings of the Political Union.²⁷

II DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1832.

A fairly new political development in the first years of the 1830's was the growth of radical toryism in North East Lancashire. Amongst the still numerically significant hand loom weavers of Blackburn there appears to have been strong links with that brand of radical toryism associated firstly with Michael Thomas Sadler and later with Richard Oastler, Parson Bull and the Rev Raynor Stephens. Even the middle class Conservatives seem to have been sympathetic to this group. After Sadler's defeat in the elections of 1832, referring to his work on defending the factory reform question, the Blackburn Alfred made this comment of the Whig/Liberal manufacturers of the West Riding of Yorkshire. "His Toryism and impatience of Reform would have been freely forgiven, but for this unpardonable offence against the mill tyrants of that pious and slave-whipping neighbourhood."²⁸

As we shall subsequently discover, it was the condition of hand-loom weavers and the issue of factory reform which was to be central to the politics of Blackburn from the early 1830's through to the 1850's. Initially it was the popular radicals who took up the question of the declining standards of hand loom weavers' wages and the factory question. It was this group also who had control on one branch of Blackburn's local politics. From 1830 to

1834 and briefly in 1837, the popular radicals under the leadership of George Dewhurst and the two weavers Withington and Gifford who dominated the Vestry. The Radicals and Liberals also seem to have been powerful in the Police Commission which replaced the vestry in 1841. Up to the incorporation of the borough in 1851, the local Conservatives do not seem to have taken much interest in the towns local government. They were active in parliamentary politics, and returned a member for the town in every election from 1832 to 1852, and, regained the seat after a successful petition against defeat in 1853. In 1865 and 1868, the Conservatives took both seats, the 1868 election particularly important as the electorate was greatly swelled by working class votes with the advent of householder suffrage.

Blackburn had no court leet or municipal body, thus, the bodies which controlled local taxation and decided upon local by-laws and other parochial offices were the Vestry - up to 1841, the Board of Guardians - from 1838, the Improvement Commission - from 1841, and the local magistracy. The local Conservatives seem to have been happy up to the incorporation of the town, with their control of the Board of Guardians and the local magistracy, and, of course their half share in parliamentary representation.

The town's leading Conservatives were Robert Hopwood, James Forrest, James Pemberton, William Eccles, William Feilden M.P., John Hornby and his brother William Henry Hornby - all these men were millowners. They were ably assisted by others like the lawyer Richard Backhouse, the shopkeeper Christopher Parkinson, and the surgeon Richard Martland. Although the town's leading Conservatives were willing to leave some aspects of local government to the Liberals, they continued to control key areas like the Magistracy. However in the early 1830's the Conservatives do appear to have been concerned with the way the working class popular radicals were attempting to control local government. William Henry Hornby realized early in 1833 that the

attack on the Conservatives and on the future of the town local government came from the seemingly irresistible progress of Liberalism and the radical inclinations of the working class:-

I need not tell you gentlemen, that there is a party in this town, who are working night and day to bring all our municipal affairs under their immediate control...and endeavouring to set the lower and higher class at variance. Let the radical and revolutionary characters once get ahead in the country, and there is an end to the constitution.²⁹

Although the leading local Conservatives were willing to leave the Liberals to those areas of local government where they felt their damage could be contained,³⁰ the union of a 'revolutionary' working class and the 'radical' Liberal party was a threat to not only local stability but to local Conservatism also. In some parts of the region during the Reform Crisis between October 1831 and May 1832, the alliance of the lower middle class radicals and the working class had been broken. At Bolton, Oldham and Manchester, after the King's proclamation banning political meetings in November 1832, the working class radicals took over their respective political unions.³¹ But at Blackburn the alliance of the lower middle class radicals and the working class was maintained. It was therefore vital that the Conservatives reorganize quickly.

Religion was also a motive of the local Conservatives in this early stage of re-organization both in terms of attempting to convince the working class of the moral worth of religious instruction, but also to gain support in order to stave off the desire of Liberal progressives to reform the Anglican Church. From 1829 and the acceptance of Catholic emancipation through to 1835 and the Litchfield House compact in which the Whigs were partially successful in binding Joseph O'Connell to moderation and the party line, the reform of the Anglican Church was fiercely resisted by the Conservatives and this threat also served to bind

Anglicans of all classes to the party's colours. In Blackburn feeling ran high..."a power anti-social and revolutionary in its principles, and constituted for the avowed purpose of plundering our church of her revenues... Let them succeed in dismantling one single barrier of our now almost tottering constitution, and the revolutionary flood rushes in"³²

But, although Conservative opinion in Blackburn was at times vehemently anti-Catholic and anti-Irish, they did appear willing to compromise in some areas. On the church rates question in 1837 / for example, the Standard reported that "If the Church rate were abolished, a bone of contention would be taken away - Dissenters and Churchmen would meet and be more happy and friendly, the effect in local situations would be the preventing of that unpleasantness which had existed in Blackburn for so many years."³³

Let us consider the political preferences of Blackburn's electorate in 1835 in relation to their religion.

TABLE XIV ANALYSIS OF VOTERS BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION:
BLACKBURN 1835. 34

NAME OF CANDIDATE AND TYPE OF VOTE GIVEN.	PLUMPED FEILDEN	PLUMPED TURNER	PLUMPED BOWRING	SPLIT F AND T	SPLIT F AND B	SPLIT T AND B	TOTAL
ANGLICAN CHURCH	4	15	34	263	9	58	383
INDEPENDENTS	0	2	66	15	3	25	111
ROMAN CATHOLICS	2	1	15	4	2	15	39
METHODISTS	0	0	21	10	3	16	50
BAPTISTS	0	0	2	0	0	3	5
QUAKERS	0	0	5	0	1	2	8
UNITARIANS	0	0	20	0	0	3	23
TOTAL	6	18	163	292	18	122	619

TOTAL VOTES INCLUDING SPLITS :	ANGLICANS	INDEPENDENTS	CATHOLICS	METHODISTS	BAPTISTS	QUAKERS	UNITARIANS
FEILDEN	276	18	8	13	-	1	-
TURNER	336	42	20	26	3	2	3
BOWRING	101	94	32	40	5	8	2

These figures show the numerical strength of the Anglicans and Conservatives but they only reveal the religious denominations of Blackburn's middle and lower middle class electorate - we know little of the religious persuasions of the town's working classes. We do know that until the 1850's working class religious attendance was at best spasmodic, and even after 1850, when working class participation is believed to have increased, Horace Mann, the author of the 1851 census report stated that in the large towns and cities of England "fewer than one person in ten attended either Church of England or Nonconformist worship on census day."³⁵ This reflects Church attendance on one day in one year and may not of course be reflective of overall working class religious feelings, but given that the middle classes and those in authority generally spent an enormous amount of money, time and energy on attempting to make the working class learn the moral teaching of religion, this suggests that irreligion was perceived as a problem before 1850. Thus it cannot be proven with any degree of certainty that because the majority of Blackburn's elites were Anglican that the working class would be similarly inclined. Religion was important, and it is a point we shall return to, especially in relation to social control, and it is probable that it was a factor in the minds of the elites. But I would suggest that at Blackburn at least, at this critical stage greater organizational efficiency was at least of equal importance.³⁶

In terms of party organization the first group to begin this were the local Conservatives. The Blackburn Conservative Association was formed in late 1834, when William IV asked Sir Robert Peel to form a minority ministry and the prospect of an early election seemed likely. In February 1835 the Committee of the Association met to admit "members, appointing officers and adopting resolutions in furtherance of the objects of the association."³⁷ Its first President was John Fowden Hindle, and his deputy was W H

Hornby. The towns' M.P., William Feilden was a member and the first committee was composed of the leading members of the Local Conservative elites, especially the manufacturers, gentry, wholesalers and retailers.³⁸ These included, William Alston, J Hargreaves, Joseph Makinson, James Cross, R S Dodgson, James Dodgson, W B Maymon, Dixon Robinson, John Lister, Benjamin Brierley, Henry Hargreaves, Christopher Parkinson, James Forrest, and the secretary was Peter Ellingthorp. Many of these men were to play important roles in the political life of the town in the next four decades, but even at this early stage the local Conservatives appear to have aimed at widening the net of the party, for later in February 1835 they announced that the annual subscriptions had been, "placed as low as 5 shillings, to afford an opportunity for such as the working classes as are disposed to stem the progress of revolutionary doctrines to become members of the association."³⁹ By November 1835 the Conservatives realized that 5 shillings was far too high a figure to entice the working classes and with the formation of the Operative Association the entry fee was 6 pence with 6 pence annual subscription.⁴⁰

The first moves had been made and they came from the middle class Conservatives concerned with three key areas of their party's ideology, the defence of Anglicanism, the Constitution, and the need to further the Conservative message; "to stem the progress of revolutionary doctrines."⁴¹ The Liberals followed quickly in forming their association on 4 March 1835, headed by the prominent local manufacturer James Pilkington which suggests that another motive was at work in these early stages, namely that of the need of local organization in relation to the annual registration of voters. These three themes of religious preservations, proselytization, and local politico/electoral organization lie at the foundation of the associations in the new boroughs, but in due course they were joined by a fourth, that of the dissemination of Conservative policy, and, as we shall discover, issues directed at working class opinion.

The Conservative Association launched the Operative Conservative Association late in November 1835. The Blackburn Standard made some significant statements as to the reactions of the political opponents of Conservatism. What it stressed was party political rather than religious distinctiveness in an article entitled 'The Whig Radicals and the Operative Conservatives.'

The Whig Radicals and the Revolutionists are suffering the most excruciating tortures, from the contemplation if the result of the revision of the elective register, and the prospect of an extensive establishment of Operative Conservative Associations. In the former they see the certainty of an early and complete defeat of their long-cherished machinations for the subversion of the monarchy; and in the latter they behold an efficient instrument for such a wide dissemination of sound political information as shall render it absolutely impossible for interested and unprincipled agitators longer to retain their hold upon the prejudices of the people.⁴²

The prime movers in the forming of the Operative Association in Blackburn were James Martin, the editor of the Blackburn Standard and Dixon Robinson, the clerk to the magistrates, but the Liberal Blackburn Gazette and the Manchester Guardian reported that there were two 'strangers' at the meeting which suggests that some motivation for the setting up of the association came from outside the town.⁴³ But importantly neither the Gazette nor the Guardian suggested that the Blackburn Operative Association was linked to Orangism. We can compare this with other parts of the region where the situation was very different. In 1835 Parliament had outlawed the Orange Lodges - but this was in effect a dead letter as the Lodges continued to exist - and the Manchester Guardian in particular accused the Salford Conservatives of setting up Operative Branches as vehicles for the continuation of Orangism. This was a point the Operative Conservatives of Manchester and Salford were quick to repudiate. In an advertisement placed in the Manchester Guardian and other newspapers stating that "persons from all persuasions being members of the society; and are

admitted providing they acknowledge themselves to be Conservatives." They also stated that not only were Orangemen members "but also Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics, who though differing on many points, are still agreed in their attachments to the existing institutions of the country, and are prepared to support them by every constitutional means in their power."⁴⁴ At Liverpool and Wigan there were links between Orangism and the Conservative party,⁴⁵ but elsewhere we must be more cautious, especially considering that prominent Catholics like Trafford and Sir John Gerrard were members of both the Manchester Conservative Association and the South Lancashire Association.⁴⁶

In Blackburn the Liberals suspected that the Operative Association was not so much the hot bed of Orangism but rather the tool of the national party attempting to interfere in local political organization. In an article written in the Blackburn Gazette in late November 1835 it came to light that the Conservative Blackburn Standard was being run from London; "...it is said under the auspices of the Carlton Club... the United Services Gazette, the Alfred and Old England newspapers; and from these are manufactured, by simply changing the name, (Gazette's emphasis) a number of country journals (including) the Blackburn Standard, the Survey Standard, the Dover Telegraph, the Oxford Conservative, the West Devon Standard, the Worcester Guardian, the Greenwich Guardian and the Leicester Herald - such are the attempts of the Tory Faction to spread their noxious principles in the country."⁴⁷ Thus it seems the Conservatives at the centre were attempting to influence opinion in the localities. However such outside influence in the setting up of the clubs is difficult to prove, although we do know that Robert Scarr Sowler, one of the leaders of Manchester's Conservatives employed a barrister, one Charles Wilkins to tour the North-West.⁴⁸

William Henry Hornby became President of the Blackburn Conservative Association in 1836, and he immediately began to cultivate a body of support amongst the Blackburn working class. In his inauguration speech he defined Conservatism as loyalty to the monarch, 'attachment to the constitution, obedience to the laws and kindness to the poor.'⁴⁹ In April at the annual dinner of the B.C.A. he suggested that the existence of an Operative branch of the Conservative party in Blackburn, "give(s) a proof that Conservatives of wealth and station, so far from regarding the working classes with feelings the least approaching to contempt or indifference, that it is their great pride to acknowledge that they themselves can only stand or fall with them."⁵⁰ Hornby began to foster the image of a good and fair master, a device not peculiar to the Conservative manufacturers, but especially relevant in the era of political economy Liberalism and Manchester school radicalism. This tendency began to reach working class audiences further afield than Blackburn. In Stockport for example during a power loom weavers dispute, one weaver, William Smith said that in Stockport, "those persons whom it was sought to stigmatize by calling them 'Tories' were the best masters and paid higher wages than those who assumed the appellation of Liberals."⁵¹

1836 was a key year in the development of Operative Conservatism as it saw the consolidation of the branch societies and their legitimization by Conservative party leaders in London, through the National Conservative Institution, based in Pall Mall.⁵² There was also considerable activity within the region with delegates from one town visiting those from another. The Blackburn branch was represented at the Preston Operative Conservative meeting held in October 1836, as were delegates from Lancaster, Ormskirk, Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton, Wigan and Chorley. The 'professional' organizer, Charles Wilkins spoke urging that the working class 'make the women your allies', saying that "...my knowledge of electioneering matters enables me to

declare that women are the best possible agents."⁵³ Charles Tiplady, a bookbinder from Blackburn stated that Blackburn was the first town in that part of the region to organize an operative branch. He said that members of the working class felt that it was 'right that we should meet and endeavour to arrive at a unity of opinion, and arrange plans for a coincidence of practice.' He said that if such bodies were maintained within the nation at large they would 'bring every benefit that the greatest reformer could desire.' The principle object and operation of Operative Conservative Associations he said were, "...the dissemination of knowledge amongst the people and especially amongst the poor and uneducated."⁵⁴ This was, as we noted previously one of the key factors of parties of social integration.

From an initial membership of 300 in its first year,⁵⁵ the Blackburn branch steadily increased its support annually. In 1839, Wilkins⁵⁶ visited the town urging greater organization and a recruitment drive in the face of the mounting challenge of extreme Chartist radicalism. By the 1840's the membership topped over 600.⁵⁷ The branch had several of the other features of a party of social integration as well as those of proselytization, political socialization and what Tiplady termed 'arriving at a unity of opinion.' It provided educational facilities at the central club rooms in Astley Gate, there was a Sick and Burial Club, there were discussion classes, fetes, lectures and outings. Also a mark of this sort of party was the development of a strong middle class' leadership within the Conservative party in Blackburn, and an increasingly close relationship between the local leaders and issues which directly affected the working class interest. In spite of the split of 1847, it was maintained Hornby kept the Operative branch alive until the mid 1850's and it was revived in February 1864,⁵⁸ but it was issues which have working class support for Conservatism a wider dimension than the mere membership of a relatively small number of working people, as we shall attempt to demonstrate.

III THE ROLE OF ISSUES AND LEADERSHIP.

Wider working class support for Conservatism in Blackburn to a large degree resulted from the radical Tory agitation over firstly, the factory question and secondly, the New Poor Law. In the 1840's the respectable middle class conservatives, led by Hornby began to champion these issues, particularly in the Blackburn area as physical force Chartism rapidly declined after 1842. What is being suggested here is that from the mid 1830's there existed a body of working class opinion in the town which began to associate issues they were concerned about with firstly, Radical Toryism, and secondly, in the early 1840's when constitutional reform seemed to have been defeated, the bread and butter questions of industrial relations and social reform. Both sets of local Conservatives began to utilize these issues at the expense of the Liberals. From the mid 1840's high flown sentiments about libertarianism and sweeping constitutional and economic reform were replaced on a massive scale with the basic bread and butter working class questions of industrial relations, welfare provisions, education, public health, rate increases, social recreation and so on, and in Blackburn the foundation of this pragmatic approach to opinion based politics has been laid in the 1830's.

We have seen already that Blackburn had a tradition of violent opposition by working people to the imposition of the new work practices imposed by consolidating industrial capitalism and the subsequent loss of independence, felt especially strongly by weavers. This placed them closer to the working class of the West Riding of Yorkshire and North East Lancashire, than say the strongly libertarian sentiments which motivated the radicals of

Oldham, or Unitarian Manchester.

Only in a few parts of Lancashire was there a working class Radical Tory faction as there was in large areas of West Yorkshire. There were elements in Burnley and Colne, but this belies the influence which radical tory leaders like Oastler and Stephens had in certain parts of industrial Lancashire. He certainly appears to have been a popular character in Blackburn; indeed he produced one of his most violent speeches against the anti-Factory Act manufacturers in that town.

At a large meeting held at Blackburn in September 1839, Oastler built his audience into a frenzy of emotion on the question of factory reform, a sense of the power of his oratory can be gauged from the following extract.

Oh, we must have men that will fight up to their knees in blood for the Ten Hours Bill. For perhaps we may have to fight for it yet; but mind you don't begin until you see me lead the way. I will tell you, however, how we can beat them. If they resist, I will teach every factory child in the Kingdom how to use a knitting needle among the machinery. Oh yes, I'll do it for them. I'm taking lessons now to learn little children how to do more harm than good. This on condition that they resist the law. I am resolved that the laws of England shall triumph over the factory masters, or that the factory masters - shall breathe their last!⁵⁹

This was powerful stuff and it was little wonder that the middle class elites of Blackburn were nervous. This was particularly so among the conventional Conservative manufacturers who as yet, had not warmed to the issue as they were to do in the 1840's, and also because it allowed the Liberals to level the charge of extremism at Oastler and his supporters. However, the town's working class seemed to have been taken by Oastler and his speech certainly had the effect of placing the issue at the forefront of local working class politics. Oastler's radicalism stemmed from deeply held Tory sentiments regarding human responsibility. On the one hand

he believed the reforming Whigs and the 'progressive' Liberal manufacturers were shirking their responsibilities in allowing the appalling conditions in the factories to remain. He also condemned the New Poor Law as an inhuman piece of legislation which effectively worsened the precarious existence of the factory worker. Thus Oastler, with his radical rhetoric but essentially sound constitutional ideology was - wittingly or unwittingly - bringing many working people over to the Conservative side on the back of issues like factory reform and the New Poor Law. This probably served to forge a lasting link in some parts of the North-West between the working class and old Tory principles, allied not as they were, to a radical message. However, in Blackburn, as elsewhere working class Conservatives were unsurprisingly not encouraged to support any form of electoral or Constitutional reform. In 1839 for example, Charles Wilkins, the barrister employed to agitate on behalf of the Conservatives correctly detected that the relationship between the physical force Chartists and the Whig/Liberals was deteriorating, "...let them hang today their companions in treason of yesterday."⁶⁰

What seems to have been happening in these new boroughs was that firstly, working people saw a political party enjoin its traditional and constitutional principles with issues which directly affected working class existence, something which the Conservatives and Tories had shown little desire to do before 1832. Secondly this led to a sectionalizing of the political opinions within the politically conscious working class, which in turn reduced the level of their overall class consciousness and thus its potential effectiveness. Finally the Conservatives were helped by the weak and disunited leadership at the highest level of the Chartist movement and the calling into question by local radicals of the historically perceived libertarianism of the Whig reformers and their Liberal fellow travellers.⁶¹ This last point was being painfully underscored to the working class of the mill-towns by the New Poor Law and the Whig Ministry's apparent backing

of the Liberal manufacturers who resisted factory reform, trades union recognition and attacking the acceptance of limited working class industrial independence within the factory system.

In Blackburn the radical Tories led the way in attacking both the New poor Law and the anti-factory Act manufacturers. But the local Conservatives began to build on this fairly quickly. In terms of the New Poor Law, they stressed the need to obey the law, and built their campaign around the idea that the Act would be best administered by friends of the working class who basically opposed the legislation and would find every means of making it less draconian than those Liberals who, in essence, accepted the theory and practice of the Act wholeheartedly. Evidence that the Conservatives managed to do this from the introduction of the Act into Blackburn in late December 1837 through their control of the Board of Guardians was offered by the Board's chairman some five years later. From May 1841 Commissioners in London attempted to impose restrictions on what they saw as the lax manner in which the Blackburn Union was run. In a series of letters to the Commissioners the Conservative chairman of the Guardians, Peter Ellingthorpe, offered a pointed - not to say curt - reminder of the situation which had and still prevailed in Blackburn.

And, in all the tumults and electioneering contests which have occurred in this town, not a single voice has been raised against the Poor Law, or the generally obnoxious regulations of the commissions, I need not inform you, of the difficulty and impolicy, I must say utter impossibility in disturbed times like the present, of suddenly urging any severe regulations, with the hope of benefit or advantage... The result of any attempt to do so would be a popular revulsion against the law, one of the effects of which would be the resignation of most of the present Board.⁶²

Ellingthorpe advocated the extension of outdoor relief, and the payment of rates and rent and, indeed to support wage increases.⁶³ The local Conservatives whilst obeying the law, but not the letter

of the law, maintained their opposition to the Commissioners between 1844 and 1846 over the question of the Labour Test and the treatment of the unemployed and those workers experiencing short time. The Standard left its Conservative supporters in no doubt as to what they should do when, in July 1846, the Commissioners appeared to be vacillating:-

We hope that the unexpected chance which has given a national opportunity of inflicting deserved vengeance upon the Poor Law Commissioners will not be suffered to pass. A series of experiments made with the view of finding out if it were not possible to render the destitute more contented without making the wealthy less satisfied might be set on foot.⁶⁴

Frequently the question of the welfare provisions for the working class was linked by the Conservatives of Blackburn with that of factory reform and the strict adherence of the laws regulating the hours of labour and factory conditions generally already in existence. The Blackburn Short Time Committee was formed in January 1842, and its initiation was, according to the Blackburn Standard brought about by the Operative Conservatives and the moral example of the teachings of the Established Church. They further claimed that by taking up these practical working class questions the Conservatives had convinced the working class to abandon 'the extravagant notions of revolution.'⁶⁵

The short-time committee had three basic aims. The Conservatives of Blackburn wished firstly for a complete abolition of the New Poor Law; secondly, the adoption of some extensive scheme of internal colonization. Thirdly, they wanted changes in the Factory Bill which would include four amendments; i) That no person from the ages of 13 to 21 should be employed more than 10 hours per day in any mill, ii) That no young person be employed between the hours of 6 at night and 6 in the morning. iii) That there should be a gradual withdrawal of all females from the factories. iv) That there should be a boxing off of all

dangerous machinery and compensation for individual injuries provided by law.⁶⁶ In that same year of 1842, William Henry Hornby's business partner published his famous appeal for shorter hours, Inventions and Hours of Labour.⁶⁷ In this work he made the claim that increased productivity made the reductions in the hours of work possible, and refused to accept the Liberal argument of the threat of foreign competition, concluding with the point: "Are the poor, toiling factory hands our only security from foreign competition? If so, they are a vastly more important class of people than they have ever yet been generally considered."⁶⁸

We have seen that at Blackburn it was the radical Tory element who grabbed the stage regarding the factory question, and to a lesser extent opposition to the New Poor Law. Moreover by the later 1840's these issues of work practices and working class welfare had become issues of mainstream local Conservatism. This unlikely alliance of Conservatism with the remnants of local radicalism was unusual but not unknown in the mill towns of the North-West which were particularly suspicious of Manchester School Liberalism.⁶⁹ This combined with a powerful and charismatic leader in Hornby makes working class support for Conservatism understandable in the 1830's, 40's, 50's and 60's.

By the later 1840's and early 1850 it does appear that the Conservatives of Blackburn could count on considerable working class support. In 1847 for example the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of John Hornby's non-electors Committee were both former radicals. William Watson, a former hand loom weaver was one and the other was none other than the 'Gas Pipe Fusilier' himself, Christopher Gifford, the leader of assaults on factories in 1826 and 1833.⁷⁰

Further evidence comes in 1853 when William Henry Hornby made the clearest statement of his attachment to working class issues and causes. Before addressing an audience put at 20,000 persons on the balcony of the Railway Station, Hornby was presented with

silver candelabrum by the Operative Conservative Association, the inscription reading 'In token of sincere and esteem of his zealous promotion of the best interests of the town, HIS GENEROUS SUPPORT OF USEFUL AND CHARITABLE, INSTITUTIONS. And particularly as the well-trying, FAITHFUL AND CONSTANT FRIEND OF THE WORKING CLASSES."⁷¹ On the question of short hours and factory reform, Hornby said that on the Liberal side of the town the argument was that the measure would ruin the capitalist. But the argument on the Conservative side was: 'We don't see why a man's constitution should be racked through before he is five and forty, merely to save the capital of the country."⁷² He advocated that the working class should stick to the Conservative Party 'like leeches, both at the hustings, at the shops and at all other places.' He accused the Liberals of building 10 pounds rated worker housing and of abusing the Small Tenements Act. He was asked what in his view, was Conservatism. "This is Conservatism", he replied, "to obtain for the working classes the benefits of short-time...each in their particular sphere and in their particular district has a power and an influence, which, when you unite together, like a bundle of sticks, is somewhat powerful."⁷³ On the question of trades unions he said, "Have you not as much right to have an association to protect yourselves as the masters have. Is their anything illegal in working men associating together to prevent a dropping of their wages... You have your own interests to look after both in the House of Commons, and out of it, and I for one should support any act which you might request to be passed to protect you from the attacks of tyrannical masters."⁷⁴

Earlier in 1853 Hornby had gone even further in taking up popular issues. For example he stated that he had no objection to a gradual extension of the Parliamentary franchise and that he was inclined to be in favour of the Secret Ballot.⁷⁵ This was Hornby extolling working class based issues in the course of attempting to win (and winning) a parliamentary seat. But he still used the local party as an opinion-generating agency among the working

class electors and non-electors. At the same time as Hornby was attempting to win the representation of Blackburn, elsewhere in East Lancashire meetings of the 'Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire Conservative Labour League' began to be held.

At one such meeting held at Padiham, near Burnley, attended by the radical Tory W B Ferrand and the former London Chartist, Samuel Kydd, it was stated that the aim: "was to clarify the position between masters and men by law, and that disputes should be settled by arbitration or the Board of Trade, whereby the mutual interests of masters and operatives would be discussed calmly and deliberately."⁷⁶ The opening address went on to note that the working class had no other course 'at present, but strikes to resist the tyranny of the manufacturing classes...(the) Labour League was designed to find the middle ground; to induce both the employers and the employed to concede something.'⁷⁷ Later in October 1853 Kydd spoke at Blackburn and at Preston,⁷⁸ Thus throughout Northern and Eastern Lancashire the Conservatives were active in attempting to influence working class political opinion and action.

At Blackburn throughout the rest of the 1850's and the 1860's, the Conservatives and Hornby commanded the loyalty of a section of the towns working class, primarily by propounding 'safe' working class issues as noted above. In 1868 the Conservatives won both Parliamentary seats.

We have stressed two possible reasons for the success of the Conservatives amongst the working class of Blackburn. Firstly there was a fairly long tradition of Radical Toryism among a section of the town's working class. However, we also pointed out secondly how the middle class Conservatives utilized the local operative clubs as opinion generating agencies and as bodies of political integration between the mid 1830's and 1870. However there were other factors which have to be briefly mentioned before

we look at developments in other new boroughs. Firstly, Blackburn had a number of very large factories and factory communities which were developed much earlier than in other North-West towns.⁷⁹ This may have led to a higher level of working class dependency than in other towns. Secondly, this is compounded by the fact that at Blackburn the manufacturers began to build worker housing on a far greater scale and much earlier than in other parts of the region. For example, the three largest employers in the town, the Conservative Hornby's and Hopwood's and the Liberal Pilkington's housed up to 90% of their workers by 1845 and by 1851, 41% of Blackburn's total housing was under the control of the large mill owners.⁸⁰ These large factories encouraged the type of 'flamboyant' political leadership indulged in by Hornby for the Conservatives and men like Feilden, Jackson and Pilkington for the Liberals.⁸¹ What we have seen in Blackburn is the development of a powerful party structure in the form of the Local Conservative party operating politically to integrate a section of the working class and also act as an opinion-generating agency for the wider working class. That they could do this was due on the one hand to the traditional sympathy many radical weavers felt towards what they perceived the 'fairness' and justice of radical Toryism and of the older types of work practices and worker independence. On the other hand it was also based on the increasing levels of worker dependency, control, and containment on the manufacturers and a growing hostility felt by many working people, for the progressive Liberals and the 'reforms' of the Whigs after 1832.⁸² A further factor in Blackburn was - as we noted in the case in Preston - that popular Radicalism was divided and was being eroded in its ability to influence working class opinion. Even during the height of the Chartist period between 1838 and 1842, the only major disturbance which occurred in Blackburn, was during the Plug Strikes of 1842, and this it seems to a large extent came from workers outside the Blackburn area. The 'sacred month' of the summer of 1839 passed off in Blackburn without any disturbance, save a slight one at the Parish Church, where the 'invaders'

received a salutary lecture from the Vicar on the need to keep public order to gain their reforms.⁸³

The local Conservatives were willing to take up working class issues, even bringing former Chartists into their ranks. The former President of the Operative Conservative Association, the bookbinder, Charles Tiplady, for a time presided over a Chartist Sick and Burial Fund before it began devoting its funds to O'Connors Land Labour Scheme.⁸⁴ At the 1847 Parliamentary election one of the candidates, the radical Chartist lawyer W P Roberts went on record saying that: "So far as practical freedom was concerned the Conservatives had done more than the Whigs ever did."⁸⁵

It does appear that, from 1833 through to 1870, the political attitudes of the Blackburn working class had been pulled in various directions. As we move into the 1840's, increasingly, this was achieved by powerful middle class leaders using the working class political clubs both as agencies of wider political opinion dissemination, and in practical terms of agencies of social and political integration. Opinion politics were far more important at Blackburn than at Preston, Wigan or the county and market towns of Chester, Lancaster and Clitheroe. But Blackburn does seem to have been particular - both in the size of its tory radical support of its weavers and its geographic proximity to the radical tory heartland of the Northern and Eastern parts of Lancashire and of course the West Riding of Yorkshire. What we must now examine is working class political development and the impact the Conservatives made on working peoples political opinions in other new boroughs in the North-West in this period.

III DEVELOPMENTS IN BOLTON AND IN THE SOUTH OF THE REGION.

As we stated above, in two key structural areas of its socio/economic development, Blackburn was unusual when compared to other parts of the North-West region. The first was the predominance of male weavers - imbued politically it seems with radical toryism from the mid-1830's - working alongside semi-skilled 'throstle' type spinners, the majority of whom were females.⁸⁶ The second was the size of Blackburn's industrial factory units and the large and clearly demarcated community boundaries which grew up around these large factories - created in the main by employer inspired housing, shopping, educational and recreational provisions. These are points we have noted above and will return to in our final analytical chapter below. But the possible significance of the size of firms in the various towns and also the question of occupational differentiation are subjects worth considering as we look in the final part of this chapter at developments in other towns created parliamentary boroughs by the Act of 1832. We begin by tracing developments at one of Blackburn's closest neighbours to the south; the town of Bolton.

The suggestion that factory size may be related to working class political activity and patterns of middle class leadership has been made readily by two historians. Patrick Joyce⁸⁷ has suggested that in those towns where the factory size was smaller and more compact it was probable that employer influence was less pronounced throughout a given community. John Garrard's⁸⁸ analysis is based on the formula that a) small factories meant a more independent working class in terms of the policies they pursued and b) larger factories seem to indicate less evidence of independent working class policies. Joyce compares Blackburn, with its large scale factory units and the widespread involvement of the middle class manufacturers in local political leadership,

with Bury and the West Riding of Yorkshire where this process was slower to develop. Garrard compares on the one hand the towns Bolton (which is of relevance to this part of our thesis) and Salford where there were larger factories and relatively low working class political involvement after 1850, with, on the other hand Rochdale where the factories were mainly small and where working class involvement in Parliamentary and local politics was more visible and continuous from the 1830's through to 1870. What seems to have been occurring is that, to a significant extent after 1832, the giving of a political lead to the working class of a given locality became increasingly important, this again attests to the importance of policies and to the politics of opinion.

Let us briefly recap on the two industrial towns examined so far. We saw that at Preston the working class became gradually less involved in politics due in part to their gradual numerical erosion on the franchise, but possibly also because what working class leaders as existed in Preston in the 1840's and 1850's became more concerned with the more mundane questions of industrial relations. However the working class of Preston did maintain an element of working class and lower middle class leadership, even though after 1833 this leadership appeared hopelessly split. Preston too seems more susceptible to traditional political practices of both influence and the market although opinion politics do become more important in the 1840's with the towns rapid industrial development. Moreover, as we have seen, the experience of the Blackburn workers was of a dramatic reduction in the scale of working-class-led radical politics from the mid 1830's on issues which they were concerned with, and the assumption of this mantle by the middle class manufacturers of both political parties.

Certainly Bolton's industrial development was different from both Blackburn and Preston. As we noted, Preston was a mixed economy providing agricultural and legal services, and a limited textile

base which mushroomed in the 1840's. At Blackburn, textiles dominated the town and had done so increasingly from the end of the Napoleonic wars, indeed, by the mid 1830's, the basic consolidation of the towns staple industry was in place, with the manufacturers merely adding to their stock of worker housing from 1836 through to 1850.

Bolton differed in several respects. Firstly, although it was neither a legal nor agricultural centre, its industrial and service sector was diverse. For example in 1851 in occupational sectors other than textiles there were 2,784 colliers as against Blackburn's 896, and, in the engineering trades there were 2,114 working in Bolton compared to 624 in Blackburn.⁸⁹ In both examples there were three times as many working men involved in these industries in Bolton than there were in Blackburn. These differentiations may reveal important distinctions in the type of relationship between the working class and their employers. This is not to say that the working class of Bolton would be less susceptible to the regimentation of the factory system with its attendant loss of worker independence at the point of production. But it would mean that there were potentially more alternative forms of employment open to the Bolton workers, and, if it can be established that the factory size was noticeably less than at Blackburn, the workers of Bolton may not have experienced the same level of all-embracing dependency on their employers as at Blackburn. It could also follow that the workers of Bolton may have experienced more political autonomy and, in effect, been more likely to develop their own radical politics around issues which they believed to be important for the whole of their class and to be led by men drawn from their own class.

Let us pursue this by looking comparatively at the size of firms in nine North-West locations.

TABLE XVI COMPARATIVE FACTORY SIZE OF NINE NORTH-WEST URBAN AREAS.
SPINNING AND POWER LOOM WEAVING BY THE SAME FIRM,
1841.90

	TOTAL NUMBER OF FIRMS	TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS	AVERAGE WORKERS PER FIRM
BLACKBURN	18	10885	605
MANCHESTER	35	14833	424
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE	13	6783	521
BOLTON	12	3660	305
BURY	37	11386	307
WHALLEY	49	10758	219
ROCHDALE	17	3073	181
OLDHAM	32	7137	223
PRESTON	15	7801	520

The figures reveal that Bolton was one of those middling towns where the ratio of workers-per-factory was not high as in the case of Blackburn, nor was it particularly low as in the case of Rochdale. However, the Factory Inspectors reports show that in those firms which combined spinning and weaving, employing both males and females and which can be reasonably expected to be the largest employers of factory labour at the time; the largest figure employed in a single factory unit at Bolton was 712, whereas at Blackburn it was 1,400, followed closely by another three manufacturers employing over 1,000 hands.⁹¹ Thus Bolton's overall factory size was low when compared to Blackburn, and, as we noted above, it was more industrially diverse with more small scale engineers and other lower middle class employers. This means that at Bolton there was a lower level of capital concentration which, in the event of worker militancy, could suggest that the employer had less chance to overcome or negotiate out of existence working class resistance by the sheer size of the economic power of the manufacturing elite as may have been the

case with the Horrocks's of Preston, or the Hornby's, Hopwood's and Pilkington's of Blackburn.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BOLTON.

What then of the political development of the working class of Bolton, the incidence of Conservatism among this social group and the pattern of political leadership in local and especially Parliamentary politics? In the pre 1832 period we saw at Preston and Blackburn, (particularly the latter) the working class becoming increasingly radical ostensibly in the area of industrial relations but developing a political radicalism out of their industrial experiences. At Bolton the pattern is similar in the later eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth, but in the 1820's there does not appear the scale of working class militancy found at Blackburn, nor do the workers of Bolton appear to have possessed the level of political sophistication of those at Preston - the great majority of whom it will be recalled possessed the householder franchise. We shall explain the possible reasons for this in due course but it should be noted here that in the Bolton area there resided the two foremost and formidable opponents of radical politics in the shape of William Holton and Ralph Fletcher.

The 1820's do appear to have been a fairly quiet period in Bolton. In 1826 for example when disputes and disturbances over the imposition of power looms and the general down turn in trade raged across the North-West, Bolton was peaceful. Even though power looms were deployed and the trade in fancy cuts and counterpanes severely hit the hand loom weavers there were few disputes. In Bolton, unlike Blackburn the weavers did not attack machinery and

during the worst of the distress allowed acts of private charity to be organized by the Manufacturers Committee on their behalf.⁹² As we have seen at Blackburn such moves by the local manufacturers and magistrates were rejected by the weavers, but at Bolton they seem to have been accepted. The pattern appears to have been that at the onset of the consolidation of the factories at Blackburn was fairly sudden - from the mid 1820's - and this may have been a factor in worker militancy at this time, whilst at Bolton it was much more gradual and not on the same scale. By the later 1830's and the rise of Chartism the factory size of Blackburn was far larger than that of Bolton, and as we have noted, Blackburn was relatively quiet, whilst at Bolton, with its smaller units and more diverse occupational mix of the working class, the situation was serious indeed, as we shall subsequently discover. This then seems to be conforming to the general model.

However, let us at this stage return to outlining the developments of the working class of Bolton from the mid-1820's. In fact during the 1820's, the main lead of the workers of Bolton in the sphere of industrial relations came from the spinners,⁹³ and not, as in the case of Blackburn from the weavers. It was the spinners who formed a committee in 1825 to look into conditions prevailing in the factories of Bolton, a move which initiated the interest of the working class in the factory movement. It was the spinners who had been introduced to the factory system first and it was they who began to politicize the male weavers after 1826 through factory reform and the need to unite in the form of a general union of Bolton textile workers. It was the spinners who remained the single largest body of employed workers in Bolton throughout the period under discussion. There were in fact several types of spinning in the town: coarse, which employed mainly women and children, with men acting as overlookers and foremen, and fine, which was mainly the preserve of the men. From the mid-to-late 1820's the spinners began their calls for a general union, centred initially on John Dohertie's plans begun in 1826.

However, the weavers - both power and hand loom - do not seem to have followed the lead given by the spinners at least in any mass sense. The apparent quiescence of the Bolton weavers before 1832 is given credence by a fellow weaver, John Miller, when looking back from 1836, he said:-

In 1809 we petitioned Parliament for a minimum wage, in 1811 we petitioned Parliament for a tightening up of the apprentice rules of entry, both refused. In 1826 when throughout the county rioters smashed the power looms, Bolton was at peace. We now need a strong union, we have relied too much on outside help.⁹⁴

The spinners were quite different. This group became involved in both the forming of a Spinners Union allied to John Doherty's National Association for the Protection of Labour and to the Bolton Political Union. During the great spinners' strike of 1829/30, the spinners of Bolton were actively supportive of their Manchester colleagues. This resulted in a long and violent dispute in 1830,⁹⁵ brought about on the one hand by a wage reduction by the employers, and on the other by fierce hostility to the Spinners Union by the manufacturers. When the weavers were faced with similar wage reductions the spinners once again attempted to bring them into a General Textile Union.⁹⁶ They had already persuaded the dyers and bleachers to join their ranks, but again the weavers refused to be drawn, placing their hopes on memorials to masters and attempting to form meetings of employers and men. At one firm the tactics of the weavers appears to work for at Green's, after a meeting at which William Pilling spoke (one of the weavers leaders), the weavers gained their list of prices.⁹⁷

This suggests that in the period before the onset of the agitation surrounding the Reform Act, the workers of Bolton did not exhibit the high levels of class consciousness of those at either

Blackburn or Preston. Rather whilst the spinners may have been active, there does appear to have been a higher degree of reluctance on the part of other workers to join them. This could be suggestive of a more heightened sense of status differentiation amongst important trades within the Bolton work force.

Throughout 1830 and 1831 the spinners became more agitated on both the industrial and political front. The main targets of their attacks were two of the largest employers in the town, Bollings factories and the Ashworth brothers. The former was Conservative and the latter were 'progressive' Liberals. In April 1830 there was a serious riot at Ashworth's factory at Sharples,⁹⁸ and in May a bomb was thrown at the window of Bolling's factory and battle took place between the spinners and Bolling's Knobsticks.⁹⁹ By the end of July 1831 the spinners dispute was over with an agreed list accepted by both sides and any outstanding prosecutions dropped by the employers.¹⁰⁰

In mid October 1830 the Bolton Political Union was formed. Its rank and file at this early stage of development was made up of spinners and craft workers, whilst its leadership was in the main composed of the lower middle class shopkeepers and small manufacturers. These main leaders at this time were William Naisby, a draper, John Mitchell, a small scale counterpane manufacturer, Joseph Skelton and his brother Peter, linen drapers, these men were drawn from the Huntite wing of popular radicalism.¹⁰¹

But it also appears that the weavers became involved in the Political Union shortly after its formation, for the leading speakers at a meeting of the Union in late October there were three weavers, John O'Brien, Charles Wood, John Aston and two spinners Edwin Barker and John Trevor.¹⁰² Thus it seems that as the Reform Agitation got under way the previously moderate weavers began to involve themselves in working class politics. It seems

to have taken a great constitutional measure of reform to raise their class consciousness and work alongside the spinners from whom throughout the 1820's they had distanced themselves on questions of industrial relations.

What is not so easy to ascertain is the exact nature of the popular politics of these 'working class leaders of the political union'. It does not appear to have been anti-capitalistic in the manner of Hetherington, Bronterre O'Brien and the Poor Man's Guardian, for as we shall see, these same leaders were willing to work alongside the employers in a body formed in 1834 called the Weavers Committee.¹⁰³ Furthermore some members of the Political Union went on to become members and supporters of the Bolton Operative Conservative Association, and even at this stage some of them were displaying signs of overt racial bigotry - attitudes which many middle class Conservatives were later to use as a device of rousing working class passions and feelings of resentment. Earlier in 1830 for example at a meeting of weavers, John O'Brien blamed the Jews of Manchester for the decline in trade: "Our ancestors would have died to a man before they would have submitted to these Jews with their baboon faces", and Richard Starkie expressed similar feelings of intolerance towards the Russians.¹⁰⁴

So even at this early stage in Bolton's politics there were the same kind of differences within popular radicalism as we saw at Preston, between the lower middle classes who supported the radicalism expressed by Paine, Carlile, Hunt and Attwood, members of the working class radicals like the spinners who drew on the proto-socialism of O'Brien and the Poor Man's Guardian, and the weavers whose leadership was drawn towards Radical Tory elements.

Within the wider Tory leadership of Bolton and its surrounding district there had been a long history of reactionary anti-Jacobinism and more recently Orangism. In this, as we noted above

two men stand out. One was a local squire, William Hulton. Hulton was the magistrate who ordered the Yeomanry to charge at Peterloo and it was he who was the driving force in the formation of the South Lancashire Conservative Association. He prided himself on his skills at political organization and lamented what his endeavours had cost him in personal and financial terms. As he told Sir Robert Peel in 1842, "No one could have devoted more energy - and few made greater pecuniary sacrifices in proportion to their means, than I have done especially for the establishment of Conservative Associations... I abandoned personal ambition in order more successfully to accomplish what I believed proved of national importance. In truth I have devoted too much to public and too little to private care."¹⁰⁵

Hulton began to organise the Local Tories as early as 1813 mainly around the sedentary auspices of the local Pitt Club,¹⁰⁶ and it was here that the other pre-1832 Local Tory leader emerged, the notorious Colonel Ralph Fletcher. It was Fletcher who acted as Hulton's assistant-in-the-field during the anti-Jacobin 'Blackface' campaign when suspected radicals were visited by Fletcher and his band of Blackfaces made up of local hand loom weavers and colliers.¹⁰⁷ Fletcher supplied the Home Office with reports of scores of secret meetings of Trades unionists and reformers from 1797 until his death in 1832. But Fletcher combined his anti-Jacobin pro-Tory activities with being an ardent member of early Lancashire Orangism. As the Bolton Chronicle noted in his obituary, he combined anti-radicalism, with religious intolerance and equated this to a defence of the British Constitution.

The whole policy of the spy system, of which, in this part of Lancashire he was the prime mover, is too well known...suffice to say, that the scenes which occurred under that system...can never be forgotten... It is difficult to trace the causes of human action to their primary source... We should perhaps find, that in the instance of Colonel Fletcher, this particular policy resulted from the

circumstance of his being an inveterate Orange man,...and from a belief that the absolute ascendancy of the Orange or Protestant interest, was necessary to the safety of what he called the British Constitution.¹⁰⁸

Although both men were hated by radicals and mistrusted and despised by many moderate men, the activities of Hulton and Fletcher may go some way to explaining the lack of cohesiveness in working class activities in Bolton before 1830. But the sheer exuberance and feelings of realization and hope drew many working people to the reform agitation in 1830 and this included the weavers who had suffered under Fletcher and, previously in the 1820's, were rightfully wary of incurring his wrath. However it should also be remembered that at Bolton, Fletcher found some support amongst a small section of working people and many of these were weavers and colliers, which not merely served to underline and highlight the complexity of the politics of Bolton's working class, but serves also to show that there existed a core of working class support for Toryism in the area before 1832 as was the case at Liverpool and Wigan. Part of the reason for this was the substantial proportion of Anglicans within the population. Also important were the tactics employed by the extreme Tories on the radical weavers.

A major point of distinction has to be noted here. Working class acquiescence and indeed support for Loyalism and Toryism before 1832 seems to have been built on the twin foundations of intimidation and fear especially among the weavers, who up to 1811/12 had been militantly radical. However, after 1832, through the integration of sections of the working class into the party structure, working class Toryism was based on mutual consent, freely offered and accepted, and also the inculcation of political opinions through the local Conservatives taking up working class based issues. Of course there remained elements of intimidation, and corruption, but these we argue became less important than the

role and function of the party. What has also to be borne in mind in Bolton was the industrial and religious differentiations which seems to have been a further facilitating factor in the development of opinion orientated politics after 1830 and the onset of the Reform Crisis. The weavers now felt safe to involve themselves in politics, but the complicating factor is that they did not advocate similar strains of politics and policies as a single trade, as say the spinners seem to have done. They were politically disparate as we shall see and the lines of demarcation do not coincide with the crude distinction between hand loom and power loom weavers.

However let us return to the Political Union. As at Blackburn from 1831/2 the leadership of this body began to involve itself in local politics through the Vestry initially but also by making assaults on the governing Boards of trustees,¹⁰⁹ particularly the Little Bolton board with its less self-perpetuating membership and its lower property qualification. However this was a type of guerilla warfare in which the lower middle class leadership engaged; the rank and file - which by November 1831 was put at 4,000¹¹⁰ - concerned themselves with Vestry packing and the assembling of public meetings to air their increasingly radical views.

We know something of how the Bolton Political Union was organized in 1831/2. This reveals a marked heightening of class consciousness and political awareness among key sections of Bolton's working class, particularly the formally moderate weavers. By 1831 a committee had been formed comprising of 25 persons who Brimlow describes as being 'chiefly working men.'¹¹¹ In October 1831 the committee was active in pondering its options after the House of Lords had rejected the Reform Bill. A public meeting was called at which a letter was read out from Edward

Curren, the leader of the Manchester Political Union of the Working Classes calling upon the 'brave men of Bolton' to attend a 'great demonstration' in Manchester, "but not to go as before (unarmed) to Peterloo."¹¹²

The radical nature of the leadership is revealed in the type of reform they desired. Effectively they would not support any measure of reform which was not founded on universal suffrage, vote by ballot and annual Parliaments. The lower middle class leadership at this time attempted to moderate the actions of the rank and file by attempting to operate within the law by asking for all their public meetings to be sanctioned by the Borough reeves of Great and Little Bolton and the local magistrates. When this was refused, the leadership vacillated and the working class effectively took over the Political Union. They organized a procession and meeting on Monday October 15, a work day at which 6,000 gathered in Bradford Square in the centre of the town. Prominent at this meeting was a hand loom weaver, Walter O'Carroll, and a spinner, Findley Frazer which again reinforces the point that by now the spinners and weavers seem to have presented a united front. Throughout the meeting the King and his ministry received support the wrath reserved for the Bishops and Lords.

After the Bristol riots in late October, the forces of authority became increasingly alarmed as to the controllability of the various Political Unions and on November 2 the King issued a Royal Proclamation declaring meetings of political societies illegal. This had the effect of splitting the moderates from the extremists. The next meeting of the Bolton Political Union was held on November 28, whereupon after a series of angry exchanges the Union split and its former lower middle class leadership consisting of Naisby Staton, Robinson, Waring, Greenalgh, Black, Starkie, Brown and Hayhurst left the governing council. Those who remained were the working class spinners and weavers who held (a

strictly illegal) meeting in Bradford Square. The militant tone of class politics at this time can be gleaned from the savage attacks some of the speakers made upon the holders of property. Walter O'Carroll for example suggested somewhat arbitrarily that anyone who owned or rented a house above 5 pounds rateable value was a coward. Further speakers included other weavers. John O'Brien and John McQuirk called for a Declaration of Rights, John Aston advised the audience to read the works of Thomas Paine but also moderated the tone of the meeting by suggesting that while the Council insisted on all their demands they would not oppose genuine moderate reform if it would be a precursor to further reforms.¹¹³

There are some important points here regarding the levels of working class consciousness among the working people of Bolton between 1831/3. These constitute striking similarities with the working class of Blackburn and other new boroughs. The first is that the working class of Bolton formulated and organized their political demands as a means of benefiting the whole of the working class, not merely sections of it. Secondly, they acted independently of other political groupings existing at the time, like for example the Whig reformers, the lower middle class progressives or indeed the Ultra Tories. These were working class issues being organized by the working class themselves, and this leads to a third important point in that the leaders of popular working class radicalism in Bolton between 1831 and 1833 were drawn exclusively from the working class themselves regardless of occupational or status differentiation. This suggests a very high level of class consciousness existing at this time, coupled as it was with a mass sense of political awareness existing among the working people of Bolton. This state of anticipation and high levels of working class consciousness continued throughout the 'Days of May' crisis, up until the elections themselves in December 1832.

The Bolton Political Union was also agitating about other issues than the reform of Parliament. They supported the 10 Hours Bill, and the opening up of local government.¹¹⁴ However, after the passing of Reform in June 1832 divisions began appearing particularly about the narrow character of the Act itself and the retention of the Corn Laws orchestrated in the main by Naisby and the lower middle class radicals. As far as this group were concerned, once the Reform Act had been passed they seem increasingly to have regained the initiative. They mounted assaults on the Board of Trustees in both Great and Little Bolton,¹¹⁵ and they won control of the Overseers of the Poor in Great and Little Bolton. In short they became increasingly important as the first Parliamentary elections drew close. The Conservatives for their part took cover. As at Blackburn they did not oppose Parliamentary Reform - which may have been an important factor in their future success - but wished above all to curb the extreme radical tendencies of the working class and to put a brake on the reforming zeal of the various sets of reformers, especially in terms of the Church and State constitution and the protection of domestic agriculture.¹¹⁶

There were four candidates at this first election. These were William Bolling, a local large scale manufacturer and the Conservative candidate, J A Yates, an 'advanced' Liberal from Liverpool, Robert Torrens, a Whig reformer and a leading Philosophic Radical, and William Eagle, a Manchester lawyer. Torrens and Yates seem to have been the favoured candidates of the lower middle class popular radicals, whilst Eagle was the man favoured by the bulk of the non-electors and the now depleted Political Union. At this first election there does seem a good deal of tactical political posturing displayed as Eagle seems to have been given a totally false impression as to the likely size of the elector and non-electors support he could expect to receive, and there were men on his committee who, although they may have been genuine in their support also harboured a 'desire to see

Bolling returned. It is worth noting that among those on Eagles' non-electoral committee were Charles Rothwell and Charles Staton, both of whom were to play important parts in the future in the Bolton Operative Conservative Association.¹¹⁷

The evidence of electoral chicanery came to light some forty years after the event in the pages of the Bolton Weekly Journal. The columnist - 'Recollections of a Radical Outcast' - maintained that soon after the result of the election was known, five non-electors entered the Swan Hotel, our chronicler remaining unseen. It would appear that the men were in an 'excited state', pleased that Eagle had finished bottom of the poll and that Yates, the favourite of the Naisby clique had lost to the Conservative Bolling. Shortly after a sixth man entered and proceeded to distribute 'treats', this man was named as the builder Isaac Barrow, a supposed supporter of the radical Yates.¹¹⁸ The idea had been to split the popular radical vote. It was known from the canvass that Torrens was unassailable, but that if the popular vote between Yates and Eagle could be split then Bolling may get a clear run. The result bore that tactic out, Torrens topped the poll with 672 votes, then came Bolling with 492 votes, then Yates with 482 and Eagle - the outsider - took a crucial 107 votes from the other radicals.

This suggests, as was the case at Preston, that popular radicalism was not united either in politics or in leadership. It could command sizable support among the working class but from the passing of Reform, this support was being pulled in various directions. Also similar to Preston was the fact that after 1832 popular radicalism increasingly fell under the influence of the lower middle classes, and they in turn began to gravitate towards mainstream Liberalism especially with regard to the question of the Corn Laws.

However some working class leaders did remain active and, many of these were to be found among the weavers; the spinners it appears

seem to have lost interest in politics after what they may have seen as the failure of 1831/2. In fact in the first few years after the passing of Reform the spinners of Bolton did not even engage in trade union activities. Here the weavers were in the mass of activity, and it is worth noting that, as at Blackburn it was issues which dominated the agitation. Moreover it would seem that many of these leaders - as was also the case at Blackburn - became attracted by conservative attempts to address working class problems.

Early in 1834 there was set up the Bolton Committee of Manufacturers and Weavers.¹¹⁹ This effectively split in two the formerly united Weavers Union: between the extreme radicals led by McQuirk and Edward Hamilton and those moderates who joined the Committee, several of whom went on to become Operative Conservatives - men like Phillip Halliwell, Richard Needham, Charles Rothwell, John Makin and Thomas Monks. The chair was taken by the Conservative M.P. and large local mill owner William Bolling. The body was an attempt to alleviate the plight of the hand loom weavers particularly in the light of a serious down turn in trade. But its significance for us is that it was an attempt to address a working class issue on the basis that it was an acknowledgment by the Conservative manufacturers that the working class themselves could be part of the decision making process. In this sense it was the beginning of an attempt in political toleration.

Meanwhile as we have noted the lower middle class radicals were gaining access to the decision making process of local government. This culminated in the Liberals gaining control of the first Municipal council after the town's incorporation in 1838, and keeping their majority until 1844 when the Conservatives regained control. However as the moderate working class were beginning to be integrated into the middle class dominated world of the

politics of the factory, the extreme working class radicals were moving further to the left of the political spectrum. Like extreme radicals across the North-West, the Bolton radicals were disillusioned by the effects of the Reform Act and the attitudes of the Whigs and Liberals. This group was the remnant of the old Political Union, its name now changed to the Bolton Political Union of the Working Classes. It became the organizational basis of Chartism later in the 1830's. In June 1833 however, the Union made its feelings clear in a letter to the Poor Man's Guardian. Commenting on 'the bad effects of the unjust and tyrannical Reform Bill, McQuirk and Hamilton gave their assessment of the Whig/Liberal government:

The government of this country are not friends but enemies of the people and that we are now subject to complete military despotism. And further, we, the unionists of Bolton do honestly declare that the circumstances that lead us to pass these resolutions further convince us that there can be no effectual relief for our sufferings without an efficient change in the representation of the people, which has determined us that we shall never cease seeking in a constitutional way that reform which has its basis in universal suffrage, vote by secret ballot, short Parliaments and no property qualification.¹²⁰

Thus the picture we see by 1834 is that politics was many sided. with opinion being pushed and pulled in various directions. Whether this can be attributed to a lack of deference amongst the working class due to the smaller size of the factory units, thus imbuing them with greater freedom of political expression, is difficult to prove, but the situation was one which was to continue throughout the 1830's and into the early 1840's.

However the support given by the working class of Bolton to the extreme radicals should not be underestimated, as the events of 1839 reveal. We look briefly at these later but the existence of a significant element of support, may have induced the

Conservatives to throw their support early behind the Weavers Committee, and in 1835, to establish an Operative branch of the Bolton Conservative Association.

The Bolton Operative Conservative Association was formed in September 1835,¹²¹ by 1838 it had a membership of over 800,¹²² and with the coming of municipal incorporation it had branches in every ward in Bolton with 30 officers throughout the town.¹²³ Its relationship with the Weavers Committee was close as the extreme working class radicals pointed out.¹²⁴

However, it included in its supporters some ardent former extreme radicals. Among these was Walter O'Carrol the secularist radical,¹²⁵ and Charles Rothwell, the trades unionist. Rothwell's commitment to trades unionism was apparent when he defended the rights of the striking spinners of Preston in a speech called to support the strikers in Manchester early in 1837. "The spinners of Preston", he said, "had been unjustly dealt with by the proceedings of their employers, in attempting to hinder them from taking such steps as the law of the land allow."¹²⁶ The tone of this meeting was radical tory, as confirmed by the speech of the Rev. Joseph Raynor Stephens who described the manufacturers involved in the dispute as, "those bloody, murdering, swindling, smuggling, plundering, tyrannical murderers of Preston."¹²⁷

We saw at Blackburn how, throughout the 1830's, the radical tories and later the Operative Conservatives grasped the issue of factory reform as a rallying cry. However, in Bolton the chief issue during the 1830's and early 40's was opposition to the imposition of the New Poor Law. It was over this question that the various leaders of popular opinion attempted to capture working class support. First of all the Liberal-inclined lower middle class radicals led by William Naisby were ambiguous on the question preferring instead to concentrate on moral-force Chartism and repeal of the Corn Laws. The Operative Conservatives, argued for

petitioning Parliament for adjustments to the New Law and ultimately for its repeal. The extreme radicals, wished to ignore the Law and incorporate the agitation surrounding the tactic of refusing to elect Guardians into the general agitation of Constitutional reform and the Charter.¹²⁸

The Operative Conservatives whilst obeying the law and electing Guardians, attempted to soften the effects of New Poor Law. However they also exploited working class traditions and sentiments especially regarding death and the decent treatment of those caught in the trap of poverty. One example came from Giles Marsh who told a public meeting on the New Poor Law that Warburton's Anatomy Bill - which appeared to be yet another example, like the Factory system and the New Poor Law, that those in positions of power cared little for working people - "robs the grave of its victims and the New Poor Law provides the schools of anatomy with subjects - the former wets the knife which is to be plunged into my body, and the latter prepares me for the dissection table."¹²⁹

When the elections for the Guardians of the Bolton Union eventually went ahead in April 1839, the three factions were represented but the Conservatives held a slender majority which they maintained well into the 1840's. During this period of Conservative control the Guardians administered relief as if the New Poor Law did not exist, much to the chagrin of Chadwick and the Commissioners in London.¹³⁰

However, whatever support the operative Conservatives, and conservatives generally found amongst the working class of Bolton in 1839 as a result of their liberal treatment of the poor, was offset by the fact that in this year particularly the great majority of working people supported the physical force Chartists.¹³¹ The local manufacturer-turned-gentleman, Robert Heywood tells us in his diaries (and this is confirmed in the Home

Office papers) that the popular support given to the Chartists was running out of control by the summer of 1839.¹³² The Mayor of Bolton, the Liberal Charles Darbyshire, told Home Secretary Russell that the membership of the Bolton Working Men's Association had increased from 700 at the beginning of the year (the membership of the Bolton Operative Conservative Association was 800 plus at this time) to 2,100 by July 1839.¹³³

The explosion came during the strikes surrounding the Sacred Month of August. By August 12 the Chronicle reported that

The town was in the greatest state of alarm, most shops and businesses closed. People believed a terrible attack to be at hand.

The riots duly came and lasted for four days, culminating in the successful storming of Little Bolton Town Hall. In the end the Military assumed control and the leaders were arrested. But Bolton remained in a state of uneasy calm. However, the only other 'small mill town' to be affected in anything like the scale of Bolton was Bury.¹³⁴ Elsewhere, at Oldham and Rochdale the situation was calm and indeed, no strikes took place. In the larger mill towns similarly the strike was at best lacklustre. In Ashton the leadership was badly divided and at Blackburn the Sacred Month passed off with scarcely a murmur.

As Robert Sykes tells us,¹³⁵ whilst the various conspiratorial schemes were being hatched in other parts of the country, most notably South Wales and Yorkshire, only Bolton, in all of the towns in the North West seems to have had anything planned, which tells us something of their commitment even though ultimately these plans came to nought.¹³⁶ It seems that the eventual defeat of 1839 reduced the strength of support for the extreme radical faction¹³⁷ and, in the years which followed the sacred month, the working class of Bolton became less militant and more interested

in issues not connected with far reaching constitutional reform. The radical Tory M.P. for Knaresborough W B Ferrand re-kindled the interest in the factory question in 1843 when he visited the town for a 'Oastler Liberation' rally in December. Speaking as a 'tory of the old school' in favour of 'ten hours', repeal of the New Poor Law and of the need for industrial arbitration he gained the backing of the Bolton Operative Conservative Association.¹³⁸ But the Liberals too, under the leadership of a major employer, Robert Knowles, also took up the issue, much to the displeasure of the leading Manchester School Liberals, Henry and Edmund Ashworth and the towns Liberal M.P. Dr John Bowring.¹³⁹

Thus the picture of working class politics in Bolton in the 1840's, 1850's and 1860's was one in which both of great parties vied for the support of the working class over issues which they - the middle classes - felt were important, irrespective of whether the working class believed them to be so, these included issues such as education, religion and public health. However, the parties also became involved in issues which the working class themselves viewed as important such as factory reform, trades unions, industrial negotiation and poor relief. The Conservatives remained a force in the town throughout the period in question. Although the operative branch did not survive the great split of 1846/7, it was revived in the later 1850's, and at the election of 1868 called under the householder suffrage, Bolton in common with several other mill towns like Blackburn, Preston and Salford - returned two Conservative members.

However, up until its decline in the mid-1840's, the Bolton Operative Conservative Association fulfilled the same kind of functions - education, proselytization, provision of sick benefits and entertainment - as in other North West towns. Also it served to integrate sections of the working class into party political activity, and it legitimized that activity. The operative branch acted as an agency for generating opinion and for its wider

dissemination. It galvanized a measure of working class support behind the party. For example, let us take a year when the Conservatives of Bolton did badly in a Parliamentary election, 1841.¹⁴⁰ This was a year when the Operative Association was at its height. We find that of the total electorate of Bolton, the working class made up 22.5 per cent. Of this 22.5 per cent, 14 per cent voted for the losing Conservative candidates, Bolling and Rothwell, whilst 8.5 per cent voted for the Liberal pair of Bowring and Ainsworth.¹⁴¹ As a statistic it reveals the overwhelming strength of the lower middle class electorate, but it does reveal that amongst the working class electors, particularly the weavers, the Conservatives held majority support.

In Bolton then, even in the years of fairly high levels of working class consciousness and solidarity - particularly the later 1830's - there was a section of the working class who were integrated into the Conservative party, and we have noted that from the mid-1830's, the Operative Conservatives did involve themselves in working class based issues. This suggests that some working people were seeking other solutions to their problems than that of directly challenging the forces of existing authority, whilst at the same time displaying a will to act on behalf of what they perceived as their class interest as a whole. This further suggests that working class consciousness may have been operating at different levels - a point we shall return to in our next and final chapter. However it also signifies that, even when class consciousness was high and working class leadership was prominent, political parties and key individuals still had the power to influence sections within the working class. In Bolton, as at Blackburn, the Conservatives utilized this, but at Bolton it was not the prominent manufacturers like Hornby, but largely the lower middle class and the working class themselves. However the local Conservative leadership carefully cultivated support amongst the moderate working class, giving publicity to their problems and at the same time denigrating the Liberals as the chief cause of their

miseries. To some working class members this may have been seen as an attack on the systematic progressiveness of Manchester School Liberalism. This was the foundation of the success of men like Ferrand in gaining widespread support amongst the working class in the 1840's, Booth Mason in the 50's and W R Callender in the 60's. However, in the case of these last two leaders it should be remembered that they used religious bigotry and sectarian and racial conflict as weapons in their political campaigns. The point is that working class sectionalism and support for conservatism had a fairly long history.

We saw in Bolton that in the 1820's it was the spinners who were active; by the 1830's it was the weavers. Unquestionably the weavers economic situation was an important factor, but so too was the effect of the transformation of their political awareness. As we have noted, even in the 1830's, working class politics were sectionalized with opinions on the solutions varying from the largest section; the extreme radicals through to the moderates, and the conservatives. However, all maintained they had genuine solutions on offer to the plight of the working class. This suggests even in the radical 30's a plurality of opinion existing around working class based issues. After the debacle of the Sacred Month mass radicalism in Bolton seems to have grown weaker until by the mid to late 40's political activity amongst the working class was minimal and support was split between the two main party groupings over issues like industrial relations, factory reform, the New Poor Law, the rating question, education, temperance, public health and so on.

The case in favour of greater working class political autonomy and the motivating of a wide set of political attitudes amongst the working class of Bolton due to the relative smallness of its factories is interesting but contradictory. There is evidence on both sides of the argument. Certainly there were not the charismatic leaders in Bolton of the type we found in Blackburn or

even Preston, and when one considers the spinners, a group who worked in some of the largest factories in the town, one finds them on the one hand active on the industrial front but on the other hand passive on the political. The engineers as a group tended to work in the small workshop environment and throughout the 1830's became increasingly radical, and in 1841, those who possessed the franchise voted overwhelmingly for the reformers and against the iron founder Rothwell. However when one looks at the 27 electors who plumped for Rothwell one finds that 9¹⁴² were working class comprising either mechanics, millwrights or moulders, thus even amongst this trade, where radicalism was in the ascendancy there was political sectionalism.

The split amongst the workers of Bolton between Conservative and radical Liberal took place in the early to mid 1840's. In Blackburn we saw this came in the 1830's. In Radical Oldham it was in the 1850's,¹⁴³ but even here Operative Conservatism established a foothold in the 1830's. Here the Operative Society was formed in September 1835, and by January 1836 they were attracting 200 to their branch meetings.¹⁴⁴ Apart from 1835 the town returned radical Liberal members, but with householder suffrage in 1868, a Conservative was returned and in 1874 the town had two Conservative M.P.'s.

Also in 1868 in Manchester a Conservative finished top of the poll and at Salford two Conservatives were returned. In these two cities the Operative Conservatives appear to have had thriving branches. A Mr Richie of the Salford branch expressed in 1836 an early form of Tory democracy when he said, "The almighty has not made different codes of law, one for the rich and one for the poor, in his eyes all are equal."¹⁴⁵ This branch vehemently denied the charge levelled at them by the Manchester Guardian that they were the political manifestation of an Orange Lodge. In March 1836 they opened up their membership books to the Guardian in order to prove that out of 380 members 'only 14 were

Orangemen.¹⁴⁶ According to The Times in 1838 Salford Conservatives held a tea party and ball, 3,000 persons attended.¹⁴⁷ In the same year when the Manchester Operative branch invited Sir Francis Burdett to address them - now acclaimed as a 'perfect specimen of English country gentlemen' - he later sat down to a subsidized dinner along with 2,000 others.¹⁴⁸ Speaking at Warrington in December 1836 the editor of the Manchester Courier, said that in south Lancashire alone the Operative membership amounted to 7,000, and Charles Wilkins speaking at the same meeting put the total membership for the whole of Lancashire at 12,000.¹⁴⁹ Even as early as 1836 Wilkins - the official 'missionary' of the South Lancashire Association was defending the right of working people to agitate over industrial relations and to form trades unions.¹⁵⁰

As we noted above, many of these operative associations faded with the split in the party after 1847. Part of the reason for this was the deep division Corn Law Repeal created among the propertied middle classes, who, as we have seen provided much of the financial backing for the operative branches. Thus without such financial help the branches folded. This reinforces the point that these operative associations were heavily reliant on the middle classes. However, by the 1850's, many had been re-formed. This was partly due to the need to re-organize in the light of the Small Tenements Act with regards local government, but also the attraction must in part have been due to the heightened ethnic and religious tensions of that period.¹⁵¹ In terms of mass membership, however, the political clubs came into their own in the 1870's with the need of both Liberals and Conservatives to organize a mass working class electorate, this, however has been covered elsewhere.¹⁵²

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have examined the nature of working class sectional development in those boroughs created by the Reform Act of 1832, concentrating chiefly on Blackburn and Bolton. We were concerned to show that in these new boroughs the Conservatives, whilst maintaining the need to preserve the constitution in Church and State, also began to integrate sections of the working class into their ranks, not merely as bigoted political powers, but on the basis of issues which the working class were directly concerned with, and thus sought to influence opinion and gain support around these issues. We noted that in Blackburn militant working class radicalism - comprising of all textile workers - grew throughout the 1820's, and culminated in the Reform Crisis. From the passing of the Act the levels of working class consciousness began to decline; as a class they became increasingly politically sectionalized and materially more dependent on the large-scale manufacturers, in areas such as welfare provision, education, housing and so on. We saw also how the local Conservatives, while attempting to politically socialize sections of the working class and to control them politically, and indeed to use them as organizational tools of the party, also began to take on board the practical, bread and butter issues which the working class themselves felt were important. Thus the Conservatives began to become involved in opinion politics. We noted also the growth of radical Toryism among sections of the working class throughout the Blackburn area as a whole in the 1830's, and a form of popular Conservatism in the 1840's, 50's and 60's centring around key charismatic leaders, usually large scale middle class manufacturers.

We saw in Bolton that during the 1820's the trades were split and that there had been a history of loyalist Tory sentiment among key

sections of the working class some four decades before 1832. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century this centred on the reactionary Magistrate Ralph Fletcher. We noted that the Reform Crisis brought a level of unity among the trades and a general heightening of class consciousness. The extreme radicals claimed a large section of working class support up until the end of the 1830's, whilst the lower middle class Liberal reformers seem to have been predominant among their social peers. Both sides seem to have looked to their class interests in politics, with the Liberal reformers concerning themselves successfully with local politics and the working class looking increasingly towards major - and possibly violent - constitutional reform. But even in this seemingly barren political environment the Conservatives could claim some working class support, and they did take some leads on influencing working class opinion, especially amongst the weavers over their particular problems, and the working class as a whole over the imposition and operation of the New Poor Law.

After the events of 1830, the working class as a whole seem to have become more involved in industrial relations, and again we found the Conservatives leading opinion on the factory question. Working class politics however became increasingly quiescent, and what interest the working class had in politics - even when the Small Tenement Act was operating in the 1850's - seems to have become polarized between the two main party alignments. We noted that after the majority of working men received the vote, Bolton returned two Conservatives in both 1868 and 1874. This may, to a large degree be due to the prevailing political situation of the era, but it is also worth suggesting that sections of the working class of Bolton, as at Blackburn, had been harbouring Conservative sympathies for possibly three decades.

In both Blackburn and Bolton, and in the majority of the new boroughs religious distinctions do not appear to have played a major role in the political choices of the working class in the

1830's and 1840's, they appear to have been more concerned with material and practical questions which affected their day-to-day existence. Some sections of the working class turned to major constitutional reform as the answer, but others looked to practical solutions within the existing system. The Conservatives aimed their dart at this second group, and it seems that on occasions they were successful. Religion, in fact seems to have been of minimum importance to the majority of the working class themselves in the 1830's and 40's, although the middle classes may have thought it was important to the working class. The working class themselves apparently used religion as an institution for gaining the basic educational needs of their children rather than a means of spiritual solace - although in terms of generational influence Sunday Schools of the 1830's and 40's may have played an important role in the rise of working class religious observance in the 1850's and 60's. In these two decades religion became an important political question in the mill towns and the large cities. With the influx of the Irish immigrants, the Conservatives, locally and nationally played the 'orange card', but even this in a sense illustrates the power of parties to generate and influence opinion - even despicable opinion - among sections of the working class.

1. Enquiry into the state of Hand-loom Weavers in the Northern District, reported in Blackburn Standard 11/8/1838.

2. Ibid. See D Bythall, The Sweated Trades, London 1980. Or J A Schmiechen, Sweated Industry and Sweated Labour, London 1981.

3. See page above.

4. See chapter 3 above.
5. Blackburn Mail 15/2/1826.
6. Ibid. 26/4/1826.
7. See Northern Star 23/2/1839.
8. Blackburn Mail 29/4/1826,
9. Preston Chronicle 29/4/1826.
10. Preston Chronicle 6/5/1826.
11. Manchester Mercury 6/5/1826.
12. See K M Spencer, Social and Economic Geography of Preston, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Liverpool 1968, pp.50/58.
13. Public Records Office, H.O. 44/16 letter unsigned, dated 9/4/1826.
14. L Mumby (Ed), The Luddites, London 1971 pp.46/47.
15. Bolton Reference Library. Meeting Sheets and Advertisements.

16. See Chapter 9 above.
17. Quoted in C Aspin, A Local History of Lancashire, Helmshore 1969 p.48.
18. H/O 44/74 Unsigned officer to Peel 26/4/1826.
19. H.O. 44/19 undated Whitehead to Peel.
20. At the time the disturbances were certainly regarded as containing a strong political element. See Blackburn Mail 14/6/1826.
21. Huskisson reduced duties on some imported goods in 1824 and 1825, but not grain. A sliding scale was introduced only in 1828.
22. See Blackburn Alfred 17/9/1832.
23. 22/10/1832.
24. Election Address of John Fowden Hindle, Blackburn Reference Library, P/O 1832.
25. Blackburn Alfred 29/10/1832.
26. Durham, W A, A History of Parliamentary Elections for the Borough of Blackburn, Blackburn 1868 p.8. Also Blackburn Alfred 23/1/1833.

27. Blackburn Alfred 17/12/1832.
28. Blackburn Alfred 7/1/1833.
29. 21/1/1833.
30. The powers of the vestry were extremely limited, and after 1834 and the Poor Law Amendment Act were reduced even further.
31. W Brimlow, Parliamentary History of Bolton, Bolton 1880 pp.109-110. Manchester Guardian 5/12/1832, Bolton Chronicle 5/12/1831.
32. Blackburn Alfred 28/1/1833.
33. Blackburn Standard 18/1/1837.
34. Blackburn Standard 4/8/1835.
35. Parliamentary Papers 1852/3 vol.89 pp.158.
36. Orangism may have been a factor in some areas, especially Wigan and Liverpool in the 1830's, especially after 1835 when the Orange Orders were outlawed by Parliament, but Blackburn at this time was not a strong ant Catholic centre, nor was it in the 1850's and 60's when anti Irish and anti Catholic battles were being fought in Manchester.
37. Blackburn Standard 4/2/1835.

38. Blackburn Trades Directory, 1834, Blackburn Reference Library.

39. Blackburn Standard 18.2.1835.

40. Blackburn Standard 18/11/1835.

41. Ibid. 18/11/1835.

42. Blackburn Standard 25/11/1835.

43. Blackburn Gazette 5/12/1835, Manchester Guardian 5/12/1837.

44. Manchester Guardian 5/9/1835 and also 12/9/1835.

45. See The Times 21/10/1836.

46. It is also worth making the point that at Salford for example the Operative Association was formed many months before the Orange Lodges were outlawed, in March 1835.

47. Blackburn Gazette 28/11/1835. This information proved to be correct see Alfred Mallalieu's memorandum to Lord Aberdeen in AD.Ms 57420 Herries Papers, for Conservative party control of the local press.

48. See Manchester Guardian 26/11/1836.

49. Preston Pilot 27/2/1836.

50. Ibid 23/4/1836.

51. Blackburn Standard 15/7/1835.

52. For a full transcription of the aims, objectives and key players in this body see Appendix Two below pp.508-510.

53. Preston Pilot 16/7/1836.

54. Ibid. The Liberal M.P. for Bury, Richard Walker also called "the new breed of Operative supporting the Conservatives, Conservative Reformers" Manchester Guardian, 11/1/1837.

55. Preston Pilot 29/10/36.

56. Preston Pilot 30/11/1836. For a list of its leading members of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association see Appendix 3 p.512 below.

57. The Eighth Annual Report of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association, Blackburn Standard 3/1/1844.

58. The Committee Report of the Blackburn Conservative Club, 1864/5, Blackburn Reference Library, B 329.

59. Manchester Guardian 24/9/1836.

60. Blackburn Standard 27/11/1839.

61. See Bolton Chronicle 8/8/1835, speeches by Halliwell and Rothwell. Ibid, 24/2/1838 or McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal, 24/4/1841.

62. Public Record Office. M.H.125529 Ellingthorpe to P.L.C. 6/9/1842.

63. Public Record Office 125529. Ellingthorpe to P.L.C. 12/8/1842.

64. Blackburn Standard 5/7/1846.

65. Blackburn Standard 19/1/1842.

66. Blackburn Standard 19/1/1842.

67. W Kenworthy, Inventions and Hours of Labour, Blackburn 1842.

68. Ibid.

69. See for example R N Soffer, Attitudes and Allegiances in the Unskilled North, in International Review of Social History Vol X Part 3, 1965 pp.429,454.

70. Blackburn Standard 28/7/1847.

71. Preston Pilot 10/9/1853. (Pilot's emphasis).

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Preston Pilot 23/3/1853.

76. Preston Pilot 8/10/1853.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid. 22/10/1853.

79. Parliamentary Papers Factory Inspectors Report for 1841 Appendix No.1, pp.45/51.

80. See forthcoming Occasional Paper. D Walsh, Working Class Housing and Dependency in East Lancashire, 1830-1850, University of Salford. Between them the three largest employers in the town, Hornby, Pilkington and Hopwood, owned 90% of their employees housing by 1851.

81. For a detailed discussion of this aspect in relation to Blackburn after 1860 see P Joyce, Work, Society and Politics, Brighton 1986 en passim.

82. In 1838 the former Benthamite candidate for Blackburn in the elections of 1832 and 1835, Dr John Bowring, said to an audience of the Blackburn Reform Association, "I felt grieved when I heard that the flame of freedom was burning less bright here, (and) that

Toryism was in the ascendant." Blackburn Standard, 26/9/1838.

83. J W Whittaker, Sermon Preached to the Chartists on Sunday August 4, 1855, Blackburn 1839.

84. The Diary of Charles Tiplady, Blackburn Reference Library, Entry dated 21/3/1848.

85. Blackburn Standard 29/7/1847.

86. In 1851 the population of Blackburn was 46,536, of whom 8,355 (18.1% of total population) females were involved in cotton manufacture, compared to 9,464 (20.5%) male weavers. In Bolton in the same year the population was 61,172 of whom 6,450 females (10.5% of total population) worked in cotton manufacture, compared to 8,237 (13.5%) males involved in weaving. No other part of the region save the Ashton township of Manchester had a higher population of working females in its total population. Source Census 1851. Parliamentary Papers (Occupations of the people).

87. P Joyce, Work, Society and Politics, Brighton 1980, especially chapter 5, also by the same author, The Factory Politics of Lancashire in the later Nineteenth Century, Historical Journal, 18, No 3 1975.

88. J Garrard, Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns, Manchester, 1983.

89. Census 1851, Parliamentary papers, 1852 Occupations of the People, pp.634/646.

90. Parliamentary Papers. Factory Inspectors Report for the Half Year ending 31/12/1841 pp.45/51. See also V A C Gatrell, Labour, Power and the Size of Firms in the Lancashire Cotton Industry in the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century. Economic History

Review 2nd series 30, 1977. Dr R Lloyd-Jones and A A LaRoux, The Size of Firms in the Cotton Industry, Economic History Review 2nd series 33, 1980.

91. Factory Inspectors Reports 1841 op.cit.

92. Handbill calling for a meeting of ley-payers and the Manufacturers Committee to consider the distressed state of weavers. Dated 29/4/1826, Bolton Reference Library.

93. J Clegg, Annals of Bolton, Bolton 1888. See also J T Ward, The Factory Movement in Lancashire, Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 1965/6 pp.186/210.

94. Bolton Chronicle 6/2/1836.

95. Ibid. 20/2/1830, 13/3/1830 also 17/4/1830.

96. Ibid. 17/4/1830.

97. Ibid. 24/4/1830.

98. Bolton Chronicle, 17/4/1830.

99. Ibid 8/5/1830 and 15/8/1830.

100. Ibid. 24/7/1830.

101. Ibid. 14/8/1830. All attended a dinner in honour of Hunt and the recent revolt in France at this time.
102. Bolton Chronicle 23/10/1830.
103. Bolton Chronicle 1/2/1834.
104. Ibid 24/4/1830.
105. Peel Papers, British Library, As Ms 40508, ff 305/9 Hulton to Peel 14/5/1842.
106. List of Members of the Bolton Pitt Club, 1813, Lancashire County Records Office, Preston DDU 53/82/11.
107. The Blackfaces of Bolton, Bolton 1831. *Bolton Reference Library*.
108. Bolton Chronicle 25.2.1832.
109. Bolton Chronicle, 16/4/1831.
110. Bolton Chronicle, 10/1/1831.
111. W Brimlow, Political and parliamentary History of Britain, vol.1, Bolton 1880, p.109.
112. Bolton Chronicle, 12/10/1831.

113. Bolton Chronicle, 5/12/1831.
114. Ibid 3/3/1832. They also seem to have had contacts with other areas of the North West and they sent delegates to the National Convention of the Working Classes in London 25/2/1832.
115. Bolton Chronicle, 1/9/1832.
116. Ibid. 3/3/1832.
117. Ibid. 1/8/1832.
118. Bolton Weekly Journal, 2/6/1877.
119. Bolton Chronicle 1/2/1834. The full committee was as follows; Manufacturers Messrs Brodie, Crook, Dean, Tong, Bailey, Heaton, Blinkhorn, Hitchen, Green, Haslam, Arrowsmith, Horrocks, Mallet, Wood. Weavers; Phillip Halliwell, Richard Needham, John Aston, John Young, William Pilling, James Whiteford, John Welsby, Walter O'Carrol, William Hatch, Thomas Marks, George Thompson, Charles Rothwell, Richard Wood, Thomas Wolf.
120. Poor Man's Guardian, 22/6/1833.
121. Blackburn Standard, 9/9/1835.
122. Preston Pilot, 22/9/1838.
123. Ibid. 15/6/1839.

124. Bolton Chronicle 15/8/1835, and 9/7/1836.

125. J Belchem, English Working Class Radicalism and the Irish, 1815-1850 in North West Labour History Society, Bulletin No.8, 1982/3 p.9.

126. Manchester Guardian 7/1/1837.

127. Ibid.

128. Bolton Chronicle 28/1/1837.

129. Bolton Chronicle 28/1/1837.

130. Public Record Office M.H. 12. 5593-4 correspondence between 4/10/1839 and April 1841.

131. See R Sykes, Popular Politics and Trade Unionism in South-East Lancashire 1829-1842, PhD Thesis, University of Manchester 1982. See also correspondence between Derbyshire to Russell, Public Records Office, H.O.40-42.

132. Heywood papers Z>H>E./35, 1839 Bolton Reference Library. Also files on Bolton, Public Record Office H.O. 40/44 1839. pp.1 L55.

133. H.O.40/44, Darbyshire to Russell 21/7/1839, p.23.

134. P.R.O. Grundy to Russell 5/6/1839 H.O.40/37.

135. R Sykes, Physical Force Chartism: the Cotton District and the Chartist Crisis of 1839. International Review of Social History Vol.30 part 2 1985.

136. Ibid. p.234.

137. The great strike of 1842 seems to have passed off in Bolton without any serious disturbance. See Sykes op.cit. PhD.

138. Bolton Chronicle 23/12/1843.

139. Bolton Free Press 20/4/1844.

140. The Conservatives of Bolton only lost both of the towns seats to the Liberals twice, out of nine elections fought, these were in 1841 and 1852, in all others, apart from 1868 when they took both seats, they shared the seats with the Liberals.

141. Bolton Poll Book for 1844, Bolton Chronicle 7/7/1841. Out of 553 split votes for Ainsworth and Bowring there were 48 working class votes; out of 406 votes for the Conservatives, Bolling and Rothwell, there were 56 working class votes. The other splits were so small as to be barely meaningful.

142. Bolton Poll Book for 1841.

143. J Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, London 1974.

144. Manchester Courier 7/1/1836.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid. 12/3/1836.

147. The Times 20/4/1838.

148. Ibid.

149. Manchester Courier 3/12/1836.

150. Ibid.

151. See N Kirk, *Ethnicity, Class and Popular Toryism, 1850-1870* in K Lunn (ed) *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities*, Folkestone, 1980.

152. See J Garrard, *Parties, Members and Voters After 1867: A Local Study*. *Historical Journal* 20, 1, 1977 pp.145-163.

Chapter Eleven

An Analytical Summation

In this final chapter the intention is to combine the summarization and analysis of the thesis in relation to firstly, the themes we raised in the introduction and secondly the main points raised in each of the individual chapters. In this way we shall hopefully pull together the various strings of description, explanation and argument which we presented in the hypothesis and the empirical findings. The central reason for this approach is to bring the readers attention both to the key themes of the thesis in toto, and to place the individual chapters in relation to these key themes which each chapter in turn has raised. In this way a summarization and a concluding analysis will be achieved.

We suggested at the outset that at both national and local levels, the form and structure of politics in Britain began to change after 1832. We were particularly interested in two key areas of political change: firstly the development of political parties (specifically the Conservatives) in the light of the social and structural changes of the 1830s and 1840s, and secondly the political development of the industrial working class in the North-West, (arguably the most economically and industrially advanced region in the country). We further suggested that by the 1850s and 60s, the impact of change had been absorbed. Thus the immediate aftermath of the first Reform Act became the cornerstone of the thesis, along with the consolidation of industrial capitalism in the 1830s and 40s. The thesis therefore attempted to link political change with economic- but more pertinently- social change. It became necessary to look at

developments on a broad as well as on a narrow canvass, and to look at the situation before 1832 as well as concentrating on the key changes which occurred after this date.

We began by looking at the historiographic debate surrounding the emergence of the modern political party before 1867. This chapter was important in two senses. Firstly it attempted to describe and explain the manner in which political factions functioned in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The point here was to highlight the key areas of development between the pre-1832 system and that which evolved after that date. This was therefore, an introductory attempt to compare the role of political parties diachronically, taking the effects of the Reform Act itself as points of assessment of the changes both at the centre and in the localities. Secondly the chapter provided a series of explanatory concepts borrowed from political science and political sociology to bring the points of departure between the pre-and-post Reform period into sharp relief. This was to provide the reader with a frame of references with which to judge what the following chapters might reveal. In this sense the chapter was the first stage of hypothesis construction.

We argued- along Lewis Namier, J.C.D.Clark, Ian Christie among others- that before 1832 political parties did not reveal the features nor perform many of the functions which both the major parties after 1832 quickly developed. These included a more co-ordinated and systematic method of selection and recruitment of the local political elites in terms of both national and local politics and, in the case of the latter a broader stage on which these elites could operate politically. This, we argued was especially so in the new boroughs, and, after the 1835 Municipal Reform Act, in the sphere of local government.

The selection and recruitment of the elites did of course take place before 1832 but the general trend was that the gentry, or large scale landowners, or the closed corporations selected and recruited local potential political leaders. To a certain extent in parts of the North-West this process was continued after 1832, as was the case of the county towns of Lancaster and Chester, and to a lesser extent in the old borough of Preston. However in the main the local party seems increasingly to have taken over this function, especially in the new boroughs. Indeed it may be recalled from chapter four that the memorandum of Alfred Mallalieu argued strongly in favour of such localized party activity to the national leader of the Conservative party.

Secondly we suggested that after 1832 local political parties played an increasingly important role in the co-ordinating and organizing electoral activity. As we saw in chapters eight and nine- on the market and county towns and those boroughs possessing franchises dating from before 1832- the older and more traditional methods of electoral organization were maintained longer after the Reform Act than in the new boroughs where the local Conservatives were noticeably quick off the mark. However with the need after 1832 to control the registration process, and to control politics after the 1835 Municipal Reform Act, even in the market and county towns and the old boroughs, the local parties became increasingly involved in the permanent co-ordination of electoral activity. A further important point was that it seems that sections of the working class- the great majority of whom were non-electors- became involved in local party political organization to a greater extent than had been the case before 1832.

This brought us to third major function of political parties in that they act as agencies of disseminating

both governmental and opposition principles and policies. Indeed in the localities, we saw that the parties began to champion those issues which were of direct concern and consequence to the working class. These may have been local factional cliques who took up particular grievances in specific places before 1832, but, as we saw firstly with the radical Tories, and later with mainstream Conservatives in the 1840s, 50s and 60s, this became a regionwide phenomenon. Modern parties play a vital role in politically co-ordinating both governmental and opposition actions in the localities, and in the post-Reform period this did occur. For example in the North-West over the harsh imposition of the New Poor Law, but as a function this seems to have been less salient a feature in the immediate post-Reform period than it was to become in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. It must be noted that local party political activity was essentially opportunistic and was rarely informed by ideological imperatives. Thus the taking up of issues varied from place to place and over time in any given place. In many parts of the North-West it is highly debatable whether in most aspects of local politics the ideological distinctions of national politics had any relation with the essence of the local political battle, although they may at times have had a peripheral bearing.

However, further functions and features of political parties can be detected in the period under discussion. These included political integration, political socialization and education. political integration meant that parties began to allow groups, individuals and sections of classes who previously had been excluded from mainstream politics, a legitimate role in localized political society. We would argue that at no time prior to 1832 did these levels of continuous activity occur in the North-West region as they did between 1832 and 1852, and again from the later 1850s through to the 1870s and the end of our period. From 1834/5 it does appear that

the Conservative party particularly was beginning to act as party of social integration in the industrial areas of the North-West. This is an important point to establish, and one we shall return to as we move through an analysis of the various chapters of the thesis.

However, we noted that parties perform a range and ongoing activities enabling the post-1832 political world overall to operate more effectively. Political socialization for example, need not necessarily be undertaken by political parties. It may be, and indeed was also carried out by the education system, or the family or the press, but (increasingly after 1832 parties began to take up this role. So too was the case with other functions which may easily have been carried out by other means. These included the determining of the political agenda- which again could be done by the press or interest groups- or the dissemination of basic ideological principles. (which could have been effectively performed by educational institutions, the press, Church or Chapel) or indeed the provision of sick and burial facilities which could, and were provided by Friendly Societies. However, in all these spheres the Conservatives were active after 1832. There were another set of functions which only the parties themselves could perform. These included the disciplining of the members and the articulating the aggregated interests and demands of their members and supporters. As we have seen parties began to perform these functions in the 1830s. It may be that some of these functions may be detected among the various factions operating before the Reform Act, especially in the 1820s. It is however, the range and the extent of the roles performed by the Conservative party which is noticeable after 1832.

In chapter two we looked at the transformation of Toryism. We began by looking at developments in the later eighteenth century and continued with Lord Liverpool's coalition ministry- including the concessions to the Catholics and economic reform- up to Peel's view of

- new Conservatism, and the ramifications this had on creating the environment for a new political culture to flourish after 1832. We attempted to trace a descriptive explanatory line of development concentrating on the central traits of old Toryism, the conservative Whigs, the economically liberal Tories, the Tories linked to religious toleration and finally the Peelite Conservatives. We suggested that there was a consistent line of development with the Peelite Conservatives representing a synthesis of all these groups between 1833 and 1856 (and indeed for some time after) which had come to make up the Conservative party.

Peel wished to maintain what he believed to be the essential constitutional and institutional prescriptive rights of the monarch, the aristocracy, the Established Church and the landed interest. However, at the same time he wished to cater to the needs of the rising economic interest, of both manufacturers and their employees, the Catholics (especially in Ireland) and the Nonconformists on mainland Britain. In effect he wished for government- and a party- which truly represented the interests of all society's material, religious and social needs.

Peel was not however, a full blown believer in political economy. The chief guiding principle of this doctrine was laissez fair, especially in economic matters. Peel believed in executive interventionism in order to achieve economic and social cohesion, hence the re-imposition of income tax. He believed that by reducing prices, lowering tariffs and relieving the burden of taxation on the less well off by shifting fiscal policy away from indirect to direct taxation, he was introducing measures which would increase the purchasing power of those at the bottom of the social and economic order. This would in the long term, he believed, diffuse class tensions especially between labour and capital. John Foster, the eminent Marxist historian, has correctly pointed out that it was Peel's belief

in liberal values and the putting of these into effect during his 1841/46 administration, which helped shift the political attitude of the majority of working people away from extreme radicalism and towards a more moderate- indeed apathetic- stance on great political questions. He writes:

In Peel's eyes government was a trust to be exercised on behalf of the entire people, and to this extent he sought to remove the main material basis of popular discontent: cutting the length of the working day, repealing the Corn Laws, passing the first systematic health legislation. The equation of political power with the roots of economic misery no longer held. Hence liberalism, once it became the language of government, sounded the death knell of radicalism. At this point, which Stedman-Jones dates 1841/43, the language of radicalism was no longer able to hold together the diffuse alliance that had previously given it mass influence. 1

For Peel, even the repeal of the Corn Laws- albeit done to assuage the possibility of mass famine in Ireland- was seen as a measure vital to Conservative party interests in that he wished to make it a party electoral question and not a measure forced on the legislature and the executive by the outside pressure of the Anti-Corn Law League, a type of special interest group Peel detested, even though he may have agreed with some of their arguments. He wished to go to the polls on a cry of cheap bread, as well as the other more traditional Conservative principles, because, in his words:

I have thought it consistent with true Conservative policy to promote so much happiness and contentment among the people that the voice of disaffection should no longer be heard, and the thought of the dissolution of our institutions should be forgotten in the midst of pysical enjoyment. 2

In effect he was asking his party to continue to back him in his policy of true political representiveness, and the killing off of extreme radicalism (or Chartism) and class tensions with kindness. Peel's chief problem was not that he neglected party organization either at the centre or in the country at large, but his own psychological inability to adequately communicate and convey his feelings to his

back benchers. He remained aloof and unapproachable to this group. The majority of the back benchers represented the counties and the agricultural interest, whilst others were remnants of the Ultra faction who had not fully forgiven Peel for his volte-face on the Catholic question in 1829. The party at the centre was split by the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, but as we asserted later in the thesis, this had very little impact on overall party development in the North-West, especially in the sphere of local government. At the centre it is worth remembering that after Peel's death in 1850, only the Peelite leadership of Gladstone, Lincoln, Herbert and Cardwell veered toward union with the Liberals. The great majority of back benchers who voted with Peel in 1846 eventually re-joined the Conservative ranks. Thus we would argue- along with Robert Stewart-3 that even after the protectionist outcry between 1847 and 1850 the party gradually returned to a neo-Peelite Conservative posture under the leadership of Derby and Disraeli for the rest of the period under discussion here. It is difficult otherwise to see how the Conservative opposition could have made an impact on public opinion between the mid-1850s and 1865, when they were faced by a government and a Prime Minister (Palmerston) who was probably more inherently conservative than many inside the Conservative party itself.

The first two chapters provided a general foundation to the points we wished to make regarding the broad changes which occurred of (specifically Conservative) party development. However, our thesis is also concerned with the political development of the working class in the North-West and in chapter three we began to trace the historical relationship between the Tory/Conservative party and the working class in the three decades before, and up to the Reform Act of 1832. Essentially this chapter attempted two tasks. Firstly we sought to describe the general political development of the working class in the North-West from the 1790s until the passing of reform in

in 1832. Secondly we wished to examine the nature of the relationship between the Tories (and after 1830 the Conservatives) and the industrial working class of our region as both were developing historically. This too was an important chapter in that although the bulk of the empirical research of the thesis was based on the post 32' period, we needed to contrast and compare the political attitudes, behaviour and relationships of key sections of the working class with Conservatism before and after the changes wrought by the effects of the Act of 1832. This chapter sought therefore, to describe and explain relations between the nascent working class of the North-West and the local and national Tories in positions of political power.

In this chapter we outlined the apparently heightened levels of working class consciousness in the North-West between 1790 and 1832, as they saw their traditional work practices replaced by the factory system, which on the one hand reduced their levels of independence, and on the other seem to produce a hostile and uncaring attitude on the part of the local and national Tories. We suggested that, from the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, class consciousness increasingly took the form of an enhanced sense of awareness on the part of working people of their social and economic position, and of the need to seek redress through increased political representation. The conclusion many seem to have come to was for a wholesale reform of the constitution.

We also argued that the traditional eighteenth century forms of social control based on mutual respect and subtle forms of 'moral economy', were increasingly put under stress, and were being replaced by the Tory-inspired system of overt coercion. This system included the widespread use of the spy system, the suspension of habeas corpus, the Gag Acts and, in short, crude intimidation. This seems only to have hardened the will-to-action of many working people in the newly industrialized parts of the region. Their outrage was in

turn violently vented on the objects they perceived as the chief cause of their problems, namely the factories and the owners of the new machinery. However, their political awareness continued to focus on the need to replace the old political system with one where they would gain some form of representation as a class. In effect they began to think politically in a class conscious way. The working class accepted to a certain extent the prevailing political theory of virtual representation, but they demanded that proper weight be given to their increasingly important economic and social status as a productive class within the nation as a whole.

In the later 1820s and the revival of the agitation for Parliamentary reform, many working people believed that their best hope of success lay in placing their support behind the middle and lower middle class radicals. We noted that at this time the Tory/Conservative attitude continued to be hostile and this posture was maintained throughout the reform crisis. Indeed, this began to be transformed into genuine fear when they saw a united working class, not divided by craft or status differentiations, allied to a radical urban middle class. The older forms of social and political controls had broken down, and this alarmed not only the Conservatives and Tories, but also the middle class radicals of the North-West, indeed, the middle class leaders of reform in the capital like Francis Place. The point was made that in several parts of the North-West working class consciousness probably reached its height when many working class radicals realized that the proposed bill was expressly designed to exclude them and that it was to be in the words of Lord John Russell 'a final and irrevocable measure'. These working class radicals then took over the formally middle and lower middle class Political Unions themselves, and did so flying in the face of a Royal Proclamation banning such associations.

It would seem that the working class of the North-West

up to 1831/34 had developed a political consciousness which increasingly took the form of what Marx called a class-for-themselves, as an advance on merely being in the objective sense a class-in-themselves. This meant they began to envisage solutions to their social and political problems within a set of purely working class orientated frames of reference. We suggested that Edward Thompson was probably correct when he argued that something akin to a revolutionary consciousness existed among the vast majority of working people at this time, in that they supported the view that the political system was in need of radical and fundamental change. It could well be argued that the working class radical movement lacked a comprehensive theory of social and political change. But what was in place was a working class unity devoid of status differentiation and a mass will to act around the economic, social and political problems which affected the class as a whole, and the mass march on London by the workers of Manchester early in May 1832, and the disturbances at Derby, Bristol and Nottingham reveal that some of them were prepared to go far down the road of destruction and violent confrontation.

The high levels of mass working class consciousness between 1830 to 1834 across the region as a whole has to be set in contrast with the sectionalization of subjective class unity and the gradual, but eventually widespread preponderance of status differentiation throughout the working class which we find at the end of our period. We suggest that several factors caused this. These included the discipline of the factory system, the high levels of working class dependency on the manufacturers, particularly such as welfare relief, education, religion, housing provision, recreation and so on. We suggested further that working class political allegiances were being pulled in various directions by the influence of the two main political parties, various pressure

and special interest groups, trades unions and the remaining working class radicals. We also stressed in chapter three that it was not only the Conservatives, but also the great bulk of moderate middle class opinion was alarmed at the radical shift in working class attitudes between the late 1820s and the early 1830s. Local and national Conservatives were moved to defend the institutions of the secular and spiritual state against what they perceived as their imminent destruction by the reforming Whigs and the progressive Liberals. However they were also motivated by the desire to deflect working class opinion away from the dangers of extreme radicalism.

In chapter four we returned to the theme of party and looked in some detail at the reorganization of the Conservative party which we suggested to a significant degree was rendered necessary by the Reform Act. Here we were primarily concerned with the changes in party structure chiefly at the centre, but also the effect these changes had in the locality. We outlined the changes wrought by the Reform Act taking special note of the introduction of the annual registration contests in the boroughs, and suggesting that these meant that localized party organization was necessary on a permanent basis. It was argued that at the centre of the party several key Conservatives recognised that a new situation existed. One aspect of this was the need to have a flow of reliable information from the various localities into a permanent standing committee at the Carlton. We produced the evidence of Alfred Maklalielieu's memorandum to support the argument that the party was aware of the changing nature of politics. It was recognised early that the party had to re-organize itself and also in the larger boroughs particularly, the political struggle would be won by swaying opinion rather by the older forms of influence and bribery. A standing committee was indeed formed under the superintendence of Lord Granville Somerset and Francis Robert Bonham who performed a variety of functions.

These included advice on organizational tactics to the constituencies, providing prospective members with constituencies and visa-versa, collating relevant information from the constituencies, marshalling the semi-professional organizers and helpers for the constituencies who required such assistance, catching the political mood of the various constituencies, organizing the press, logging registration and electoral returns and keeping the party's leadership informed as to developments and reactions in the localities. We suggested that the sheer size of these activities marked the period off from anything which had perviously occurred in the British party system, and we specially noted how the party attempted to influence opinion of the local and national press in an effort to place it's message before as wide an audience as possible.

As with our discussion in chapter one on the emergence of the party system we noted that several of these features had been seen before 1832, especially in the later 1820s, but it was the scale of the change and the dynamism, with which the Conservatives particularly, took up the challenge of the period immediately after 1832 which is so notable. It could be argued that as an opposition they were in a far better position to effect the re-organization of the party than when in government, and this may partly explain why the Whig/Liberals were so relatively slow off the mark. The manner in which the leading politicians- including at first the extremely sceptical Peel- accepted the need for the party to be permanently organized at the centre coupled as it was with the autonomous, but closely monitored local branch associations throughout the country. This is a striking feature of the immediate post-32 situation. Moreover- and this is a vital point in our thesis- the local parties began to canvass support from groups previously denied access to the political system: namely the non-electors and sections of the working class in the industrial areas. a group, it may be recalled from

chapter three in whom the Tories and Conservatives had previously shown no great interest. However before we expanded this key theme we had to establish whether anything of this type of political integration had taken place among the lower orders before the 1930s.

In chapter five we looked at the loyalist associations of the 1790s, also at the middle class Pitt Clubs and the early development of the Conservative Associations on the North-West in the immediate aftermath of the Reform Act. The key purpose of this chapter was to form the basis of a contrast between the limited nature of working class support given to the Tories and the conservative Whigs before 1832 with working class support for the Conservative party between 1832 and 1870. This chapter therefore acted as a bridge both in terms of the structure of the thesis and of the historical period and the events under discussion. It attempted to point out the major differences between what occurred in the 1790s amongst a section of patriotic working class members, whipped up into a state of near frenzy of xenophobia and hatred of all things Jacobin or radical, and those working class members who supported the Conservative party in the 1830s, 40s, 50s and 60s, because in their opinion, it was in their best interests to do so.

The important points to note were firstly that the loyalist associations and Reeves Societies gained few footholds in the North-West in the 1790s. There were occasions in the first two decades of the nineteenth century when groups of weavers and miners, led by men such as Ralph Flether of Bolton, embarked on their 'Jacobin Hunts', but the evidence suggests that the overwhelming tendency of the majority of the working class between the 1790s and the 1820s was of increased class solidarity based loosely around the principles of Paineite radicalism. Developing alongside this was a nascent articulation of a collective consciousness based on defence of traditional working class independence

- which led to the transformation of Friendly Societies into trades union organizations. The second important point is that the Loyalist Associations and Reeves Societies were specifically not designed to drum up party political support; they were designed to produce loyalty to the state, the monarch, the Church and the conservative Whig ministry at a time of impending and actual war. There may have been elements of legitimizing the state in the activities of political parties after 1832, but, as we have discovered, the main objective was the eliciting party political support at the expense of the rival political party.

Neither do the middle class Pitt Clubs realistically correspond to the Conservative Associations of the 1830s. The Pitt Clubs were little more than annual debating societies where lavish dinners were consumed in order on the one hand to maintain exclusive political control, and on the other to occasionally raise money for prospective candidates. They may have performed a limited function in political recruitment, but they were quite definitely not interested in integrating other social groups, and were at pains to maintain and support the traditional system of political influence—be it corporate or aristocratic. It could be argued that they did set a precedent of sorts in that they were bodies of individual representation, but we would argue that if any organization was a genuine antecedent of the political associations of the 1830s, then it was probably O'Connell's Catholic Association of the later 1820s and the political unions of the early 1830s.

The overall tightening of national party structures, coupled with a range of permanently organized functional features marks the Conservative Associations off from the Pitt Clubs of the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Also the localized political associations of the 1830s, 40s and 50s engaged in another feature of the modern party system in that they began to allow entry

into their party members of the working class and endeavoured to enlist the support of groups representative of the various social and economic interests of the North-West region.

In chapter six we began the detailed examination of operative conservatism in the region by looking at its early development and describing its structure and its functional aspects in the changing political culture of the 1830s and 40s. We described how initially the middle class Conservative Associations came into existence in North and South Lancashire and subsequently in the boroughs and townships. We stressed the point that these were essentially autonomous bodies and initially were viewed with some suspicion by a few of the leaders of the national party. However, when their usefulness became manifest in terms of the detailed information which the party could utilize, these fears were allayed. The main aims of the local Conservative Associations were to regain the political initiative from what they saw as the threat posed to the constitution by the Whig reformers and the progressive Liberals, also to place the party on a firm organizational footing within the region as a whole. This was seen as especially important given of the Whig/Liberals at the first elections held under the first Reform Act. A further aim was to convince the moderate working class (even the non-electors) of the dangers of extreme radicalism and to point out that Liberalism- of the political economic variety- was no supporter of the inherent needs, culture and traditional practices of working people. Essentially, in this early stage of development, the local Conservatives of the North-West played on the feelings of working class loyalty to the protestant religion and the state, but also on their deference to long standing institutions and local men of distinction and worth. They emphasized the old paternalistic values and the sense of natural justice of the eighteenth century. These were tactics which may have struck a chord with those groups of workers who saw their

independence disappearing rapidly, and others who were witnessing the regimentation of the factory at first hand. Although the factory system itself was not condemned- many of the leaders of the Associations in the boroughs were local factory owners. It was stressed that the best employers tended to be Conservatives and the Liberals were portrayed as cold, hard-headed, uncaring people concerned more with the relentless pursuit of profit and the radical re-organization of society according to the tenets of political economy, than to the real needs and wants of working people. However, the need to preserve the chief institutions of Church and State were the main basis of the Conservative ideological message at this time, and especially to work within the existing law.

There emerged however, a group of radical Tories, especially strong in the north and east of the region who were particularly antagonistic to the Liberal factory owners, men like Richard Oastler and Joseph Rayner Stephens to wild and violent speeches to get their message across regarding the abuses of the factory system. In these stages they too may have made a strong impression on sections of the working class.

In this chapter we also outlined how this working class support may have been beneficial to both the party and the members. It has to be recalled that Peel particularly wished the party to be truly representative of all sections of society, and the incidence of working class support for Conservatism was in a sense proof of that representative aspect. Also the working class were useful as foot soldiers both in the process of electoral organization and the annual registration contests. Furthermore they acted as agents of communication from the party's leadership to wider working class society, and conversely the party's local and national leaders became aware of what questions and issues particularly concerned working people at any given time. The party had

also the potential facility of being able to control and politically direct influential leaders of working class opinion.

for the members of the working class who became members of the operative branches the chief benefits were that they were now part of a legitimate political party, and, in a sense had become integrated into the wider political system. There were also benefits of a more material nature such as the sick and burial clubs- which may have been a vital facility in periods of economic recession and personal hardship. There were trips and outings, literary and social facilities such as free libraries and newspaper reading rooms, some had bowling greens or brass bands. There were educational services and evening classes available for both adults and children, there were dinners, tea-parties, dances and guest speakers all of which served to underscore both the worth of working people themselves and the worth they were being held in by their social superiors.

This movement and the setting up of the operative clubs took place very quickly, from 1834 to 1836, and although the middle class Conservatives aimed their message and their recruitment at a certain type of working man, there does not at this early stage, appear to have been the overt sense of sectarian bigotry or indeed Orangism which became prevalent in some working class Conservative clubs in the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. In the mid-1830s Orangism was on the defensive and indeed was outlawed in 1837, and this was one of the reasons why some national leaders were suspicious of these local societies. They were concerned that the party should not be tainted by the charge of crudely absorbing the ranting fanatics of Orangism; this is why branches like the Salford Conservative Association opened their membership lists to the public scrutiny of the Manchester Guardian in order to prove that they had no links with Orangism.⁴ Certainly some elements of the local and national Conservative press were hostile to the Irish Catholics in particular, and certainly the Anglican church was lauded to the heavens, but the point to recall

is that these working class associations were set up and financed by local middle class Conservatives who tended in the main to be Anglicans. However, it was not religious or racial bigotry which these clubs embodied in this early phase, (not even in traditional areas of Orange activity such as Liverpool and Wigan)⁵ but the need to maintain the prescriptive constitution in Church and State; the directing of working people away from extreme radicalism, and, from the later 1830s concern with some of the social and economic issues which the working class themselves felt were important.

(It was this last point which provided the basis of chapter seven. Here we expanded on the assertion that the Conservative party in the localities began to promote working class based issues which the local Conservatives felt were safe and in tune with the basic philosophy of the party. By safe we mean issues which would not rock the constitutional boat- electoral reform was out of the question as was church reform and the full repeal of the Corn Laws. What this chapter attempted to provide was an account of not only the issues which the local Conservatives tended to champion- such as lessening the effects of the New Poor Law, factory reform, non-political trades unions, public health and so on- but also to convey an impression of the changes in political attitudes of both those in positions of effecting decisions. We were also concerned to describe the changes in the overall political climate, (what some political scientists have termed political culture) the on-going traditions, attitudes, style and behaviour in which politics was conducted. With this in mind two key sets of concepts were brought forward as possible areas of explanatory conjunction with the main themes of the thesis. The first was the revised use of Tom Nossiter's notions of the politics of influence, market and opinion. A second possible argument was that the Conservative political elites began to reinforce and re-work the eighteenth century view of paternalistic responsibility.

The argument of chapter seven was that through the use

of working class related issues, the dominant trend in the politics of the North-West after 1832 (among a wide set of social and economic groupings) was towards the politics of opinion, rather than influence or corruption. The significance was two-fold. Firstly, the competing political elites saw far more advantage in winning public opinion and electoral support by argument over issues and policies, rather than by influence or crude corruption. This is not to say that the politics of the market, or influence disappeared immediately, but the growth of social and political respectability in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s, they increasingly came to be seen as devices of considerable risk

As the pressure and interest group system became increasingly accepted, party political leaders in the localities began to be associated with the various blocs of potential support; similarly they began to be associated with questions which concerned key interest groups and social classes. Hence the desire of local Conservatives to foster the appearance of relating to working class based issues we noted above; this support was particularly objectionable to many Liberals as it ran in direct opposition to the central tenets of laissez fair political economy.

The second area of significance is that some working people began to support Conservatism not merely because they were Anglicans or were socially deferential but because they saw in that party and its elites, distinct signs that the Conservatives supported the bread and butter issues they themselves were concerned with. This was especially so across the region as a whole with the decline of Chartism in 1842, but also before this date in those parts of the North-West (like the north and east) where Chartism did not possess the mass hold it claimed elsewhere. We contend that given the recent radical history and the contentious nature of some of those questions, and given the uncompromising nature of some of the leaders of radical toryism, like Oastler and Stephens, it becomes clear why some working people supported the party, because it seemed to take their

concerns on board, as opposed to the apparently unfeeling abstractions of the progressive Liberals. It must also be recalled that the Conservatives by the 1840s had their local organizational and structural apparatus in position to influence such opinions through their working class based clubs; through the press and the message of their own working class party members.

We would contend that at this particular time those working people who gave their support to Conservatism were not labouring under what Marxists call false consciousness. Levels of class consciousness in certain parts of the region (in Stoskport, in Blackburn, Preston, Wigan and Warrington) had begun to decline from the mid-1830s, and in most other parts of the North-West this occurred from 1842. Sections of the working class seem to have given their support to Conservatism because that party seemed to be opposed to the harsh capitalism which Liberalism apparently expounded and promoted issues related to the working class which the Liberals fundamentally opposed on points of principle. Sections of the working class, from the 1830s and through the 40s and 50s, came to the profound realization that, of the two established political parties, they should support the Conservatives because it was in their wider interests to do so. If therefore, they followed a party- in the absence of a real alternative after the decline of Chartism-that seemingly pursued the policies of working class interest, then one can see why sections of the working class would believe in that in supporting Conservatism, they too were pursuing their class interest. This is especially understandable if the local party began to put their words into action as the Conservatives of Lancaster, Blackburn, Bolton, Preston Wigan and Salford did from the later 1840s, 50s and 60s. Indeed by the 1850s and 60s even the issues of constitutional reform, such as the extension of the franchise and the secret ballot were being supported in the constituencies of the North-West by prominent Conservatives. It may well be therefore that we need to re-think the notion that the mid-Victorian period was one of class lacunae.

The essential point of chapter seven was that in terms of practical day-to-day questions as we move through the period, it seems that the Conservatives were increasingly able to claim sectionalized working class support.

However this is not a blanket statement; it was not true that the party claimed majority working class support in all parts of the region. Popular Liberalism flourished in Rochdale, Bury, Stockport and Oldham, but by 1874 even in the last example the householder franchise ensured the return of one Conservative in this former bastion of radical Liberalism. Earlier, in 1868, the householder franchise ensured that Conservatives won both the seats at Blackburn, Bolton, Preston and Salford, and won the single seat constituencies of Ashton and Clitheroe, and they even won a seat at Manchester, the capital of Liberal political economy.

Also in this chapter we suggested that deference- both political and social- may have played a part in the motives of those who joined the party in its early stages of development. However, as we subsequently explained there were other reasons- like religious belief, the use of issues, and the range of sick and benefit, educational and recreational inducements- which were contributory factors. Furthermore, by the mid-to-late 1830s, Conservative employers were engaging in overt displays of paternalism to their employees. These covered a range of areas including housing provision and schools, and by the 1840s offering trips, fetes and dinners to their workers. However it must be remembered that many Liberals were doing the same sort of thing in the period of increased profits after 1847/8, and they too expected a form of deferential respect from their factory communities. Also a point worth noting was that often this was not blind deference, it was based particularly for the Conservatives, on a form of reciprocal and negotiated mutual respect. The status and local standing of the employer demanded that he be treated with deferential attitudes, but Conservative employers were quick to point out that the overall success of the business depended on the harmonious operation of mutual esteem of capital and labour. Thus deferential attitudes can be seen

as part of the negotiated politics of industrial relations, which by the later 1840s seems to have been based on conciliation and compromise rather than confrontation.

There were of course still disputes, but prominent Conservative millowners in particular, appear to have been more willing to accept working class representation through trades unionism than their Liberal counterparts. Social and political deference and respect was a widespread cultural norm of the early and mid-Victorian period. It was part of the wider contemporary social culture which the Conservatives utilized. However, as we have shown, there were other factors which may help to explain how they achieved support from sections of the industrial working class from the mid-1830s to the early 1870s.

In the second half of the thesis we highlighted the themes outlined in the first half by looking at three case studies: firstly three market and county towns; secondly an old, fairly large pre-1832 borough which combined industrial development with more traditional economic and social practices; and thirdly, the new, post-32^d boroughs which tended to be wholly reliant on emerging industrial capitalism.

The focus of chapter eight was the market town of Clitheroe and the county towns of Chester, and particularly Lancaster, with its mix of being a legal and administrative centre, a proportionately large agricultural and service sector, but also the scene of limited industrial growth. In all three of the case study chapters we were concerned to outline our findings in relation to the two central themes of Conservative party and working class historical development. But we also attempted as far as possible to consider our sub-themes; the main trends in local leadership and political recruitment; the nature of the salient issues- particularly those of consequence to the working class; the prominent political idioms of a locality, be they the politics of influence, the market or of opinion; the incidence of deference and displays of paternalism and

finally the importance of religion on the political affairs of the various localities. We were also concerned to plot the wider political developments in terms of local and national politics, and to gauge the relative success of working class development and the Conservative party in the light of the differing economic and social structure of the various areas. This last point was important given the advanced state of the development of industrial capitalism throughout the region as a whole. It was therefore thought useful to outline and correlate the economic, social and political background of a given locality in order to compare it with other parts of the North-West and with the region as a whole.

We began by looking briefly at the county town of Chester. Up to 1850 the agricultural sector was by far the largest and most important economic force in the town along with auxillary shops and service industries. The town was a market centre for the surrounding area, and it also possessed a sizeable group of 'professionals' - lawyers, bookkeepers, managers, teachers, clerks and others who were located at Chester because of it's position as the administrative centre for the county. However, by the 1850s light industry and the advent of the railways had made Chester a key network point prior to the development of neighbouring Crewe. Thus by mid-century a modestly sized wage earning working class had become established. However, in terms of it's general political development, Chester seems to have been relatively untouched by the great events of the period - both before and after the first Reform Act, or, indeed the Act of 1867. For much of the eighteenth century and up to 1870 Chester was dominated by the Whigs and the influence of one of it's great aristocratic families, the Grosvenor's, to the extent that in the general election of 1837 for example, out of an electorate of 2298, the Conservatives polled a mere 352 votes. Given the lack of a wage earning working class until relatively late in the period (and even then it was extremely small) and further given the absence of a viable radical leadership and the

tight control of the reforming Whigs, it is not surprising that Chester had no Operative Conservative Association, although branch meetings of the Cheshire Conservative Association were held in the town.

The politics of influence and the maintenance of long established political traditions- not to mention the paternalism of the Grosvenors and other leading Whig families and the deferential respect they appear to have been held in- seems to have held sway in both the local and national politics of the locality. In many ways Chester (supports Norman Gash's argument for the continuation of the traditional practices of the pre-Reform period.⁶ However Chester, like all of Gash's boroughs are market and county towns who held the parliamentary franchise for hundreds of years before 1832. It may well have been different in the new boroughs as we shall subsequently discover.

However although for most of the period, the Whigs dominated Chester and the borough was effectively under the nomination of the Grosvenor family, towards the end of our period when the franchise was extended to include the male householders (the electorate rose from 2502 to 6021) the Conservatives gained a seat and in 1874 they finished top of the poll. This suggests that although in socio-economic terms the presence of a working class may have been marginal, even by the 1870s, there was an element of Conservative support amongst them.

Clitheroe, even by the 1830s, did have a limited industrial sector in the form of a small textile industry. However, here too the political presence of the working class was minimal for most of our period, but there was a considerable radical presence throughout the 1830s, 40s and the early 1850s in the shape of the local squire John Fort. Between 1832 and 1868 the Conservatives only won the seat once- in 1853. In the 1830s and 40s, although a

Conservative Association existed, the local Conservatives gave little time or thought to proselytizing or rallying the support of the town's working class. But once again after 1867 in the two elections of 1868 and 1874 the Conservatives won the seat outright. This suggests that as with Chester there was an element of the new electors who tended toward Conservatism. In the 1830s and 1840s what working class political activity there was tended to be supportive of the Liberal radicalism of Fort. Tory radicalism did have a foothold in the Pendle towns of neighbouring Colne and Burnley, but this seems largely to have passed by Clitheroe. There is also evidence that through the 1830s and 40s, both influence and corruption were to be found in Clitheroe, with few, if any local issues (let alone working class questions) finding any purchase on the decisions of the town's elites or in the consciousness of the town's industrial working class. Thus again, as with Chester, the traditional form of political culture appears to have been carried over into the post-1832 period. Activity in local government was minimized by the fact that Clitheroe was controlled and largely financed by rates levied by the county magistrates, but even at the level of the vestry there was little involvement by the working class. Chartism only held a brief term of influence in 1842, and even then it did not achieve in electorally unrepresented towns of Burnley and Colne. Thus, as with Chester, Clitheroe seems to have been barren ground in the propagation of our central thesis of working class political intergration and Conservative party development in the key decades of the 1830s, 40s, and 50s.

The most detailed analysis in this chapter was given to Lancaster. In economic and social terms we noted that Lancaster was a combination of all the facets of our case studies thus far. It had an industrial base and a proportionate working class. It was a county town and an administrative centre and it also served as a market for the agricultural district of north Lancashire. The town had a fairly equal social mix of waged labourers, skilled

artisans, lower middle service sector, middle class professionals and manufacturers and a small but significant gentry. The town was however small if compared to Bolton or Preston, or even Chester but it's population was larger than that of Clitheroe.

In political terms Lancaster was interesting in that for most of the period the two main areas of political activity- the municipal and the parliamentary- seem to have operated independent of each other. Thus the local gentry and aristocracy who controlled the town's parliamentary affairs did not interfere in it's local government, and the corporation did not involve itself with the recruitment and selection of candidates nor the organizing and running of parliamentary elections. It would seem therefore that two sets of informal, elite political caucuses existed, one confined to parliamentary contests and the other to corporate affairs.

Before 1832 and the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 both sets of political elites were fairly exclusive, and, as we have noted ran their affairs independent of each other. However after 1835 the two sets of Conservative leaders did come together under the umbrella of a local Conservative Association, known as the Heart of Oak Club.

Although both sets of elites raised funds jointly for both parliamentary and municipal elections, the actual control of the two sets of contests seem to have been carried on much as before. They did of course use the services of professionals for banking and legal work, but the overall control remained in the hands of a small, tightly organized and exclusive group up until the 1850s, after which date new blood was infused into the organizing body at the parliamentary level due to the Conservatives losing both of the town's seats to the Liberals in 1852. Up to this date the Conservatives had won every parliamentary contest. In the main this new blood was drawn from the ranks of the professionals and the larger manufacturers, and it is noticeable that it is in

this era that the issues which affected the various social groups of Lancaster first began to surface in parliamentary contests.

In Lancaster it was the Liberals who began to utilize opinion politics and attempted to integrate sections of the working class into their political orbit through the Anti-Corn-Law Association. However this seems to have had little success. The Conservatives, up until the early 1850s, retained their exclusive nature, and even then only began recruiting members from the lower middle and professional classes, whilst still using the Court of Admissions to attract votes. Moreover, although the formally exclusive nature of the town's municipal politics had been supposedly ended by the Act of 1835, in reality, all this served to do was to allow the Liberal elite- of the Manchester school variety- led by the Gregson's, the Arnstrong's and the Greg's into the local political game. The Liberals, for much of the 1830s and 40s, seem to have directed their activities to areas of local politics concerning chiefly the cost of the local rates and the need to retain the county assize at Lancaster rather than Preston. The working class of Lancaster did not agitate over the issues which were prevalent in other parts of the region. Thus we found little support for Chartism or constitutional reform, or opposition to the New Poor Law, factory reform, and neither do these questions figure in the actions of the leaders of the two main political parties until the later 1840s, save the aborted Liberal attempt to establish the Operative Anti-Corn Law Association, which failed through lack of support. The Conservatives lost control of Lancaster's municipal council in 1837, but won it back in 1841. They retained control until 1848 and, after a brief period of Liberal control the Conservatives held sway through the 1850s and early 60s. However the Liberals did retain control of the Improvement Commission for virtually the entire period between 1835 and 1865, which suggests that not only was power split between the two groups, but that

some form of informal arrangement was carried on which stifled any potential there may have been for participation by the non-elites.

Up to 1847 parliamentary contests at Lancaster revolved around the broad principles and national policies of the two main parties: the Conservatives unflinching in their defence of the rights of property, the constitution and law and order; and the Liberals firmly supporting issues like the removal of church rates and the repeal of the Corn Laws. Local questions, which affected electors (such as the improvement of the town or local industrial development) and the non-electors (like public health, franchise extension, the New Poor Law and factory reform) which figure prominently in the contests in the new boroughs, were scarcely, if ever mentioned at Lancaster. Therefore it appears that the old system of corruption and the influence of those elites drawn from the immediate vicinity of Lancaster were the dominant trend in the area, as long that is, as the Conservatives remained in control. After 1847 however, when the Liberal merchants and manufacturers began to take the initiative, the system began to change, especially, as we saw with the Conservatives taking up the issue of public health.

We noted that in both local and parliamentary affairs, changes in the pattern of Lancaster's politics can be detected in both structure and behaviour in the years following Peel's fall and throughout the 1850s and 60s. Part of the reason for this, in the case of the Conservatives was the split of 1847, for the parliamentary boundary of Lancaster included areas where the agricultural interest dominated, either directly (as with the farmlands to the north, south and east) or indirectly (on those electors in the town itself whose living was dependent on providing services based on agriculture). The town's two Conservative members voted on opposite sides over the repeal question, Greene voted with Peel and Marton against. The Liberal elite, led by the three

big manufacturers of Greg, Armstrong and Gregson began to apply pressure in both parliamentary and municipal politics, culminating, as we saw in the early 1850s, in the struggle between Schneider and the Conservatives over the representation of the town.

The two main issues in local politics were, as we saw the Conservative persuance of public health reform and the Liberal's policy of low rates and laissez-fair in local government. In the sphere of local government we suggested that at Lancaster the Conservatives faired better through the widening of the municipal franchise in the 1850s brought about by the Small Tenements Act, than did the Liberals. This suggested further that the Conservative party was, by the later 1850s, developing features and functions similar to local parties in other parts of the region. However in Lancaster this development took place very late compared to developments elsewhere. Up until the end of the 1850s political integration into the Conservative party by groups other than the propertied elites had been minimal. Moreover, in the intervening period from 1830 to 1860 working class political development in the town had been virtually non-existent and we offered some possible reasons for this. These were based essentially on the relative smallness of the working class and their marginal importance as an economic, social and political force when compared with other groups within Lancaster itself- for example the tradesmen- and with other parts of the North-West region. We suggested further that traces of opinion politics could be detected on the Liberal side at various times in the municipal arena, but that this tended to be directed chiefly at the electors and not at those below the level of the lower middle class. This would appear to suggest that working class political integration and the Conservatives displaying the political idiom of opinion/interest politics were only phenomena where industrial capitalist development was advanced and where there existed a numerically large and class

conscious working class to make such exercises worthwhile.

- *In terms of party organization in Lancaster the Reform Act of 1832 seems to have made little impact, even the annual registration contests- which were occasions of deep party rivalries elsewhere in the region- appear in Lancaster to have been decided by tacit agreements between the parties. Also it would seem that, at least until the early 1850s, the Conservatives kept their recruitment of both leaders and members firmly in the hands of the traditional elites. Furthermore at the (very end of our period the analytical saliency of the 1867 Reform Act is lost to us because of the town's loss of parliamentary representation in 1865. So it would appear that for much of the period the political culture of Lancaster was changing only very slowly, and if any group forced the pace of change it was not the Conservatives but the Liberals. They appear to have the more dynamic of the two major parties. There was virtually no radical activity at any time during our period and very little working class activity either in the politics of constitutional reform or in matters of interest or direct concern to themselves as a class.*

Conservatism in Lancaster was traditionalist county Toryism with a smattering of conservative Whiggery. It's Liberalism was not that of popular reformism or libertarianism, but strongly influenced by Greg's link to the Unitarian and utilitarianism of Manchester school political economy.⁷ Traditional Tory attitudes to paternalism seem to have been maintained in the outlying agricultural areas of the town, but little Conservative urban paternalism can be detected. Some help was given to the working class of Lancaster, but this was not paternalism as understood by the Conservative or Tory. For most Tories this meant a prescriptive customary obligation and responsibility. For the Liberals of the political economy school the aim was to

make assistance as unacceptable to the respectable poor as possible and as painful to the residuum and those deemed undeserving. The ideological key here was thrift, sobriety, self-help and the education of the rational intellect which would redeem the individual from immorality and superstition. intellectual self-improvement with an emphasis on hard scientific rigour was the Liberal remedy with which to halt the effects of irrationality which sustained such traits as dependence , pauperism, superstition and eventually the corrupt political system itself. The Conservatives of Lancaster- basking complacently in their niches of traditional political power- only began to respond to this challenge in the later 1840s.

Overall it would appear that the market and county towns were resistant to political change, at least in the first two decades after 1832. However in chapter nine we moved our empirical research to a case study of Preston which as a town was a mixture of most of the political, social and economic features of the region as a whole. Preston was an open borough which meant that before 1832 it possessed a householder franchise for all males over twenty one years of age who had not received parochial relief twelve months prior to an election. It was an administrative centre with it's own Assize; it was a market centre for the fertile Fylde district to it's west, and, importantly it was the location for a relatively large industrial sector based primarily on textiles. We began the chapter by looking at the social mix of Preston and the economic development of the town in the early nineteenth century. We then described the religious and political changes which had taken place to this rapidly developing and geographically central part of the region between 1820 and 1870. We noted that as with it's mixed social and economic base, Preston was also multi-denominational with Roman Catholics a significant and influential part of the town's population: but only on relatively few occasions- as in 1835- throughout the 1830s, 40s and 50s did there seem to be any overt displays of anti-Catholic feeling.

This suggested that Preston was a fairly tolerant society and, coupled with it's wide parliamentary franchise one in which open political participation of most social groups was parr of the political culture of the town.

However, although the working class were the largest single group on the parliamentary register- even after 1832- the majority of them were excluded from participation in the local government of the town until the advent of the Small Tenement Act of the mid-1850s. This was due to the property qualifications and the exclusion of the compound ratepayers under £7 per year which were written into the town's charter under the terms of the 1835 Municipal Reform Act. Thus the only forum open to the working class was the Vestry, but with the imposition of the Poor Law Amendement Act in 1838, this institution too was rendered useless in political terms, and it meant that parliamentary contests with their large working class voting strength became the focus points where working class grievances could be aired.

Local government power seems to have been shared equally between the Liberal and Conservative elites, with the latter holding a majority on the Council and the former on the Improvement Commission, a situation similar to that at Lancaster. The leaders of these parties seem to have been drawn mainly from the industrial and merchant sectors of the town's economy. However there was some involement of the professional sector comprising of bankers, lawyers, doctors and the like, and also a sizeable proportion of tradesmen and shopkeepers. In the main however, those in positions of genuine power tended to be drawn from the propertied and munufacturing classes. We noted that throughout the period from 1830 to 1870 key wards in the town retained their political colour. This suggested that traditional political allegiances were maintained, especially in the sphere of local government, and that even after the introduction of the Small Tenements Act the Conservatives still had a majority of the seats in the largely working class wards of Trinity and St. George's. Clearly working class political support-

whether arising out of religious, deferential or opinion/ interest causes- once identified was resistant to change in Preston. As we shall discover later, this was a facet of working class political development in the new boroughs. This long-term tendency of working class political allegiance is noteworthy and something we shall address more fully in due course.

Meanwhile in parliamentary politics the size of the town's electorate- over 3,700 in 1835 and almost 2,800 in 1857- made attempts at large scale bribery financially impractical, but this is not to say that treating and intimidation did not occur; it was a facet of electoral practice before 1832 and seems to have continued throughout the 1830s and early 1840s. There were rowdy scenes at elections in 1835, 1847 and 1852, and there were allegations of treating levelled by both sides in 1837 and 1841.(8) However, throughout the period under discussion there was only one petition of corruption lodged, and this was after contest of 1857 when the Parliamentary Enquiry rejected the claim. However it seems that Preston, complete with it's relatively large electorate does not appear to have been an especially corrupt or riotous constituency.

As regards influence, this too does not appear to have been especially prevalent. We noted for example early in our period, that at the by-election of 1830, the extreme radical Henry Hunt defeated the nominee of the Earl of Derby, his son Edward Stanley. The Stanley family held considerable property in Preston, indeed possessed a large and imposing residence in the town centre itself. It could well be that as in the past Lord Derby expected his wishes to be observed, but the result indicates the lack of influence and the openness of the borough in parliamentary politics. The noble Earl incidentally, responded by putting all his property in Preston up for sale and never became involved with the town again.

Also employer influence does not appear to have been a notable feature of the towns' parliamentary development. There are two pieces of evidence for the plausibility of this assertion. Firstly, in order to be effective a manufacturer would have to be a fairly large-scale employer of voters, or of workers who could act as rabble-rousers on his behalf. Up to the mid-late 1840s the size of Preston's leading factories was small, only the Conservative Horrocks's possessed a workforce of over 1,000. In the mid-1840s large factories began to be built, but here again there is little evidence that Liberal or Conservative employers were attempting to influence their workers' political allegiances. There may have been deferential respect or religious affiliation, and we have seen that there were long-standing traditions of political allegiances on the part of the working class Conservatives of St. George's ward or that of Liberal Fishergate ward. However this may be more attributable to a range of factors including both social and political deference and respect; or employers looking to working class /community interests, or- as we shall argue in more detail below- to a form of proto-cohort theory in the political consciousness of the working class.

Secondly with regard working class involvement, in 1873. the Preston Conservative Association made the important public admission that at the recent parliamentary election their candidate, Robert Townley Parker gained his victory as a result of the operatives 'taking the lead' and further attesting that 'nowhere on the Conservative side were the operatives' votes forced'. (9) A point incidentally that the Liberals on their side made no effort to deny. So although there may have been attempted influence, it was not conspicuously successful; intimidation was spasmodic and if treats were given this may have been part of the traditional political culture and part of the ritual of an old open borough. We would argue that at Preston from the later 1820s and increasing through the 1830s and 40s, it was opinion politics and the open recognition of the key interest orientations of social groups- including

those of the working class- which were the dominant trend in the town's parliamentary politics.

In the case of the local Conservatives, we saw that, once in existence, the Preston Operative Conservative Association began to operate in the manner described in chapter six. Consistent with the trend throughout the North-West during this early phase, and even taking into account the fairly mild sectarian skirmishes of the 1835 election, neither the Preston Conservative Association, nor its working class and tradesmen branch seem to have been involved with Orange sentiments. Moreover, the Association appears to have been expressly designed to fulfill the functions and features we outlined above and in chapter six. For although registration information was solicited from the members, the size of the working class electorate in the town rendered it necessary to form a separate society to deal exclusively with the annual registration. This association was known as the Conservative Registration Committee and it acted as an organizational coordinator for both the Preston Conservative Association and the operative branch. Its existence strongly suggests that the operative branches were not mere fronts for the Orange Order, nor were these associations purely set up for organizing the registration process, as the existence of a separate society purely for that purpose at Preston makes clear. The Preston Operative Conservative Association carried through all the functions noted above and contained most of the features of other branches in the neighbouring boroughs, including recreational facilities, education, political socialization, sick and benefit facilities, dances dinners, outings and the like. It acted, in effect as a party of social integration.

The Conservatives, by 1839 had also begun to exploit working class issues in order to secure broader working class support especially over questions like factory reform and access to welfare provisions. The Conservative stance on the factory and short hours issue challenged Joseph Livesey's and the popular Liberals near monopoly

of purely working class questions, whilst acted as a rallying point of opposition to the harsher elements within the New Poor Law. In these areas the working class Conservatives gained the support of their parliamentary representative Robert Townley Parker.

this combination of factors by the end of the decade- working class access to the party and all that entailed, plus the apparent concern of the Conservative elites for working class opinions and interests- may have had an effect on the political consciousness of a section of the town's working class, as indeed conversely may the actions of Livesey and the popular Liberals. The essential point is that we must attempt analytically to deconstruct the hitherto limited picture of both Conservatism and the organization of the party, and also that relating to working class allegiances in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s. We must further attempt to point out both the changing political culture and patterns of political organization, and further show how this may have affected both middle and working class attitudes to politics and to wider society. In Preston the middle classes began, as in other towns to control local education, local justice and the relief of poverty after the decline of the Vestry, replacing, in effect, the old eighteenth century rule of the gentry- through the greater powers of the borough council and the Improvement Commission. However at Preston there does not appear to be the same level of overall working class dependency on the manufacturing class in, for example the sphere of housing provision, as there was in towns like Blackburn. Thus at Preston there was less chance of direct influence and suggesting a more open political atmosphere.

In Preston sections of the working class do seem to have maintained their interest in politics throughout the 1830s- which was not the case at Blackburn- even though throughout much of the central years of the decade extreme radicalism was in decline. Towards the end of the

decade Chartism for example, although it was to become numerically fairly strong in 1842 (at the height of a very severe economic recession) was not of the physical force variety, and as a movement in the town was slow to develop. For example the Chartists of Preston were decidedly reticent on the tactic of the general strike, or as it was known the Sacred Month. Their organizational base was the Preston Radical Association who, in July 1839 claimed a membership of 400, (in comparison the Preston Operative Conservative Association at the same time claimed to have 650 members). Part of the reason why the (workers of Preston did not wish to engage in a general strike was probably due to the recent experience of the failure of the great spinners strike of 1836/7 and the effect this may have had on the class consciousness of the workers of Preston. However another part of the reason may have been the concerted action of each of the two main party groupings, who in turn were probably successful in part because of the flagging appeal and weak organization of the extreme radicals. Once the established parties began to take note of pressure group politics and took on board the aggregated demands of groups within their respective orbits, working class mass agitation around platforms of extreme radicalism ceased to be a problem for the forces of authority (possibly the only exception being the great strike of the summer of 1842) throughout much of the 1830s, 40s and 50s. There were of course trade disputes involving both Conservative and Liberal millowners, but these tended to be devoid of political aims and objectives. This was more akin to disputes surrounding industrial relations where employers- particularly on the Conservative side- tended to accept a limited role for trades unions, and were willing to negotiate on purely economic and industrial terms.

We noted that from an early stage in their development, the Conservatives of Preston utilized the traditional practices and customs of the working class as a means of punching holes in the Liberal attitude to working class

moral regeneration. The Conservatives saw nothing inherently wrong with working class bawdy culture- drinking, gaming, traditional past-times and the like- whilst the Liberals

- either found such distractions meaningless- and thus irrational- or dangerous to the moral fibre of society as a whole. The Conservatives, whilst not condoning excess, made light of Liberal pretensions of righting the wrongs of society by some form of strict formulae and denying the working class their slight excesses. This attitude may also have served to attract some sections of the working class to what they perceived to be Conservative toleration. Thus, in terms of behaviour, the Conservatives, by the 1840s and 50s presented a more humane and realistic image to sections of the working class. Those who accepted Conservatism did so in the belief that by the later 1840s, industrial capitalism was a permanent feature. Chartism had effectively failed, and the hope of major constitution reform looked remote. The Conservatives, as we have seen pursued basic working class bread and butter issues, and expressed not only a willingness to look at these issues, but also to integrate sections of the working class themselves into the party structure. In Preston they accepted the limited role of trades unions, they looked more kindly on working class cultural practices, and they did not attempt to browbeat the working class into the acceptance of some form of complicated theoretical scheme of what that class should be. In the later 1840s and early 1850s, whilst economic conditions were gradually improving, (but in terms of work practices were only marginally better than in the 1930s) the Conservative approach- though still elitist, hierarchial and exclusive in terms of actual power within the party- was based on mitigation and extenuation rather than reproach and harsh remediation. Coupled as it was by the 1850s, with a dash of religious and racial bigotry and popular patriotism, which may have seemed attractive to a section of the working class.

The Preston Operative Association lasted until the later

1840s.(10) It was revived again in the later 1950s, and began to flourish toward the end of our period. In parliamentary terms the local party was badly affected by the split of 1846/7, and in the election of 1847 the Liberals took both of the seats for the first and only time between 1800 and 1870. Throughout the 1850s the two main parties shared the seats until 1865 when both were taken by the Conservatives, as they did again in 1868 and 1874.

Working class deference and the re-working of paternalistic attitudes by some Conservative employers may have been a factor in attracting the support of some working people, as indeed may the heightening of the tensions between religious groups due to the influx of catholics after the Irish famine of 1846/8. Also it does seem that by the mid-1840s it was the rejection of Liberalism by a section of the working class and the opinion orientated support for Conservatism throughout the 1850s and 60s which greatly assisted the party in both municipal and parliamentary politics. It may be worthwhile to make a slight but important distinction between what political scientists regard as the politics of opinion and what the Conservative party was doing in Preston in the 1840s and 50s. It will be recalled that during these decades the town still possessed a significant working class electorate- even though this had been reduced from the

1832 figure under the old householder franchise. The politics of opinion which the Conservatives (and Liberals) utilized were not were not always the call to the individual conscience of the open minded, non-partizan elector acting on the basis of his own interest and the best policies/arguments put forward, but rather, as we have maintained throughout, an appeal to sectional, group or class interests. What the parties were attempting to do was to appeal to the interest orientation and aggregated demands of as many people as possible of a given group or class without sacrificing the central tenets and basic ideological principles of the party as

a whole. The key to success was to cast a wide net.

This explanation fits reasonably well with the development of pressure or single interest groups from the 1840s, and as we are aware these pressure groups proliferated across a wide range of issues and interests- from church reform to education; public health to trades unionism; the brewing interest to temperance, (often within the same party). As we noted above the aim was to cast a wide net and to gear party policy to the salient and preferably numerically prevalent interest in a given locality. The (Conservatives of Preston seem to have managed this balancing act well from the 1840s (even though it was done somewhat later than some towns in the North-west, like Blackburn for example where it was begun in the early 1830s). At Preston, however the party seems to have played the political percentages, gaining the maximum amount of support, not from small-scale single interest groups, such as the Anti-Gambling League, but from numerically strong pressure groupings like trades unions or the Protestant Association and the like. Increasingly, and with a degree of calculation, they began to concede more and more as pressure from their client groupings became more intense. Examples of this in the case of the Conservatives of Preston can be seen in the way they carefully began to take questions like franchise extension in both municipal and parliamentary politics from 1849. The leaders of the various interest groups could assess the commitment of the party to their cause and also the results. They would then advise their wider followers accordingly or, their peers would clearly see for themselves which party deserved their support. Thus a more accurate term than the politics of opinion in cases like this may be the politics of interest.

The evidence from Preston reveals an admixture of the old and the new. Old traditions were continued well into the 1840s. One tentative conclusion is that although

Preston had a relatively large industrially based electorate, neither party seems to have had much difficulty in controlling and directing it after 1832. Throughout the 1830s and 40s the the two main parties of Preston used a range of devices and techniques of direction and control: the careful selection of political leaders, choosing issues and limiting the agenda of politics, religious affiliation, social and political deference, devices of paternalism, treats, occasional incidents of intimidation, the use of community or workplace cohort tendencies, the infusion into the party of sections of the working class, and, increasingly, from the later 1840s, the politics of opinion/interest. In terms of overall working class party political allegiance and wider support, the Conservatives did not command the majority of workers support until late in the period, due largely to the strong leadership qualities and libertarian values of the local Liberals, particularly Joseph Livesey. However at the end of our period the Conservatives seem to have been successful because they controlled the allegiances of the key majority groups. They began to derive regular support from the Anglican middle and lower middle classes, also from substantial section of the industrial working classes, and, for a time they even captured the support of some Catholics.(11) The Conservative elites of Preston began to adapt to the changing political culture based on a form of proto-pluralism and a recognition of the power of the masses- particularly the working class- in a locality increasingly dominated by industrial capitalism.

Compared to the other large towns and localities we have looked at in the thesis, Preston does reveal some of the traits of market and county centres especially of it's retention of traditional political values, but we noted that even before 1832 Preston's large working class based popular franchise meant that even that even at this time some limited concession to the popular will had to be made. Conversely we saw that old style

aristocratic or squirarchy influence seems to have ended with the Reform crisis and never returned in the same form. When the gentry (like Townley Parker for example) attempted to influence the political opinions of the electorate, they did so with an appeal which combined social deference with the principles of Conservatism and a recognition of the needs of key social groups.

Due to Preston's economic and social mix and the retention of some limited traditional values, plus the relative slowness of the industrial development of the town, the picture is not one of rapid transformation. We noted for example, that the local Conservatives were fairly slow to reorganize. A pattern of continuity can be detected up to the later 1830s, after which the pace of the changing political culture quickened appreciably. However, at this stage let us leave Preston and turn to our next area of comparison of the North-West region, that of the new boroughs.

In chapter ten we examined the changing situation in the new parliamentary boroughs created by the Reform Act of 1832. We suggested at the outset that according to our hypothesis, these new industrial boroughs might produce the clearest evidence of the changing political culture of the post-1832 situation by virtue of the fact that they were not bringing into the political arena the customs, rituals and political idioms of the pre-Reform period. Furthermore, they were relatively advanced examples of industrial capitalism, with the social and economic characteristics- such as large-scale factory development and a population made up in the majority of a wage earning proletariat- which were not to be found in other regions of Britain at the time. In general terms the research seemed to bear this out. We kept to the same format of looking centrally at the two main themes of the thesis, namely of Conservative party development and working class social and political integration.

We also considered our sub-themes of the key issues in a

given locality and the patterns of leadership and recruitment, also the evidence of deference and paternalism and the dominant political idiom over time in a given place, be it the politics of the market, influence or opinion/interest. However, we were forced by the evidence to look at the long-term regional variations of the dominant political allegiances found in particular places. Important questions had to be addressed. The most vexing was, for example why did the working class switch away from the agitation around long held principles of extreme radicalism, manifesting as it did in high levels of class consciousness? And (further, why did the north east of the region for the most part support Conservatism from the mid-1830s until the end of our period, while the south veered towards mainstream Liberalism? Related questions could include why did allegiances change in Bolton from radicalism to mainstream Liberalism and over time switch to Conservatism and why did Rochdale and Bury retain their support for popular Liberalism throughout the period?

In one sense these questions of fixed and changing political allegiances throughout the period as a whole encapsulate the two dominant themes of the thesis, namely working class political development and eventual integration and secondly, Conservative party explication and organization. However the sub-themes of trends of political idioms, policies, the incidence of paternalism and deference, working class issues and so on became important in trying to provide an overall evaluation. Some tentative conclusions can be attempted. Firstly, from the later 1830s through to the decline of Chartism as a movement in the North-West after 1842, middle class political leadership became increasingly important in directing and controlling working class political orientation. Secondly, this was coupled with the considered but pragmatic use of basic issues which the working class in a given locality felt were of direct relevance to them. Thus it was from this crucial period of the decline of popular radicalism in an area or town that the dominant

political party and its leaders began to emerge initially. If strong and attractive leadership around opinion/interest questions was maintained, then that party seems to be able to retain power, control and a wide basis of support. The working class are important in this explanation but so too were the attitudes of other social groups, for example key religious minorities, like the Roman Catholics at Preston, or Unitarians in Manchester, or Nonconformists in Rochdale. Similarly the middle class professionals as well as the manufacturers began to play an important organizational role in the urban centres, as did the lower middle class electorate. In many of the new boroughs this latter group were the majority of the ten pound qualifiers under the 1832 franchise, and although the working class might seek to influence them through exclusive dealing or some other form of collective influence, as a group the lower middle class tradesmen were the key to power for many party political leaders in the 1830s, 40s and 50s in these new boroughs. The successful placation of the working class might afford security but the successful appeasement of the lower middle class brought power.

Manchester, Rochdale, Bury and Stockport- towns with proportionally high levels of Unitarians, Methodists and other Nonconformists- remained firmly under Liberal control throughout the entire period under discussion. Here the lead seems to have come from these middle and lower middle classes, even before the decline of Chartism. In Ashton for example, physical force Chartism was pre-dated by the working class being influenced by the Primitive Methodists and the extremely violent rhetoric of the Tory Radical Joseph Raynor Stephens. This was lower middle class leadership attempting to influence working people around issues and sentiments which were tailored to the needs of working people. In Rochdale the high level of flexibility displayed by the Liberal textile owning elite in responding to working class demands and protests over the New Poor Law may have been a factor in ensuring substantial working class support. Also at

Rochdale these middle class elites were willing to integrate working class issues into local governmental programmes as witnessed by their provision of a gas supply to working class homes. At Bolton, we may recall during the Reform Crisis the working class threw off the middle class leadership primarily because it did not address itself to the needs and aspirations of working people. By the later 1830s and into the 40s, this middle class and lower middle class leadership had become once again the primary focus of working- and middle class- political authority. However it must not be forgotten that this party domination and leadership, although it may have had a fairly long history with a given party in a given location, still had to take into account the interests and aggregated demands of it's client groups. It may have been able to persuade and argue it's case under favourable conditions predicated on the fact that it's client groups were intrinsically sympathetic, but the party and it's leaders had at least to listen to what was concerning their supporters.

Firmly linked to our last point was the fact that political traditions of a given locality and community were still important, even in this period of rapid political change. Thus we saw in our market and county towns the continuation of the traditional forms of politics- both in terms of customs and rituals, and in the maintenance of institutions and practices well into the 1840s, and, at Chester into the 1850s. In these types of localities changes in political allegiance and the idioms of politics took place very slowly. Conversely in Preston and Bolton we see allegiances shift from Radicalism to Liberalism and then to Conservatism. We know in these places- as in Oldham and Rochdale- there appears to have been a general openness in political discourse, and that this had a long history, dating back to well before the Reform Crisis. Thus the switching of allegiances may have in part been due to the willingness of the local leadership to play to a wide variety of social and economic influences in these towns, and to recognize that the various

forces of opinion and interest would not be afraid to make their disenchantment with the previous party's policies widely felt. The importance of this for our thesis is that we would contend that this was the beginning of a pluralistic form of politics. Increasingly in the industrial boroughs this made local leadership skills an important factor. Unquestionably in Preston for example, the retirement of Joseph Livesey from politics in the later 1850s was a profound loss to the local party, and opened up the previously staunch Liberal areas of control to attack from the Conservatives. Meanwhile at Bolton (improved organization by the Conservatives, coupled with their use of practical working class issues after the decline of Chartism in 1839, dramatically improved their fortunes among the working class and the lower middle class tradesmen. As we noted the popular Liberals held on to Rochdale, Bury, Stockport (and to a lesser extent Oldham and Salford) for the whole of our period. While at Manchester, the power of Unitarian Liberalism, strongly influenced by political economy and a talented press, remained in control for most of the period under discussion. However even at Manchester, the Conservatives eventually broke through, though it must be said they pandered to the darker, more bigoted sentiments of Hugh Stowell and W.R. Callender from the mid-1850s.(12) At Salford the allegiance to Joseph Brotherton and his version of popular Liberalism lasted among the middle classes from 1832 until the advent of the Second Reform Act, after which the Conservatives broke through, taking the most densely populated ward of Crescent with a massive 512 majority.(13)

Thus while in some parts of the region traditions were eventually eroded with strong leadership and the use of issues, in others they were maintained. Control of the popular political will in Bury, Stockport and Rochdale ensured that the popular Liberals retained the initiative for virtually the whole of the period. Here the Conservatives failed to offer up viable policies or importantly, popular leaders. Meanwhile in the north and east of the region the Conservatives dominated Blackburn in a converse fashion, with the Liberals unable to offer a serious challenge to

Hornby's popular Conservatism.

At Blackburn we saw that a combination of factors could be put forward as to why this situation prevailed. Firstly the control of the propertied and manufacturing Conservative elites over the industrial working class was begun the earliest- in the mid-1830s- and was the most comprehensive of any of the towns in the North-West region. We noted the areas in which this control was manifested, the most important of which was probably the housing of workers by the textile-owning elites of Blackburn. Also these communities were, by the 1840s, completely self-contained units with their own public houses, chapels or churches, schools shops and the like, all under the supervision of the mill-master or his appointees. Thus in Blackburn the majority of the town's working class were highly dependent on their employers from a very early date in spheres such as work, education, welfare relief, recreation and religious instruction.(14)

Secondly, as we saw in chapter ten the political organization of the Conservatives in Blackburn was particularly strong, indeed as it was to become in Bolton and Preston, ostensibly through the use of the political clubs. Also the Conservatives of Blackburn possessed in W.H.Hornby a man of quite exceptional leadership skills- a feature which the Liberals could not match.

Thirdly, by the mid-1840s Blackburn's Conservatives had become the party of popular politics, as we have seen the Liberals were in some of the towns of south-east of the region. That this was so we would argue was primarily because they captured the opinions/interests of several key sections within the working class and of course, the middle classes. By the 1850s there was a range of issues which key interest groups regarded as important, and parties vied with each other in an effort to gain support through the use of these issues.

Fourthly we would contend that change in the political

culture of Britain occurred initially in the localities- and in the North-West particularly- not at the centre of politics, and the momentum of change was begun in the 1830s. Fifthly, as we have suggested at several points in this

- * analytical section, a form of proto-cohort theory(15) can be detected in the political developments of the region in this period. What is meant by this is that individuals, families, community groups, factory workers, trades unions, religious associations and local political clubs, began over time to become so thoroughly socialized into the party that they accepted their political allegiance as a matter of course, in a sense unthinkingly, not even considering the points of argument presented by the rival party. This was, of course backed up by party political propaganda which filtered through a variety of sources and agencies, the trades union, the public house, the place of work, the political club, the newspapers, the chapel or church, or even over the back-yard wall. This was a process of both formal and informal ideological reinforcement and, again as a process in party political change seems to have become much more salient a feature from the 1830s. This may go some way to explain- along with the politics of opinion/ interest and aspects of deference- why certain parts of a locality- and even entire towns- consistently supported a particular political party over many years, as in the case of Liberalism in Rochdale, or Conservatism in Blackburn, or in the St. George's and Trinity wards in Preston. Increasingly political allegiance seems to have taken the form of an almost inherited collective consciousness akin to the way football supporters give allegiance to their team. It was passed on from father to son like the proverbial gold watch.

It seems that the advent of working class sectionalization and the decline of class consciousness (coupled with an increase of intra-class status differentiation derived from a variety of sources) meant that by the 1850s a coherent and collective set of working class policy alternatives did not exist within the ambit of a single political grouping, as they did say during the height of Chartism. Some individuals and groups began to support

political parties because the appeal lay not only in their policies or how they handled power, but because of a range of factors which varied from community to community and from town to town. At times this may have been through the cult of the individual leader, as with Hornby at Blackburn, Livesey at preston, Callender at Manchester, Stowell at Salford or Tommy Mellor at Ashton, but it may also have been because in political terms in the mid-Victorian period, political parties were becoming more powerful a force than class.

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Let us conclude this long summation and analysis with a series of conclusions and inconclusions. In terms of Conservative party development in the North-West, the thesis has gone some way to show that far from being an aloof and contemptuous organ of resentment towards the working class, (as was the case between the 1790s and 1832) it did- eventually in all parts of the region- begin to accommodate their interests and aggregated demands. Also, importantly, it was the Conservatives who were the first major political party who began to integrate sections of the working class into their organization in a modern sense. We have suggested several motives for this, which stretch from the features pointed out by political scientists to the possibility of elites playing on the prejudices and deference of working people in order to secure victory over the opponants of Conservatism.

In the North-West, as in many other parts of the country, the Conservatives were, in 1833, fighting for their very existence. Many middle class Conservatives felt passionately for the maintenance of their central principles and the party's ideology. What developed in the 1830s and 40s, and in the 1860s and 70s was a process of reorganization and reformulation- both at the centre and in the localities- which in a sense modernized the party. In some small way this study of the North-West has attempted to validate this assertion.

When looked at in relation to the features and functions of

modern political parties which we outlined in chapter one, these local Conservative clubs and associations were a remarkable historical departure from the pre-1832 political norm. For example in their methods of integration and recruitment, their facilities and proselytization, their techniques of socialization and local organization, their use of issues and by their utilization of the opinions/interest of their working class (and lower middle class) members and supporters. However, not all of the features and functions we outlined in chapter one are evident in this period. At no time was policy formulated at a grass roots, nor were the 'ordinary' members in positions of real power within the party. The party did legitimize working class political activity; it did offer status to the member, and, although it controlled the agenda of politics, it could not ignore the interests of its client groups. Importantly, post-1832 political parties began to control or to politically direct sections of the working class, through opinion, ideology and party discipline. We attempted to show that up until 1832/33- and in parts of the North-West beyond that date- the industrial working class began to pose a serious threat to social and political stability. We would argue that the development of political parties after 1832, although not the sole agency of the reduction of this threat, was an important part of the process.

With our second theme of working class development and their social and political integration, the thesis has gone some way to pointing out how this possibly took place. By 1870 the working class of the North-West were politically sectionalized between the two main party groupings. In 1800 or in 1832 the working class presented a very different picture- one in which class consciousness was high and intra-class status differentiation was low. We argued that in certain parts of the North-West the process reducing working class consciousness had begun by the mid-1830s, in some areas it came later, and in others (like Lancaster) it barely existed. This revealed the usefulness of the comparative method. However, even at the height of Chartism we argued that the authorities did not appear as threatened

as they did say during the 'days of May crisis' of 1832. We suggest a change in attitudes had taken place and this involved the nature of social and economic variables as well as those of a political nature. It was at this point that the two central themes came together, and it was here that the key sub-themes of the idioms of politics, and of issues, paternalism, deference, religion, bigotry and ethnicity became relevant. It would have been useful to do more case studies and the case made stronger. For example in the area of religio/political sectarianism we noted some limited examples of this in Preston in the 1830s and 40s, also in Manchester in the 1850s and 60s, but the mining district of Wigan would have been a useful addition to the research as would the colourful mix of economic, social and political variables that is Liverpool could have been revealing, but there is only a given amount of research time and space available.

What then of 1832, and the proposition that the immediate years following the Act were an historical watershed in terms of the two main themes of our thesis- of party political and working class development. It has to be said the thesis has thrown up some support for the advocates of gradualism and continuity. Change was slowest in the market, county and old boroughs. Political traditions and rituals were maintained here the longest. This is not that surprising. Economic and social change was also slowest to develop in these types of boroughs and these variables are important factors in the development of a locality's political culture, as we have attempted to show. However, we also endeavoured to show that even here changes in the political culture did appear and these coupled with the rising need for political respectability began to alter centuries old traditions and practices. It is arguable that we could have made more of the underlying religious motivations- especially among the Conservative elites- but although these people seem to have believed that religion was essential to pacifying the working class, and further it was part- an essential part- of the Conservative desire to preserve the constitution in Church and State, it is by no means clear just how affected the workers of the industrial North-West were by

this variable. Where it was a factor, we have attempted to note it, however, in the crucial decades of the 1830s and 40s it does not appear to have had the impact, in terms of determining party allegiances which it was to have in the 1860s, 70s and 80s.

Although, as we have noted above, there are parts of the hypothesis which do not connect with the empirical evidence, on the whole we must argue that the study does show that the Conservative party was a dynamic force in the 1830s and 40s. The split of 1846/47 may have interrupted this process, but this was chiefly at the centre of politics. In the localities the political clubs in parts of the North-West became inactive- in Liverpool, Wigan and Blackburn they remained active throughout the 1850s- the years of political quiescence at the centre- the Conservatives remained active, as we have seen. By the 1870s working class political integration was complete, and it is hoped this study may have gone some way in explaining how this process may have taken place.

1. John Foster, 'The De-classing of Language', a review of Gareth Stedman-Jones's 'Languages of Class' in New Left Review, 150 March/April 1985, p33.

2. Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol. 83, p95.

3. Robert Stewart, The Foundation of the Conservative Party 1830-1867, London 1978.

4. See the Manchester Courier, 12/3/1836.

5. For example see the work of Frank Niel, Sectarian Violence, The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914, Manchester 1988, Chapter two.

6. Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, London 1952, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and Appendix D.

7. For a consise analysis of this see John Seed, 'Unitarianism, political economy and the antinomies of Liberal Culture in Manchester, 1830-1850,' in Social History, vol. 7, No. 1 January 1982, pp 1 to 25.

8. See Dobson's Parliamentary History of Preston, Preston 1868, pp 68-71.

9. Preston Pilot, 28/4/1838, full quote cited in Chapter Nine above.

10. Interestingly the Preston Operative Conservatives remained loyal to Sir Robert Peel, whilst the middle class leadership tended towards protectionism. As one Operative Conservative said in 1847. "He had no doubt that if they did their best at the next general election, we would have Sir Robert Peel back again in office." Preston Pilot, 5/6/1847.
11. Preston pilot, 30/4/1859.
12. For a further discussion of this see N. Kirk, 'Ethnicity, Class and Popular Toryism', 1850-1870, in Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities, Ed. K. Nunn, Folkstone 1980. Or by the same author, The Growth of Working Class Conservatism in Mid-Victorian England, Beckenham, 1985.
13. Salford Chronicle, 21/11/1868, see also R.L.Greenall, 'Popular Conservatism in Salford', Northern History, 1974.
14. See D. Walsh, Working Class Housing and Dependecy in East Lancashire, 1830-1850, forthcoming, see also Chapter Ten below.
15. For an exploration of this concept see P.Norton and A. Aughey, Conservatives and Conservatism, London 1981, pp 178/

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GREGSON DECLARED VOID); 1848, (DISMISSED); 1852, (ELECTION OF
ARMSTRONG DECLARED VOID); 1853, (WITHDRAWN); 1865, (VOID ELECTION,
WRIT SUSPENDED); LIVERPOOL, 1852, (VOID ELECTION); 1853,
(WITHDRAWN); MANCHESTER, 1868, (DISMISSED); OLDHAM, 1868,
(DISMISSED); PRESTON, 1859, (DISMISSED); 1868, (WITHDRAWN);
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- WEST, J. THE HISTORY OF THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT, (LONDON, 1920)
- WIGLEY, J. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE VICTORIAN SUNDAY, (MANCHESTER, 1980)

Income Mr Derrnall		His Debt amount to £1200	
Received	£	Paid.	
D. of W. —	50	Lord Remy —	100
W. Remy —	100	D ^r Hill —	55
D. Reddick —	10	Draft to M. W. D.	150
Col. Mayling —	20	D ^r 19 th Dec. —	100
W. Barker —	20	advanced by H. H.	30
Sir E. Harrison —	20		435
D. Lyndhurst —	20		
W. Haddington —	20		
D. Bandon —	10		
W. Southam —	10		
D. of St. —	100		
	380		
Sir W. Jones —	5		
Sir J. Ansdell —	50		
W. Sterling —	5		
Lord Cameron —	5		
B ^r of Se. —	5		
	450		
Sir Ch ^r —	5		
Knightly —	10		
W. Litchford —	10		
D. Ellingham —	100		
W. F. Eyster —	100		
Sir J. French —	10		
W. Aberdeen —	20		
W. Winchelsea —	20		
	625		
		16 th forward	£625
		Rice Inward —	25
		D ^r Bute —	20
		A R. W. R. Inver —	5
		D ^r Whamcliffe —	10 p ^d
		Sir C. Donville —	20
		Sydney Herbert —	25 p ^d
		W. Adm Dale —	50
		Colonel Cornhill —	10 p ^d
		x Col. Verner —	10
		x Col. Biersford —	10
		W. Jones —	10

Colls & Co. 72 Lombard Street, promissory note	75.0.0
W. Colles. Manor Terrace, Chelsea - Rent	100.0.0
Cash borrowed, & promised to be repaid elsewhere	30.0.0
Hay, leather	71.9.10
J. Gibson, manual out-fitter, Gas front,	27.0.0
Wright, & Co, Bankers, Debt & costs	70.7.10
Sir Francis Macdonnell, Ireland, Debt & costs	205.0.0
Bacon & Co. 2 Little Street, Dublin, Debt	38.16.10
Chapman & Tailor, 3 Mouthborough Street, tailor to Spring 1836	45.0.0
May & Co Tailors, sub-agent to Chapman	30.0.0
Mawbey, grocer, Allegate Street	18.15.7
Lake, grocer, Chelsea	23.18.9
Symmons, butcher, Chelsea	43.0.0
Padgett, 21 Davies Street, kind & spirit merchant	49.9.0
Bettsworth, Chelsea, Coal merchant	23.0.0
Beagely, Chelsea, butter & cheese merchant &c. &c	24.7.0
Blundford, Chelsea, boot & shoe maker	13.0.0
Duncan Blount, Bill & L st	54.0.0
Barker, Fleet Street, house agent	20.0.0
Alley, Kensington, School	62.0.0
Cervier, Dragheda, School	72.0.0
Chapman, New Ross, Ireland, board, lodging &c on sea coast, for delicate children	47.0.0
Hatchett - L ^g . Chancellor, wash fire, L ⁵ . 6. 6.	39.6.6
Notes & Taxes L ⁶ . Medium L ⁴ . & other	
small matters, about L ¹⁵ - Total	

£ 773

APPENDIX TWO: FULL TEXT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL
CONSERVATIVE INSTITUTION

Meeting held at the British hotel, Cockspur Street, London on 25 April, 1836, Lord Sandon (M.P. Liverpool) in the chair.

It was unanimously resolved;

1) That an institution be established in the Metropolis under the name of the National Conservative Institute and its objects shall be as follows. First- To promote by all lawful means the advancement of the Conservative cause in general. Second- To collect and afford information on every subject connected with that cause. Third- To diffuse the principles of loyalty, good order, and obedience especially amongst the middle and lower classes of society. Fourth- To support the constitution of the United Kingdom, as established in Church and State.

2) That a reading and newsroom shall be opened, to be furnished with papers, periodical works, and other such publications as shall be deemed of a suitable character.

3) That every paper offered shall be made by the Institution, to extend the circulation of Conservative publications and other works tending to improve the religious, moral and political condition of the people- and that it should afford facilities to private individuals for the distribution of pamphlets and other works of a desirable nature.

4) That the formation of Conservative Associations shall be encouraged wherever it is practicable, especially amongst the trading and labouring classes- and that the establishment of reading rooms for the above named portions of the community, shall be aided promoted by the Institution.

5) That the Conservative Associations shall be furnished by the Institution with such publications as the Committee may think proper (when arrangements are made and funds permit), either gratuitously, or on the payment of a certain sum, to be hereafter determined.

6) That proper arrangements shall be immediately made for procuring subscriptions, donations and contributions.

7) That members be balloted for; and that an Annual Subscriptions of two of Two Guineas, or a donation of twenty guineas, be paid by every member resident in London, or within a circle of 7 miles; beyond that limit members of Conservative Associations to be eligible as members of the Institution, on the payment of one guinea annually, or a donation of ten guineas. Gentlemen from the country to be admitted to the reading room, on the recommendation of two subscribers, for a period not exceeding one week.

8) That the following noblemen and gentlemen constitute a committee of management- three to form a quorum, with power to add to their number- and from this body Sub-Committees of finance and for other purposes be chosen:- Committee. Lord Sandon, M.P., Henry Ashley, M.P., Lord Ashley, M.P., Col. Bailie, M.P., John Barneby, M.P., John Barwise, Sir J.P. Beresford, M.P., F.R. Bonham, M.P., J. Clutton, Sir W.R.S. Cockburn, J. Crisp, E. Dalton, Col. Daubeney, C. Dodd, Lord Francis Egerton, M.P., C. Francis, Sir Roger Gresley, M.P., Mr. Hartley, T. Hawks, M.P., S.W. Henslow, H. Hoare, William Holmes, J.B. Hoy, M.P.,

A.L. Irvine, Andrew Lawson, G.B. Lafroy, Earl of Lincoln, M.P., John Nichol, M.P., Foster Owen, J. Pluckett, W.M. Praed, M.P., S.G. Price, M.P., A. Quinn, J. Rossiter, Col. Rushbrook, M.P., Marquis of Salisbury, Wingfield Stratford, D.T. Shears, J. Wilkins.

9) *That any contributions of any amount be recieved in aid of the Insitution friendly to the Conservative cause be deposited at Messrs Coutts and Co., The Strand, Messrs Drummond and Co., Charring Cross Road, Herries and Farquar, St. James Street and the offices of the Institution. Publishers Messrs Rivington.*

10) *That cordial thanks be given to Lord Sandon.*

OBJECTS AND VIEWS OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE INSTITUTION

((One great and leading object of this Institution is th it should become the focus of Conservative intelligence, and affor a place of meeting for individuals holding constitutional principl from all parts of the Empire- where members of the House of Commons may see their constituents- and where an intercourse may be established between Conservatives of the several grades of society.

It is well known that sedition and disloyalty, irreligion and immorality, have been infused like poison into the minds of the lower and middle ranks of society, by means of cheap and illegal publications; that every art that hatred and malignity could devise against all that is pure and good, has been most indusitriously and perseveringly exercised, to sap and overthrow the principles of the people. Unhappily, good and loyal publications have not been so accessible nor so freely offered to the mass of the community. To supply this defect, the Institution will use all it's energies to diffuse sound and constitutional principles; by which all means it seeks to strenthen and support all that is valuable in the institutions of the Empire; and to improve the moral and religious condition of the people.

The British Constitution has hitherto presented to all other nations a model of mixed government. It's excellence is best tested by it's permanence, and by the unexampled growth and prosperity of Great Britain- a permanence and prosperity which have been owing in no small degree, to a proper admixture of aristocracy, and to the power which this has been has exercised through the House of Peers, acting as an independent branch of the legislature. Without this, the force of popular movement would at times have become omnipotant, and swept away in it's momentry violence the most venerated of our institutions. It is against this aristocratic power that Liberalism is now waging war, and aiming a fatal blow at the main root of the British Constitution.

Amongst the lower orders Conservative principles are rapidly beginning to develop themselves, and it requires only that these principles be encouraged to produce the best results. Already, the nucleus of an Operative Conservative Association has been fostered by the Institution in the Metropolis, whilst in Lancashire and other places, lately the stronghold of radicalism, the most striking political changes have been affected amonst the people, who are beginning to feel, that they have been most grossly decieved by a democratic faction, and that they, above all other classes, are interested in upholding that Constitution, which secures to the poor as to the rich, the fullest enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

With these views, and offering a place of resort for the commercial man of the city, for the landed proprietor, the noble lord of the West End, and for a gentleman of Conservative principles resorting occasionally to the Metropolis, this Institution has been established, has taken vigorous root, and now appeal confidently to the support of Conservatives in town and country.

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APPENDIX THREE.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS OF BOROUGH
DISCUSSED IN THE THESIS.

1) ASHTON UNDER LYNE				
<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1832	433	G. Williams	Lib.	176
		C. Hindley	Lib.	163
		T.W. Helps	Con.	33
1835	515	C. Hindley	Lib.	212
		T.W. Helps	Con.	105
		G. Williams	Lib.	63
1837	603	C. Hindley	Lib.	237
		J. Wood	Con.	201
		J.R. Stephens	Tory/Rad	19
1841	713	C. Hindley	Lib.	303
		J. Harrop	Con.	254
1847	871	C. Hindley	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	937	C. Hindley	Lib.	Unopp.
1857	1085	C. Hindley	Lib.	Unopp.
(Death)				
1857	1085	T.M. Gibson	Lib.	522
		B. Mason	Con.	390
1859	1081	T.M. Gibson	Lib.	Unopp.
1865	967	T.M. Gibson	Lib.	Unopp.
1868	4822	T.W. Mellor	Con	2318
		T.M. Gibson	Lib.	2109
1874	5471	T.W. Mellor	Con.	2612
		A. Buckley	Lib.	2432

2) Blackburn (two seats)				
1832	626	W. Feilden	Con.	376
		W. Turner	Lib.	346
		J. Bowring	Lib.	334
1835	761	W. Turner	Lib.	432
		W. Feilden	Con.	316
		J. Bowring	Lib.	303
1841	906	W. Feilden	Con.	441
		J. Hornby	Con.	427
		W. Turner	Lib.	426
1847	1121	J. Hornby	Con.	641
		J. Pilkington	Lib.	602
		W. Hargreaves	Lib.	392
		W.P. Roberts	Chartist	68
1852	1258	J. Pilkington	Lib.	846
		W. Eccles	Lib.	580
		J. Hornby	Con.	509
(Election of Eccles declared void on petition)				

(Blackburn continued)

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1853	1325	M.J. Feilden W.H. Hornby	Lib. Con.	631 574
1857	1518	W.H. Hornby J. Pilkington	Con. Lib.	Unopp. Unopp.
1859	1617	W.H. Hornby J. Pilkington J.P. Murrough	Con. Lib. Lib.	832 750 567
1865	1894	W.H. Hornby J. Feilden J. Pilkington J.G. Potter	Con. Con. Lib. Lib.	1053 938 744 577
1868	9183	W.H. Hornby J. Feilden J.G. Potter M.J. Feilden	Con. Con. Lib. Lib.	4907 4826 4399 4164
1874	11195	H.M. Feilden W.E. Briggs D. Thwaites R. Shackleton	Con. Lib. Con. Lib.	5532 5338 5323 4851

3) Bolton (Two Seats)

1832	1040	R. Torrens W. Bolling J.A. Yates W. Eagle	Lib. Con. Lib. Radical	627 492 482 107
1835	1001	W. Bolling P. Ainsworth R. Torrens	Con. Lib. Lib.	633 590 343
1837	1340	P. Ainsworth W. Bolling A. Knowles	Lib. Con. Lib.	615 607 538
1841	1471	P. Ainsworth J. Bowring P. Rothwell W. Bolling	Lib. Lib. Con. Con.	669 614 536 441
1847	1479	W. Bolling J. Bowring J. Brooks	Con. Lib. Lib.	714 652 645
(Death of Bolling)				
1848	1479	S. Blair	Con.	Unopp.
(Resignation of Bowring)				
1849	1437	Sir J. Walmsley T.R. Bridson	Lib. Con.	621 568

APPENDIX THREE CONTINUED
Bolton continued

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1852	1671	T. Barnes J. Crook S. Blair P. Ainsworth	Lib. Lib. Con. Lib.	745 727 717 346
1857	1933	W. Gray J. Crook T. Barnes	Con Lib. Lib.	930 895 832
1859	2050	J. Crook W. Gray	Lib. Con.	Unopp. Unopp.
1868 (12650	J. Hick W. Gray T. Barnes S. Pope	Con. Con Lib. Lib.	6062 5848 5451 5436
1874	12595	J. Hick J.K. Cross W. Gray J. Knowles	Con Lib. Con. Lib.	5987 5782 5650 5440
4)Bury				
1832	535	R. Walker E. Grundy	Lib. Lib.	306 153
1835	526	R. Walker	Lib.	Unopp.
1837	637	R. Walker J.P. Cobbett R. Spankie	Lib. Lib. Con.	251 96 87
1841	768	R. Walker H. Hardman	Lib. Con.	325 288
1847	868	R. Walker	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	959	F. Peel Viscount Duncan	Lib. Lib.	472 410
1857	1218	R.N. Phillips F. Peel	Lib. Lib.	565 530
1859	1289	F. Peel T. Barnes	Lib. Lib.	641 478
1865	1352	R.N. Phillips F. Peel	Lib Lib	595 572
1868	5587	R.N. Phillips Viscount Chelsea	Lib. Con.	2830 2264
1874	6236	R.N. Phillips O.O. Walker	Lib. Con.	3016 2500

APPENDIX THREE CONTINUED

5) Chester (Two Seats)

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1832	2028	Lord R. Grosvenor	Lib.	1166
		J. Jervis	Lib.	1053
		J.F. Maddock	Lib.	499
1835	2053	Lord R. Grosvenor	Lib.	Unopp.
		J. Jervis	Lib.	Unopp.
1837	2298	Lord R. Grosvenor	Lib.	1282
		J. Jervis	Lib.	1109
		Hon. F.D. Ryder	Con.	352
1841	2445	Lord R. Grosvenor	Lib.	Unopp.
		J. Jervis	Lib.	Unopp.
1847	2450	Earl Grosvenor	Lib.	Unopp.
		Sir J. Jervis	Lib.	Unopp.
<i>(Resignation of Jervis)</i>				
1850	2529	Hon. W.O. Stanley	Lib.	986
		E.C. Egerton	Con.	645
1852	2524	Earl Grosvenor	Lib.	Unopp.
		Hon. W.O. Stanley	Lib.	Unopp.
1857	2428	Earl Grosvenor	Lib.	1244
		E.G. Salisbury	Lib.	924
		H.R. Grenfell	Lib.	729
1859	2502	Earl Grosvenor	Lib.	1464
		P.S. Humberstone	Con.	1110
		E.G. Salisbury	Lib.	708
1868	6062	Earl Grosvenor	Lib.	2270
		H.C. Raikes	Con.	2198
		E.G. Salisbury	Lib.	1283
		R. Hoak	Lib.	1071
1874	6268	H.C. Raikes	Con.	2356
		J.G. Dodson	Lib.	2134
		Sir T.G. Frost	Lib.	2126

6) Clitheroe

1832	306	J. Fort	Lib.	157
		J. Irving	Con.	124
1835	351	J. Fort	Lib.	Unopp.
1837	368	J. Fort	Lib.	164
		W. Whalley	Con.	155
1841	387	M. Wilson	Lib.	175
		E. Cardwell	Con.	170

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1847	504	M. Wilson	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	448	M. Wilson	Lib.	221
		J.T.W. Aspinall	Con.	187
(Election declared void on petition)				
1853	456	J.T.W. Aspinall	Con.	215
		R. Fort	Lib.	208
(Election declared void on petition)				
1853	456	Le G.N. Strakie	Lib.	216
		J. Peel	Con.	205
1857	457	J.T. Hopwood	Lib.	Unopp.
1859	469	J.T. Hopwood	Lib.	Unopp.
1865	438	R. Fort	Lib.	Unopp.
1868	1595	R. Assheton	Con.	760
		C.S. Roudell	Lib.	693
1874	1790	R. Assheton	Con.	892
		E.E. Kay	Lib.	804
7) Lancaster (Two seats)				
1832	1109	T. Green	Con.	Unopp.
		P.M. Stewart	Lib.	Unopp.
1835	1207	T. Green	Con.	Unopp.
		P.M. Stewart	Lib.	Unopp.
1837	1161	T. Green	Con.	614
		G. Marton	Con.	527
		P.M. Stewart	Lib.	453
		W.R. Greg	Lib.	347
1841	1296	T. Green	Con.	699
		G. Marton	Con.	594
		J. Armstrong	Lib.	572
1847	1377	S. Gregson	Lib.	724
		T. Green	Con.	721
		E.D. Salisbury	Con.	621
(Election of Gregson declared void on petition)				
1848	1377	R.B. Armstrong	Lib.	636
		Hon.E.H. Stanley	Con.	620
1852	1398	S. Gregson	Lib.	699
		R.B. Armstrong	Lib.	690
		T. Green	Con.	509
		J. Ellis	Con.	432
(Election of Armstrong declared void on petition)				
1853	1420	T. Green	Con.	686
		J. Armstrong	Lib.	554

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1857	1328	S. Gregson W.J. Garnett R. Gladstone	Lib. Con. Con.	827 773 537
1859	1288	W.J. Garnett S. Gregson W.A.F. Saunders E.M. Fenwick	Con. Lib. Con. Lib.	660 641 509 459
<i>(Resignation of Garnett)</i>				
1864	1394	E.M. Fenwick W.A.F. Saunders	Lib. Con.	682 525
1865	1465	E.M. Fenwick H.W. Schneider E. Lawrence	Lib. Lib. Con.	713 685 665
<i>WRIT SUSPENDED</i>				

8) *Liverpool (Two seats from 1832, three seats from 1868)*

1832	11283	W. Ewart Lord Sandon (Snr.) T. Thornley Sir H. Douglas	Lib. Con. Lib. Con.	4931 4260 4096 3249
1835	12492	Lord Sandon (Snr.) W. Ewart Sir H. Douglas J. Morris	Con. Lib. Con. Lib.	4407 4075 3869 3627
1837	11179	Lord Sandon (Snr.) C. Cresswell W. Ewart H. Elphinstone	Con. Con. Lib. Lib.	4876 4652 4381 4206
1841	15539	Lord Sandon (Snr.) C. Cresswell Sir J. Walmesley Lord Palmerston	Con. Con. Lib. Lib.	5979 5772 4647 4431
1847	17004	E. Cardwell Sir T.D. Birch Sir D. Mackworth Lord John Manners	Con. Lib. Con. Con.	5581 4882 4089 2413
1852	17433	C. Turner W.F. Mackenzie E. Cardwell J.C. Ewart	Con. Con. Con. Lib.	6693 6367 5247 4910
<i>(Election declared void on petition)</i>				
1853	16182	T.B. Horsfall Hon. H.T. Liddell Sir T.E. Perry J.B. Moore	Con. Con. Lib. Con.	6034 5543 4673 1274

Liverpool continued

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
<i>(Succession of Liddell to the Peerage, Lord Ravensworth)</i>				
1855	16182	J.C. Ewart	Lib.	5718
		Sir S.G. Bonham	Con.	4262
1857	18314	T.B. Horsfall	Con.	7566
		J.C. Ewart	Lib.	7121
		C. Turner	Con.	6316
1865	20618	T.B. Horsfall	Con.	7866
		S.R. Graves	Con.	7500
		J.C. Ewart	Lib.	7160
1868	39645	S.R. Graves	Con.	16766
		Lord Sandon (Junr.)	Con.	16222
		W. Rathbone	Lib.	15337
		W.N. Massey	Lib.	15017
1874	54952	Lord Sandon (Junr.)	Con.	20206
		J. Torr	Con)	19763
		W. Rathbone	Lib.	16706
		W.S. Caine	Lib.	15801
		W.S. Simpson	Lib/Lab	2435
9) <u>Manchester</u> (Two seats from 1832, three seats from 1868)				
1832	6726	M. Phillips	Lib.	2923
		C.P. Thompson	Lib.	2068
		S.T. Lloyd	Lib.	1832
		J.T. Hope	Con.	1560
		W. Cobbett	Rad.	1305
1835	8432	C.P. Thompson	Lib.	3355
		M. Phillips	Lib.	3163
		B. Braidley	Con.	2535
		Sir C. Wolseley	Lib.	583
1837	11185	C.P. Thompson	Lib.	4158
		M. Phillips	Lib.	3759
		W.E. Gladstone	Con	2224
<i>(Resignation of Thompson)</i>				
1839	11185	R.H. Greg	Lib.	3421
		Sir G. Murray	Con	3156
1841	10818	M. Phillips	Lib.	3695
		T.M. Gibson	Lib.	3575
		Sir G. Murray	Con.	3115
		W. Entwistle	Con.	2692
1847	12841	J. Bright	Lib.	Unopp.
		T.M. Gibson	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	13921	T.M. Gibson	Lib.	5762
		J. Bright	Lib.	5475
		G. Loch	Lib.	4364

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1852 cont.		Hon. J. Denman	Lib.	3969
1857	18044	Sir J. Potter	Lib.	8368
		J.A. Turner	Lib.	7854
		T.M. Gibson	Lib.	5588
		J. Bright	Lib.	5458
1859	18334	T. Bazley	Lib.	7545
		J.A. Turner	Lib.	7300
		A. Heywood	Lib.	5448
		Hon. J. Denman	Lib.	5201
1865	21542	T. Bazley	Lib.	7909
		E. James	Lib.	6698
		J. Bright	Lib.	5562
		A. Heywood	Lib.	4242
1868	48256	H. Birley	Con.	15486
		T. Bazley	Lib.	14192
		J. Bright	Lib.	13514
		J. Hoar	Con.	12684
		E.C. Jones	Lib.	10662
		M. Henry	Lib.	5236
1874	60222	H. Birley	Con.	19984
		W.R. Callender	Con.	19649
		Sir T. Bazley	Lib.	19325
		J. Bright	Lib.	18727
10) Oldham (Two seats)				
1832	1131	J. Fielden	Rad.	677
		W. Cobbett	Rad.	645
		B.H. Bright	Lib.	150
		W. Burge	Con.	101
		G. Stephen	Lib.	3
1835	1029	J. Fielden	Rad.	Unopp.
		W.M. Cobbett	Lib.	Unopp.
1837	1372	W.A. Johnson	Lib.	545
		J. Fielden	Rad.	541
		J. Jones	Con.	315
		J.F. Lees	Con.	279
1841	1467	J. Fielden	Rad.	Unopp.
		W.A. Johnson	Lib.	Unopp.
1847	1691	W.J. Fox	Lib.	726
		J. Duncuft	Con.	696
		J.M. Cobbett	Lib.	624
		J. Fielden	Rad.	612
1852	1890	J.M. Cobbett	Lib.	957
		J. Duncuft	Con.	868
		W.J. Fox	Lib.	777
(Death of Duncuft)				

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1852-	1978	W.J. Fox	Lib.	895
		J. Heald	Con.	783
1857	2098	J.M. Cobbett	Lib.	949
		J. Platt	Lib.	934
		W.J. Fox	Lib.	898
1859	2151	W.J. Fox	Lib.	1039
		J.M. Cobbett	Lib.	966
		J.T. Hibbert	Lib.	955
1865	2285	J.T. Hibbert	Lib.	1104
		J. Platt	Lib.	1075
		J.M. Cobbett	Lib.	899
		F.L. Spinks	Con.	846
1868	13454	J.T. Hibbert	Lib.	6140
		J. Platt	Lib.	6122
		J.M. Cobbett	Con.	6116
		F.L. Spinks	Con.	6084
<i>(Death of Platt)</i>				
1872	16063	J.M. Cobbett	Con.	7278
		Hon. E.L. Stanley	Lib.	6984
1874	18560	F.L. Spinks	Con.	8582
		J.M. Cobbett	Con.	8545
		J.T. Hibbert	Lib.	8397
		Hon. E.L. Stanley	Lib.	8360
<i>11) Preston (Two seats)</i>				
1832	6352	P.H. Fleetwood	Con.	3372
		Hon. H.T. Stanley	Lib.	2273
		H. Hunt	Rad.	2054
		J. Forbes	Lib.	1926
		C. Crompton	Lib.	118
1835	3734	P.H. Fleetwood	Con.	2165
		Hon. H.T. Stanley	Lib.	2092
		T.P. Thompson	Lib.	1385
		T. Smith	Lib.	789
1837	3656	P.H. Fleetwood	Con.	2726
		R.T. Parker	Con.	1821
		J. Crawford	Lib.	1562
1841	3371	Sir P.H. Fleetwood	Lib.	1655
		Sir G. Strickland	Lib.	1629
		R.T. Parker	Con.	1270
		C. Swainson	Con.	1255
1847	3044	Sir G. Strickland	Lib.	1404
		C.P. Grenfell	Lib.	1378
		R.T. Parker	Con.	1361

Preston continued

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1852	2854	R.T. Parker	Con.	1335
		Sir G. Strickland	Lib.	1253
		C.P. Grenfell	Lib.	1127
		J. German	Lib.	692
1857	2793	C.P. Grenfell	Lib.	1503
		R.A. Cross	Con.	1433
		Sir G. Strickland	Lib.	1094
1859	2657	R.A. Cross	Con.	1564
		C.P. Grenfell	Lib.	1208
		J.T. Clifton	Con.	1168
<i>(Resignation of Cross)</i>				
1862	2773	Sir T.G. Hesketh	Con.	1527
		G. Melly	Lib.	1014
1865	2562	Sir T.G. Hesketh	Con.	Unopp.
		Hon. F.A. Stanley	Con.	Unopp.
1868	10763	E. Hermon	Con.	5803
		Sir T.G. Hesketh	Con.	5700
		Lord E.G.F. Howard	Lib.	4846
		J.F. Leese	Lib.	4782
1874	12073	E. Hermon	Con.	6512
		J. Holker	Con.	5211
		T. Motterhead	Lib/Lab.	3756

12) Rochdale

1832	687	J. Fenton	Lib.	277
		J. Entwistle	Con.	246
		J. Taylor	Lib.	109
1835	746	J. Entwistle	Con.	369
		J. Fenton	Lib.	326
<i>(Death of Entwistle)</i>				
1837	857	J. Fenton	Lib.	383
		C. Royds	Con.	339
1837	857	J. Fenton	Lib.	374
		A. Ramsay	Con.	349
1841	1016	W.S. Crawford	Lib.	399
		J. Fenton	Lib.	335
1847	1026	W.S. Crawford	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	1160	E. Miall	Lib.	529
		Sir A. Ramsay	Con.	375
1857	1255	Sir A. Ramsay	Lib.	532
		E. Miall	Lib.	481

Rochdale continued

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1859	1340	R. Cobden	Lib.	Unopp.
(Death of Cobden)				
1865	1358	R.B. Potter	Lib.	646
		W.B. Brett	Con.	496
1865	1358	T.B. Potter	Lib.	Unopp.
1868	9280	T.B. Potter	Lib.	4455
		W.W. Schofield	Con.	3270
1874	10352	T.B. Potter	Lib.	5614
		R.W. Gamble	Con.	3716
13) <u>Salford</u> (Two seats from 1868)				
1832	1497	J. Brotherton	Lib.	712
		W. Garnett	Con.	518
1835	2336	J. Brotherton	Lib.	795
		J. Dugdale	Con.	572
1837	2628	J. Brotherton	Lib.	890
		W. Garnett	Con.	888
1841	2443	J. Brotherton	Lib.	991
		W. Garnett	Con.	873
1847	2605	J. Brotherton	Lib.	Unopp.
1852	2950	J. Brotherton	Lib.	Unopp.
(Death of Brotherton)				
1857	—	E.R. Langworthy	Lib.	Unopp.
1859	4222	W.N. Massey	Lib.	1880
		Sir E. Armitage	Lib.	1264
1865	5397	J. Cheetham	Lib.	Unopp.
1868	15862	C.E. Cawley	Con.	6312
		W.T. Charley	Con.	6181
		J. Cheetham	Lib.	6141
		H. Rawson	Lib.	6018
1874	19177	C.E. Cawley	Con.	7003
		W.T. Charley	Con.	6987
		J. Kay	Lib.	6827
		H. Lee	Lib.	6709

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1832	1012	T. Marsland T.H. Lloyd H. Marsland E.D. Davenport	Con. Lib. Lib. Lib.	551 444 431 237
1835	922	H. Marsland T. Marsland E.D. Davenport	Lib. Con. Lib.	582 482 361
1837	1192	H. Marsland T. Marsland R. Cobden	Lib. Con. Lib.	467 467 412
1841	1238	H. Marsland R. Cobden T. Marsland	Lib. Lib. Con.	571 541 346
1847	1108	R. Cobden J. Heald J. Kershaw J. West	Lib. Con. Lib. Chartist	643 570 537 14
(Cobden elects to sit for the West Riding of Yorkshire)				
1847	1205	J. Kershaw T. Marsland	Lib. Con.	545 518
1852	1341	J. Kershaw J.B. Smith J. Heald	Lib. Lib. Con.	725 622 549
1857	1417	J. Heald J.B. Smith W. Gibb	Lib. Lib. Con.	769 641 594
1865	1348	E.W. Watkin J.B. Smith W. Tipping	Lib. Lib. Con.	736 664 601
1874	7814	C.N. Hopwood F. Pennington W. Tipping P. Mitford	Lib. Lib. Con. Con.	3628 3538 3406 3372

14) Warrington

1832	456	E.G. Hornby J.I. Blackburne	Lib. Con.	203 176
1835	557	J.I. Blackburne C. Hindley	Con. Lib.	148 140
1837	635	J.I. Blackburne E.D. Davenport	Con. Lib.	278 254
1841	633	J.I. Blackburne	Con.	Unopp.

Warrington continued

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1847	699	G. Greenall W. Allcard	Con. Lib.	327 298
1852	701	G. Greenall	Con.	Unopp.
1857	720	G. Greenall	Con.	Unopp.
1859	723	G. Greenall	Con.	Unopp.
1865	768	G. Greenall	Con.	Unopp.
1868	4470	P. Rylands G. Greenall	Lib. Con.	1984 1957
1874	5022	G. Greenall P. Rylands	Con. Lib.	2381 2201

15) Wigan (Two seats)

1832	438	R. Thicknesse R. Potter J. Whittle J.H. Kearsley	Lib. Lib. Lib. Con	302 296 212 174
1835	495	J.H. Kearsley R. Potter C.S. Standish	Con. Lib. Lib.	296 181 166
1837	539	C.S. Standish R. Potter J.H. Kearsley P. Greenall	Lib. Lib. Con. Con.	249 245 229 211
(Resignation of Potter)				
1839	551	W. Ewart J.H. Kearsley	Lib. Con.	261 259
1841	586	P. Greenall T.B. Crosse C.S. Standish C.P. Grenfell	Con. Con. Lib. Lib.	273 268 264 263
(Death of Greenall)				
1845	517	Hon. J. Lindsay R.A. Thicknesse	Con. Lib.	274 211
1847	637	Hon. J. Lindsay R.A. Thicknesse	Con. Lib.	Unopp. Unopp.
1852	718	R.A. Thicknesse Hon. J. Lindsay F.S. Powell	Lib. Con. Con	366 356 324
(Death of Thicknesse)				

<i>Election</i>	<i>No. of Electors</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1854	788	J. Acton F.S. Powell	Lib. Con.	339 334
1857	797	F.S. Powell H. Woods Hon. J. Lindsay	Con. Lib. Con.	492 447 309
1859	835	Hon. J. Lindsay H. Woods F.S. Powell	Con. Lib. Con.	500 476 273
<i>(Resignation of Lindsay)</i>				
1866	863	N. Eckersley J. Lancaster	Con Lib.	411 349
1868	3939	H. Woods J. Lancaster N. Eckersley J. Pearson	Lib. Lib. Con. Con.	2219 2166 1920 1875
1874	5062	Lord Lindsay T. Knowles J. Lancaster W. Pickard H. Woods	Con. Con. Lib. Lib/Lab Lib.	2493 2401 1883 1134 1029

Local Leaders of Blackburn Operative Conservative Association 1835-1846

<u>NAME</u>	<u>OFFICE HELD</u>	<u>OCCUPATION (if known)</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>ABLE TO VOTE</u>	
Thomas Ainsworth	Committee 1844	Hatter	Blakey Moor	1835 No	1847 Yes
James Appleton	President 1837 Committee 1844	--	--	No	No
Henry Ashcroft	Committee 1836/42	Shoemaker	Church St	No	Yes
John Barber	Committee 1840	--	--	No	No
Thomas Banister	Committee 1837/42	--	--	No	No
James Bell	Committee 1840	--	--	No	No
John Bennett	Vice-Pres 1839 President 1840/1 Committee 1842/3	Headmaster	St Peters Place	Yes	Yes
Thomas Bennett	Treasurer 1837/46	Cloth Finisher	21 Montague St	No	Yes
James Brogden	Committee 1837	Attorney	Ainsworth St	Yes	Yes
William Brooks	Vice-Pres 1844 President 1845 Committee 1842	Draper	King William St	No	Yes
Thomas Bury	Committee 1842	Pawnbroker	Whalley Banks	No	Yes
Robert Cliffe	Committee 1840	--	--	No	No
John Clough	Vice-Pres 1842 President 1843	Operative	Montague St	No	Yes
Richard Cardwell	Vice-Pres 1837	Operative Spinner	--	No	No
Joseph Cowell	Committee 1839	--	--	No	No
Thomas Dewhurst	Committee 1835/7	Operative Joiner	Brown St	Yes	Yes
William Dobson	Committee 1838	--	--	No	No
Henry Elgin	Vice-Pres 1840 President 1841 Committee 1839	--	--	No	No
William Ellison	Librarian 1840	--	--	No	No
Edward Fisher	Committee 1837/9	--	--	No	No
Thomas Fisher	Committee 1839	Operative	King St	No	Yes
Thomas Forrest	Committee 1842	Draper	King William St	No	Yes
Jonathan Gate	Committee 1841	Clthier	Richmond Terr.	No	Yes
Thomas Gillibrand	Committee 1839	Cotton Mfr.	Old Bank St	No	Yes
Richard Greenwood	Committee 1840	Operative Weaver	Strawberry Bank	No	Yes
Richard Hall	Committee 1841	Grocer	Fleming Square	No	Yes
George Hayes	Committee 1837	--	--	No	No
William Holden	Committee 1841/2	Shopkeeper	Whalley Old Rd	No	Yes
Charles Holland	Committee 1836/8	--	--	No	No
James Holland	Committee 1840	--	--	No	No
Henry Hobbsen	Vice-Pres 1838	Quarry Owner	Grimshaw Pk Rd	Yes	Yes
James Isherwood	Committee 1838	--	--	No	No
William Jones	Committee 1838	--	--	No	No
George Jackson	Committee 1841	Operative Spinner	Ainsworth St	Yes	Yes
Henry Kenyon (Jun)	Secretary 1835/41 1843/46	Solicitors Clerk	Richmond Terr.	Yes	Yes
William Kenyon	Committee 1837/8	--	--	No	No
Roger Kellett	Committee 1843	--	--	No	No
Isaac Lloyd	Vice-Pres 1841 President 1842/3/4	Operative	--	No	No
John Littlefare	Committee 1837	--	--	No	No
J.S. Livesey	Committee 1837	Shopkeeper	Northgate	No	Yes
James Mullington	Committee 1837/8	--	--	No	No