

WORKING CLASS POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND THE
CONSERVATIVE PARTY: A STUDY OF CLASS
RELATIONS AND PARTY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE NORTH-WEST, 1800-1870.

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
<i>List of tables and illustrations.</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iii
<i>Summary.</i>	iv
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<u>SECTION ONE</u> <u>THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONSERVATISM AND WORKING CLASS DEVELOPMENT.</u>	11
Chapter One <i>The emergence of the political party in first half of the nineteenth century.</i>	12
Chapter Two <i>The transformation of Toryism.</i>	39
Chapter Three <i>Toryism, Conservatism and the emergent working class.</i>	70
Chapter Four <i>The re-organization of the Conservative party after 1832.</i>	135
Chapter Five <i>Loyalist Associations, Pitt Clubs and the advent of Conservative Associations in the North-West.</i>	179
Chapter Six <i>Operative Conservatism I, It's early development, structure, role and function.</i>	211
Chapter Seven <i>Operative Conservatism II, The role of issues and the various idioms of politics.</i>	245
<u>SECTION TWO</u> <u>THREE CASE STUDIES</u>	280
Chapter Eight <i>The market and county towns.</i>	284
Chapter Nine <i>The old boroughs, Preston.</i>	341
Chapter Ten <i>The new boroughs.</i>	433
Chapter Eleven <i>An analytical summation.</i>	510
<i>Bibliography</i>	564
Appendix One <i>Copies of Sir Henry Hardinge's subscription lists, 1835.</i>	578
Appendix Two <i>Full text of the inaugural meeting of the National Conservative Institution.</i>	580
Appendix Three <i>Parliamentary election results of the boroughs discussed in the thesis.</i>	583
Appendix Four <i>Local leaders of Blackburn's Operative Conservative Association, 1835-1846.</i>	597

MAPS, TABLES AND GRAPHS

	Page no.
Table i <i>Grouped occupations of entrants to Lancaster Town Council, 1835-1870</i>	317
Table ii <i>Politics of entrants to Lancaster Town Council, 1835-1870.</i>	318
Table iii <i>Average age of death of different groups in Lancaster Union, 1838-1844.</i>	323
Table iv <i>Density of population of six North-West towns.</i>	324
Table v <i>(Rate of intercensal growth of Preston's population, 1801-1871.</i>	348
Table vi <i>Persons per house; Preston, 1811-1871.</i>	354
Table vii <i>Textile workers of Preston in relation to population.</i>	357
Table viii <i>Number of cotton forms in Preston, 1815-1862.</i>	359
Table ix <i>Relative size of Preston's municipal franchise, 1835-1860.</i>	372
Table x <i>Size of the electorate of Preston in relation to the old and new franchise, 1832-1862.</i>	380
Table xi <i>Voting patterns of spinners and weavers at the 1830 Preston By-Election.</i>	383
Table xii <i>Voting patterns of spinners and weavers at the Preston election of 1832.</i>	396
Table xiii <i>Political and occupational analysis of Preston Council, 1835-1860.</i>	423
Table xiv <i>Analysis of voters by religious denomination; Blackburn, 1835.</i>	450
Table xv <i>Comparative factory size of nine North-West urban areas; spinning and powerloom weaving by the same firm, 1841.</i>	470
Graph i <i>Intercensal growth of Preston</i>	348
Graph ii <i>The electorate of Preston, 1832-1862.</i>	377
Map i <i>Preston 1825.</i>	352
Map ii <i>Preston 1850.</i>	353

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

WORKING CLASS POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY: A STUDY OF CLASS RELATIONS AND PARTY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH-WEST 1800-1870

The thesis is primarily concerned with the investigation of two inter-related themes. Firstly, it sets out to examine the changing nature and role of the Conservative party in the decades immediately following the 1832 Reform Act up until the advent of householder franchise and the Second Reform Act of 1867. The main contention is that political parties after the First Reform Act began to display many of the features and functions which political scientists of our own age see as the essential traits of modern party structures. One key area in which the Conservative party revealed these traits of modernity was in the way the party in the localities began to integrate sections of the industrial working class into the party structure, a phenomenon which had not occurred before 1832. This leads us on to our second central theme, namely the description of the political development of the working class of the North-West region with specific reference as to why some sections of the industrial working class began to support and join the Conservative party after 1832.

The thesis is divided into two sections. The first is concerned with the changing nature of Conservatism and working class development, and the second with a series of comparative case studies. These examine developments in three different types of urban centres of the North-West region. We look firstly at the county and market towns, secondly at an industrial borough with an established working class electorate, and finally we examine those boroughs created by the Act of 1832. The thesis ends with a chapter which aims to provide a concluding analysis.



THE CHARLES ST. GANG.

FROM McCLEAN'S FORTNIGHTLY MAGAZINE JUNE 1831

WORKING CLASS POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND THE
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INTRODUCTION

The essential hypothesis to be tested in this thesis is that during the period between the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 the working class of the industrial North-West of England and the Conservative party at the national and local level underwent a political transformation. With regard to the working class it was a political transformation which affected both the way they themselves perceived politics and the way they were perceived by the brokers of power. In terms of the Conservative party it was a process of relatively rapid adaptation forced by the pace of political change after the 1832 Reform Act and the social and economic consequences - in the North-West at least - of industrialization, which forced the party to react to change in order to defend their principles, and, indeed to survive. Thus the thesis is an exercise in the investigation and explanation of aspects of political change, involving class behaviour and attitudes, and of the institutions - like political parties - who, it will be contended contributed to these developments.

In one way the emerging proletariat of the North-West can be viewed as the forerunners of a social group which after 1850 began to rapidly increase throughout British society. To examine the political changes which affected the behaviour and attitudes of this important social grouping in these formative years may go some way to explaining why the working class after 1867 appears to

be so politically heterogeneous. For what was happening in the North West of England between 1832 and 1867 in social, political and economic terms can be viewed as a precursor for what was to happen in other parts of the country as industrial capitalism advanced.

It could be argued that it does not necessarily follow that social class is inevitably a pre-determinant for political affiliation. However there is a widespread belief among political scientists-especially those who have studied the working class¹ and among Marxist social scientists - that a groups' or classes social position may determine political orientation, interest demands and representation. The fact is that when placed under the microscope of empirical historical investigation, this does not always follow. Thus a major theme running through this thesis is the possibility of variations of political allegiances among the working class - and the factors which may explain these variations - of the North-West in the afore-mentioned period.

One possible suggestion regarding working class political heterogeneity would be that in an objective sense the working class were undergoing major changes in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and this is something the thesis will eventually discuss. However, we suggest that it was equally important that the political institutions of Britain were undergoing major changes during these years. These changes included the nature of political representation - both in local and national politics, changes in the power of the various branches of the legislature and the role and functions of the executive and the monarch, and, importantly for our thesis, in the development of political parties. It is the consideration of the changing features and functions of the political party-specifically the Conservatives - which takes up the bulk of the opening chapters.

In chapter one we offer an historiographical account of the emergence of the modern political party beginning with the Whig interpretation and ending with that of the approach of political science. In this chapter we introduce a major theme of our investigation in that we contend that it was only after 1832 and the first Reform Act, that we can begin to plot the elements of political change within the nature of modern political parties. An important example of which for this thesis is that the Conservative party in particular began to integrate sections of the working class into their party structure in the 1830's, something which before this period they had never attempted.²

In order to bring the significance of the changes occurring in the nature of parties in the post-Reform Act period, it will be necessary to examine the situation prevailing in the immediate decades before 1832. In chapters two, three and four we attempt this by sharpening the focus by looking in some detail at the effects of change within the Tory/Conservative party. In chapter two we look at the transformation of Toryism into Peelite Conservatism. Here we trace the linkages between the Toryism of the late eighteenth century, through the coalition of the conservative Whigs and up to the guiding ideological principles and basis of Conservatism in the years immediately following 1832.

Chapter three deals with the relationship between the Tories/Conservatives and the other key element of our thesis: the developing industrial working class of the North-West before 1832. Here we shall examine the perceived position of the working class and what they demanded politically, and, in turn how they were perceived by the national and local Tory elites. We shall look at the drift of the working class towards extreme radicalism, examine the reasons why they sought to be included in the political contract and also note the apparent bitter acrimony which existed between the Tories and the emerging working class between 1800 and 1832. In this chapter we also introduce the concept of class

consciousness, and as this shall feature throughout this thesis, it may be useful if we make clear what we mean by this term from the very start. Later in the thesis we will suggest that in order in order to account for regional and periodic variations in the scope and depth of working class consciousness it may be useful to perceive the concept as one within which various levels of intensity exist. We do not wish to labour the point here but we shall use the term class consciousness in the following way. Essentially the term will denote a subjective awareness of the objective reality of the vast majority of the urban proletariat. Class, as a concept, suggests an objective relationship between the wage labourer and the owners and managers of capitalistic production. This may be said to be the objective reality of an individual or groups class position. However, there is thought to exist by many social scientists of an individual and collective awareness of this 'objective reality' of class and this is the subjective element of the class the individual believed himself to belong to and perceives the same identifiable traits among his fellow class members. However, for the purpose of our thesis we suggest that within this subjective awareness there is also a political dimension by which high levels of class consciousness can be detected. When this political element is absent class consciousness is low and intra-class status differentiation high. However when the mass of working people seek to radically change the existing social, economic and political order, with an alternative political structure of their own design and one which ensures at least equal political representation with other groups or classes, then levels of class consciousness must be deemed high. In our analysis a worker who affiliates with the Conservative party has a lower level of class consciousness than the worker who supports a political group which seeks to advance the interest of the working class as a whole and over and above those of any class and of any bourgeois political party.

It is however, important that we examine the nature of class

relationships and the political influences which the working class were subjected (like that of integration into either the Liberal or Conservative parties) in the light of the historical events and period of the time, and not read back to the past theories and concepts of which the working class themselves had no knowledge-like for example advanced socialist theory. We suggest there were valid (in the sense that we do not require a theory of false consciousness to explain them) reasons why some working people supported Conservatism, just as there were why some advocated physical force Chartism. However, the overall effect of political sectionalization, we contend, was that it lowered the levels of class consciousness of the working class as a whole. One of the essential themes of this thesis is to examine why this political sectionalization took place among the working class of the North-West after 1832.

In chapter four we intend to look at the reorganization of the Conservative party in aftermath of the Reform Act. In this chapter we shall focus on the party at the centre but we shall begin to look at the effect these organizational changes had in the localities. We shall examine the possible reasons why the Conservatives began to alter their organizational structure, which, we suggested had a profound effect on the development of the British political culture. One of the central reasons for change was forced by the terms of the Reform Act itself, taking especial note of the Registration clauses which we contend were of particular importance in the boroughs where, for the first time local political parties were organized permanently. In this chapter new evidence will be produced, emanating from the very centre of the Conservative party which suggests that the leadership were well aware of the need to re-organize.

Essentially these first four chapters can be regarded as contextual preliminaries to what will be the central themes of both the main hypothesis and the empirical content of the central

chapters. After these initial chapters the reader should begin to be aware that, seen from the focus of the national political party and from a significant section of an important social group, significant changes were acting upon the very foundation of British politics. What was being transformed here was the very fabric of Britain's political culture. Political culture is used here to denote the traditions, style, attitudes and behaviour of the governed, the governors and the subtle effects these may have on the existing political constitution and its institutions. In subsequent chapters which shall attempt to detail this change from the standpoint of the Conservative party and sections of the working class in the North-West region.

In chapter six we shall begin to look at the early development of the Conservative party's attempt to attract a wider membership through the setting up of the local Operative Associations after 1832. However, in order to judge the historical significance of these political clubs specifically designed for the working class, we must look for evidence of political groups who attempted to influence the working class before 1832. This is the basis of chapter five. In this chapter we shall describe and explain the attempts by the state to gain the loyalty of the 'lower orders' in the 1790's through the use of the Reeves Societies and Loyalist Associations. Also we shall look at the middle class based Pitt Clubs and compare and contrast these bodies with the features and chief functions of the political societies set up after the Reform Act.

In chapter six we take our first detailed look at the Operative Conservative Associations of the North-West. We shall look at the organizational structure of these Operative Associations and, importantly consider what their middle class designers intended their effect to be on the working class of the North-West. We contend that one of these desired effects was an attempt to steer sections of the working class away from what middle class

Conservatives perceived to be the dangers of extreme radicalism. Thus they began to integrate sections of the working class into the local party structure. This is important to our hypothesis in that this may have led to working class political sectionalization and had the effect of reducing overall working class consciousness.

In chapter seven we intend to pursue this theme of working class political integration by looking at some of the issues which the working class were directly concerned with and which the local Conservatives became involved. This introduces us to a major sub-theme of the thesis in that in relation to all the foregoing elements we have noted - especially with regard to changes in the political culture - we now begin to look at the various idioms of politics in the 1830's, 40's and 50's. Here we intend to utilize the models of the politics of influence, of the market and - the idiom which we believe became the dominant trend in the industrial north-west - the politics of opinion. Also in this chapter we shall examine the concepts of deference in relations to Operative Conservatism and look for incidences of paternalism in the light of changing patterns of urban industrial society.

The purpose of chapters eight, nine and ten is to examine the hypothesis in the light of empirical evidence drawn from three case studies which reflect the differing political and economic make-up of the region as a whole. In these chapters we intend to compare political change, working class politics and Conservative party development in the market and county towns, the old (pre-1832) boroughs and the new boroughs created by the Act 1832.

Chapter eight is concerned with developments in the market and county towns. Here we shall be looking at the small borough of Clitheroe, and the County towns of Chester and Lancaster. We shall examine the economic and social structure of each of the towns and describe political change in both parliamentary and

municipal politics. The most detailed description will be of developments in Lancaster, where there appears a fairly equal mix of older economic practices with newer proto-industrial forms. We shall look at political changes in relation to the dominant political groups, patterns of leadership local issues and the incidence of political pressures emanating from the working class. We shall also be concerned to subject the hypothesis and its frame of investigation - namely the various idioms of politics, and the salience (or otherwise) of features such as religion, working class deference and middle class paternalism - to the empirical findings.

In chapter nine we shall concentrate on the old borough of Preston. Preston is interesting in that it was a traditional centre for agricultural products but also had a substantial industrial base. However, its key importance for our thesis is that the town possessed a householder franchise under the terms of the pre-1832 political system. This meant that the working class of Preston made up the majority of electors both before and after 1832. This offers us an ideal opportunity to examine working class development and the attempts of the political parties to influence them in a town where they were the numerically dominant groups. Again we shall be looking for signs of change in the form and features of the Conservative party and looking at how they organized their political actions in relation to the working class, key issues, patterns of leadership and electoral contests in both spheres of local and parliamentary politics.

In chapter ten we look at the new boroughs - those who were granted parliamentary representation by the Reform Act of 1832. We shall be concentrating on the cotton town of Blackburn, but will be comparing developments here with a briefer examination of Bolton. We contend that these new boroughs, unfettered as they were by long standing political traditions and customs, will provide us with the most useful evidence with regard to working

class political integration into the Conservative party and the resultant political sectionalization of that class and its variations of class consciousness. It is in these types of boroughs that we would also expect considerably more emphasis on opinion politics, because of the need of the political elites to contain and control - as in the case of Preston - the numerically dominant working class. Thus we shall be looking at issues which may reflect this in the context of the working class, the development of the Operative Associations and the Conservative party in the North West.

We shall attempt to show that not only did these local working class based political associations act as parties of social and political integration, but that they also acted as agencies of social conditioning, containment and control. They also seem to have been agencies of opinion dissemination and generation in ways which organized political groups never attempted with working people before 1832. This Act of 1832 will crop up throughout the thesis for two essential reasons. Firstly, we contend that it was around this time that working class political consciousness was, in a mass sense, arguably at its highest level in the period under discussion; and secondly that the effects of the Act itself and crisis surrounding its eventual implementation forced the pace of the eventual emergence of the modern party structure.

In our final chapter we shall present an analytical overview which will bring together all the key themes in the individual chapters, and offer an evaluation of the hypothesis in the light of the empirical findings. We shall, in the course of the chapter offer a series of conclusions and 'inconclusions', whilst at the same time seeking to bring into sharp relief the chief areas of discussion each chapter has revealed.

1. For example E Nordlinger, Working Class Tories, London 1968, or R Mackenzie and A Silver, Angels in Marble, London 1968.

2. As far as the present writer is aware there is only one study which covers roughly the same ground as the present thesis, and this is: R L Hill, Toryism and the People: 1832-1846, London 1979. However Hill's work seldom rises - in terms of scholarship - above the level of a crude polemical justification of Conservatism of the later 1920's. Hill makes biased political assumptions from the very selective and limited evidence he presents and is thus of very marginal significance. He does mention Operative Conservative Associations but make very few analytical assessments of the possible reasons for their evidence and makes no attempt to evaluate their form and functions.

SECTION ONE THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONSERVATISM AND WORKING
CLASS DEVELOPMENT.

Chapter One

THE EMERGENCE OF THE POLITICAL PARTY IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

I THE ORTHODOX VIEW.

As with most questions of historical importance the debate surrounding the emergence of the modern British political parties is one that has been raging fiercely for many years. In essence it began in the nineteenth century and was dominated by the Whig view of rational progress expounded most elegantly by T B Macaulay's History of England. Macaulay begins his narration just prior to 1888 and the Glorious Revolution and ends with the final Whig triumph over the forces of Tory ignorance; the 1832 Reform Act. His 'History' is, in essence the account of the transition of the Whig faction (or factions) into early Victorian progressive Liberalism and as such is one-dimensional and narrow. However, Macaulay's History of England was for many years the accepted view that the modern (nineteenth century) political party came into being as a result of the Whigs' successful political and religious emancipation from the absolutist tendencies of firstly, James II (1682-1688) and secondly their triumph over his Tory supporters during the Hanoverian succession and the three decades which immediately followed it, (1714-1746). This struggle set the tone for the opposing factions - of Whig liberty and Tory reaction - right up until the 1870's. It was the history of right and wrong, black and white, Macaulay chose his lobby and stuck with it.

It was not until the publication of Sir Lewis Namier's The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III in 1929 that

the simplistic thesis propounded by Macaulay regarding the development of British political parties was seriously challenged. What Namier did was to scotch the view offered by Macaulay that the two party system could be traced back to the last two decades of the seventeenth century. For Namier, such a system could not begin to be understood at any time prior to 1832 and the passing of the Reform Act. The great historians of the nineteenth century who set the tone of the 'Whig interpretation' which Namier rejected, were mistaken in thinking that the political and constitutional norms of their day had been an unchanging feature of political development since 1688. Indeed it can be argued that a 'pure' two party system has never existed for any significant period. It is far more plausible to perceive third or even fourth party groupings, themselves transitory but separate entities into the two main groupings. Furthermore, the alternation of the two major parties which was so much a feature of Macaulay's age after 1832 finds few parallels in the eighteenth century except possibly from between 1689 and 1714. For after 1714 the Whigs dominated power until 1762, with their liberal wing (the Rockinghams' and Foxites') denied positions of power apart from four extremely short spells between 1762 and 1830. Thus it is extremely misleading to think of a modern system of the alternation of party political power.

However, with regard to historical development, Namier went too far in totally denying the existence 'in the modern sense'¹ of political party principles and ideological bindings before 1832. It is on this point that much of the criticism of Namier's thesis has focused. The bulk of this historiography has been produced in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and a grasp of its complexity is vital in order to explain and describe the importance of the emergence of the political party in the 1830's, especially, in relation to the features and functions which they rapidly acquired, and which most historians have, thus far, not adequately considered. In subsequent chapters we shall argue that, when these developmental

changes in the features and functions of political parties are analysed in detail, one discovers that they were not generally apparent in political society before 1832, but that many of them become increasingly visible and important in political society after that date. This is especially the case when they are examined in relation to their operation as institutions and also in relation to their impact on the changing patterns of political behaviour and attitudes of wider society at the time. This method of examining the institution of the political party and the changing political culture using some of the techniques of political science will, we suggest, set the debate surrounding the emergence of the political party in the first half of the nineteenth century into crisper focus, and allow points of contention to be explained more adequately.

However, let us at this stage return to the debate itself. In one important sense we are, by utilizing the above methodology - of comparing institutions and behaviour before and after 1832 - reinforcing the central theme of the Namier thesis. In other words we are suggesting that the modern features of political parties began to take on more meaningful appearances after 1832. However, many modern critics do not agree and they point to inadequacies in Namier's methodology, many of the faults of which we would not deny.

II THE REVISIONIST VIEW

What seems to have occurred was that the reluctance displayed by Namierite historiography to admit the importance of the eighteenth century type of political parties came about as a reaction against earlier writers. In a sense overstatement produced overstatement, and the structure of post-1688 and Hanoverian politics went from being assumed to be the Victorian type of progressive constitutionalism to being a continuance of the seventeenth

century court/country type. What has come most fiercely under attack in recent decades is the assertion made by Namier that the elemental parts of the Whig and Tory parties fell away in the 1760's. Professor Cannon for example in his, The Fox/North Coalition² has contended that his study of years 1782-84 "could not have been written except in party terms."³ Recently there has been a tendency amongst some historians to return to a modified Whig interpretation in terms of historical explanation rather than a guiding methodology, especially in relation to the descriptive utility of the term 'political party' rather than 'political faction' or mere groups of opposing aristocratic political families, which has been accompanied by a gradual erosion of the credibility of Namier on points of scholarship and detail. Recent historians⁴ have pointed to Namier's lack of detail about the conduct of elections; his overly pessimistic view of human motivation; his excessive attention to political patronage as a political motivator rather than issues; Namier's failure to take into account foreign affairs and his lack of perspective.⁵ However, critics also point out that the most inherent weaknesses of Namier's position are to be found in admissions made within his own writings. For example, he conceded that the names and creeds of Whig and Tory: "which covered enduring types moulded by deeply ingrained differences in temperament and outlook,"⁶ did in fact exist. Also, and importantly, he admitted that "in a good many constituencies the names of Whig and Tory still corresponded to real divisions."⁷ This apparent contradiction; that party nomenclature could be apparent in Parliament and that real divisions continued to exist in certain constituencies, but despite these concessions party's in a modern sense did not exist in reality was never adequately explained by Namier. What later followers⁸ of the Namierite position have maintained was that the period from the 1740's to the 1770's was the high point of the era of 'personal parties' associated with differing cliques, who retained the names and even some of the principles of Toryism and Whiggery, but without any of the disciplines, functions and

features of the political party either between 1688 and 1714 or after 1832.

By far the most important recent critique of the Namierite position has come from Dr Frank O'Gorman, whose chief purpose is to stress the elements of continuity between the pre 1832 political world and that which followed the Reform Act. In The Emergence of the British Two Party System,⁹ the book that addresses the subject most directly he writes that "The interpretation offered in this book conflicts with the accepted or orthodox view that a two party system was created by the 1832 Reform Act."¹⁰ What in fact O'Gorman is saying is that the lineage of the two party system - the modern system of party with tight discipline, wide organization, ideological distinctiveness and multivariant social and political functions - was one that can be traced back some fifty years before the Reform Act, and he places the crucial turning point in this gradual process in the years between 1806 and 1830. He is particularly strong on the development of the Whigs, and sees this grouping as being a permanent, albeit fluctuating, feature of the political structure of Britain from the 1760's. O'Gorman suggests that the Whig party was in reality two parties - those in office and receiving royal favour and those in opposition and waiting to receive royal favour. The Tories were those independent members of the 'country party' who attacked the ministerialists for nepotism, dishonesty of purpose, sinecures and from a general disapproval of Whig principles. Thus this group attempted to distance themselves from both wings of the Whig party, whilst still retaining a zealous advocacy of the Anglican church and the traditional or prescriptive writs of the Monarch. During the 1760's no group had a clear set of ideological principles, and parties insofar as they existed at all were confined to the constituencies, 'where they lingered to give a cloak of respectability to tradition family conflicts and to provide an appeal to the electorate'.¹¹

According to O'Gorman the two-party system evolved as a result of realignments during periods of profound instability, citing the following examples. The early 1760's and the active political involvement of the monarch; between 1779 and 1784 and the crises surrounding the American colonies, parliamentary sovereignty and electoral reform. Again between 1792 and 1794 and the effect the French Revolution had on reviving on the one hand popular radicalism and on the other popular patriotism and traditionalism. Between 1806 and 1812 over once again the political role of the monarch, religious toleration and war policy, and finally between 1827 and 1832 where the issues of the religious and constitutional reforms served once again to divide groupings and forge realignment.

At the beginning of the 1760's. according to O'Gorman the three groupings of Ministerial Whigs, opposition Whigs and independents existed fairly harmoniously together, without, as we noted above, the trappings of party or political ideologies. At the time of the Reform crisis of 1832 the "two party system had become securely established."¹² It was established firstly in the manner of conducting government business and in providing an opposition to the Ministry; secondly, by establishing areas of organization both at the centre and on the peripheries; thirdly, by mobilizing channels of communications via the medium of the written word, and fourthly, by the development of distinctive and discernable sets of political ideologies. O'Gorman contends that as each successive crisis unfolded between 1760 and 1832 it became increasingly possible to talk meaningfully of 'parties'. By 1812 and the start of Lord Liverpool's administration, the Whig politicians in office, backed by a 'covert administration group' and by the independents, had begun to utilize the philosophy of Edmund Burke, especially his 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs',¹³ and had effectively fused to form a 'Tory Party'. They were opposed by the Foxite Whigs (led by Lord Grey and George Tierney) and by a loosely organized set of Radicals. The 'Tory'

grouping, according to O'Gorman, became identified with loyalty to the Anglican church and the crown, the preservation of the rights of property - especially political rights, the security of the country and the maintenance of law and order. It was this identification with basic principles which formed the basis of the rapid development of parties up to the last period of crisis between 1827-32. Thus, states O'Gorman, "The events of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic years had infused them (the principles noted above) with a new relevance, and any government dedicated to these objectives, especially one which was continuously faced with an opposition which boasted of its pure Whiggism, was likely to find itself tarred with the brush of Toryism".¹⁴ However, O'Gorman is careful not to identify the administration of Lord Liverpool too closely with a hard or inflexibly doctrinaire political ideology. He says:-

The ethics of executive Toryism, the defence of the country, the landed interest, property, the established Church, and resistance to radicalism may have been so generalized that they scarcely amounted to a specific party programme. Indeed, the Whigs agreed with much of it. It would be unhistorical to depict the ministries of Pitt and his successors as reactionary governments confronted by a liberal and progressive Whig opposition. Opinions on Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation and the Slave Trade sometimes cut across political loyalties. At the same time, the government's frequently negative approach to such questions before the mid-1820's, its identification with political reaction and its self-proclaimed purpose of maintaining the countries institutions amounted to an identifiable Tory mentality.¹⁵

Thus, for O'Gorman, the nomenclature of political parties was effectively in place well before the Reform struggle. So too was a crude and embryonic form of party organization, both at the centre of political affairs - the legislative and executive - and in the localities. Although conceding that Pitt the younger was an avowed opponent of party political organization,¹⁶ as indeed was George III, O'Gorman invokes Professor John Cannon's argument

that in opposing party organizations the supporters of Pitt and the King became an organized party: "in pursuing his anti-party crusade, his (George III's) supporters had been forced to adopt the techniques of party itself - letters of attendance, pairing arrangements, co-ordinated tactics, organized propaganda and electoral planning.¹⁷

If this situation was true of the emerging Tory party, O'Gorman suggests it was an even more identifiable trait of the Foxite Whigs. He tells us that this grouping had the rudiments of party organization dating back as far as 1782 in the form of the relationship between Charles James Fox and his electoral organizer William Adam. With the assistance of Adam, the Foxite Whigs built up a powerful organization by 1790, this in terms of a network of provincial supporters and organizers, a subscription fund for electoral purposes, the control of an influential section of the London press and a tightening in the control and discipline of Fox's supporters in Parliament, with Adam functioning as Chief Whip in the Commons. Although not stated explicitly, O'Gorman implies that various eighteenth century political groupings also attempted to attract wider popular support from the non-electing social classes: for example the Foxite Whigs with their flirtations with popular radicalism, and the conservative Whigs through Loyal Associations and Reeves Societies,¹⁸ producing a "popular brand of Anglican-Toryism to which many people readily subscribed."¹⁹

It would seem that much depends on the interpretation of the term 'party' and what connotations the historian places upon it. As we have seen for Cannon and O'Gorman, political groups before 1832 were gradually assuming the roles and functions of political parties both at the centre and in the localities. However Namier (and, as we shall see those who defend his position in the 1980's) was fairly precise as to what was occurring in British politics up to 1832. What the Whigs and, to a certain extent the revisionist,

were calling parties were mere factions, located primarily at the national centres of political power - the court, the executive and Parliament. Namier wrote that:-

Parliamentary struggles for office necessarily produce a dichotomy of 'ins' and 'outs'; and two party names were current since the last quarter of the seventeenth century: hence in retrospect the appearances of a two party system. In reality three broad divisions, based on type and not on party, can be distinguished in the eighteenth century House of Commons; on the one side were the followers of the Court and Administration, the 'placemen', par excellence, a group of permanent 'ins'; on the opposite side, the independent country gentlemen, of their own choice, permanent 'outs', and in between occupying as it were the centre of the arena, and focusing upon themselves the attention of the public and of history, stood the political factions contending for power, the forerunners of parliamentary government based on a party-system.²⁰

The important notion which marks Namier off from historians such as O'Gorman and John Cannon is that parties were but 'appearances' and that political divisions were based on where the politician was placed in relation to the broad divisions, which again were not parties but differential 'types'. It would seem at first sight that Namier's three broad divisions, especially those who were the Ministerialists and Court Administrators, broadly correspond to O'Gorman's Tory party-in-the-making throughout the 1790's and the first decade of the nineteenth century. Indeed in a sense they do; the difference is one of emphasis. For Cannon and O'Gorman these groupings were to a greater or lesser extent parties developing historically more and more the characteristics of recognizable political parties from the 1760's to the 1830's. For Namier they were merely appearances of parties and actual parties until the changes wrought by the reform crises and the Act itself made them so.

However, to further complicate the debate, there are recent historians who not only defend the Namierite position regarding the slow emergence of the political party in the modern sense, but

arguably go further than the great man. One such historian, Professor Ian Christie wrote in a review of O'Gorman's book that "The term 'Whig', on O'Gorman's showing, does not provide a good distinctive party definition of the early nineteenth century. 'Tory' is a misnomer for any politician of that period. The term 'Liberal Tory' is a monstrosity, and the sooner it can be buried the better."²¹ An even more forthright position has been adopted by J C D Clark, "The history of the tory party in parliament between the early 1760's and the late 1820's may be simply written: it did not exist."²²

III THE NEW DEFENDERS OF ORTHODOXY

J C D Clark is the latest and most determined pro-Namierite historian of party development. Following in the wake of Ian Christie and Derek Beales, he vociferously disputes the notion that the political party of the mid-to-late-nineteenth century had a lineage which can be traced back to the mid-eighteenth century. Hence, he is opposed - on serious historical and academic grounds - to the position adopted by the anti-Namierites. He fully endorses the position of his mentor, Ian Christie who said it was the 1830's which was the crucial decade in the development of political parties. For it was in this decade that parties "completed their conquest of the House of Commons, and became accepted as the organizations whose relative strength should determine the complexion of the government."²³

According to Clark the political factions of both government and opposition were coalitions for most of the eighteenth century and certainly after 1760. He argues that the ministries from 1714 to 1760 gained power because their leaders had battled their way to the top of the Whig party. The ministries who enjoyed long periods of office between 1760 and 1827 did so only because they had initially been chosen by, and enjoyed the continued support

of, the King. Support in the House of Commons came as a result of this royal favour, not necessarily because there existed a large 'King's party' but because of the ministries ability to claim the support of the independent members and to poach support from the opposition, thus widening their base by offering places, and by other dubious devices of venal influence. This position is a justification of Namier's 'ins' and 'outs' scenario of political change and continuity. Clark explains his case thus:-

(At first sight the latter part of the (eighteenth) century displays a bewildering list of ministries. In fact successful governments had a common basis. In the years 1757-1827, power was held for over 74 per cent of the time by only four: the Newcastle-Pitt coalition; North's; the younger Pitt's and Liverpool's. They conformed to a common type. They were non-party coalitions, coalitions in the sense that the party identity of the participating groups had been submerged on a basis of loyal support of the King's government, and non-party in the late seventeenth century sense of party, since they were all whig in the old sense, vis-a-vis the question of the succession.²⁴

Also Clark suggests that formal party organization both inside, and especially outside Parliament, was also lacking. It was through the Treasury²⁵ not party organization that government support inside Parliament was rallied, and outside through the use of secret service money at elections. He says nothing of O'Gorman's point regarding William Adam the Foxite organizer-in-chief, but the implication is that Adam operated on behalf of Fox as a means of countering the effects of the Treasury on account of Fox being one of the 'outs'. But Fox's supporters were not a separate party, for on most questions and certainly in principle Fox was a Whig as was the government. "Pitt had no doubt of his Whig identity in the traditional sense", writes Clark, "he was even, at times, willing to play the Rockinghams at their own game, emphasizing his own Whig purity."²⁶

For Clark political coherence came as a result of an administrative ethic rather than one of party. This in turn was

the result of an apprenticeship with individuals working their way up the governing coalition where administrative skills fused with political arts. This situation reached its height under the premiership of the younger Pitt with the support of the King who deliberately ran ministries devoid of party ties. But it was continued under Lord Liverpool from 1812 to 1827. Even the Prince Regent who had close ties with the Foxite Whigs was drawn in to the acceptance of non-party ministries. It was commented on at the time that the Ministry of Lord Liverpool's was a loose amalgam of diverse groups.²⁷ Clark tells us of the government of Lord Liverpool that it was: "The long continuance of that administration (which) gave it, eventually, the appearance of being opposite to the Whig party (Clark's emphasis) opposition; of being the other element in the ancient antithesis. It was an appearance only. Liverpool's cabinet was conducted on assumptions different from those incorporated in the party systems of 1832-46, 1846-68 or 1868-86. In the 1820's the issues of parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, in particular, cut across party lines; when they ceased to do so, in 1827-32, the parties were torn apart."²⁸ This 'appearance' of party is what has confused many of the historians who maintain that the modern features of party can be traced back to the mid-eighteenth century. Part of this confusion, argues Clark is that modern historians have taken the language terms of the time too literally. As he says, "Too frequently the language is accepted as authentic, and inferences drawn from it to what the party structure must have been - in order (Clark's emphasis) for that language to have been accurate. But an argument in the contrary direction is necessary to show the senses in which, by contrast to reality, the language was used for political advantage."²⁹ Again the implied point here is that party terminologies merely corresponded to 'ins', 'outs' and 'independents' as convenient tags but not linked directly to parliamentary groups, nor 'to identities derived from the parliamentary stances of such groups.'³⁰ Thus the position of those historians who advocate the long antecedents of party

development prior to 1832 is refuted and the Namierite stance preserved.

Clark also examines the work of those historians writing in the 1930's and 40's³¹ who contended that from 1807 to 1827, (the Duke of Portland, 1807-9; Spencer Perceval, 1809-12; Lord Liverpool, 1812-27) with the exception of 'Talents' ministry (from 1805-7) the government of Britain was conducted by the tories. According to Clark, "Finding the word 'tory' in the contemporary political language, historians assumed that because there was an organized whig party, a tory party existed also",³² Clark suggests it did not and that the political composition of the ministry of Lord Liverpool's 'conformed to the pattern of North's and the younger Pitt's.'³³ He tells us also that important issues of the day such as parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation cut across the lines of the political parties, and adds 'when they ceased to do so, in 1827-32, the parties were torn apart.' This last point is, like most of Clark's style of writing, rather confusing, and indeed is a point of confusion surrounding any explanation of the emergence of political parties in the first half of the nineteenth century. For if, as Clarke argues, parties did not exist prior to the mid-1830's how could they be 'torn apart' by the political crises of 1827-32. The answer is probably that he refers to the old coalition parties of royal influence, and when these were subsequently torn apart the field was left open for political parties to align themselves around firmly held principles, which eventually began to correspond to policy positions, both of government and opposition, with the influence of the monarch thrown into sharp relief.

Another problem facing the Clark thesis, when it is placed alongside that of the anti-Namierites, is the latter's assertion that party alignments came about as a result of deep rooted and far-reaching political crises. With regard to the Tory party the crisis most often cited as the one which galvanized Tory

principles and the re-emergence of the Tory party was the position adopted by the Rockingham Whigs, especially Fox, regarding the revolution in France after 1789. As Frank O'Gorman tells us:-

There can be no serious doubt...that the French Revolution provoked a vigorous debate in Britain between those already suspicious of reform and those captivated by the libertarian principles of the French Revolution. The writings of Burke together with the dislike felt by the middling and landed orders for the anti-religious drift of the Revolution after the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in July 1790 turned British opinion against reform...this phenomenon is depicted - as an upsurge of patriotism, as a religious (evangelical) revival, as a crusade in defence of church and King - the historian is tempted to speak the language of party. A government pursuing 'Tory' policies over law and order, enthusiastically sustained by a 'Tory' public opinion may be seen to possess a Burkean set of 'Conservative' values.³⁴

According to O'Gorman the only obstacle standing in the way of a formally organized Tory party was the younger Pitt, who as a Whig of the old school disliked and distrusted all organized parties. When Pitt died in January 1806 his followers such as George Canning and R B Jenkinson were free to organize as a party. By the General Election of 1807, O'Gorman tells us, the party names of 'Whig' and Tory were back in use describing on the one hand those who railed against the King's actions in removing the 'Talants' ministry of the Foxite Whigs, and those Tories - 'Mr Pitt's friends' - who supported it under the leadership of the Duke of Portland.³⁵

This is a powerful argument, and one which the pro-Namierites do not address directly. Clark maintains that it was on the one hand the adaptability of the leadership of Portland, Perceval and Liverpool which allowed them to lead coalition ministries, and on the other the rivalries of the Foxite/Grevillite opposition coupled with weak inflexible leadership which prevented their becoming a serious political force until the reform crisis. Again the stress is on non-party coalition; its successful

implementation by the political forces of the ruling executive and its lack of success on the part of the opponents for the ministry. Ian Christie sums up the position of the pro-Namierites thus: "The correct label for those sceptical of change is 'Conservative'. Conservatism was evolving within the Whig tradition as part of the Whig tradition. (Christie's emphasis) from the 1790's onwards and thus a gradual bifurcation of Whiggism helped to give birth to both the mid-nineteenth century political parties. In the 1830's Peel's choice of party name was a formal recognition of this fact."³⁶

IV THE POST-1867 ARGUMENT

The picture then regarding the emergence of the modern type of political party in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is confused and the scene of intense academic debate with advocates on both sides of the Namier line of argument. However, there are some historians who go even further arguing that it is spurious to designate the 1790's or the early 1830's as watershed period at all. They suggest that the true date at which one can safely discuss the emergence of the modern political party was after the Second Reform Act of 1867 and the Ballot Act of 1872, with the advent of household suffrage and the secret ballot. The combined implications of these factors, it is argued, meant that political parties had to become truly organized and develop the features and functions of modernity, especially with regard to competitively managing, for the first time in British politics, a truly mass electorate. However, even the post-1867 historians of party cannot agree precisely when it is proper to speak of the emergence of the modern political party. Nevertheless, Norman Gash, John Vincent, H J Hanham, J B Conacher, Maurice Cowling and Robert Blake³⁷ all, to a greater or lesser extent contend that the modern party system was a product slow in development.

H J Hanham for example has said, "...the break in English political life...came not in 1867 but in the years between 1880 and 1886."³⁸ He goes on to stress the changes in the machinery of politics which accompanied the changes in the nature of the political parties. "The Corrupt Practices Act of 1883 which linked election expenditure and made it easier and cheaper to get into parliament and gave a new importance to party organization."³⁹ He concludes that the old system of parties and politics ended in the mid 1880's and that: "The chapter of political history that opened with the general election of 1885 was, in short, a completely new one. Leaders, parties, constituencies, were all different from those of 1867..."⁴⁰

Norman Gash, in a slightly different vein, stresses the continuity of political change from the pre-Reform era to that of after 1832. He says: "The first Reform Act was both a landmark and a turning point, but it would be wrong to assume that the political scene in the succeeding generation differed essentially from that of the preceding one."⁴¹ This is a theme which Gash elaborated on, "In fact the pre-1832 period contained many new features which it transmitted to the future; and the post-1832 period contained many old features which it inherited from the past. Between the two there is indeed a strong organic resemblance...the continuity of political fibre was tough enough to withstand the not very murderous instrument of 2 Wm.IV., C.45...there was scarcely a feature of the old unreformed system that could not be found still in existence after 1832."⁴² Gash points to the maintenance of the system after 1832 of the nomination of members of Parliament by the aristocratic influence of the local landowner; widespread corruption, and the continued domination in national politics by the greater and lesser aristocracy, especially in the social make-up of the legislature.⁴³

J B Conacher appears more cautious. "It is difficult to say when political parties in the modern sense first emerged."⁴⁴ But he

appears to be sustaining the argument of the anti-Namierites when he says that the various parties which existed in the 1830's and 40's were 'a coalition of sub-groups and subject to various tensions'.⁴⁵ This was a situation which existed, suggests Conacher, until the two great political parties re-aligned after the fluidity of party affiliation in the years following the Conservative split of 1846. With regard to the specifics, Robert Blake maintains that the Conservative party was a product of the confusion of 1846 and less the product of Peel and advisers in the 1830's.⁴⁶ For the Liberals, John Vincent is inclined to a later date:

The creation of a (predominantly Liberal) cheap daily press outside London, the action of organized labour and militant non-conformity, the Reform agitation of the 1860's and the chief representative significance of Gladstone, were the chief influences in the changing context of the Liberal Party. Up to 1865, that party had been the expression of personal rivalries and political differences within the aristocracy, broadly defined. After 1865 the Liberals, without important changes in their Parliamentary personnel, came to represent great and dynamic social forces in the country, by reason of their vitalizing connection with their rank and file.⁴⁷

This then is the rather confusing and in some ways contradictory picture regarding the emergence of the political party in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part of the problem is that the various positions adopted by historians have been arrived at because the various historians have simply been looking at political change in a very narrow context (the political party) or a specific event (the Reform Act of 1832 or 1867) or a specific event at a specific period, (the Reform Crises of 1830-32 or 1866-7). Also these historians have been products of the prevailing historical methodological orthodoxies as they have developed since the end of the nineteenth century. Modern historians, or rather modern historical methodology and techniques of analysis and description, have, however, undergone subtle changes in recent years. More and more historians are now turning to other

disciplines within the social sciences to explain problems historically.

V A NEW APPROACH

With regard to the problem of the emergence of the modern political party, it appears logical to utilize some of the approaches used by political scientists and political sociologists. The former are usually concerned with the detailed examination of the functions and features of political institutions and the latter with the effects the various institutions - such as the legislature or the executive or the political party - have on political behaviour. We intend throughout this thesis to examine and explain historical change by utilizing some of the concepts and techniques developed in these related disciplines. An example of how useful an exercise this can be is to attempt to offer a definition of the functions of the nineteenth century political party as detailed by historians⁴⁸ building on the work of political scientists.⁴⁹ We suggest that most historians and political scientists would agree that by 1914 that the numerous features and functions of the modern British political parties can be said to be in position. Thus, by attempting to examine the historical transition of the political party from the late eighteenth century (or in our specific case from the 1830's even if only in a heuristic context), a pattern of development will emerge. For if we can point out what party features are on display and what functions are being performed, and importantly what attitudes and patterns of behaviour are apparent, then an advance may have been achieved.

By utilizing the term 'functions' of political parties we are not subscribing to the methodology of structural functionalism in an absolute sense. We use the term to describe the various effects

the changes in the post-1832 political parties had both on the parties themselves and on the local political society. Some of these changes may have been necessary for the political system as a whole to function - which is indeed similar to structural functionalism - but others may have been beneficial only to specific groups, for example the partys' supporters or its governing elites - which is not structural functionalism. Thus we are suggesting that the term function in broad terms be viewed as the possible changes in party structure and their effects on wider political culture.

Let us at this stage, briefly outline what these main features and functions are and return, in our final concluding analysis, to discussing whether the empirical evidence of the central thesis has revealed their existence. Parties are firstly agencies of selection and recruitment by which the local and national elites are built up and maintained. In the contemporary world of the late twentieth century there are other methods and agencies of political recruitment such as trade unions, but the political party is by far the most effective agency. Secondly, political parties play a vital part in coordinating the organizing of electoral activity. Thirdly, parties perform the function of disseminating and, indeed generating both governmental and opposition programmes and policies. There is a problem as to precisely how much the rank and file determine actual policies, which are usually selected and initiated by the political elites. However, there is a process of consultation and consideration with various interested groupings, and one of those groups integral to the consultative process are the party's members and supporters even if only as a sounding board and vehicle of political feedback. This third function is linked to our fourth: political parties have an important role in politically co-ordinating governmental actions and indeed the actions of the opposition. Fifthly, parties act as agencies of political integration of diverse sectional interests by acting as vehicles for the

articulation and possibly satisfaction of political demands. This point regarding political integration provides parties with a sixth function in that they are agencies which allow individuals a platform for political activity and also are a useful device in political education, socialization and proselytization. A seventh feature is that they articulate ideas and organizations alternative to governments.⁵⁰ The eighth feature of political parties is that they act as disseminators of basic political principles - of Conservatism or social democracy or Liberalism - and in their most extreme form can act as vehicles for the transmitting of ideological doctrines. This is closely linked to the ninth, and very basic, function in that political parties are instruments of marshalling and disciplining their political supporters. A tenth function of political parties in the modern world is that they tend to give legitimacy to political activities so long as the members and supporters abide by the principles and structure of the particular party. The eleventh and final feature and function of modern political parties is that to a significant degree they determine the limits of not only the political agenda through policy initiatives, but also set the limits of political action - of what is allowable and what is not, especially with regard to its own supporters, but also on occasions other party's officials in both the local and national arenas.

These features and functions must be set in context in terms of the levels or areas of activity. In broad terms it would seem that our first seven functions are system supporting activities - functions which some agency, not necessarily parties would have to perform if the system as a whole was to function successfully. The last four functions however, serve to benefit just the parties or the groups themselves and, by and large do not act as system supporting functions in the manner of the first seven.

Most of the features and functions outlined above can be said to be in place by the outbreak of the First World War. Their

development had been slow. However, their origins can be traced back we would argue, as far back as the first decades after 1832. This guide we have set up may assist us in clearing a way through the somewhat confused and at times contradictory historiographical path we have outlined above. With regard to a verdict, it would seem that Messrs Clark, Beales and Christie are on strong ground. For we shall endeavour to show subsequently that there were qualitative changes in the functions of political parties after 1832 which were a direct result of the Reform Bill. There is little evidence that political parties acted as agencies for any of the aforementioned functions prior to 1832. Although lines of party demarcation regarding fixed principles can be begun to be detected from the 1790's, it was only in the later 1820's that the notion of broad cross-party coalitions with their inclusive assumption, both at the centre of political activity and on the peripheries, that one party constituted the ministry and the other the opposition. This does not mean that the anti-Namierites are totally wrong. O'Gorman and others are right to point out the growing tendencies towards organized political activities from the 1790's. Precedents were set most notably the work of organizing opposition to the Jacobins and Whig radicals, and, in the work of electoral organization, by William Adam for the Foxite Whigs.

Nor are those historians completely wrong who argue that it is only meaningful to speak of the modern political party after 1867 and the advent of a mass electorate. This is a very important point and one we shall bear in mind throughout this theses, but the changes wrought by the first Reform Act were so markedly different from what was the norm previously. We intend to show in the chapters which follow that not all of the functions outlined were set into place in the years immediately following 1832, nor indeed by 1867, but that sufficient evidence exists to suggest that, with regard to the operating of parties and party politics, the Reform Bill was an important watershed, not only at the centre

of political activity but also in the localities.

We suggest that for many of the areas of functional activity of political parties, the 1830's was the crucial decade. It was here, as Derek Beales has rightly pointed out, parties, "completed their conquest of the House of Commons, and became accepted as the organizations whose relative strength should determine the complexion of government."⁵¹ We must be cautious not to read back our understanding of the parties of today to that period when the parties were merely developing the initial signs of modernity. Our task is to point out when the traits of the changing nature of parties first became apparent and meaningful. Hopefully the method we have adopted will offset the lack of definition which has done so much to fuel the debate regarding the emergence of party. But we have to be aware of historical anachronism. We must consider political and social change in the context of the past and not the ideas of the present. It must be stressed political modernity did not dawn the morning after the passing of the Reform Bill. But on the other hand, the pace of political change did quicken appreciably in the 1830's and 40's in many areas of the political culture of Britain.

One of the crucial changes was that the political party ceased to be confined to the centre of political activity - in Parliament or at Court. Increasingly after 1832 political activity was to be found in the localities. It was in the localities that the struggles for the Reform Act was begun, in places such as Bristol, Nottingham, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester. This raising of the political consciousness of different social groups did not disappear with the Bills enactment, it was maintained and part of the reason for its maintenance was that political parties - Conservatives, Whig-Liberals, Radicals and Chartists - operated effectively in these localities and part of the reason why they did so was due to the terms of the Reform Act and subsequently the 1835 Municipal Reform Act.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have attempted to provide a historiographic outline of the debate surrounding the emergence of political parties in the early nineteenth century, whilst also considering the possibility of utilizing some of the tools of political science. Let us now turn to the examination of the changes which occurred to a specific party in this period, namely, the transformation of Toryism into Conservatism.

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2. Cannon, J The Fox/North Coalition, Crisis of the Constitution 1782-4, Cambridge 1969.
3. Ibid, P.240,
4. The modern Anti-Namierites would include as well as Professor Cannon, Frank O'Gorman in The Rise of Party in England, The Rockingham Whigs, 1760-82, London, 1975 or his The Emergence of the British Two Party System, London, 1982, or L G Mitchell, Holland House, London, 1980. The more traditional anti-Namierites would be K G Feiling, The Second Tory Party, Oxford, 1938 or G M Trevelyan, Lord Grey of the Reform Bill, London, 1952 ed.
5. See for example T W Perry, Public Opinion, Propaganda and Politics, Cambridge, Mass, 1962, pp.191-2.
6. Namier, L Crossroads of Power, Essays in Eighteenth Century England, London 1962, pp.229-30.

7. The latest examples being J Brooke ed. (with Sir Lewis Namier) Ibid.

8. The latest examples being J Brooke ed (with Sir Lewis Namier), The History of Parliament 3 vols, London 1964. Or I R Christie, Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth Century British Politics, London 1970 and J C D Clark, A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688-1832 Historical Journal vol. 23 No.2 1980.

9. Especially in The Emergence of the British Two Party System and, The Rise of Party in England, The Rockingham Whigs 1760-1832, London 1975 and, "Party Politics in the Early Nineteenth Century", in English Historical Review January 1987. Also his most recent work, Voters, Patrons and Parties, Oxford, 1990.

10. Emergence op cit p.176.

11. Ibid p.ix.

12. Ibid. p.12, also 'Party Politics in the early nineteenth century' p.84.

13. Burke, E Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, London 1791.

14. O'Gorman, Emergence, op.cit. p.59.

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17. J Cannon, The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-84, Cambridge 1969, pp.235-6.

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19. Ibid.

20. L B Namier, Monarchy and the Party System, in Crossroads of Power: Essays in Eighteenth Century England, London 1962, p.220.
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22. J C D Clark, 'A General Theory of Party Opposition and Government: 1688-1832', Historical Journal 23,2,1980, p.305.
23. D E D Beales, The Political Parties of Nineteenth Century Britain, London 1971, p.11.
24. Clark, A General Theory of Party etc op.cit. p.307.
25. Ibid, p.308.
26. Ibid, p.309.
27. F Bamford and The Duke of Wellington, The Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot 1820-1832, London 1950 vol.II 19/2/1830, p.337.
28. Clark, A General Theory of Party op.cit. p.310
29. Clark op.cit. p.312.
30. Ibid
31. By such historians as Arthur Aspinall, Brougham and the Whig Party, London 1927. M Roberts, The Whig Party 1807-1812, London 1939, A Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830, Oxford 1967.
32. Clark op.cit. p.314.
33. Ibid.

34. O'Gorman, 'Emergence' op.cit. pp.45-51.
35. Ibid. p.56
36. Christie, op.cit. p.341.
37. N Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, London 1953, and Aristocracy and People, London 1979. H J Hanham, Elections and Party Management, London 1959. J B Conacher, The Peelites and the Party System, Newton Abbot, 1972. John Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party, London 1966. Maurice Cowling, Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution, Cambridge 1967. Robert Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher, London 1983.
38. Hanham op.cit. p.xxx
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40. Ibid.
41. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, op.cit. px.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid and Aristocracy and People, op.cit.
44. Conacher, Peel and the Peelites op.cit. p.10.
45. Ibid. p.11.
46. Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher, op.cit.
47. Vincent, The Formation of the Liberal Party, op.cit. p.xlvii.

48. For example see J Garrard, The Functions of Nineteenth Century Political Parties, Occasional Papers in Politics and Contemporary History, Salford 1986.

49. See Neumann, Modern Political Parties, Chicago 1967.

50. These first seven functions are based largely on the work of John Garrard, op.cit.

51. D E D Beales, The Political Parties of Nineteenth Century Britain, London 1971, p.11.

CHAPTER TWO THE TRANSFORMATION OF TORYISM

In the previous chapter we outlined the state of the debate surrounding the emergence of the recognizably modern political party. We suggested that all those contributing to the debate have sound points to make but that, in the main, a good case can be made out for those who view the Reform Act and its ramifications as a watershed in the emergence of the political party as we understand it in the modern sense. In order to make our case we attempted to define the political party with regard to the functions it performs and to use this model as a guide to understanding its historical development. In this chapter we intend to enlarge on this discussion of the development of the political party by focusing on the Tory and Conservative party of the 1820's and 1830's. This will enable us to plot the changes taking place historically especially with regard to assessing precisely what Conservatism was in the 1830's. We intend to examine the traits of similarity and of difference between the old Toryism and the later eighteenth century and of the Conservatism of Peel and his followers in the 1830's. We shall also look at the importance of the guiding principles of Conservatives especially that of religion, and finally we briefly compare the Conservatism of Peel with that which developed after his retirement in 1846 and death in 1850. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to set a recognizable definition of what was meant by Toryism and Conservatism in the 1820's, 30's, 40's and 50's.

I OLD TORYISM

Originally the Tories were that group who defended the absolute rights of the later Stuart monarchs, Charles II and James II in the 1670's and 1680's. When confronted however, by James's insistence on closer ties with Rome in 1687¹ - which effectively forced the Tories to chose between their King and their Church - they chose the Church. Although the invitation to William III, which signalled the so-called 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, is regarded as essentially a Whig triumph it is worth noting that it was signed by three Tories; Thomas Danby, Bishop Compton and Lord Lumley as well as four Whigs; Russell, Devonshire, Shrewsbury and Henry Sidney. The Tories joined with the Whigs in bringing about the Revolution Settlement on the basis of a compact between sovereign and people. Henceforth the Tory still believed in Church and King, but his loyalty was to the crown as an institution rather than to the king as a person. When Queen Ann failed to leave any direct heir, the conflict of loyalties between the King on the throne and the King over the water destroyed the Tory party in Parliament, but the great mass of the clergy and greater and lesser gentry preserved Tory feeling and principles as well as the Tory name in the countryside. This is an important point. Even though for much of the eighteenth century the Tory party - as far as it existed - was denied office and power, Tory principles and Tory ideas regarding patriotism and traditional practices and customs were popular among a wide selection of social groupings, among tenant farmers, yeoman, and artisans of several kinds. Thus if one is seeking an historical lineage for popular Toryism, political traditionalism and the preservation of long-held customs, then the line goes back at least as far as the late seventeenth century. The apparent totality of the Whig triumph during the Hanoverian succession and their complete hold on political power at the centre - at least up to 1760 - should not confuse the fact that in the localities Toryism was preserved amongst the various Court Leets, Quarter Sessions, Vestries and

Magistrates benches, and, indeed amongst the 'independent' members who sat on the back benches of the House of Commons. Thus the long tenure of Sir Robert Walpole's term of office was not left completely unchallenged. Helped by the writings of Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, Henry St John (first Viscount Bolingbroke) made it his aim to unite the Tories, led in the House of Commons by Sir William Wyndham, with the dissident Whigs led by Sir William Pulteney (later Earl of Bath). He founded the Craftsman as a political magazine with a view to breaking the grip of the dominant Whig families with a call to governing the nation with talented men drawn from all factions and not exclusively by an oligarchy of the same political caste.

The advent of George III, glorying, unlike his grandfather and great grandfather, 'in the name of Britain', and educated in the principles of Bolingbroke, reconciled the Tories once more to the person as well as the title of the monarch, and once again Tories began to be seen as court. When the Whig's attempt at personal rule failed, Tories increasingly found their principles of monarchical and patriotic loyalty, law and order and so on, realized in the policies pursued during peace and war by the younger Pitt, and after his death the Conservative Whigs like Portland, Perceval and Liverpool.

In the long period through the eighteenth century, Tory policy evolved largely by adaptation to changing circumstances, but there remained certain guiding principles. First was the unbroken attachment to the Church of England. Part of the reason for this was political expediency and part was, as the Catholics and Nonconformists claimed, to maintain the privileges of the Established Church as laid down in the Revolution settlement of 1688. Indeed the politics/religious tendencies which were made dominant after 1688 were in fact in being before that date when James II was still on the throne. The Toleration Act was the first legal dispensation for Dissenters. It modestly provided an

exception to the existing penal laws requiring all persons to attend services of the Church of England, and to refrain from other forms of public worship. However, there was a Test clause written into the Act which required all those who swore their loyalty to the Monarch (such as Justices of the Peace, Members of Parliament, Ministers of State, Military and Naval officers), to swear oaths of allegiance and supremacy and to Protestantism by subscribing to the Declaration against Transubstantiation.

It was regarded as politically expedient to exclude from positions from which the security of the state could be compromised all those who would not adhere to the Test clause. No Catholic could ever subscribe to the Declaration against Transubstantiation, but many Nonconformist could and thus while not allowed the full privileges of the Anglicans they were allowed positions of power in local politics, and they were allowed to vote in elections. For the Tories the Test clause became one of the cornerstones of the proven loyalty to the constitution as laid down in the settlement of 1688. If the Whigs thought of themselves as defenders of religious toleration especially of Nonconformity, the Tories saw themselves increasingly after the destruction of Stuart claims to the throne in 1745, and more so after the overtures made to them by George III, as the defenders of the Established Church. Because defence of the Established Church of England equated with loyalty to the King and the Constitution, the Tories defended the abuses of patronage and privileges enjoyed by the Anglican Church, which lost them friends amongst sections of the local Non-Anglican clergy and local squirearchy.

Secondly, the Tories became associated throughout the eighteenth century as closely attached to the landed interest, in opposition to many Whigs who favoured the rights of trade and commerce. This is not to say that the Whigs looked upon the land with disfavour. The voting Whig oligarchy were amongst the greatest landowners in Britain but the question was one of giving priority to that

interest which the two groups believed would best serve the national interest. In the case of the Tories this emphasis was on the capacity of the nation to be self-sufficient in as many areas of economic life as possible, but especially in agriculture; in the case of Whigs it was an emphasis on trade and commerce. For much of the eighteenth century the Whig view prevailed, but again a sizeable amount of popular public opinion was in sympathy with the Tory view.² Nor were the Tories wholly unsuccessful in their policy of protecting land and property. The property qualification for political representation as well as for those wishing to be political representatives was pursued successfully by the Tories, as were the Corn Laws of 1815 which protected home grown wheat against foreign competition.

Thirdly, and finally, throughout the eighteenth century the basic political psychology of the Tory was of an individual who was adverse to change unless the need for it was proved completely. This habit of mind made many Tories feel ill at ease with the settlement of 1688, though their leaders had helped bring it about; but as the years passed and the Revolution settlement became the established order of things, the Tories came to regard themselves as its special guardians. This dedication to the established order, accentuated by war abroad and unrest at home, created an image of the Tory party - especially in the years immediately following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 - as hostile to the labouring masses and a brake on economic and political progress as perceived by those of a radical bent. But as we have stated above many sections of eighteenth century society could relate more to the homilies of Toryism than to aristocratic Whiggery,³ and this is largely why - with little or no organization inside Parliament and none whatsoever outside-Toryism as a loose set of political principles and policies managed to survive the eighteenth century. It may well be that the call of Bolingbroke and George III for non-party government was successful at the centre of power, especially in the

administrations of the younger Pitt, but in the country at large Toryism still represented a political creed, even if, over the course of the eighteenth century this creed had become somewhat confused.

II THE INFLUENCE OF BURKE.

The man regarded as being chiefly responsible for the intellectual rehabilitation of Toryism, Edmund Burke,⁴ was in fact a Whig, but increasing towards the end of his life a Conservative Whig or 'Old Whig' as opposed to the 'New' Whigs led by Charles James Fox. But Burke remained a Whig until his death always refuting the name of Tory and Professor Christie is probably closer to the truth when he suggests that what Burke was outlining in his Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs,⁵ and Reflections on the Revolution in France,⁶ was not Toryism at all as it was understood in the eighteenth century, but the intellectual precursor of nineteenth century Conservatism. Nonetheless, the Tories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries found in Burke a close and comfortable ally. Nor is Burke important solely for his contribution to Toryism/Conservatism, but also - and arguably more importantly - for his intellectual justification of the political party as a legitimate and valuable entity.

Burke's first defence of the notion of party came in 1770 with the publication of his Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.⁷ This was a spirited attack on what he regarded as the conspiratorial, but thus far successful, attempt by those politicians close to the King to reduce Parliament to impotence. The traditional and essential role of the House of Commons was to check to the power of the crown by having the facility to refuse funds. This Burke argued had been undermined by the take-over of the court cabal. This court clique had managed to persuade to

vote extraordinary additions to the Crown's revenues; additions which Burke and the Rockingham Whigs argued were not needed to uphold the dignity of the monarch, but were only needed and used to buy the support of the House of Commons for dubious court policies.

It was to stop this tendency that Burke initially pressed the idea of party. Only if every administration's tenure was made to depend on the support of a declared party could this venal undermining of the traditional function of Parliament be curtailed. What was required, Burke argued, were honest men, publicly committed to stand or fall together, who could not be picked off, one by one by offers of place or office. As he himself put it. "Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed."⁸

It may well be that Burke's stance can be seen as no more than a manifesto for the Rockingham Whigs - who in the 1770's were the only group who came close to his criterion of a party, in as much as their leaders were reluctant to take office except as a party. Alternatively, it can be viewed as a seminal work which set out the rationale of the nineteenth century party system and cabinet responsibility - the hallmarks of the British system of representative government. The probable answer is that Burke advocated his system of party only as a measure for the situation existing in the 1770's but that it was utilized - mainly in the 1830's - as a justification of the legitimacy of the party system by politicians of the nineteenth century. But this should not detract from Burke's contribution, for he was the first leading politician of the later eighteenth century to oppose the prevailing orthodoxy set down by Bolingbroke of non-partizan politics.

As we noted in Chapter one to call a group of men a 'party' in the

eighteenth century (and continuing into the nineteenth) was to suggest that there was something suspicious about them. Party was denounced in Lord Halifax's phrase as 'a conspiracy against the nation'. Kings and politicians affected to be above party; to be, above all, patriots and non-party men. The King's ministers could not rule without support in Parliament, which was then often divided into parts; but these parts, as Namier noted were not parties in the late seventeenth century or mid-nineteenth century of the terms usage. They were loose collections or groups of interests which could be influenced or swayed by place, privilege or money. There were opposers - the 'outs' - of the ministries, but this opposition was not organized. This situation was tolerated up until Burke's blast, primarily on the pragmatic basis that it worked.

After 1789, and the possibility that the French revolutionary experiment could spread across the Channel, Burke renewed his advocacy of the political party as a device necessary not only for responsible government but also as a defensive measure against organized Jacobinism. Burke was the first established political thinker and practising politician to advocate open and loyal opposition within Parliament, indeed suggesting that party government could be an instrument of freedom. He was the first thinker to explain that organizations created for the capture of political power are not necessarily obstacles to good and responsible government, but on the contrary are a means to it, provided they work in the open and respect whatever conventions those who seek to hold power are required to be adherent of.

But it must be stressed Burke was no democrat. He developed his theories of party and government precisely to offset the growing tendency of the early 1790's towards democracy amongst the great mass of the population away from the centre of political power. He strongly held to the Lockean notion that only those with property or a viable stake in the political fortunes of the nation

should be involved in the political contract. Furthermore, only those with the most to lose, the aristocracy, were the natural governors and administrators of local and national government. A government ought to be stable and strong while it enjoys the confidence of the politically mature classes; as soon as it loses that confidence, it should abandon power and give way to a successor. This was the Burke's idea which he thought could be best achieved by means of the political party. Thus Burke's notion of party, although innovative, can be viewed as a preservative compromise of the prescriptive or long-standing constitutional values of the settlement of 1688, against on the one hand the venal and over-bearing excesses of the King's cabal, and on the other the danger of democratic Jacobism.

Burke always, throughout his life, considered himself a Whig, he was never a Tory. But towards the end of his life, from 1790 he was a special type of Whig, what we have already noted above as a conservative Whig. His conservatism manifests itself in the defence of the aristocratic oligarchy and the preservation of the prescriptive rights of the House of Commons, House of Lords, the Established Anglican Church as well as those of the monarch, also rights of property, the defence law and order, and finally the vigorous defence of British honour abroad. Again it was the preservation of these prescriptive rights which distinguished the Burkean 'Old' or conservative Whigs, who eventually fused with the Tories in the first decade of the nineteenth century, from the 'New' Whigs whose Foxite progeny became eventually the Liberal party. For Burke, all revolutionaries and many radicals are blind, for they do not see the damage they cause or may cause before they act. They act regardless of the possible effects and ramifications, and this for Burke and for subsequent Conservatives is inherently irrational behaviour.

Burke attacked egalitarianism and the natural 'rights of man' on the pragmatic ground that those who advocated such ideas were

deceiving their followers because they never could achieve their aims and objectives. He argued, as many nineteenth century Conservatives did after him, that differing talents exist among people as do differing opportunities. It is this very difference which gives society its complex balance and structure. He was not opposed totally to social mobility for example, but merely maintained that it should be as difficult as possible in order to assure that only the very best succeed.

These kinds of values, along with the preservation of the prescriptive constitutional and political rights noted above, were fertile ground for the fusion of the old 'absolutist' Tories and the conservative Whigs, especially so after the resurgence of the popularity of the English Monarchy after the summer of 1792 when Louis XVI was executed. Loyal Associations and Reeves Societies sprung up nationwide (at one time in 1795 2000 of them) and these served to re-kindle a jingoistic popular brand of Anglican Toryism - as was the case one hundred years previously - to whom many thousands drawn from all grades of society readily subscribed. This swell of support can be viewed as a reaction; but it was not a blind reaction, (although at times during the Church and King riots it might have appeared so). It was articulate, and the chief presenter of this articulated form of resurgent Toryism was Edmund Burke.

Some commentators⁹ have attempted to portray the Toryism which developed in Britain after 1789 as a political creed opposed to all change, but this is not the case. For Burke and those Tories and Conservative Whigs who applied his views after the death in January 1806 of William Pitt (the man who, incidentally, was the chief barrier to Conservative Whig/Tory union because of his aversion to party) a specific and particular type of political doctrine was being formulated and it was one, as we shall discover shortly, which did not preclude the development of policies designed to reform proven abuses.

Before we compare the political principles of the administration of Lord Liverpool with the Conservatism of Sir Robert Peel, let us at this stage examine in some detail what Burke had to say because it did serve as the philosophical justification for the kind of Liberal Conservatism associated with Liverpool, Canning, Huskisson and Peel. As we stated above Burke's views regarding the post-Revolutionary political world are to be found in two books, firstly Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event, published in 1790 and secondly his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs published in 1791. In these two works he was not just opposing the French revolution and alerting his countrymen to the dangers which might result from that event, he was also protesting against a particular type of politics and political argument. The counter-revolutionary blast of Burke was inspired by a profound dislike and mistrust of the then fashionable rationalistic philosophy. The radical movements of the later eighteenth century had prompted conservative writers to defend the existing constitution, and this they did on mainly practical grounds such as the weakness or absence of public demand for a radical reform of the constitution or the impracticality of proposed reform measures. What Burke did was to elevate the debate to a higher, more philosophical ground. Reacting against many of the current modes of thought - the philosophic rationalism of the enlightenment, the romantic sentimentalism of Rousseau and others, and arguably also against the developing utilitarianism of Bentham - Burke sought compelling philosophical justification for the traditional ties of social order.

Repudiating Rousseau's and the English radicals assertion of a sublime state of nature, from which humanity peacefully derives its rights and freedoms, Burke argued, in a vein similar to Hobbes and Locke - that society was a thankful liberation from the anarchy of nature. Man's rights were derived not from any

mythical or metaphysical contract, but from the practical advantages of living peacefully in society. Political rights and obligations were not, therefore, matters of choice; they were determined by the nature of society and of man and also, importantly, by the religious and moral values of Christianity. Inevitably, therefore, any discussion of political rights involved the historical development of those rights and the activities of man in society.

As we noted above, Burke suggests that practices and institutions passed on from the settlement of 1688 had a prescriptive legitimacy. That is to say they were justified on the empirical ground of their existence, and their customary and traditional development over a long period of time. Institutions of an immemorial age, for example the English Parliament of Commons and Lords, had acquired legitimacy from their very age and their ability to adapt and change, as indeed man had adapted and changed in society as necessity dictated. It was this that Burke contrasted with the radicals belief in the arbitrary and largely theoretical virtues of a rationalist and utilitarian criteria. Burke examined the world around him and was deeply disturbed by what he regarded as the destruction of Christian Europe at the hands of the forces of reason, revolution and atheism.

By arguing for the rights of property, for monarchy, for aristocratic government and for the existing institutions of Church and State, Burke stood on the side of tradition, expedience and pragmatic usage, as opposed to rationalist speculation and dangerous experiment with the complexities and delicate balances of human society. The fruits of experience and history must not, Burke argued, be sacrificed at the altar of rationalism. The classic Burkean maxim and the adage of Conservatism since his time is that Conservatives are entering into a contract to preserve the fruits of a past generation, by the present generation for the benefit of a future generation.¹⁰

Burke did allow for change and reform but these had to operate within the framework of the existing order and must have as their objectives the safe and gradual restoration of an institution to its original purpose of fulfilling its customary and prescriptive function. Indeed on some questions Burke appears to be quite liberal, which should be not too surprising given his Whig credentials. His liberality comes out the strongest when he discusses the relief of Catholic disabilities, or the call for an independent Polish state but most obviously when he discusses economic affairs, and here he influenced several key members of Lord Liverpool's cabinet including Canning, Huskisson, Peel and Goodrich.

Traditionally the Whigs had been the political group that defended commerce against the 'country' Tories who inclined towards the defence of domestic agriculture. In his economic thinking - which the Ultra Tories of the 1830's would have liked to discard - Burke was consistent to this Whig tradition. Let us offer two examples of Burke's economic liberalism which was to gain so much credence in the nineteenth century.

In his book Thoughts and Details on Scarcity¹¹ Burke outlined the folly of the Speenhamland system. At Speenhamland in Berkshire, not far from Burke's estate of six hundred acres in the adjoining county of Buckinghamshire, the Justices of the Peace had put into effect a system of poor relief which involved payments to labourers to supplement their wages. The scale of payments related to the size of the labourer's family and the current cost of bread. They had done this in response to the acute distress of the labourers, whose wages were, in year 1795 below subsistence level. Burke was afraid that the government might make this a national policy, and he wrote his book in an attempt to urge them not to do so. Burke argued that any such action would be both useless and wicked: for it would dry up the springs of

enterprise, which would leave the labourers eventually even worse off; and this because it would be an unnatural interference with the laws of the market, and an arbitrary tax on property.¹² It could be contemplated as an effective relief of the poor only by men ignorant or forgetful of the laws of political economy. Burke wrote his Thoughts and Details on Scarcity to remind the government of those laws, and of the necessary connection of those laws, and of the necessary connection of those laws with the defence of property and hence civilization. These were more or less the same arguments Peel invoked when his back-benchers led by Lord Ashley asked him to explain his behaviour in defending the Whig Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.¹³

A second example of Burke's economic liberalism which confirms his relevance to the Conservatism of Peel in the 1830's and 40's but not to traditional Tory protectionism was his defence of laissez-faire. Regarding the principle of laissez-faire Burke had no doubts. A competitive self-regulating market economy was the ideal, for it was the most efficient system of production. It was for Burke - whose views incidentally were arrived at independently of Adam Smith's the most equitable system of distribution of the whole product, and it was a necessary part of the natural order of the universe. It was even, Burke believed, divinely ordained, which set the seal on it being both necessary and equitable.

This natural and necessary system of non-interference by the government in economic affairs which Burke praised as being both efficient and equitable was not the simple market economy of independent small producers, whereby peasants and craftsmen exchange their products to mutual advantage. It was a specifically capitalist economy. The motor of his system was the desire for accumulation, and the mechanism was the employment of wage-labour by capital so as to yield a profit to the capitalist. It was this system which Burke held to be natural, necessary and equitable. The desire to accumulate, which Burke took to be a

natural urge,' at least among those members of society who held some capital, was the source of every states prosperity. As Burke tells us, "Monied men ought to be allowed to set a value on their money; if they did not there would be no monied men. This desire of accumulation, is a principle without which the means of their service to the state could not exist."¹⁴

Burke took it as obvious that the capitalist's income came from the surplus produced by the actual producers, and he saw this as beneficial to the community provided that the surplus was ploughed back into production. The example Burke gives is of the landed capitalist but the example served for productive capital of any kind, he wrote

In every prosperous community something more is produced than goes to the immediate support of the producer. This surplus forms the income of the landed capitalist. It will be spent by the proprietor who does not labour. But this idleness is itself the spring of labour; this repose the spur to industry. The only concern of the state is, that the capital taken in rent from the land, should be returned again to industry from whence it came.¹⁵

It was obvious that the rich lived off the labour of the poor, but Burke held, as did the Conservatives who utilized his arguments in the 1830's and 1840's,¹⁶ that, for two reasons, this was no grounds for redistributing wealth. Firstly wholesale redistribution of wealth would give each of the poor an insignificant amount, and secondly, it would dry up the springs of wealth. As Burke tells us in a quote deserving of extended quotation:

The labouring poor are only poor, because they are numerous. Numbers in their nature imply poverty. In a fair distribution among a vast multitude, none can have much. That class of dependent pensioners called the rich, is so extremely small, that if all their throats were cut, and a distribution made of all they consume in a year, it would not give a bit of bread and cheese for one nights supper to those who labour, and who in reality feed both the pensioners and themselves. But the throats of the rich ought not to be cut, nor their magazines plundered, because, in their persons they are trustees for those who labour, and their hoards are the

banking houses of these latter. Whether they mean it or not, they do, in effect, execute their trust.¹⁷

Thus in economic affairs the Liberal Conservatism of Peel has a direct antecedent in the writings of Burke almost half a century before the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846.

The conservatism of Burke which emerges from his writings is one in which notions of prejudice, contract, party, prescriptive rights, economic freedom and the sanctity of the constitutional state are pushed to the fore. It is also powerfully informed by his perception of the inherent corruptibility of man and the frailties of his talents. This practical recognition of man's weaknesses - possibly reinforced by his own experiences as a politician acting on behalf of the Rockingham Whigs painfully aware of the limitations of political power - restrained him from offering confident generalizations regarding man's future capacities.

However, if Burke was essentially a pragmatist in most things, his political philosophy does contain a vital moral dimension. He believed there was a higher moral law which man should observe and which he could not alter. This required man to accept certain basic political values which made possible civilized social existence. Thus Burke believed it a moral imperative for statesmen to maintain social order, to use restraint in their exercise of power and to preserve the timeless heritage of the past. The statesman must employ care and prudence, he must negotiate circumstances and contingencies to enable the state and society to conserve themselves through peaceful change and gradual adaptation.

In arguing that the state should sponsor moderate reform within a prescriptive framework as a guarantee of civilized social order, Burke was leaving the way clear for more specifically organic and developmental forms of Conservatism in the later nineteenth

century. But care must be taken for Burke was quite definitely not an organic Conservative. Burke certainly conceded that states and institutions can and must change, but change was not to be directed towards some vague, untried future ideal but towards a past-directed one. Burke had no ideal conception of a future social order only the value of the nature of society and civilizations in the past - that is to say the immediate past from 1688. The 'Revolution' of 1688 could be defended because it returned to the mixed form of government which the absolutist Stuarts attempted to destroy. But Burke's love of tradition had its limits. For example in 1780 he advocated the reform of the now useless offices of the Royal Household - the separately administered principalities and duchies of Wales, Lancaster, Chester and Cornwall - on the basis that they were redundant to present requirements. They may have performed useful functions in feudal times but in 1780 their only use was to buy Members of Parliament by handing out sinecures. Thus change for Burke had to be proven beyond doubt and then only embarked upon to restore societal harmony, thus his conception of the state and of society has a certain inertia. He recognized the complexity of the state and of society more strongly as the French Revolution unfolded. Consequently he came to rely more on prescription and developed a profound fear of innovation and by the time of his death in 1797 he had become extremely pessimistic as to the prospects of conserving the British and European heritage of civilization.

III THE TRANSITION TO CONSERVATISM.

The idea that society grows and develops like any other living organism was not Burkean, it was the product of the 'organic' paternalistic Tories of the mid-nineteenth century who owed more to the work of Coleridge and his adopter-in-chief, Disraeli. The transformation of old Toryism into Conservatism was of a slow transition and, indeed, after 1846 and the party's split over the

Corn Laws, many of the older Tory principles of protectionism, and of the inherent obligation for those with wealth and prestige to protect those less fortunate, again, came to the fore. But the Conservatism of Peel was the foundation of Conservatism throughout the nineteenth century, and we must seek to discover how it related and grew out of the amalgam of late eighteenth century Toryism and conservative Whiggery.

Nineteenth century Toryism and Peelite Conservatism owe much of their ideological principles to the Conservative Whigs led philosophically by Burke and politically by the Portland Whigs in the loyalist climate of the 1790's and the first decade of the nineteenth century. To the old Toryism of the mid-eighteenth century Peelite Conservatism owed relatively little although certain traditions and continuities of sentiment, and of local and family traditions, can be detected. The 'new Toryism' of the Duke of Portland, Henry Addington, Spencer Percival, Lord Liverpool, George Canning and ultimately Sir Robert Peel can be seen to grow directly out of the reactions to the possible spread of the French Revolution, the radicalism of the Foxite Whigs and the philosophical ideas of Edmund Burke. In the years prior to 1789, the Old Tories, denied office and actual power, offered support to various leaders, but never as a unified party. The principles which held them together as a unit, if anything did, were their total support of the Anglican church and of the title and office of the Monarch. However, even though their leadership was dissipated after 1760 the old Tories still remained a force in the House of Commons. As we noted above this group were rarely place-holders, but independent country gentlemen, representatives of the country interest and sworn to its protection. They scorned bribes and shunned office, and were essentially amateurs in politics, enjoying their status for its social prestige, usually in their own locality, rather than for its material gains. The support these old Tories gave the King was even more effective because it was voluntary and unpaid, and once combined against it, no

ministry could long survive the wrath of the independent Tories. Thus they remained a force throughout the eighteenth century, but what in a sense unified them into a cohesive whole was on the one hand the reactions against Fox and on the other the welcoming and comforting philosophy of Burke (with the economic liberalism left out) and the political leadership of the conservative Whigs such as Portland, Perceval and Liverpool in the last years of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth.

In order to bridge the divide between the Napoleonic years of war and the development of Peelite Conservatism of the 1830's we must first set the context of the significance of the changes by resorting to a brief description of the salient episodes in the political history of the intervening period. Although in political terms the amalgam of conservative Whigs and Tories was in the ascendancy in terms of a broad basis of support (both inside and outside the Legislature), and although this support was gathering momentum throughout the Napoleonic wars, there was in reality little sign of party unity during these early stages in terms of formal recognition and actual organization. It was essentially a cabinet coalition.

The long ministry of the younger Pitt came to an end in 1801, and this served to fragment the coalition which had governed Britain in the 1780's and 90's into Pittites, Addingtonians, Grevillites, Canningites, and the supporters of the Duke of Portland with the Foxite opposition remaining outside the pale of possible power. The traditional supporters of the Court and Treasury numbered about 200 to 230 members of parliament and these would support any ministry the King appointed. However, the problem was compounded by those Irish members (of about one hundred) whose loyalties were uncertain and given that the independents were uncertain and that the various former coalition supporters were aligned against each other, there hardly existed a hard basis on which to secure reliable majorities. Thus the situation was extremely fluid. A

stable majority required the alliance of at least two of the constituent groups of the old Pittite coalition of Pitt, Portland, Greville, Addington and Canning, in order to supplement and lead the supporters of the Court and Treasury. It took eleven years before four of the sub-groups came together under the leadership of Lord Liverpool, and Greville and his followers only joined his administration in 1821. Of the prominent issues of the day; the abolition of slavery, catholic emancipation, further served to engender disunity, whilst others, the conduct of the war, law and order, Parliamentary Reforms served to bind the disparate forces together.

The precise reasons and causes as to how and why the various groups came together as a coherent party under Lord Liverpool is, as we saw in chapter one, the subject of intense debate, and is extraordinarily complex. But basically there are two reasons. Firstly the Pittite group, numbering about sixty members of Parliament, realized after their leader's death in 1806 that in order to maintain the basic political principles of Pitt they must act in a way that their leader never would have approved, that is to say act and organize themselves as a single unit. Secondly, as we noted above, although Pitt remained to his death a forthright opponent of party, this hostility was beginning to recede amongst a wise section of Parliamentarians, on the one hand because of the necessary expedience of gaining power, and on the other due to the theoretical justification of party offered by Burke.

It was in the general election of 1807 that the party names of Whig and Tory came back into general political use. The Whigs led by Greville and the Foxite wing stood on the legitimacy of the late 'Ministry of all the Talents', and poured scorn on the high-handed action of the King in dismissing them. The Tories led by Portland and the 'friends' of Mr Pitt stood on the defence of the King's actions. The basis for acting as a party was given added legitimacy when, for the first time in almost one hundred years,

the Tories had a recognizable leader; and a Prime Minister in the shape of the Duke of Portland who now openly referred to himself as a Tory. Of equal importance was the fact that Portland's ministry appeared to the public (electors and non-electors) to openly support the prerogatives of the Crown and to ensure 'No Popery' in politics. Scores of petitions and loyal addresses from all sections of society left the matter in no doubt, nor did the result of the election. In reply to the 'No Popery' chant of the Portland coalition of Tories and conservative Whigs the reformist Whigs of Grenville and Earl Grey cried 'No Corruption'. However, the scale of the defeat for the reformist Whigs revealed to them that the political climate was running against them and this was highlighted when the strongly Whig orientated corporation of London voted an address of thanks to George III for the 'decided support and protection given by him to the protestant reformed religion as by law established'.¹⁸ The overt patriotism felt by the masses during war-time and defence of the monarchy were the key to Portland's election success, but so too without any extra-Parliamentary organization as such, was the notion of party. Henceforth all General Elections would be fought under the party titles.

Among the electors the only extra-Parliamentary political organizations of even a marginal significance which existed in the first three decades of the nineteenth century were the dinners organized (usually annually) by the Whig Clubs - to eulogize the memory of Charles James Fox, and the more permanent and widespread Pitt Clubs. Of the latter more will be said in the next chapter, but it is worth noting that the first stages of permanent extra-Parliamentary organization of a very primitive type dates from 1807.

In May 1812, Spencer Perceval (Portland successor in 1809) was assassinated in the House of Commons Lobby; he was succeeded by Lord Liverpool. Liverpool's administration was a broadly based

team, the core of which were the old Pittites with places found for George Canning and Lord Sidmouth (formally Henry Addington). It was united upon the basis of loyalty to the monarch, a belief in service to the nation as a whole and the defence of the established (or prescriptive, as Burke defined the) institutions in church and state. Added to these basic principles was the decidedly anti-Burkean belief in the protection in agriculture and domestically produced staple industries, arguably excusable during war time but maintained after 1815. However, it was primarily because of the Ministry's uncompromising stance on questions on law and order, but more likely because of its economic policies, that the opponents of Lord Liverpool's administration referred to it as a 'Tory' government.

In several respects the term 'Tory' is misleading. Firstly the government of Lord Liverpool never allowed the Prince Regent or George IV after 1820, the range of prerogatives the old Tories allowed in his father; this limitation of the powers of the Monarch was traditionally Whig in outlook. Secondly there were members of Liverpool's Cabinet who pursued a traditional Whig foreign policy, most notably George Canning who passionately believed in the granting of independent status to nations such as Poland and Greece. Thirdly there were also those ministers - once again Canning but also Robinson and Palmerston - who were in favour of Catholic emancipation in order to resolve the political problems of Ireland. Fourthly, in economic affairs, there were important elements within the Liverpool government who attempted to steer the Cabinet away from rigid protectionism as advocated by the old Tory faction, and towards giving manufacturing industry at least equal status as that of agriculture, most notable amongst this group was William Huskisson. Fifthly, although Liverpool's ministry had a reputation for pursuing a tough line on law and order questions it is unlikely that the 'reforming' Whigs of Tierney, Ponsonby and Grey would have done any differently given the seriousness of the outbreaks of Luddite violence and the semi-

paranoiac sentiments of many of the landed and middle classes in the wake of the French Revolution. Moreover, it should also be noted that the Home Office, under the direction of Robert Peel, committed to Statute more legal reforms than any government for over one hundred years. The sixth and final point to note regarding Liverpool's government is that there were even those - Peel, Croker, Goulbourn etc - who pressed for some concessionary measures regarding Parliamentary reform before the radical Whigs put through a measure too sweeping in content.

On all these points Burke and Pitt would have concurred. This was so because the essential fabric of society on the basis of property was being conserved by these moderate measures. It suited the back-bench Tory traditionalists to forget what Pitt and Burke said and wrote regarding the above questions, and to push to the fore those aspects of their heroes' policies which suited the sentiments of traditional Toryism. To be sure the back-bench Tories were significant numerically and their view could not be totally ignored but the point to be noted is that the administration of Lord Liverpool was a coalition of conservative Whigs and moderate Tories. It was in essence the penultimate stage in the development of Conservatism. The traditional Tories realized this and vented their anger on those ministers, such as Canning who they believed went too far, even to the point of withdrawing their support when Canning formed a government in 1827. Thus the coalition was smashed, and in Parliament members began to divide along 'party' lines. The liberal supporters of the 'catholic' Canning - Huskisson, Melbourne, Palmerston and Lansdowne - joined the Whigs. Those who could not support¹⁹ Canning on the catholic question formed a separate group led by Wellington and Peel. These two leaders were joined by the traditional or 'Ultra' Tories - men like, Lord Londonderry, the Lowther family, Lord Salisbury, Lord Eldon, Sir Richard Vyvyan, Edward Knatchbull and the many backbenchers.

But again the Ultras never felt entirely confident with their new leaders, suspecting them of 'liberal' tendencies, confirmed when Wellington as Prime Minister repealed the Test and Corporation Act in 1828 and Catholic Emancipation one year later. The Tories might have deserted Wellington and Peel had not the sweeping nature of Grey's Parliamentary Reform Bill provided a point around which all sides of Toryism/Conservatism could rally. But the essentially Burkean nature of conservative Whiggery was maintained by Peel, Goulbourn, Aberdeen and others, and, in the early 1830's, the term 'Tory' was again thought unsuitable and replaced by Conservative.

Thus a direct line can be traced from the practical policies of Pitt and the theoretical or philosophical foundations laid by Burke - through to Portland, Liverpool, Canning and Peel. Many of the back-bench 'Conservatives' were in reality old Tories in new clothes. They supported Peel and the Conservatives firstly because this group genuinely believed in the preservation of the prescriptive and constitutional principles enshrined in Church and State, even though they may have found Peel's impersonal style unsupportive and still held his policies with great suspicion. The second reason was that there was no one - in the House of Commons at least - equal in political stature to Peel: thus they were in a sense stuck with them and, to his occasional chagrin, he with them. But in political terms the unity of the Peelite Conservatives and the old Tories was preserved primarily because of what each perceived as the danger to the Constitution - in terms of the independence of the two branches of legislature, the rights of the Monarch, and the preservation of the Anglican religion as the national Church of England - as presented by the reforming Whigs.

Thus the chief difference between the Peelite Conservatives and the Ultras or old Tories was one of temperament regarding not only specific issues but to political change as such. If any group

were resistant to change of any kind it was the Ultras. They were unshakeable in their defence of the Corn Laws and in their hostility to the interests of commerce and manufacturing. The Ultras or old Tories were totally opposed to Parliamentary reform of any kind, and were vehemently (in some cases pathologically) anti-Catholic. On this last question, the argument was crudely simple for the Ultras. It demanded how could a man or group of men swear a quasi-holy allegiance to their King and country, when they have already sworn allegiance to the Pontiff in Rome? To the Ultras, all Catholics were suspect, all potential traitors and all indolent ritual worshippers. In an attempt to prove their point they pointed to Ireland or to France. In the second already a revolution had occurred, in the first it could happen at any time.

Although many Peelite Conservatives felt affinity to the basic principles of the Old Tories - especially on religious questions - they could not accept their dogmatic assertiveness regarding policy options. Peel, like Burke realized that national needs were in a state of rapid change and that the Old Tory philosophy of political rigidity was impracticable to Britain in the 1830's. Peel at no time believed in pure laissez-faire as a doctrine - he contended that the state had a role in intervening in the national economy - but neither did he believe in blanket protectionism. Peel's moderation and quest for consensus similarly revealed itself on religious questions. He was an Anglican and not a supporter of Catholic Emancipation, but he recognized that the Catholics and nonconformists had reasonable grounds for complaint regarding the privileges of the Established Church. This is why he set up the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835 during his 'hundred days' of ministry, and gave the Irish Catholics an annual government grant to train their priests at Maynooth.

Whilst the Peelite Conservatives could agree with the Old Tories on the need to protect and preserve the political constitution in Church and State, and further agree with Burke that innovation in

political terms was highly suspect, they did not agree that all reform was necessarily bad. If it proved to be required then it should be considered; similarly the Conservatives under Peel did not believe that political groups or parties existed solely to protect the interests of a given section of society. This is why Peel mistrusted the sectional interests of the Anti-Corn Law League as much as he was disdainful of his Old Tory backbenchers who advocated protection for domestic agriculture. For Peel the Conservative party was a national party representative of all grades of society and their various interests. Peel was most decidedly not a democrat. He believed like Burke that property and education were the best qualifications for political participation. But he did realize that differing political interests existed and that the Conservative party had to cater for the popular will through its representation, not in extra-parliamentary activity but in the House of Commons. As he stated in 1838, "My object for some years past, that which I have most earnestly laboured to accomplish, has been to lay the foundation of a great party, (cheers) existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will..."²⁰

Perhaps then the most stark differences between Peelite Conservatism and Old Toryism can be summarized this. Firstly, the Old Toryism represented a sectional interest, Peel a national one. Secondly, the Tories stood for extremes in policy and Peel for moderation and consensus. Thus the old Tories stood for total resistance to innovation and conservatism for the reform of proven abuses; the old Tories for an anachronistic economic policy and conservatism for limited state intervention for the benefit of both producers and consumers.

Peel and the Conservatives were, however, walking a fine line. On the one hand Peel recognized he had to placate those Tory elements on which his majority in the House of Commons rested. This he showed in the Merchant Taylors speech of 1838.

I will, in conclusion, briefly state what I mean by Conservative principles. By Conservative principles, I mean, and I believe you mean, the maintenance of the Peerage and the Monarch - the continuance of the just powers and attributes of the King, Lords and Commons in this country... By Conservative principle I mean that, coexistent with equality of civil rights and privileges, there shall be an established religion and imperishable faith, and that established religion shall be of the Protestant Church... By Conservative principles I mean .. the maintenance, defence and continuance of those laws, those institutions, that society, and those habits and manners which have contributed to mould and form the character of Englishmen.²¹

On the other hand, Peel recognized the need to widen the social foundation of the Conservative party to include all sections of society and that this would upset many of the Old Tories. The problem was noted by Lady Palmerston in her journal in 1841 after Peel had made a speech at the opening of Tamworth Library in which he advocated the need to open-up knowledge to all classes of society and to strengthen the bonds between them. She wrote: "tho' he (Peel) bids for popularity in all his speeches, he disoblises his followers thereby. They do not like...a speech he made at Tamworth at some literary meeting, in which he said all classes were alike and that education should not be merely confined to the Church of England (very displeasing to his bigot followers)." ²²

It was Peel's urge alone to make Conservatism a national party and he realized that this could not be achieved on the narrow basis of landed Toryism alone. These old Tories were, as Henry Goulbourn defined them in 1834, 'deaf to all improvement which comprises change, however much on other ground he desired.' ²³

Even though Peel and the Conservative party were, in the 1830's remarkably successful both in changing the direction of an out-dated and outmoded political grouping, and also in changing the perception of the wider public to the point that the Conservatives

won a clear electoral victory not ten years after many had considered them dead as a political force, the old Tory elements did not disappear. In the later 1840's after Peel had repealed the Corn Laws, landed Toryism under the leadership of Lord George Bentinck, Benjamin Disraeli and Lord Stanley, came to the surface and over twenty years of brooding suspicion of Peel and his political views exploded in a moment of intense hatred.

The Peelite leadership were split off from the main party- although many back-bench supporters of Peel did remain - and Conservatism began to re-trace its Tory antecedents. But the problem, in the years that followed, was that the policies of free-trade invoked by Peel actually worked, and Disraeli and Derby knew this. Protectionism was quietly discarded as the central plank of post-1846 Conservatism and Peel's central aim of strengthening the old institutions by means of controlled and moderate reform became acknowledged as the central tenet of Conservatism.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have attempted to plot the transformation of eighteenth century Toryism and conservative Whiggery into the Conservatism of the 1830's. We have looked at the defence of 'party' as laid out by Edmund Burke and seen that writings were the foundation of nineteenth century Conservatism. We also looked at the reintroduction of party names in 1807, through the administration of Lord Liverpool to find the central ingredients of Conservatism. We looked at the differences in the character of the policies of Huskisson, Canning and Peel compared to traditional Toryism. We saw how Peel attempted to widen the social basis of Conservatism from the narrow sectional interest as

represented by Old Toryism by appealing to all sections of society. At this point therefore, before embarking on a description of Conservative organisation in the post-Reform era, with its changing form and functions, it may be useful to look at the other side of the analysis from the perspective of those at the lower level of the social order. The aim here is to get some sense of how the working class of the industrial north-west responded to Toryism and, in the 1820's and the early 1830's to developing Conservatism.

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3. Ibid.

4. For an account of other early Conservative theorists see H T Dickinson, Liberty and Property, London 1977 and for an alternative view see J J Sack, "The Memory of Burke and the Memory of Pitt" Historical Journal, Vol.30 N.3 1987.

5. Burke, E Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs, London 1791.

6. Burke, E, Reflections on the Revolution in France, London 1790.

7. Burke, E. Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents, London 1770.

3. E Burke, Thoughts on the Cause of Present Discontents, London 1770 p.335.

9. Most particularly the radical press of the Reform Crisis and the Chartist years.
10. Burke, Reflections etc op.cit. pp.194/5.
11. E Burke, Thoughts and Details on Scarcity, London 1795.
12. Ibid p.380.
13. Peel Papers, British Museum January 14, 1835. Ass Ms 40, 408 pp.310-313. See also Hansard, Vol XXXI p.158, February 1836 for Peel's speech in the House of Commons. See also Gertrude Himmelfarb for the link between Malthus and pessimistic laissez faire and the support given by the substantial land owning class in, The Idea of Poverty, New York 1984.
14. E Burke, Third Letter on the Regicide Peace. London 1797.
15. E Burke, Reflections op.cit. p.270.
16. See for example, T W Whittaker, A Sermon Preached to the Chartists at Blackburn Parish Church on Sunday 4 August, 1839. Blackburn 1839.
17. Burke, Details on Scarcity op.cit. pp.376-7.
18. Quoted in J Watson, The Reign of George III 1760-1815, Oxford 1985 edition p.455.
19. It was not so much that Peel and Wellington could not support Canning's politics as that they detested him personally. See for example L Woodward, The Age of Reform, Oxford 1985 edition pp. 74-5.
20. Speech by Sir Robert Peel at Merchant Taylors Hall, 12 May 1838. From the Authentic Report of the Conservative Festival at the Merchant Taylors Hall, Conservative Journal Office, London 1838. See also Robert Stewart, Party and Politics, 1830-1852, Basingstoke 1982, especially chapter 5, pp.62-77

21. Ibid p.99.

22. T Lever (Ed.) Letters of Lady Palmerston, London 1957 p.248.

23. Peel Papers Add Mss 40333f 177. Goulbourn to Peel 8/12/1834.
British Library.

CHAPTER THREE TORYISM, CONSERVATISM AND THE EMERGENT
WORKING CLASS.

I TORY ATTITUDES.

In this chapter we wish to broaden the discussion to examine what the relationships were between Toryism, Conservatism and the working classes of the industrial North-West in the years from the Napoleonic wars to the election of the first reformed Parliament in early 1833. The justification for this is to show the attitudes between the Tory and Conservative elites and the lower orders before the advent of a nationally organized party structure. This is necessary to gauge the significance of the transformation of attitudes of sections of the industrial working class from antagonism to Toryism up to 1833 to acceptance and support in the later 1830's, 40's and 50's. Later in the thesis we intend to bring forward evidence to support the claim that sections of the working class of the manufacturing districts of the North West did embrace Conservative political principals and did so for a variety of reasons. The ultimate change worked in two ways. From being a group whose political outlook was antagonistic to the manufacturing and working classes, the Tories, as they developed into Conservatives, began to embrace some of those interests. Similarly sections of the working class, from being inherently hostile to the Toryism of the type epitomized by Lord Sidmouth or Lord Eldon, began to look more kindly on the Conservatism of Sir Robert Peel. However, first we must set the context by highlighting previous attitudes.

The lines of change bear out the themes we began to develop in chapters one and two. Namely that in several key areas the essential functions of the political party were not performed before 1832. Further, we see that the transformation of Toryism into Conservatism which took place from the 1780's to the late 1820's, happened without the wider political interests of the manufacturing and working class being considered, except by those enlightened economic liberals such as Canning, Huskisson and eventually Peel. Nowhere was this more apparent than the situation which existed in the North-West in the early years of the nineteenth century.

As we suggested in chapter two, included within the principles of traditional Toryism was the desire to preserve the constitution, a sense of patriotism and attachment to the interests of the agrarian and agricultural sectors of the economy. During the Napoleonic war years patriotism gained the expected purchase on the consciousness of many working people not least in Lancashire. This situation should have reinforced traditional Tory values and moreover given as economic boost to some of the skilled working class through increased government contracts. But the war also brought with it extreme hardships in the form of high food prices and severe trade recessions, especially in the years when Napoleon enforced his blockade. The Tories demand for the protection of domestic agriculture was perceived as an overt act of political partiality in favour of the landed and propertied classes and against those who held no land or property. This, coupled with the Tory principle of a harsh and rigid policy of law and order and a deep distrust of organized labour, served in the years from 1790 to 1832, to make them extremely unpopular among a large section of the emergent working class of the industrial North-West.

As the migrants from the hamlets and villages moved into the rapidly increasing textile towns of Lancashire after 1800, some of

these families may have felt a sense of social deference to the Tory principles of the eighteenth century. However, loss of independence and severe cycles of trade depression, coupled with a growing perception that Tory politics and politicians were inherently hostile to working class grievances, increasingly moved more and more working people toward popular Painite radicalism.

As we noted in the first two chapters the national and local political elites were much frightened by the possibility that the principles and the political ramifications of the French Revolution of 1789 might find a purchase among those socially and politically disenchanted in Britain. In the 1790's the younger Pitt revoked his previous support for Parliamentary reform, and indeed, passed, in 1799 the first of the Combination Acts, in an effort to prevent the workers of various trades from collective action in support of their grievances. The tendency was for both national and local government to pursue increasingly draconian policies of legal coercion and political reaction in an attempt to isolate and eradicate what were primarily working class social and economic grievances regarding the loss of customary work practices and the imposition of new and more rigorous techniques of production.

The Tories were traditionally hostile to the commercial and industrial interests of Britain and felt no sympathy either to the wage labourers or the manufacturers who suffered under the frequent cycles of booms and slumps in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Conservative Whigs and the Tories were, as we noted, extremely concerned about securing domestic peace and order whilst maintaining a long and, at times precarious war with France. France was a national enemy and therefore it is no surprise that, at a period of high patriotism, any signs of sympathy to republicanism, or of religious and political opposition to government policy during a period of war would be labelled by those of a conservative disposition as being

sedition. It is also understandable that this extremely defensive conservatism would continue for a considerable time after the national conflict itself had been resolved, in this case after 1815.

It might appear to some historians writing, some hundred or hundred and fifty years after the events, that the actions and reactions of the Government and their conservative Whig and Tory supporters bordered on hysterical paranoia. But, at the time for the propertied and others in position of influence, the French Revolution and the war that followed were attempts at the complete destruction of everything they valued. Thus, it is in this context the actions and reactions of those who believed and perceived the situation as being threatening and dangerous must be seen and understood. The war propaganda was intense and was carried to ludicrous lengths even twenty years after its conclusion. The French and Jacobins were portrayed as inhuman barbarians. The Blackburn Alfred for example in 1834 compared the humane nature of the British mode of execution with that of the French, and indeed questioned that decapitation produced instantaneous death. For example, "The head of a criminal named Tillier being submitted to examination after the guillotine, the head turned in every direction from whence it was called by name."¹ The newspapers² of 1835 still carried reports of cannibalism amongst the French troops during the Peninsular Wars of over twenty years before. With such speculation and general anti-Gallic feelings it is little wonder that among wide sections of Conservative opinion when they were told that the disputes and reforms demanded by the working class were Jacobin in origin, they were inclined to believe them. That this climate of anti-libertarian feelings was continued during a major war with France goes some way to explaining why the authorities were unwilling even to listen to the demands of groups possessing as much self-proclaimed probity as the Loyal Order of Mechanics or the Loyal Association of Weavers.

For the forces of the Government the pattern was set by the younger Pitt in the 1790's. When, in 1795 the King on his way to the State Opening of Parliament was jeered and stones flung at his carriage the response of the authorities was immediate.³ A Royal Proclamation was issued against seditious assemblies, and in the House of Commons Pitt introduced Two Acts. The first declared it to be treasonable to incite the people by the written word or by speech to hatred or contempt of the King, Constitution or Government. In the Second Act no meetings of over fifty persons could be held without notifying a Magistrate. The Magistrates were given wide powers to ban meetings or stop speeches, arrest speakers and disperse smaller meetings. It became a capital offence to defy the orders of the magistrates. Habeas Corpus, or the right of trial before imprisonment, had been suspended since May 1794 in an effort to stem the rise of popular Radicalism - especially in London - against the government of Pitt and in favour of Parliamentary reform. The culmination of this legislation was the Six Acts of 1817. Here Lord Castlereagh attempted firstly to prohibit drilling and military training amongst non-military personnel. Secondly the Acts allowed magistrates to enter and search houses without warrants. The Third Act renewed the prohibition of meetings of over fifty persons. The fourth increased the stamp duty on periodicals thus raising the price far above that affordable to working people. The final Two Acts defined and refined the libel laws in accordance with what the government considered seditious and inflammatory. Once again, as a matter of course Habeas Corpus was suspended.

The government felt for much of the period between 1794 and 1831 that only by the implementation of such measures of legal coercion could law and order be maintained. The tone again was set by Pitt who is reported to have said after the passage of the Acts of 1795 that: "My head would be off in six months, were I to resign."⁴

The widening breach between the various sections and groupings within society was summed up in 1807 by the moderate Whig reformer Sir Samuel Romilly when he said, "The influence which the French Revolution has had over this nation has been in every way unfavourable to them. Among the higher orders it has produced a horror of every kind of innovation: among the lower, a desire to try the boldest political experiments, and a distrust and contempt of all moderate reforms."⁵ This then was the perception of respectable opinion. The coalition of conservative Whigs and Tories under the direction of Lord Liverpool believed that the popular claim for reform - Parliamentary, economic, religious and social - were manifestations of a deeper conspiracy to undermine the very fabric of British society. We saw in Chapter Two how this situation of the need to maintain law and order, preserve the rights of property, the monarchy, the Anglican church, and the prescriptive rights of the constitution served to galvanize the union of conservative Whigs and old Tories. But so too did the elite's fears and suspicions of those members of society below them. As one member of the Lancashire magistracy, Ralph Fletcher of Bolton, wrote to the Home Secretary in 1802 in relation to the Cotton Arbitration Acts.

In this neighbourhood (Bolton) the seditious seem to be mostly occupied about the intended application to Parliament for regulating the cotton manufacture. This application (although some small alteration may be necessary to the existing laws as to that trade) certainly originates in the Jacobin Societies (Fletcher's emphasis) and is intended as a means to keep the minds of the Weavers in a continual Ferment and as a pretext to raise money for them which will probably be employed in part at least, to seditious purposes.⁶

After the conclusion of the wars in 1815, as we noted earlier, these feelings continued, not only in the manufacturing districts but to other economic sectors as well. Even in agricultural areas, still the largest single industrial sector in terms of output and employment, and protected by the Corn Laws of 1815, severe cycles of depression occurred in the years immediately following Waterloo. When the farmers complained, the Tory squires

and county gentry were quick to demand further redress, not just for economic reasons but also to offset any political discontent among the yeomen. At the occasion of the General Election of 1818 William Huskisson reported to Lord Liverpool that the radicals were beginning to sway the opinions of those stoutest defenders of traditional Toryism, the Yeomanry. He wrote, "They despise the Whigs; but they are no longer what they were ten years ago in their attachment to the old Tory interests and principles which are prevalent in the Nobility and Gentry."⁷ This widening of the gap between those who believed that government and its administration should be immune from outside and potentially damaging pressures and those below the elites who contended that the closed political oligarchy of constitution conservation was static and detrimental to the nation's interest as a whole was noticed by Robert Peel when he returned to England after six years as Chief Secretary in Ireland. Writing to his friend John Wilson Croker in March 1820 he said.

Do you not think that the tone of England...is more liberal, to use an odious but intelligible phrase, than the policy of the Government? Do you not think that there is a feeling becoming daily more general and more confirmed...in favour of some undefined change in the mode of governing the country.⁸

A feeling that political change was in the air was apparent but the Tory elements of Liverpool's administration - Eldon, Sidmouth, Wellington, Castlereagh and Canning - were determined that no change in the political contract should be considered, at least not while they remained in office. As a justification for their intransigence on constitutional and Parliamentary reforms they utilized the theories and concepts of Edmund Burke. This resistance to popular politics and those who expounded it - as we shall subsequently discover - managed to galvanize the Tories and conservative Whigs into a party unit, but at the time provoked great hostility to those who 'would leave everything as it is'.

For many Tories and conservative Whigs the views of Peel; cited above were symptomatic of the feeling of the post-war political world. For this group a curious situation had developed in which public opinion, with more influence than it had ever had previously, was becoming daily more dissatisfied with the share of actual power it possessed. Peel was writing in the wake of Peterloo disturbance of 1819 and the Six Acts which had followed quickly after the depressing catalogue of alternate bouts of disorder and repression beginning in 1794. The list is long and it includes several outbreaks of Luddism, the riots in East Anglia, the March of the Blanketeers, the Pentrich rising, Peterloo, the Huddersfield rising, the riots at Spa Fields, and, arguably the most serious, the Cato Street conspiracy. Then there were the consequent actions of the state in the form of Special Commission, Orders in Council, the secret committees of enquiry, suspension of Habeas Corpus, and Seditious meetings Acts. In purely Parliamentary terms - but only in those - riots and disorders were in a sense the least of the ministry's problems. In this sense government was never stronger in the legislature than when there were plots and disturbances in the country. The offers of the opposition Whigs and radicals to exploit such situations, as was the case of their anti-war policies prior to 1815, invariably recoiled in their face and convinced the respectable moderates of their unfitness for office. The House of Commons always appeared to be ready to rally round the government in times of social unrest and the repressive legislation was overwhelmingly backed by the governing class as a whole. Ministers were acting in response to genuine fears and alarms and on the evidence put before them seemed to justify their position. Indeed they were often urged to do more in language more extreme than they would have used.

In London and other centres of urban power events such as Peterloo could only increase the widespread feeling that the country was in a state of crisis. The crisis indeed seemed worse than in the

1790's since it was not a matter of a specific danger to British Society inculcated by ideas brought in from outside, but a more pervasive atmosphere of violence and disunion within. Tories, Whigs and Radicals, with some justice, could feel that these were symptoms of an unhappy and divided nation, even though they disagreed both on causes and remedies. Ministers, such as Huskisson and Canning, could reiterate the arguments of the political economists to which most educated men subscribed: that the laws of economics were inexorable and legislative intervention, likely to do more harm than good. However, if the educated public was willing to accept this doctrine in the abstract, they also felt strongly, if somewhat illogically, that something was missing in practice. The discontent and distress in society, even if not directly the fault of the government, materially weakened its prestige and damaged its influence. To be seen to do nothing was to invite widespread unpopularity and worse. It can be argued that Ministers were not indifferent to the problems of the economy and the hardships of the poor; nor indeed to the general dissatisfaction of the public with the conduct of the government. Their difficulty was to know what, if anything, they could do about it. Direct concession to political agitation, which meant in effect making substantial changes in the actual fabric of the constitution, was out of the question. In the immediate post-1815 period, there was no inclination for that in either Parliament or Cabinet. As Romilly observed, the effect of the revolutionary struggle had been to harden the resistance of the governing classes to any organic change. The only exception was Catholic Emancipation, the issue which had been left unresolved by Pitt. On this question the House of Commons was fairly equally divided. But the Cabinet's agreement in 1812 to remain neutral with regard to policy precluded any ministerial initiative; and the House of Lords with Liverpool's personal example to guide them, offered an insuperable barrier to independent action in the Commons until Liverpool's death in 1827.

Yet, as we saw in chapter two, an alternative road did emerge for a ministry that wished to appear both moderately progressive and conservative. As well as utilizing the work of Burke there was also the eighteenth century school of practical reformers, of whom Adam Smith was the great British representative. This group had concerned themselves not with doctrinaire plans for ideal constitutions or attacks on established political institutions, but with an examination of the methods whereby enlightened legislators could improve the lot of society as a whole. The prime object of this new political science, was not to take power from the governing classes - which the proponents of radicalism as diverse as Paine or Bentham wished for - but to teach them how to promote the happiness of the people in their charge.

This then, in general terms was the position of the conservative Whigs and moderate Tories in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. However the perceptions of the working class themselves on the industrial North-West differed from those of the government to an alarmingly dangerous extent. To give balance to the picture of the relationship between the Tories and the emergent working class of the North-West, we must also examine their grievances about the existing political society.

II THE EMERGENCE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE INDUSTRIAL NORTH-WEST: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE.

The disputes engaged in by the emergent working class of the industrial North-West began in the 1770's and were concerned primarily with the introduction of new technology in the sphere of cotton spinning. The interest is to trace the growing political awareness of this social grouping which evolved as a result of what were chiefly economic and social grievances such as the imposition of new work practices and the resultant loss of

independence. This 'political' element in the attitudes and behaviour of the emergent working class is vital to the understanding of the development of a working class consciousness in the first half of the nineteenth century. But it is a question which has in the past, and still is producing a lively debate amongst social and political historians. It may be worthwhile at this stage in the thesis to outline some of the most salient and relevant arguments before we move on to describe the events which illustrate the attitudes of the working class of the North-West from the 1790's to the struggle for the Reform Bill. The purpose of this, as we noted earlier, is to contrast the attitudes of the elites and of the working class prior to the 1830's and to outline the transformation after the mid 1830's.

The first historians who in any sense systematically investigated the development of the industrial working class in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were John and Barbara Hammond.⁹ The Hammonds worked within the tradition of Whig historiography stressing the progress of industrial labour to overcome the obstacles placed in their way by the forces of capital and the state, in this they were in tune with the views of the Fabians and the progressive Liberals of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

According to the Hammonds within certain limits the ordinary workmen of the 1760's had still a large margin of independence and freedom in his daily life. They drew on sources such as Samuel Bamford's Passages in the Life of a Radical¹⁰ and his picture of the Lancashire weaver towards the end of the eighteenth century drawn from his uncle's home at Middleton. These essentially domestic workers had some limited autonomy in that he could leave off work when he pleased to tend his small-holding or have a meal or take a smoke and a chat. He was not in short "disinterested from the old village economy in which a man did not merely sell his labour but had some kind of holding and independence of his

own."¹¹ The industrial changes of the 1770's, argued the Hammonds, destroyed this social economy with its margin of freedom and choice for the worker. To the observers of the upper or middle classes the new agencies of industrial change such as the utilization of capital for the building and equipping of factories promised a great saving of human labour but also would serve as social conditioning which would morally uplift the loose and disorderly lower orders.¹² That the majority of these workers subjected to this transformation resisted was not surprising considering that the worker did not appear to gain any greater financial compensation for his increased effort but saw, in contrast, the owners of capital becoming enormously wealthy at the workers expense. Not only this but the lifestyle of the working class also underwent a transformation as did that of his family also.

This was the crux of the Hammond's case. The working class of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century resisted industrial change not only because they were materially worse off - the domestic workers of the earlier part of the eighteenth century were not affluent by any means - but because they saw on the one hand the visible signs of a maldistribution of the results of their labour and on the other the closing-in of a social and economic system which they likened to slavery.¹³ The Hammond's were well aware of the fact that the transition from a semi-feudal, or corporate industrial system to a full blown capitalist mechanized system was a slow process. However they were at times guilty of utilizing the language of 'golden age' sentimentalism. For example:

Surely never since the days when populations were sold into slavery did a fate more sweeping overtake a people than the fate that covered the hills and valleys of Lancashire and the West Riding with factory towns that were to introduce a new social type for the world to follow.¹⁴

But the Hammonds were right to point out that, although economic and industrial relations had been gradually changing from the late fifteenth century and the end of feudalism, what the mechanization of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries meant to the wage labourers was the removal of the 'last vestige' of initiative and choice in the daily lives of working people. Indeed they were at pains to show that it was the culmination of a long process.

The last vestige; for so much had been lost already that the upper class came readily to think of the surviving elements as an anachronism. For two centuries there had been a steady concentration of economic power in the hands of a small class.¹⁵

The last vestige was important. It distinguished between allowing a margin of freedom and choice, prevalent in the older type of social economy, from the new conditioning agencies of new industrial society. They argued that so much attention had been given to the transitory nature of the development of capitalism before the industrial revolution that there was a marked tendency to under estimate the transformations on the emergent mass working class which came as a result of industrialization. The Hammonds knew well that, by the 1770's and 80's the majority of domestic workers were already dependent upon capitalist enterprise, but this did not mean that the changes induced by the latest phase of industrialization were in some way unimportant. Indeed they were so important that when the weaver in Oldham or Blackburn or the cropper in Halifax or Huddersfield looked back in the 1820's or the 1830's to the beginning of his life, he believed he could remember a time when the worker was in all senses a freer man.¹⁶

The social economy with its margin of choice and independence, and with its inherent belief in the fair and just price for labour as well as the naive but widespread assumption that the forces of the

state existed as a last recourse of arbitration, was not a myth - as much authoritative research in recent years has revealed.¹⁷ There were of course trade depressions in the eighteenth century as well as in the nineteenth, most notably during times of foreign crises, but in these situations the hand workers had opportunities for the diversification of their labour. In the better times the hand workers earned sufficient wages to take time off for recreation and had the money and time for the cultivation of a garden or the keeping of poultry or pigs. From several trades - wool croppers, woollen weavers, cotton spinners and weavers, framework knitters and so on - such a picture comes forward with such frequency for it to be dismissed as a romantic fancy of an idyllic past. It was a world which was due to disappear both due to the regimentation and authority of the factory system and the long working day in the era of the factory, especially for those hand workers who resisted the factory who still had to work long hours in order to mitigate the effects of falling piece rates in the nineteenth century. The Hammonds, we contend were correct to point out that the reactions of such workers, as well as those actually employed in the factories, to their frequently depressed nineteenth century conditions was intense and passionate because of the recent experience of better times. As we shall subsequently discover, this led many of the working class to seek radical political solutions to their plight, but it also produced among some working people attitudes of deference, and important element in the Tory tradition of the respect for custom and prescriptive rights, and such feelings were played upon by the Conservatives in the decade after 1832.

However, the main problems with the work of the Hammonds is not their passages of description and explanation, which are both scholarly and copious in primary sources, but their failure to analyze the motivations of the working class in terms of politics as well as in the social and economic aspects is something we shall have to look at. Of course the Hammonds recognized the

political context within which the industrialization of early decades of the nineteenth century took place, especially in terms of those in positions of political authority who acted too harshly on those of the working class who opposed the new work practices. Indeed many political leaders, argued the Hammonds saw the new work practices as a means of controlling the lower order, as we noted above. As they themselves wrote.

From this spectacle (of the French Revolution) the rulers of England had derived one set and fixed idea: the idea that the art of government was the maintenance of discipline... Hence their unquestioning welcome to an industrial system that seemed to answer their own purpose and to answer the purpose of nature as well: to reinforce at once the law of authority and the law of progress.¹⁸

However the Hammonds were reluctant to admit that the actions of resistance on the part of working people to the imposition of the factory system - especially Luddism - were in any meaningful sense political, and certainly not revolutionary. This fear of insurrection on the part of working people was at best the machinations of paid informers intent on giving their members reason for their continued employment, or at worst, the kind of information the government wished to present before Parliament in order to secure the support for their draconic measures of social and political coercion. Thus for the Hammonds, the rumours of a general rising in Lancashire in 1812 were started 'solely by spies'.

The tale is an intricate one, and the material on which to base it disordered. Four main factors stand out. 1) A General discontent with power looms; 2) Deliberate but unsuccessful attempts to destroy the obnoxious looms fomented if not originated by spies; 3) Food riots, beginning in anger at high prices and ending in the destruction of power-looms or buildings; 4) Rumours of a 'general rising' started as far as can be gathered solely by spies.¹⁹

Following the work of the Hammonds, F O Darvall²⁰ wrote in 1934 that there was no evidence to support the claim that the Luddites

of Yorkshire and Lancashire had any political motivation whatsoever. He concluded that, "despite the great efforts of the spies to prove such motives" the Luddites had no large-scale political designs.²¹

For over a generation this view remained the orthodox position until the publication of E P Thompson's Making of the English Working Class,²² Thompson offered a very different interpretation of Luddism, and made the Hammond's analysis the subject of a rigorous and continuing debate. Thompson believed he recognized in the work of the Hammonds a reformist/Fabian-like predisposition to minimize to the point of extinction the place of direct action, inter-class violence and high levels of class consciousness bordering on the revolutionary in the history of the development of the emergent English working class. He wrote

The chapters on Luddism read at times like a brief prepared on behalf of the Whig opposition, and intended to discredit the exaggerated claims made by the authorities as to the conspiratorial and revolutionary aspects of the movement.²³

This view of intense conflict between the emergent working class and the forces of governmental authority is one of the key-stones of Thompson's - and more broadly the Marxist - view of the development of a working class consciousness. Similarly, this theme of conflict - both political and between differing social classes - is one to which we shall address ourselves in some detail later, especially in relation to the attempts made by the local and national elites to utilize the vehicle of the political party as one of the means of resolving deep-rooted conflicts and steering sections of the working class away from extreme radicalism and towards respectable and legitimate (and safe) political involvement.

In the thesis of Thompson, and of Marxist historians generally, high levels of working class consciousness can be shown to be

manifest if the overwhelming mass of the working class display a sophisticated and vigorous set of political aspirations on behalf of themselves as a class as opposed to the political aspirations and norms of other classes. It is therefore essential to show that the working class had this political dimension in their subjective evaluation of their objective class position as they began to emerge and as industrial capitalism dramatically began to transform their lives.

With regard to the emergent working class in the period 1790 to the 1820's, the problem lies in the treatment of evidence which consists to a great extent of the reports of paid spies and informers to receptively panic-stricken magistrates and government officials. Thompson argues that the Hammonds, by discounting all such evidence, present an unreal case which can only be sustained:

by a special pleading which exaggerates the stupidity, rancour, and provocative role of the authorities to the point of absurdity; or by an academic failure of imagination, which compartmentalises and disregards the whole weight of popular tradition... We end in a ridiculous position. We must suppose that the authorities through their agents actually created conspiratorial organizations and then instituted new capital offences (such as that for oath-taking) which existed only in the imagination or as a result of the provocations of their spies.²⁴

What Thompson is suggesting requires further elaboration.

Lancashire Luddism which as we noted began in the late 1760's, was suppressed in the 1770's and was re-lit in the early 1800's, is acknowledged to be a particularly difficult era in which to disentangle the aspirations, (political or otherwise) of those involved. The pre-disposition of the Hammonds was to believe that bona-fide insurrectionary schemes on the part of working people were highly improbable, or, alternatively wrong, and undeserving of sympathy and therefore to be attributed to a lunatic irresponsible fringe. Thompson asks reasonably enough why the

working class should hold advanced radical political attitudes by 1812. War had continued for almost twenty years. Trade Unions had been coerced and suppressed. The weavers had suffered a cataclysmic decline in living standards and hunger and food shortages were severe and widespread. Why, he asks, does it appear improbable that men in such circumstances should advocate widespread political change or even revolution? The only reason Thompson argues, for believing that the reports on the revolutionary aspects were false was based on the assumption that such evidence derived from paid agents is bound to be false. Reading the same evidence without such an assumption Thompson produces a version,²⁵ suggesting that by May 1812 Luddism in Lancashire had largely given way to a heightened political awareness and a revolutionary organization. He goes further and suggests that an identical form of oath to one found on an associate of Colonel Despard at the time of the 1802 insurrection is one of many pieces of evidence which links the revolutionary underground of 1802 with that of some ten years later. However, he is disinclined to believe rumours of a national organization or the involvement of genteel leaders; instead he stresses that Luddism was a movement formulated and organized by the working classes usually in the localized community.

For Thompson the subjective awareness of their objective position during this phase of industrialization made the working class conscious not only of their own class in relation to other classes but politically aware of the exploitative nature of capitalism and of those in local and national government who condoned it. "Even while attacking these symbols of exploitation", writes Thompson, "and of the factory system they became aware of larger objectives, and pockets of 'Tom Painers' existed who could direct them towards ulterior aims."²⁶

Traditionally Toryism could count on a measure of popular support through the principle of paternalism and their opposition to Whig

corruption. However, from the 1790's, the economic slump and the cultural cleavages wrought by industrialization, condoned as it was by Tories in government and in the local magistracy, lost the Tories much of their support, especially in the manufacturing districts of the North-West. For Thompson Luddism was part of the transitional development of the working class, 'one is struck not so much by its backwardness as by its maturity... One can see Luddism as a manifestation of a working class culture of greater independence and complexity than any known to the eighteenth century.'²⁷

Thus for the Hammond's working class development between 1790 and the 1830's is seen primarily in economic and social terms whilst for Edward Thompson it is conceived in economic, social and political terms. Let us investigate the manifestations of working class political developments beginning our discussion of the North-West region at the turn of the nineteenth century and ending with the worst political defeat for the conservative Whigs and Tories: the Reform crisis of 1831/2. We suggest that this political dimension of working class consciousness was increasing throughout this period, reaching its peak in 1831/3. We suggest that after this date the political development of working autonomic aims and objectives was curtailed by devices of containment and control imposed on sections of them from above. One of these, the political integration of sections of the working class by the Conservatives will be subsequently discussed. But first we lay the foundations by examining the antecedents which forced the elites to re-formulate their position regarding the working class of the manufacturing districts.

III WORKING CLASS POLITICS BEFORE 1820.

Early in 1799 the weavers of Lancashire were complaining of the decrease in the price of labour and formed themselves into an Association for mutual protection and for obtaining Parliamentary relief. At the end of April a magistrate wrote from Wigan to the Home Office to say that a number of societies were being formed there and in other parts of Lancashire and that:- "when the sum of five hundred pounds is collected by the grand central committee at Manchester consisting of three persons...they are to pay it into the hands of some great person in London who (they) hath engaged to procure them an Act of Parliament for an advance in wages."²⁸ On May 27 the same correspondent sent to the Home Office an address that had been issued to the public by the newly formed Association of Weavers. The address was to be printed and distributed in various towns in the name of the General Committee assembled at Bolton. On May 13, 1799 John Seddon was President and James Holcroft was Secretary. The Committee was composed of representatives from Bolton, Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Oldham, Wigan, Warrington, Blackburn, Chorley, Newton, Bury, Whitefield, Leigh and Chowbent, in total there were 28 representatives on the General Committee. In their address they made a direct claim for political intervention.

The present existing laws that should protect weavers, etc., from imposition, being trampled underfoot, for want of a union amongst them, they are come to a determination to support each other in their just and legal rights, and to apply to the Legislature of the country for further regulations, as it may in its wisdom deem fit to make, when the real state of the cotton manufactory shall have been laid before it.²⁹

The correspondent, John Singleton of Wigan, who sent the weavers address to the Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, denied that the weavers had grounds for complaint. The labouring class were he said 'fully employed and very well paid for their labour and

before these arts were used to disturb their peace and make them discontented was both happy and contented.'³⁰

The government, in whom the weavers had placed such faith responded by passing the first Combination Act of July 1799. However, the passing of the Combination Act did not deter the weavers nor did it diminish their faith in Parliament as a council for the application of redress. At the end of February 1800, the journeymen weavers of Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire sent to Parliament a petition '*praying for a more speedy and summary mode of regulating abuses and for the settling of wages, pay and price of labour from time to time.*'³¹

It should be remembered that the Combination Act nominally prohibited combination amongst manufacturers as well as amongst wage labourers. Thus the weavers took the opportunity to point out that their position was in part due to a 'powerful combination of the master weavers and manufacturers and that the Petitioners, scarcely earning a bare subsistence by their daily labour, are totally unable to seek the Suppression of Combinations of so much Secrecy, Wealth and Power, or any redress of their Grievances, by any existing Law.'³² However, some masters and manufacturers sided with the workers for, also in May 1800, there arrived at the House of Commons a petition from the master manufacturers of Chester, York and Lancashire stating that many of their difficulties were due to the fact that there was no power to settle wages.

A Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to take evidence, and the outcome was that the weavers did not obtain their required regulation of a minimum wage, but instead they were given an Act providing for arbitration in the cotton trade.³³ This Act provided that in all cases of dispute over wages of hours of work each party could name an arbitrator, and if the arbitrators could not agree either arbitrator could require them

to submit the points in the dispute to a Justice of the Peace whose decision would be final. In the actions of working people at this time, we see a belief that their economic rights could, and should be protected by a political appeal direct to the national legislature. At this time they were working within the existing political system, but their recourse to that system reveals that they possessed a degree of political awareness and that a collective political consciousness in a class sense was developing albeit draped in the trappings of obeisance to the existing political institutions. This, however, as a situation did not last very long.

The Arbitration Act had some success for a short time as a device for settling disputes and protecting workers from actual frauds. But inherent within what was in reality permissive legislation were two flaws which the manufacturers utilized quickly. Firstly the Act required the masters to appoint an arbitrator, and made provision for cases of disagreement between arbitrators, but it contained no provision to compel arbitrators to act. The manufacturers, discovering this flaw, simply appointed an arbitrator living in London or some other distant place who in reality had no intention of acting, with the result that the arbitration went no further. Secondly, when the arbitration went to a magistrate as a final test - on the few occasions that it did - it was often discovered that the magistrate had some indirect link (eg financial) with manufacturing, and thus was biased. The argument the magistrates produced was that the demands made by the workers were an attempt to fix wages, which, they argued the Act was not empowered to do.

In such a situation, compounded as it was by war-time food shortages and high prices for provisions, the emergent working class lost faith in the forces of local and national political power, and began to develop a more militant attitude to their distress. As for the elites, we saw above that they were becoming

increasingly uneasy regarding the political attitudes of the working classes of the north-west.

By 1803 the judge in charge of the Northern Districts wrote to the Home Office that "much of sedition has mixed itself with the Weavers Petition and Bill...cavalry should be stationed near Bolton and an eye kept on the whole quarter." ³⁴

Not only were the magistrates and judges becoming alarmed at the lack of respect towards authority which the working class was developing at this time but also the manufacturers. In 1800 the Bolton manufacturer Thomas Ainsworth wrote to Sir Robert Peel that: "There is nothing to fear from Jacobinism."³⁵ By 1801 the same correspondent was writing of the possibility of a general rising. "If ever there is an invasion or other commotion to employ the regular force of the country I make no doubt but that opportunity will be seized."³⁶ Peel's partner at Bury, Mr Yates wrote in equal alarm at the same time. "I am sorry to say that what I have seen and heard today, convince me that the country is ripe for rebellion and in a most dangerous situation and I firmly believe that if provisions continue at the present high prices, a Revolution will be the consequence."³⁷ A working man from Salford named Dyson was sent to the House of Correction for uttering the words 'Damn the King and Country. When told he would be informed against his anger spilled over into 'damn the magistrates, damn the volunteers as a set of damned fools', and that it 'time to take Billy Pitt's head off.'³⁸ However, more dangerous than the displays of verbal disaffection with the Government from the working classes of the North West was that doctrines subversive of the existing order were being formulated and circulated in the cotton districts. This was certainly the belief of Colonel Ralph Fletcher of Bolton who informed the Home Office that he had "encouraged several loyal masters who employ great numbers of servants in different branches of cotton manufacture, to examine into the political opinions of their workmen, and discharge such

are known to be Jacobin from their employ."³⁹

Such was the fear of the authorities of their growing unpopularity throughout the manufacturing districts of the North West that in 1801 the Home Office began the procedure of employing informants which was to last for over thirty years. The magistrate parson of Manchester Rev. Hay was overjoyed when he told the Duke of Portland he had secured the services of an informer,⁴⁰ and Col. Fletcher also began to use the services of a Mr Bent to infiltrate the meetings of the working class of Bolton.⁴¹

In 1803 an Amendment was made to the Arbitration Act, which empowered the magistrate to choose a panel of not less than four and no more than six persons, half representative of the manufacturers and half of the workmen. This amended version again proved ineffective although it served to split the Weavers Association into those - such as Richard Needham of Bolton - who were regarded as loyal weavers and those like John Knight of Oldham or Samuel Bayley of Rochdale who became convinced that appeals to an unreformed Parliament were useless. An example of this can be found in a petition from the weavers of Bolton who, in 1813 complained with retrospection that the Act of 1803 was "unavailing inasmuch as not one conviction before a magistrate under this law has ever been confirmed at any Quarter Sessions of the Peace."⁴²

However, growing disillusionment with the forces of authority did not prevent the moves to obtain a minimum wage for cotton workers in 1807/8, and this agitation was carried forward by the 'loyal' branch led by Needham. These loyal weavers were supported by the local elites and large manufacturers of Manchester, Chorley, Preston, Bolton and Stockport. Some of the employers even raised a subscription⁴³ in order that the workers representatives could travel to London to present their case to the President of the Board of Trade, Earl Bathurst and his Common Committee. This

again was greeted with deaf ears in London. The arguments raised against the measure of a fixed minimum wage included the problem of differing skills required for differing qualities of cuts and the numbers of workmen who would be discharged as a result of its possible enactment. It was also argued that the problem was not that wages were too low but that they were too high and thereby attracting an abnormal supply of labour to the trade. The news of the defeat in May 1808, gave rise to serious rioting in Manchester which left one man dead and several injured.⁴⁴ A strike followed with looms idle in Rochdale, Wigan, Bolton, Stockport, Bury and Chorley, and by early June in Manchester alone it was estimated that there were 60,000 looms idle.⁴⁵ The demand of the strikers was for a wage increase of thirty three and one third per cent on present wages. The masters almost at once agreed to increases of 20% Needham and the 'loyal' weavers supported the 20% offered by the Masters, but the strikers held out drawing on funds held by the Friendly Societies. The strike lasted until mid June and the extremists appear to have won further concessions from the manufacturers, but even in what was primarily an economic dispute political elements can be detected. Firstly the strike came about primarily because appeals to the conservative Whig/Tory government had failed. Secondly, and more explicitly some strike leaders were urging the men not to return to work but instead to direct their energies towards attacking the government and its war policies which, they argued, were the true sources of their distress.⁴⁶

The local and national authorities attempted to control this display of economic (and political) insubordination by the use of overt coercion. One magistrate from Wigan, Col. Silvester suggested that the taking away of shuttles by the strikers be made a capital felony, an expedient which commended itself to the Mayor of Wigan who reported to the Home Secretary, "The case was considered by me to be barely a felony - but I wished to give it that construction, conceiving that such an interpretation of the

offence would have great effect on the Minds of the People."⁴⁷

After a brief upsurge in trade in 1809/10 the cotton industry again entered into serious slump in August 1810, with the consequent reduction in wages. At Blackburn a 'Manifesto' was printed by the weavers elaborating a strategy of economic stability. The basis of their plan was:

Simply this; Reduce the quantity of foods when the market is overstocked, and their value will undoubtedly increase with the scarcity. Gentlemen, the whole body of weavers have come to a determination not to submit to a Reduction in Prices, but will rather be limited in the Quantity of their Work, and will, in conjunction with their Masters, bear every privation for a few weeks or months, until a change takes place in the Markets."⁴⁸

This manifesto created such a stir and not a little alarm to the Blackburn Magistrates that they asked for troops to be sent to the town. The local militia, they pointed out, was mostly composed of weavers.⁴⁹ Another manifestation of the discontent the working class of the North-West felt towards the government of Spencer Percival was that although petitions did continue to be sent to Parliament they were no longer addressed to Ministers of the Crown to present but to members of the reforming Whig opposition, most notably to the radical Samuel Whitbread⁵⁰ Petitions of 17,000 from Bolton, of 40,000 from Manchester were sent to the House of Commons,⁵¹ not just from weavers, but signed by mechanics, spinners, printers, tailors and others.

At Manchester a Committee of working men was formed to gather and forward the petition. Richard Taylor and John Knight were the chief organizers and Knight in particular was active in working class politics for many decades. When the House of Commons once again prevaricated on the claims of the workers of the North-West, Knight wrote a remarkable paper, which signals unavowedly the rise in the political consciousness of at least the working class

leadership. He argued that the evidence produced by the Committee as to the plight of working people in the North-West was irrefutable, but the Commons Committee could not suggest any single expedient to remedy the sufferings of the working class. Instead, Knight argued, the mood of the Commons Committee "tended to circumscribe matters which ought to be left to their own operation, and which like water would find their own level."⁵² In his paper Knight displayed a level of political sophistication and powers of logical argument which Pitt in his prime, or Canning would have been proud. It is worthy of extended quotation.

We are only mechanics, of course ill acquainted with the reason why the same measures are frequently opposed, at one time, by the same arguments by which at other times they are vindicated and supported. But considering the number of petitioners and the extent of their sufferings was it not possible that some reasonable portion of hope should not have been founded on these circumstances? But when we consider likewise, that the legislature has already interfered in matters of apparently less moment - has enacted laws for regulating the price of corn (Knight's emphasis), for fixing the assize of Bread, for fixing the price of labour in the case of the Spitalfields Weavers, and Journeymen Tailors of London; for augmenting the salaries of judges and clergymen; for regulating commerce, and a multitude of other things which time would fail to enumerate... This Committee are utterly at a loss to conceive on what fair ground legislative interference can be improper under circumstances so necessitous. If a large mound be projected from one bank of a river, the stream must necessarily make inroads on the opposite shore; and if laws can be made to regulate the necessities of life, laws should be enacted for regulating the wages by which such provisions must be purchased, especially when (as in our case) such wages have lost all reasonable balance and proportion... The moral to be drawn from these events is that the House of Commons, as is at present constituted or appointed, is unfit to manage your affairs... Had you possessed 70,000 votes to elect members to sit in that House, would your application have been treated with such indifference, not to say inattention? We believe not. You are urged to exert yourselves to recover the right of electing representatives and extending the franchise.⁵³

Knight's call for agitation surrounding the electoral franchise is important, for it shows that amongst the radical working class

leadership of Manchester at least the mood had changed from one of agitation of a pressure group type to one demanding wholesale political reform.

The disturbances which swept through the manufacturing districts of the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire have been well documented,⁵⁴ but it is essential that they be seen in the context of Knight's call for political action on the part of working people, by working people to attain representation on behalf of working people. That they were unsuccessful matters little in this context. What is important to note is that from a very early date in the emergence of the working class of the industrial North-West that they had developed a political side to their class consciousness. The actions of the authorities - both local and national - in attempting to curb this growth of working class resentment only served to highlight to the mass of the working class the apparent disdain which the conservative Whigs and Tories held them. Indeed many moderate members of the middle classes felt angered at the excessively harsh treatment which the forces of the state handed out to Luddites and political activists.

One example must suffice. When, in 1812 a mill at Westhoughton was destroyed by Luddites - instigated and encouraged as was later discovered by agents of Colonel Fletcher⁵⁵ - a Doctor Robert Taylor wrote a letter protesting at the severity of the sentences passed on those convicted. In his letter he picked out the possible reasons for the actions of the forces of authority and the lengths the state was prepared to go to suppress working class anger,

We are told of members of revolutionary principles which have been smouldering for years: and which... are revived by the fancied grievances of improved machinery... we are told that this evil was raised to its height by religious fanaticism prevalent in the manufacturing districts... I am, it is true a Dissenter, and some of Mr Fletcher and Mr Ainsworth's⁵⁶ friends in the enlightened Church and King Club, may possibly

have been instructed, that all Dissenters are Jacobins - and that all Jacobins ought to be swept into oblivion (Taylor's emphasis)... He (Fletcher) then expresses a doubt whether the mildness of these punishments did not operate as an encouragement to the disaffected in the Northern Counties... At Lancaster none of these qualms of compassion were allowed to interfere with the steady march of the law. There only eight were capitally convicted, but even-handed justice consigned the whole eight to the hands of the executioner... It will be recollected that one was a boy (of 13 years of age) so young and so childish, that he called out for his mother at the time of his execution, thinking she had the power to save him.⁵⁷

(It is little wonder that the authorities, especially the government were held in contempt by the mass of working people. These sentences were carried out in April 1812. When, on May 11 Prime Minister Perceval was assassinated in the House of Commons, elation was nationally felt amongst working people. At Bolton Colonel Fletcher complained 'the mob expressed joy (Fletcher's emphasis) at the News'.⁵⁸ In the Potteries a witness heard the news when, "A man came running down the street, leaping into the air, waving his hat around his head, and shouting with frantic joy 'Perceval is shot, hurrah! Perceval is shot, hurrah!'⁵⁹ A crowd in Nottingham celebrated and 'paraded the town with drums beating and flags flying in triumph.' Outside the House of Commons, when Bellingham the deranged assassin was taken away 'there were repeated shouts of applause'.⁶⁰ The conservative Whigs and Tories then, as is apparent from the above, were not at all popular in the final years before the end of the Napoleonic wars.

Nor, indeed were they when the war was successfully concluded. The great hero, Wellington was even one of their own ilk, and even this factor did little to raise their esteem with the masses. During those post-war years the political dimension of working class consciousness continued to increase amongst the working class of the industrial North-West. A spirit of hostility to employers and the authorities was a marked feature of this development. Under the influence of the political reformers many

out of work labourers and weavers began to look with ridicule at the efforts of private charity undertaken by the local elites. "What do the poor want", ran one Bolton pamphlet, "Wages not alms: Work not charity."⁶¹ At Wigan the attitude of the working class was even more direct and uncompromising, declining to receive the local charitable subscription, "using very impious language and observing they would have reform not relief."⁶²

What is interesting is the development in most parts of the region of an intra-class leadership among working people at this particular time, a phenomenon which the local middle classes were to exploit with vigour in the 1830's. However, in these years after the end of the Napoleonic wars the national political leaders of the conservative Whig/Tory party appeared to have no understanding of the possible political advantage such gestures of involvement and interest might procure. This again is in marked contrast to the situation which came about after the 1832 Reform Act was operational, as we shall subsequently discover.

An example of the national leaders apparent ignorance of the political advantages to the party of at least listening and encouraging anti-Reform sentiments amongst the working class leaders came in 1816. At Bolton the anti-Reform working class leadership was Richard Needham, Thomas Thorp and Thomas Ainsworth. The latter recalled in a later letter to the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, an interview he had with him in 1816. At this time he presented to Sidmouth, at the Home Secretary's request 'a statement of the fair average price of labour paid to weavers',⁶³ adding his own suggestions for relief. At the time of the interview, Ainsworth reminded Sidmouth:-

...a petition lay upon the table signed by 20,000 weavers to the Prince Regent. I hope your Lordship will pardon my being plain. I did feel most intensely the slight and cursory manner in which your Lordship overlooked the paper, and the few minutes you took to give a decisive answer to what concerned near a million of souls. Seeing the weekly

earnings you said, "poor things! can nothing be done for them." I replied (feeling as I did, rather too warmly, for which afterwards I was very sorry), "It is as easy as for your Lordship to wind up your watch." After a very few words, laying your hands upon the Weavers Petition you said, "You may tell the Petitioners, I will present their petition to the P. Regent at the Levee on Monday next." Then obeying your Lordships motion, I bowed and left the room. Week after week I was enquired of, if any answer was received? No, No, No, was as often repeated.

It would seem that after this display of ministerial intolerance and, indeed indifference, the 'Loyalist' triumvirate of Bolton became supporters of Parliamentary Reform. For all three of the loyalists spoke in favour of reform - as well as the minimum wage - at a meeting called for the purpose of attaining Parliamentary Reform held at Bolton in late September 1816.⁶⁴

This lack of awareness of the potential importance of political support amongst sections of the working class, indeed the apparent indifference which leaders like Sidmouth attached to it, may serve to illustrate the point we made in Chapter Two. Prior to 1832 the notion of 'party' and what modern political scientists have seen as a pre-requisite of party i.e. a wide political basis of support, was not present. This served to alienate those moderate members of the working class and drew them nearer to the entrenched opponents of the conservative Whigs and Old Tories. What we are suggesting however is that the attitudes of the elites, and of the working class were undergoing a transformation. This environment of attitudinal change affected the urban groups of the industrial North-West profoundly in the years between 1790 and 1832. The Act of 1832 can be seen as a catalyst to changes in the British political culture in that parties became stronger, also they began to integrate social groups into their orbit and it forced the elites to take notice of the interests and orientations of groups the system had previously ignored. Before we describe the activities of the national political leaders during the reform crisis and the effect the Act had on subsequent party

organization, let us end this chapter with a description of the continued growth of the political dimension of working class consciousness.

IV WORKING CLASS DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1820's

At first many working class leaders were reluctant to embrace the 'Jacobin' views of Painite radicalism in the years between 1790 and 1815. Primarily because of the anti-patriotic taint such views engendered. However it would seem that after the conclusion of the war such expressions became widespread amongst the working class of the North-West. This is important because it shows that the working class were developing a political strategy for the attainment of a power to redress their grievances. Whether this manifested itself in the alternatives of either the violent forms of direct action levelled against the 'progressive' mill owners or others of the local elites, or whether it was in the elaboration and the widespread articulation of Painite social and political reforms is of less importance to this thesis than the fact that it existed, and served to politically unite the working class of the North-West.

Of course, throughout the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century, political groups attempted to use working class muscle as a means of intimidating the electors in a given direction. But what is apparent from the 1790's is that this 'Church and King mob' factor is less pronounced. Certain individuals could be bought to inform on their fellow class members, but these were only individuals and this tactic had the effect of underscoring on the one hand the hatred of the government and on the other of how the 'lower orders' had been used as pawns in the past.

This point regarding the united political front of the working class, the development of their own radicalism and the serious political threat being posed to the local and national elites can be clearly seen if we look at the developments from 1818 to 1832. At Blackburn for example in 1819, working class women organized themselves into a Reform Society as a branch of the towns male version.⁶⁵ At meetings of 30,000⁶⁶ working class reformers in the town held on 5 July 1819 the Female Reform Society carried the banner 'Liberty or Death'. Mrs Alice Kitchen called for all working men in the country to join the general union and for universal suffrage, election by ballot and annual Parliaments.⁶⁷ The point that working people would attain redress for their grievances when they had political representatives elected by themselves, in the House of Commons was reiterated by John Knight. He called for a minimum wage, and legislation to back it up, repeal of the Corn Laws and other restrictions of common use. He continued, "As long as our laws are made by men whose interests are so different - if not opposed to the general good - there is very little room to hope for any improvement in our situation, any diminution of our extreme and unprecedented sufferings...nothing less than a radical reform of the Commons House of Parliament will ever produce any considerable diminution of your sufferings or procure any permanent relief."⁶⁸

Knight's remarks were made at a meeting held in Manchester in July 1819. In August there occurred the event which was to serve as a lasting influence upon the British political tradition, especially concerning the politics of the working class. On August 16 there assembled between 60 and 100,000 persons at St Peter's Fields, Manchester to peacefully demonstrate in favour of Parliamentary Reform. The demonstration had been planned for weeks in advance and the authorities in Manchester and in London were apprized of the potential for disorder. Lord Sidmouth agreed that the main speaker, Henry Hunt was to be arrested in the midst of the assembly. All the fear and contempt of the authorities

towards the working class reformers was unleashed on that day. The Yeomanry charged the crowd as Hunt was about to speak, in the ensuing confusion eleven were killed by the sabres of the yeomanry and over five hundred were injured. The mood of one Manchester magistrate and manufacturer was described to John Cam Hobhouse by Francis Place, prior to the attack of August. This gives us some impression of how certain quarters reacted to working class social, economic and political demands.

(These Manchester yeoman and magistrates are a greater set of brutes than you form a conception. I know one of these fellows who swears 'Damn his eyes, seven shillings a week is plenty for them'; and when he goes round to see how much work his weavers have in their looms, he takes a well fed dog with him... He said some time ago that 'The sons of bitches had eaten up all the stinging nettles for ten miles around Manchester, and now they have no greens to their broth.' Upon my expressing indignation, he said, 'Damn their eyes, what need you care about them? How could I sell you goods so cheap if I cared anything about them.'⁶⁹

The charge by the Yeomanry at St Peter's Fields undoubtedly left a lasting impression on the working class of the North-West, but its immediate aftermath had a greater effect on working class radicalism than the authorities could have considered. For the incident served to split the Radical Leadership and their supporters into Constitutionalists (Hunt, Sir Francis Burdett, J T Saxton and others) and 'Ultras' or extremists, (Arthur Thistlewood, Richard Carlile, James Watson etc). The extremists were in the majority in Bolton, Blackburn, Wigan, Oldham and Burnley. The Constitutionalists were in the majority in Manchester, Bury, Liverpool and Preston. However, this split was rendered less significant by the fact that, throughout this development of working class radicalism, the leadership in a national sense had been poor. If sections of the middle classes had sympathy for the plight of the working class and agreed with them in their claims regarding the unrepresentative nature of the House of Commons (especially so after the savagery of Peterloo and

the revelations of the Government spies and 'agent provocateur's) such feelings were dissipated over the Cato Street Conspiracy, when Thistlewood and his colleagues attempted to assassinate the cabinet at dinner early in 1820.

Following the debacle of Cato Street for most of the 1820's working class radicalism was effectively leaderless, except for the demagoguery of Hunt and the radical Toryism of William Cobbett. What is remarkable however, is that the political element of working class consciousness continued to grow in many parts of the North-West. In the years between 1790 and 1820 the emerging working class and their leaders were devoting their energies to harnessing their grievances and industrial claims to wider political mobilization. This was, in a sense, a knee-jerk reaction to the new work processes and the intolerance and injustice they perceived emanating from those classes above them. This was in the tradition of the eighteenth century, and indeed the even earlier perception of the just, or, fair price, of, in essence a leveller tradition. What we can see from 1811, and Knight's manifesto, is the awakening of the working class leadership to other, more subtle and sophisticated strategy. This involved politically educating the mass of the working class as to their real economic position and the exploitative relationship they were involved in under the capitalist factory system. This manifested itself at the time in insurrecting displays of violence, but it was not revolutionary in that these leaders in the main did not wish to destroy the political system but merely to be a part of it. Government coercion was savage, and it did force down the lid on the barrel of rising discontent, but the resentment it left for the pre-Reform political leaders was widespread. What was notable about this period was that throughout the North-West the working class were united in their solidarity - which cut across status and trade boundaries - to defend their living standards. It was this more than anything else which gave the radicals their positions of leadership.

The 1820's up to the Reform Crisis of 1831/2 consolidated this educative process. The growth of unstamped radical tracts - mostly pursuing a republican democratic line on the basis of Paine's writing - was most notable between 1819 and 1833. There was Cobbett's Political Register, Wolley's Black Dwarf, Doherties Voice of the People, The Red Publican, The Destructive, The Pioneer, The Poor Man's Guardian and many, many more. Added to this was the growth of working class literacy and political education associated with the Sunday schools, especially those of the Primitive Methodists. There was also the development of a fiercely independent form of trade union consciousness, with a strong sense of the need for political radicalism. At Stockport for example, the local radical leader Joseph Mitchell reported that the Primitive Methodist chapel was used on the Monday night as a meeting point for working class leaders, on Tuesday for 'moral and political readings'; on Wednesdays, 'a conversation or debate'; Thursday, 'Grammar, Arithmetic etc' was taught. Saturday was a social evening; while Sunday was a school day for adults and children alike.⁷⁰ This work of education as well as being carried on through the medium of the unstamped press and the radical Sunday schools,⁷¹ was also being carried on in the home. In Blackburn members of the Female Reform Society pledged themselves "to use our utmost endeavour to instil into the minds of our children a deep and rooted hatred of our corrupt and tyrannical rulers."⁷² Thus throughout the 1820's, class consciousness was steadily growing and becoming mature amongst the working class of the industrial North-West.

It had been argued that naturally the 1820's as a decade was relatively peaceful compared to the previous two decades.⁷³ But in the North-West this was not the case. Although, as we noted above there were variations in the intensity of feeling in differing parts of the region; and this may be attributed to the 'constitutional' or extreme nature of the radical leadership in

any particular place - a theme incidentally which we shall pursue later in the thesis - but all the working class leadership shared an intense mistrust, not to say hatred, of the national political elite.

Throughout the 1820's in East Lancashire (the towns around Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington etc) the working class appeared to have displayed tendencies of extreme radicalism, that is of the physical force form of direct action against the local elites in positions of power and local manufacturers. Furthermore this seems to have been the situation prior to Peterloo and was maintained afterwards in the climate of the Government's further attempts at suppressing radicalism through the further suspension of Habeas Corpus and the Six Acts. Disputes at Blackburn began in 1823 with the reneging of the masters to keep to the price lists agreed in to 1812 and 1818, at Burnley it was reported that 10 or 15 thousand had gathered for a meeting despite the warnings of the magistrates ordering them not to do so.⁷⁴ By 1826 the situation in East Lancashire had deteriorated further with the trade recession of the previous twelve months. At a meeting of the Blackburn weavers in late March it was announced that out of a work-force of 10,786 town-based hand loom weavers, only 2,807 were in full employment, 6,412 were unemployed and the rest, 1,467 on half-time.⁷⁵ It was also noted that the poor rates were exhausted as was the subscription fund. As to the blame for this situation the working class leaders pointed to the free imposition on power-looms without any taxation of horse-power capacity; the lack of a minimum wage; the lack of a uniform price list for cotton cuts; and finally, (and importantly, for here we have the political element) they blamed the government for the prejudiced operation of the corn laws.

On April 18 a group of manufacturers were stoned as their coach arrived at Syke's power loom factory in Accrington and the First Dragoon Guards were dispatched from Blackburn. On Monday 24 April

a mass meeting was held at Enfield situated half way between Accrington, Burnley and Blackburn, at which delegates from the Weavers Association throughout Lancashire held a conference and then addressed the crowd. Afterwards 10,000 marched to Blackburn as a display of unity and strength. At the time the Blackburn Mail noted, "They came in good order and quietly into the town; about 500 were armed with pikes, several with fire arms (these were called 'captains'); some with large hammers, and the remainder with various weapons."⁷⁶ The effect of these types of demonstrations of working class force should not be underestimated on the psychology of the middle classes and the authorities. Here were 10,000 people armed to the teeth, openly defying the civil and military power of the district. It is little wonder that the local elites felt threatened, for this was no mere demonstration against food shortages, but against the power of the manufacturers. A reporter from the Preston Chronicle gave an impression of the display. "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.'"⁷⁷

The following day the attacks on the Blackburn mills began. Messrs Haughton's was visited and all the looms destroyed at the factory of Bannister Eccles not only were the looms broken but explosives destroyed the entire factory. The mills of Feildens were visited as were those of Thorp and Townley, but these were left intact as no looms had yet been delivered.⁷⁸ The same day in Manchester the mills of T and M Harbottle were attacked and all the looms broken, also the factory belonging to Hugh Beaver was attacked and buildings fired, also those of Clegg and Norris at Long Millgate, the foundry of Peel and Williams and Company were attacked and much damage done.⁷⁹ On the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of that week mills were attacked at Rochdale, Bury,

Helmshore, Edenfield, Oswaldtwistle, Clitheroe, Chorley, Darwen, Wigan and Barrowford near Colne.⁸⁰

That this was a spontaneous outbreak of mindless violence is unlikely. It is probable that the attacks were planned at the Conference of the Weavers Association the previous Monday at Enfield. Thus it is likely that there was a region-wide level of organization intent on inflicting as much damage on the manufacturers as possible.

(On Thursday the 27th at Blackburn the military assembled in force and the magistrates read the Riot Act, in the ensuing confrontation six of the machine breakers were killed. On the same day at Chorley a correspondent of the Preston Chronicle described the scene of machine breaking: "I saw a rioter at work, and the coolness and determination with which they destroyed everything was surprising. There was no appearance of haste, but on the contrary, the greatest serenity." The mob, he said, had come from Blackburn, but that, "there can be no doubt a great multitude of the townspeople were their friends...the women supplied the rioters with stones, concealing the missiles under their aprons."⁸¹

The following week the troubles spread. On Sunday April 30 a mass meeting was held at Tandel Hill near Oldham, and then the factories of Cleggs were attacked, also those of Milne, Travis and Milne. On the Monday the mills of Collins and Lancashire were destroyed. At Chadderton, also near Oldham, the mills of Aitkins were attacked and in the pitched battle with the military, eight rioters were killed. There was a serious riot at Macclesfield and power loom factories were destroyed as far away as Wakefield and Bradford in Yorkshire.

On the Monday of the second week a series of demands were issued to the manufacturers of Blackburn, and they were based essentially

on three points. Firstly it was demanded that a lot of prices be drawn up which would be applied consistently to power-loom weavers, hand loom weavers and cotton spinners. Secondly the use of power looms was to be regulated and employed only in the manufacture of non-intricate cuts, it's status being downgraded to that of semi-skilled work suitable for women and children, the idea here being to control the access to skilled work. Thirdly a tax was to be levied 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 the occasions when the weavers suffered privation due to the downturn in trade. The tax had also a sense of symbolic justice about it in that it seemed to many working people as though the manufacturers were escaping from their obligations of paying a 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 the church rate. On this occasion all the demands were refused by the manufacturers, and when the magistrates amongst them announced that on that very day news arrived that the King had given a donation of 1000 pounds to the relief fund, for his pains the magistrate was stoned.⁸²

Although a degree of planning is evident on a region-wide scale, there were variations in different districts regarding tactics. At a meeting in Manchester on Saturday April 29 a weaver named Jonathan Hodgins from Stockport urged moderation without violence;⁸³ a man named Aikins from Bolton pursued the same line arguing that petitions and memorials would serve the weavers interests better in the long run than direct action. This kind of working class leadership may explain why there was little violence at either Stockport or Bolton at this time, a point we shall return to later in the thesis.

However it is important to note the apparent closeness of the working relationship between the various textile crafts (hand loom

weavers, power loom operators and spinners) at this time. Indeed, the spinners maintained a strike for two months after the disturbances over the issue of a uniform price list for all textile workers. What is worth stressing is 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 or mechanization entirely, but simply to limit its use. This attempting enhancement of the bargaining position suggests that this was not mere Luddism. For example at no time was the mechanized spinning equipment touched. Indeed it is notable that the town of Preston escaped the violence primarily because a uniform list of prices was already in operation and the mills in this town operated power and hand loom weaving with apparent harmony; the former, manufacturing mass produced shirting and the hand loom weavers the fine calicos,⁸⁴ all in the same mill complex. Further supporting the apparent lack of status differentiation at this time is that the various textile Workers Associations in operation all contained representatives from each of the branches of the textile trades, with equal examples given to each. Nor was this trades harmony restricted to the textile trades, the mechanics and other engineering workers sent memorials to London.⁸⁵ Neither was geography a problem, for support and relief to the textile workers of East Lancashire came from Manchester, Liverpool, London and the weavers of Yeovil in Somerset organized meetings and collected funds.

We have attempted to show that there existed among manufacturing people of the North-West a perception, dating from at least 1811, that political rights were required if they were to enhance their class position. This, we would suggest is a sign of rising levels of working class consciousness. Some might dispute this. We have heard a great deal about pressure group demands, rather less of demands for actual political rights. The violent disputes of 1826

were essentially a form of spontaneous pressure group activity centred on primarily economic grievances. But the political element was 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."⁸⁶ The logic of the situation also suggests that a political element was present: here were a large section of the region's population suffering appalling privations due to trade recession and industrial rationalization and the government appeared not to be acting in their interests but in the interests of those groups the working class believed were the cause of their problems, the aristocratic idlers, the place and fund holders, but also importantly the industrial manufacturers of nascent capitalism. Not only this but the Government seemed unwilling, indeed hostile to combating high food prices by allowing cheaper foreign grain into this country and sticking rigidly to the 1815 Corn Laws was protecting one group in society at the expense of another. It is thus only a short step from being able to recognise 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 legislate on behalf of those who feel they are being repressed. The obvious solution for the industrial workers, which became apparent from 1811 onwards was to gain working class representation within the institutions of local and national political control. In the local sense this was focused on those ancient institutions of local politics; the Open Vestry and the Select Vestry, and in the national sense on the growing realization of the necessity of the reform of Parliament to include representatives of the working class interest.

What needs reiterating about working class development at this time, in contrast to the subsequent events after 1832 is the homogeneous nature of the working class response. Evidence for this comes from the developing notion of general unionism and in

the way the various trades were able to co-operate with each other. We have noted how, in various parts of the region, the hand loom weavers, power-loom weavers and spinners were able to work together on equal terms. But also many other tradesmen were involved in pre-Reform Act working class politics; shoemakers, 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.

We suggest that one can gain some idea of the level of working class consciousness and their disaffection with the political elites by examining the responses of those social groups who were directly affected by the increased levels of working class activism, namely, middle classes and manufacturers. It is apparent also that the methods of controlling and containing the activities of the emergent working class which ranged from overt state coercion to conciliation were not functioning well, given the continuing problems the working class posed to the authorities from the 1790's. However, this varied within the region. At Stockport for example overt displays of middle class public and private charity appear to have placated the local working class political leader, William Longson, who only advocated physical force as a last resort. He mounted his campaign around the issues of wage equalization, the re-allocation on equal terms of work between hand and power loom operatives (an early form of work-sharing), reductions of the duties of cotton thread exports and grain imports. At Bolton and Preston similar displays of conciliation also helped to prevent serious confrontations, and Bolton particularly had a reputation for machine breaking and working class political radicalism. By contrast in the Oldham area, the manufacturers resisted all working class demands and serious violence ensued, and, as we have seen, the same kind of development occurred in East Lancashire.

The overall effect of the working class struggles from 1811 through the 1820's; was to induce fear and shock among the middle class. If they had contrived to dismiss the Jacobin 'cranks' and 'demagogues' in the past, towards the end of the 1820's they began to take their threats seriously and lobbied the local and national political leaders for the imposition of effective powers of control. If anything the relationship between the forces of authority (and the middle class and manufacturers of the industrial North West) and those opposed to them (an increasingly articulate and frustrated working class) were not improving as industrial capitalism became more consolidated but deteriorating.

The ease with which the working class could destroy the mills suggests that the mechanism of order and social control were being stretched to breaking point. Apart from sending in military force - which was unwelcome, unpopular and might provide further trouble - there was little the state could do to protect property against a determined mob. There was virtually no regular police force, and all the local magistrates could do was to hope to keep a line of communication with the sources of potential trouble by the use of spies and informants, or sign in special constables, or form a loose and undisciplined local yeomanry and of course keep the national authorities informed. A less coercive means of attempting control was public and private charity, but the sheer state of the recession of the 1820's rendered this inoperable in many parts of the North-West. As we shall show⁸⁷ in subsequent chapters the propertied middle classes and the manufacturers felt threatened by what they perceived as an increasingly violent and 'revolutionary' working class, they felt helpless and confused, and they too blamed the government for its apparent inability to adequately protect property.

Increasingly, the working class of the industrial North-West had abandoned their attitude of social deference and began to develop

a radical set of political solutions. It has been suggested by some historians that nationally the working class as a whole had not manifested a recognizable class consciousness in the early nineteenth century - let alone a revolutionary consciousness. They point out that they had not advanced political theory or strategy.⁸⁸

Indeed some have suggested that they had no political aspiration at all.⁸⁹ In the same vein the agitation surrounding Parliamentary reform in early years of the 1830's, the involvement of the working class is portrayed as merely the tale of a middle class inspired strategy.

Firstly let us examine the arguments that the working class had no political side to their agitation in the period from 1810 to 1830. As we have attempted to show above during the early phase of these struggles from 1810 to 1820's, although the primary aim was the removal of economic impediments to working class independence by exerting pressure and manufacturers and the forces of authority, a political edge did develop as witnessed by the formation of Parliamentary Reform Associations throughout the manufacturing districts of the North-West region. Indeed these associations included branches formed by arguably the most disadvantaged group of all, the women. Although the mass involvement in these associations may have waned and been re-lit during times of trade recession, this does not necessarily mean that working people lost interest in political solutions to their collective predicament. It merely means that probably they were engaged in other things, most notably the very act of working for a living. However, in most of the larger demonstrations of working class grievances, both locally and at a region-wide level, the working class political symbols were to be found; the tricolour, the symbol of the French Revolution of 1789, and the white scarf - the symbol of universal suffrage.⁹⁰ More often than not the speeches delivered on such occasions would include

references to political matters, be it Parliamentary Reform, or the unjust nature of the operation of the Corn Laws, or the acts of repression on the part of local and national governmental bodies. Thus to suggest that during this period the working class had no political aspirations is highly misleading.

We can briefly turn to the claim that working class politics had not developed any sense of political strategy or theory. This is more difficult to disprove but there are signs that an abstract form of political thought based on popular democracy was being articulated and developed amongst wide sections of working people before 1832. This took various forms - from the simple recapturing of lost rights to the calls of William Benbow in 1831 for a month long strike by the working classes during which they would assume control of the nations resources and government.⁹¹ If we have to point to a single work or works by a single author which had the effect of proselytizing the idea of popular democracy amongst the working class, and encapsulated their feelings during the first three decades of the nineteenth century (and indeed beyond), then it would probably be Tom Paine's Rights of Man and Age of Reason (especially the former), both of which date from the last years of the eighteenth century. Neither book, nor indeed any of Paine's work, rank as first class examples of political thought (Burke got much the better of the battle between the two), but on the level of popularizing a series of ideas regarding the abuses inherent within the British political system at that time, he was extremely successful. Paine's call was essentially one in which the people of Britain be given definable and legitimate rights based upon common justice and fairness, in short a call for a Bill of Rights comparable with that of the U.S.A. Simultaneously, the legislature had to be purged of the place-hunting, fund-holding, sinecurists, and the corrupt hangers-on of the aristocracy. Once these had been swept away a popular legislature would be formed based on the mandate of universal suffrage. At the time of Paine's political activities in the

1790's, his ideas received a direct attack, from the conservative Whig Edmund Burke, who had the misfortune to utter two words which inflamed the passions of working people and contributed to their rising dislike of conservative Whiggery and Toryism, when he described the lower orders as the 'swinish multitude', such pejorative language did not endear the starving industrial workers of the ensuing period to the side of Paine's opponents.

In the fifth chapter of the second part of Rights of Man, Paine offers a series of proposals which were to become the bedrock of radical reformism for the next two hundred years. He advocated a reduction of spending with regard to the Army and Navy, abolishing the poor rates, the Church rates and other taxes on the impoverished. Necessary revenue was to be raised by the introduction of a graduated income tax, rising to 20 shillings in the pound for those with an income in excess of 23,000 pounds. Finance raised was to be spent on alleviating and improving the conditions of the poor. A system of family allowance was to be introduced, a state aided system of state education for children, an old-age pension, benefits for newly married couples, a maternity benefit and the building of combined lodging houses and workshops to help migrants and the unemployed. Just how much purchase these ideas gained amongst the working class is difficult to assess, but Paine's works sold very well and it is highly probable that his ideas were explained to many of the working people for whom they were expressly designed.

Paine's works are radical, but they are essentially reformist, albeit couched in the language of republicanism. Nowhere does he speak of economic levelling, or the termination of the basically subordinate relationship between labour and capital; indeed he extols the virtues of commercial and industrial enterprise. Thus, if we are seeking to trace the thread of reformism in the political thought and actions of the British working class in the

nineteenth century, Painite radicalism takes us back a very long way.

This brings us to a further argument - that the working class were used by the middle class reformers to gain them a greater involvement in Parliamentary politics. This view suggests that all working class political activity was merely the tail of middle class led organizations for Parliamentary reform and that the working class actions, during the Reform crisis of the early 1830's were never revolutionary. Again the evidence here is contradictory. Some areas were more active than others, and the activities took on differing forms depending on the area. If one examines the politics of Birmingham⁹² for example, during this period one undoubtedly is aware that the calls for reform and its subsequent organization were firmly in the control of the middle class and the lower middle class. But if one goes to Bolton or Manchester, or Blackburn or Oldham, one sees the same political unions based on the Birmingham model, but firmly under the control of the factory based working class.⁹³ One significant reason why one would not find this situation in Birmingham, was that the structure of capitalistic development differed from that of the North-West. Birmingham certainly had industry in the early 1830's, but there was not a large-scale factory population; it was based mainly around a network of small workshops and 'little masters', unlike the factory towns and cities of the North-West.

The conventional argument⁹⁴ is that the national leaders of the moves for Parliamentary reform - Place, Attwood, Brougham, Parks etc - merely used the threat of working class resistance, and even rebellion as a means of negotiating a settlement suitable for all but the most die-hard defenders of the old system. But the fact is that the Tory and conservative Whig resisters to reform-Wellington, Peel, Croker et al - were well aware of the blackmailing efforts of Brougham and the reform leaders, but quickly realized that once the rebellion or revolution threat had

been put in train the chances of the middle class leadership being able to contain it were very slim. This fact was also known to the working class leaders as well. As the Poor Man's Guardian pointed out in October 1831 during the height of the first phase of the reform crisis:-

...a violent revolution is not beyond the means of those who threaten it, but it is also to them their greatest object of alarm; for they know that such a revolution can only be affected by the poor and despised millions, who, if excited to the step, might use for their own advantage... who would thus (then) have their clear rights and property endangered; (?) be assured that a violent revolution is their greatest dread.⁹⁵

The ministry of the reforming Whigs was well aware of the mood of rising expectations of many working class radicals on the one hand, and, the taunts of the Tories on the other, that they were giving too much away in their scheme of reform. This is why they drew a precise picture of who was to receive the vote and who denied it. This is why the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, said in the House of Lords in November 1831 in an attempt to forestall any leaps in the expectations of the extreme radicals:- "If any persons suppose that this reform will lead to ulterior measures, they are mistaken; for there is no one more decided against annual Parliaments, universal suffrage and the ballot than I am. My object is not to favour, but to put an end to such hopes."⁹⁶ In the immediate aftermath of this statement many of the aspirations of the radicals were dampened, but many of the working class in the manufacturing towns still clung to the idea of radical reform, even after Grey's speech, and they began to take over the organization of the movement from the middle class reformers. As Francis Place noted also in 1831.

The systematic way in which the people proceeded, their steady perseverance, the activity and skill astounded the enemies of reform. Meetings of almost every description of persons were held in cities, towns and parishes, by journeymen tradesmen in their clubs and by common workmen who

had no trade clubs or associations of any kind.⁹⁷

In all the manufacturing towns of the North-West political unions were formed, and as noted above, by 1832, the majority were in the hands of the working classes. Just how this was achieved is interesting, and offers an example of the high levels of working class consciousness and the anti-Tory feeling operating at this time. At Bolton the local Political Union was formed in the Autumn of 1830 and was at this time made up predominantly of the lower middle class 'shopocracy', the small manufacturers and the skilled working man. However, by December 1831 its committee of 25 persons was made up overwhelmingly by what a contemporary source described as 'chiefly working men'.⁹⁸ What happened was that the moderate lower middle class had been ousted by the more extreme working class radicals. The split occurred in October 1831 when the Reform Bill had been thrown out by the Lords after much wrecking and prevarication. In Bolton, a public meeting was called for but refused by the Borough reeve on the specious grounds of the cost to the ratepayers. The situation deteriorated and reached a potentially dangerous point in November when the King issued a Royal Proclamation outlawing Political Unions and banning all political meetings. On November 27 a meeting of the Bolton Political Union was held and attended by the entire committee. Votes were taken and resolutions passed calling for universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and annual Parliaments without either property qualification for the electors or the elected.⁹⁹ At this meeting the shopkeepers and moderate radicals led by William Naisby walked out when a call came to hold an open-air public meeting in defiance of the Royal Proclamation. Thus the council of the Political Union was firmly in the hands of the working class radicals. On the 28th (a work day) the public meeting was held in Bradford Square. In the chair, Thomas Smith, a weaver, opened the meeting by calling for a Painite Bill of Rights, and again reiterated the call for a radical reform of Parliament, whilst at the same time conceding "that all property

honestly acquired be sacred and inviolable.¹⁰⁰ But the cry was also 'down with the Bishops' and 'No Peers',¹⁰¹ thus underscoring once again the Painite influence. At this time the Bolton Union claimed a membership in excess of 4000 and all the members paid a regular membership fee of 2d per month; its total funds by the end of 1831 were put at over 1000 pounds. By the standards of the 1820's and 1830's this level of working class political organization is impressive, and it was to become mobilized to an even greater extent in 1832 when Lord Grey's government resigned and created the so called days of May crisis.

The working class of the North-West believed (wrongly as it quickly became apparent in 1833) that the Reform Bill of 1832 was but the first step in a series of reforms which would restore their political, social and economic rights. Thus it had to be supported at all costs even in the face of discouraging statements made by Grey, Landsdowne and Russell. The Tory opposition to the bill believed in roughly the same kind of scenario: they heard Grey's denunciation of extremists and how he would preserve the rights of property at all costs and further how moderate the claims of the Reform Bill were, but the prevailing Conservative and Tory fear was that to allow one crack in the dam of the Constitution and the 'revolutionary flood would rush in',¹⁰² as the Tory editor of a Blackburn newspaper so graphically put it. Many of the above factors are evident in a letter sent by John Wilson Croker, the former Tory Admiralty chief, to the Home Secretary, Melbourne. However, the most important point to note is that it is apparent from Croker's letter that he claims the working class of the North-West had been mobilized, and that many of them had set off to march to London 'to carry the bill', under the most spurious of pretences.

I think it right to acquaint you that there arrived today in this little village some workmen from Manchester, who, under the pretence of offering some cotton yarn for sale, were strong and sturdy beggars...they told me they had left

Manchester in a considerable body (Croker's emphasis)... The article they had for sale could be of no value to the villagers and it is clearly a pretence. After some conversation...they said they would not go back to Manchester until they had carried the Reform Bill with them - and that there were thousands and thousands resolved upon that -¹⁰³

Two final comments by later historians confirm the view, that at this particular time, working class consciousness was sufficiently high to bring about an open rebellion if not an actual revolution. The first comes from G D H Cole, who said in The Common People "Never since 1688 had Great Britain been so near an actual revolution; never in all the troubles of the next two decades was she to come so near it again."¹⁰⁴ Secondly, the judgment of Edward Thompson. "In the autumn of 1831 and in the 'days of May' Britain was within an ace of revolution which once commenced, might well (if we consider the simultaneous advance in co-operative and trade union theory) have prefigured in its rapid radicalization, the revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune."¹⁰⁵ Thompson bases his assessment on the power of the middle class/working class radical alliance, suggesting that the working class response had a strength which had not been seen before. In fact, as we have attempted to show above, working class political development in certain parts of the North-West region was even in advance of this. As witnessed by the way their leadership dispensed with the lower middle class dominated political unions and took over their organizations, advocating a much more working class orientated set of aims and objectives.

The Tory and Conservative opposition certainly expected trouble, indeed revolution. The Duke of Wellington personally supervised the preparations in the case of an attempted seizures of Strathfieldsaye, his country home.¹⁰⁶ Croker arranged for ships in order that his family and friends may flee the country,¹⁰⁷ and even the unflappable Peel began to arrange his own private army at Drayton.¹⁰⁸ The usually taciturn Francis Place - of the leaders

of reform but no friend of revolution or indeed radical working class politics - noted in May 1832 in a private letter

We were within a moment of a general rebellion, and had it been possible for the Duke of Wellington to form an administration the thing and the people would have been at issue... Barricades of the principle towns - stopping the circulation of paper money...(in short) it would have been an act of the whole people to a greater extent than any which had ever before been accomplished.¹⁰⁹

Rebellion or revolution was prevented on the one hand by the reformers moderate national leadership being able to convince the working class that the Reform was merely the first stage in a series of reforms designed to rectify social and political imbalances. On the other this process was assisted by the statements of national leaders like William Cobbett who suggested that half a loaf was better than none. Also it should be noted that violent revolution was not essentially what the working class actually wanted. What they did want was those placed socially above them to witness their plight and to see their point of view. In this sense revolt could only occur as a last resort. But the situation was getting very serious as incidents at Derby, Nottingham and Bristol revealed. However, in the final analysis it must be said that it is probable that a general insurrection would only have to have been forced on the working class by the intransigence of the 'diehards' and Ultra Tories. Basically, it appears that even at this high level of working class consciousness the working class wished if possible to follow the reformist path and this ran deep in the British radical tradition.¹¹⁰

However, working class consciousness was operating at a very high level in the pre-Reform period. There also appears a strong sense of intra-class political unity coupled with a developed sense of political awareness in a class sense; there was also a will to advance the interests of the class in a political sense and there

was a will to act on behalf of those interests. Here we see the beginnings of a working class based programme for political and social change based on a crude, but effective form of political theory linked to popular democracy and an economic theory based on co-operation. Finally there was a sense of mass unity without the sectionalization inherent within intra-class status differentiation. In the five or so years after 1831/2 however, this high level of working class consciousness was to fragment, and we suggest it never reached a comparable level of intensity for the next fifty years. For, although class consciousness did rise during the first phase of the Chartist years, from 1838 to 1842, changes in the structural relations between capital and labour coupled with the subtle changes in the nations political culture in the years between 1832 and 1842 meant that Chartism never looked likely to succeed in dramatically and radically changing society in comparison to the potential the working class had in 1831/32. This distinction between the two phases of activity is based on comparing on the one hand the fears perceptible among those social groups above the working class in the early 1830's with those of the early 1840's, and on the other hand of the relative inability of the authorities to control a dangerous situation in 1831/2, and their ability to control Chartism between 1838 and 1842. It is the consideration of how this situation began to change after 1833, and further how inter-class relationships began to improve and how the initiative was seized by the predominantly middle class groups that concerns the rest of this thesis.

SUMMARY

In this rather long chapter we have attempted to show the nature of the relationship between the ruling conservative Whigs and Tories towards the working class on the one hand, and on the other we attempted to set down the political attitudinal development of

the industrial working class from the 1790's to 1832. We looked in some detail at the prevailing historiography - particularly of the Hammonds and Edward Thompson, and embellished this with our own findings in order to assert that the working class were becoming more politically conscious during this period, and further that this was a feature of their rising levels of class consciousness. We also suggested that the Tories and Conservatives, both nationally and locally recognized this development and, by 1831/2 became increasingly concerned as to its outcome. This story may have been told before, but it was necessary here in order to contrast these developments with what occurred after 1832. Thus much of the analysis and explanation can be viewed as a foundation or basis for comparison with what will follow. For in the 1830's the Conservatives particularly began to radically reformulate their attitudes towards the working class of the northern districts.

However before we elaborate further on describing this process and its consequences for the Conservatives, their party and the working class, we must return to explaining the situation the Conservative/Tory party found itself in after the passing of Reform, and further how the national leadership undertook to change the organizational structure of the party.

1. Blackburn Alfred 8/1/1835.
2. For example see The Morning Chronicle of 1/2/1835.
3. Anon Truth and Treason! or a narrative of the Royal Procession. British Library.

4. Quoted in E P Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, London 1978 edition p.159.

5. The Life of Romilly Vol. II London 1842 p.537.

6. Fletcher to Portland 3/4/1802, H.O. 42.65.

7. Quoted in J E Cookson, Lord Liverpool's Administration 1815-22, London 1955 p.143.

8. Vol II Croker Papers Peel to Croker 18/3/1820, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. For a discussion of the growth of the pressure of public opinion see also P Hollis (Ed) Pressure from Without, London 1974.

9. J and B Hammond, The Skilled Labourer, London 1919.

10. S Bamford, Passages in the Life of a Radical, Manchester 1844 and, Early Days, Manchester 1859.

11. Hammonds op.cit. p.2.

12. See for example P Gaskell, The Manufacturing Population of England. London 1833.

13. Hammonds op.cit p.3.

14. Ibid.

15. bid. p.1.

16. S J Chapman, The Lancashire Cotton Industry, Manchester 1954 (ed) p.46.

17. See for example E P Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism' in Past and Present No 38, 1967. Or the same author's 'The Moral Economy of the Eighteenth Century Crowd' in Past and Present No 50, 1970.

18. Hammonds op.cit. p.311.

19. Hammonds op.cit. p.223.

20. F O Darvall, Popular Disturbances and Public Order in Regency England, London 1934.

21. Ibid p.174.

22. E P Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, London 1963.

23. Thompson op.cit. p.629.

24. Thompson op.cit. pp.631-636-7.

25. Thompson op.cit. p.647.

26. Ibid. p.657.

27. Thompson op.cit. pp.657-8.

28. H(ome) O(ffice) reference 42.47. John Singleton to Portland.

29. Ibid. We do have some figures as to the membership, which was high in the 1790's, see Thompson op.cit. p.460.

30. Singleton to Portland op.cit.

31. House of Commons Journal 5/3/1800.

32. Ibid.

33. 39 and 40 George III c90.

34. H.O.42.50. Justice Bayley to Portland, no date.

35. H.O.42.50. Ainsworth to Peel no date.

36. Ibid. 12/3/1801.

37. Yates to Peel, H.O.42.61. 14/3/1801.

38. H.O.42.62.

39. H.O.42.62. Fletcher to Portland.

40. H.O.42.62.

41. Ibid and H.O.42.65.

42. House of Commons Journal 25/2/1813.

43. In total 477. 1s 6d was raised, the larger donations came from Ainsworth's (Bolton) 75. 0s Od. Horrocks (Stockport) 31. 0s Od. J B Spencer (Manchester) 10. 10s Od. and Sir Robert Peel 31.10s Od.

44. The Times 28 May 1808.

45. Annual Register for 1808, p.63 (Chronicle).

46. H.O.42.95. Handbill, enclosed in letter dated 2/6/1808.

47. H.O.42.95. 15/6/1808.

48. H.O.42.108. August 1810. Handbill.

49. Ibid.

50. H.O.42.197.

51. H.O.42.117, 25/5/1811 and Hansard 24/6/1811.

52. Knight's paper was forwarded to the Home Office by Ralph Fletcher H.O.42.117, Fletcher to Ryder, 21/11/1811. For more on the activities of John Knight in the 1820's, 30's and 40's see J Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution. London 1974.

/53. H.O.42.117 op.cit.

54. See for example E P Thompson op.cit. pp.515 to 628 or L M Mumby, The Luddites, St Albans 1971 or M I Thomis, Newton Abbott 1970.

55. See W Moor, The Blackfaces of Bolton, Bolton 1839.

56. Richard Ainsworth a prominent Bolton Tory magistrate and large-scale manufacturer.

57. The Letter of Dr Robert Taylor. Reference No B323-Z Blac. Bolton Reference Library.

58. A Prentice, Historical Sketches of Manchester, Manchester 1851 p.46.

59. F Peel, The Rising of the Luddites, Chartists and Plug Drawers, 1895, reprinted, London 1968 pp.156-7.

60. A Briggs, The Age of Improvement, London 1959 p.157.
61. H.O.42.154 26/10/1816.
62. H.O.42.153. Byng to Sidmouth 15/10/1816.
63. H.O.42.197.
64. H.O.42.154, Fletcher to Sidmouth 7/10/1816.
65. Manchester Observer 10/7/1819.
66. The journalist reporting the meeting estimated the crowd at 'between 30,000 and 40,000 were present'. Ibid.
67. Ibid. There were also Female Reform Societies at Ashton, Bolton and Stockport. Mcr Observer 17/7/19.
68. Mcr Observer 10/7/1819.
69. Quoted in Thompson op.cit. p.751.
70. Quoted in Thompson op.cit. p.788.
71. Most, if not all of the Sunday schools in Lancashire in the 1820's were 'radical' or non conformist, the Anglican church did not open Sunday schools for working class children until the late 1830's.

72. Manchester Observer 10/7/1819.
73. See Thompson op.cit. pp.781/2.
74. Thompson op.cot. p.760.
75. Preston Chronicle 25/3/1826.
76. Blackburn Mail 29/4/1826. The seriousness of this outbreak should not be undervalued, it had enormous impact in London with the authorities. The Times reported on April 25 that 'the City was thrown into much alarm by intelligence that the working class at Blackburn and its neighbourhood had broken out into actual violence.' It was deemed serious enough for a full cabinet council to meet on a Saturday and a Sunday morning to 'devise measures for the restoration of tranquillity in Lancashire.' Something which had not occurred since the end of the wars in 1815. The Home Secretary, Robert Peel informed the Duke of York as commander of the Army, who in turn informed the King in a long session on Sunday afternoon.
77. Preston Chronicle 29/4/1826.
78. Blackburn Mail op.cit.
79. Manchester Mercury 29/4/1826.
80. Preston Chronicle 29/4/1826 and Blackburn Mail 6/5/1826.
81. Preston Chronicle 29/4/1826. This determination also caught the attention of the military. One officer described the situation at Helmsore. "When the military discharged their rifles, a working man assaulted them with stones, and walked deliberately away; this he did repeatedly after the soldiers had

fired, and retreated snapping his fingers in their face. This daring behaviour made one of the officers exclaim. 'Had I a company of such determined fellows as that, I'd storm Hell and make the devil prisoner.'". The Times 4/5/1826

82. Preston Chronicle 6/5/1826.

83. Manchester Mercury 6/5/1826.

84. See for example K M Spencer, Social and Economic Geography of Preston M.A.Thesis University of Liverpool, 1968 pp.50-58.

85. See for example the letter from the mechanics of Blackburn to Sir Robert Peel 9/4/1826 H.O.44/16.

86. At the time the disturbances were regarded as having a political element. See letter in Blackburn Mail 14/6/1826.

87. See for example the memorial sent by the manufacturers of Blackburn to Sir Robert Peel, British Library Ad Ms 40501 ff 139 "...the outrageous proceedings of the rioters, at the periods referred to and the disastrous consequences resulting from their ignorant and inveterate hostility to mechanical improvements..."

88. For example see H Pelling, The History of British Trade Unions, London 1963 or H E Musson, British Trade Unions 1800-1875, London 1977.

89. Musson op.cit. or M I Thomis and P Holton, Threats of Revolution in Britain 1789-1848, London 1977.

90. See J R M Butler, The Passing of the Great Reform Bill, London 1914 or A Briggs, The Background of the Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities, Cambridge Historical

Journal 1952. Also see Preston Pilot 1/12/32 or Bolton Chronicle 8/12/32.

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91. See A J C Ruter, 'Benbow's Grand National Holiday' International Review of Social History, 1936 p.27.

92. Briggs op.cit.

93. See Blackburn Alfred, 22/10/1832 or W Brimlow, A Parliamentary History of Bolton, Bolton 1880.

94. See D C Moore, The Other Face of Reform, Victorian Studies, September 1961, or M Brock, The Great Reform Act, London 1973.

95. Poor Man's Guardian, October 1831.

96. Cited in Thompson op.cit p.892.

97. British Library Ad Mss. Place Papers 35148, October 1831 Place to Grote.

98. W Brimlow, Political and Parliamentary History of Bolton, Bolton 1880.

99. Bolton Chronicle 5/12/1831.

100. Ibid.

101. Speech of Walter O'Carrol, Bolton Chronicle op.cit.
102. Blackburn Alfred 21/1/1832.
103. Croker to Melbourne 18/5/1832. Vol. 26 of Croker Letter Book, Croker Papers, Clemont's Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
104. G D H Cole and R Postgate, The Common People, London 1938.
105. Thompson op.cit. pp.898,899.
106. The Times, 18/5/1832.
107. Croker Papers 18/5/1872. Letter to Lord Hertford, Ann Arbor. University of Michigan.
108. Ibid. Letter to Peel 11/11/1831.
109. Place Papers British Museum AD Mss 27 295, ff 26/7.
110. See Thompson op.cit. p.889.

CHAPTER FOURTHE RE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY
AFTER 1832.

As we have seen in the last chapter how the relationship between the attitudes of the Tory party after 1789 appeared inherently hostile to the interests of the emergent working class of the manufacturing districts. We also saw how this indifference, indeed hostility on the part of the governing elites created much resentment amongst the emergent working class of the North-West. We also noted how the rising class consciousness and increased political radicalism of the working class was a source of anxiety, if not fear, on the part of the middle classes.

We noted, in the second chapter, the archaic and essentially loose organization and structure of the Old Tory/conservative Whig coalition, and how, in organizational and functional terms, they could scarcely be defined as a party according to the set of criteria we described in Chapter One. In the current chapter we aim to show how this situation changed at the national level in the wake of the Reform Act. But first we must describe what the basic structure was in the 1820's. This was based around the Parliamentary party with virtually no organization in the country whatsoever.

I THE SITUATION BEFORE 1832.

Essentially the reason why the Tory party had no organization outside Parliament - and very little inside it - was that, as the party of government they had no need of formal organization. The method of managing elections not to mention public opinion - in the pre-Reform political world was by personal influence. This personal influence may have the policies pursued by the government (or opposition) at the centre of politics as its basis, but the influence itself was located at the local level. This was usually held by the leading greater or lesser aristocratic families of a given constituency. In the vast majority of cases the political shade of the leading families determined the political shade of a constituency's Parliamentary representation. It was very rare, therefore, for elections to be decided on the presentation of the difference of opinions of the competing candidates over political issues. Indeed it was very rare for a hotly contested election to be held at all, the norm was for those intent on becoming a member of parliament to reach an agreement before the election to avoid the disruption and expense of a contest. In case a contest was called between two rival political groupings, the government always had the advantage of being in possession of office and of the 'Treasury Chest', of which more will be said later.

In fact constituency representation before 1832 was grossly unrepresentative of population density and differing centres of interest orientation, especially the 'new' manufactures of textiles and engineering. More than half of the 204 English boroughs before 1832 were concentrated in Wiltshire and the sea board counties from Norfolk to Gloucestershire. Wiltshire and Cornwall had more boroughs than all of the eight northern counties. This gave the maritime and agricultural interests predominant influence in the House of Commons. The franchise in

these boroughs varied in a loose and haphazard way. In certain places - such as Preston - there were the Scot and Lot, or Potwalloper franchises which conferred basically universal suffrage. Elsewhere, the vast majority of boroughs were made up of electors of the holders of certain privileges, certain tenement rights or even only members of the Corporation who handed down this right in primogeniture. Most electorates were small and their registration was unnecessary because imposters would quickly have been detected. Meanwhile in the counties and the Scot and Lot boroughs, voters could prove their qualifications by producing receipts for the payment of land tax or local rates.

In the boroughs with small electorates the patron could use money or territorial power to secure the return of candidates according to his wishes. John Wilson Croker (chief secretary to the Admiralty in the Liverpool ministry) estimated in 1827 that 276 out of 658 seats in Parliament were directly at the disposal of landed patrons and that 203 of these were under Tory control; eight peers alone controlled 57 seats¹

The existence of the nomination boroughs, and of the patron, gave a particular character to English politics before 1832. Since political power nationally had become centred on the House of Commons, and power in the House of Commons depended on votes, political groupings or individuals could buy votes or seats on the open market, as it were; the 'pocket' or nomination boroughs thus became "the instrument by which the Government of the day maintained its majority"² This was necessary precisely because the authority and discipline with which we associate the modern political parties was lacking before 1832. The price the government paid to the patron was occasionally in money, but more often in the form of political advancement and jobs in the public services for the patron's relatives and dependents. When George III attempted to build up a political grouping of his own he too was forced to become "the first of the borough-mongering

electioneering gentlemen of England.³

The nomination boroughs which existed in the North-West before 1832, were Chester under the control of the Grosvenor family, a seat at Preston held in the interest of the Earl of Derby, one of Clitheroe's seats was controlled by the Earl of Brownlow and the other by Viscount Dustanville, and one of Lancaster's seats was held by the Earl of Longsdale. In the south of Lancashire one of the seats at Newton were owned by T P Legh, whilst the seats at Wigan were shared jointly by Sir Robert Holt Leigh and the coal owner J Hodson. Thus in the twelve borough seats of the county before 1832 only one seat from Lancaster and the two Liverpool seats were open to contest, the other nine being closed. Of the seven the Tories held five to the Whig's four.⁴

Thus it was in the open boroughs that much of the money was spent to bribe or treat or influence electors and non-electors. This was one Tory argument against the Reform Bill - that it would have the effect of increasing both venal activities and expense. An example of the Liverpool election of 1830 will serve as an illustration of the point. Charles Greville, the Whig diarist reveals the nature of the contest.

The Liverpool election is just over... It is said to have cost near 100,000 pounds to the two parties, and to have exhibited a scene of bribery and corruption perfectly unparalleled; no concealment or even semblance of decency were observed; the price of tallies and votes rose, like stock, as the demand increased, and single votes fetched 15 pounds to 100 pounds a piece. They voted by tallies; as each tally voted for one or other candidate they were furnished with a receipt for their votes, with which they went to the committee, when through a hole in the wall the receipt was handed in, and through another the stipulated sum handed out..."

"Here comes the difficulty of reform", went on Greville, "for how is it possible to reform the electors?"⁵ We shall argue later in the thesis that in the manufacturing districts of the North-West

the electors were comparatively incorrupt after 1832.

According to the prevailing theory of electoral representation before 1832, variations in the franchise allowed the representation of differing sections of the community. Thus the opinion of the towns could be declared in the open boroughs, and the county members represented agriculture. Therefore the manufacturing interests were 'virtually' represented in the boroughs controlled by rich manufacturers and merchants. Ingenious arguments were put forward by the Tories and Conservatives to show that the bill of rights had been drawn up mainly by the representatives of nomination or 'rotten' boroughs, and that the House of Brunswick owed its possession of the throne to the votes of these boroughs. It was said that representation was, and should continue to be based on property and wealth and not on numbers.⁶

Given such a basis of representation the government had no need of any formal organizational structure in the country because they had such a large advantage in the nomination boroughs and in the counties. One example of the influence they pressed on their supporters is given in a letter from Lord Liverpool to the Earl of Longdale, a prodigious collector of boroughs in Cumberland and north Lancashire, one of whose nominees, Sir James Graham sat for Cumberland.

The conduct of Sir James Graham unfortunately produces the worst effect, for he seems to have a satisfaction in showing his resentment to the government, not less by the manner of his opposition than by the opposition itself... If your feelings and opinions concur with ours...may I request of you to use your influence with those who are connected with you...⁷

In terms of support in the press to guide and influence political opinion, individual parties - as distinct from Governments - had virtually no control prior to 1832. One of the most important

aspects of the political history of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the growth of the power of the press, and of its political influence. In the early nineteenth century Whigs and Tories indiscriminately complained of their inability to control the press to their own satisfaction. In 1815 Lord Liverpool wrote to Lord Castlereagh that he could not get any journal to support either the Corn Bill or the income tax. "I can assure you that I am fully sensible of the injurious effect which must result from the general line of present politics taken by our daily papers...there are no papers over which we have any authority, or even any influence on which we can depend."⁸ In 1827 the Ultra Tories complained loudly that the newspapers had totally abandoned them, and that most of the press (apart from the radical unstamped press) was supporting the coalition ministry of Whigs and moderate Tories formed by Canning in April. However, the leader of the Ultra's, the Duke of Wellington, did not help matters by showing his open contempt of those connected with the press, as Lord Ellenborough noted in his diary in 1830, "We have neglected the press too much. The duke relies on the support of 'respectable people' and despises the rabble; but the rabble read newspapers."⁹ However, as we shall discover, this too was a situation which began to change after 1832. Having thus noted that formal organization in terms of party was not required before 1832 we must contrast that situation with an account of the struggle for Reform and the dramatic effects the Act had on British political culture after 1832.

II THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE FIRST REFORM ACT.

One of the most important functions of the political party and of the press is to inform, educate and influence the public. Before 1832 there had been examples of pressure being brought to bear on a ministry from outside Parliament, the most striking probably

being the campaign against slavery and the question of the removal of Catholic disabilities. But these questions, even though mobilized largely from outside, only began to apply real pressure on the government when they were debated inside the House of Commons. Even then these issues did not become 'party' issues but attracted widespread cross-bench support and opposition. The proposed Reform Bills of 1831/2 were the more serious for the Conservatives and Ultra Tories for they served to galvanize the Whigs and Liberals into a serious party and the Conservatives into what appeared to be an entrenched party opposed to any reform whatsoever. Further, this impression was held by the vast majority of those holding political opinion in the country at large. Toryism, as was the case between 1800-1820, was once again being seen as the party of knee-jerk reactionary opposition to what many regarded as a long overdue reform.

The outside pressure which the agitation for reform built up in the country, and especially in the manufacturing districts, was unlike anything seen previously. This was especially disturbing in that there appeared to be an alliance between the middle class reformers and the working class radicals. The outside agitation began in early 1830, when in January, Thomas Attwood founded the Birmingham Political Union, the example was quickly followed by other urban areas. By November, Greville was recording the scenes in London

"It was expected last night that there would be a great riot, and preparations were made to meet it. Troops were called up to London, and large body of civil power put in motion... The Duke of Wellington expected Apsley House to be attacked and made preparations accordingly, at Temple Bar a body of weavers with iron crows had been dispersed."¹⁰

Later in November 1830, Greville states the situation was becoming desperate, and, most alarmingly for the elites more, and more of the working class were becoming involved.

The state of the country is dreadful; every post brings fresh accounts of conflagrations, destruction of machinery, (and) association of labourers... Cobbett and Carlile write and harangue to inflame the minds of the people... Distress is certainly not the cause of these commotions, for the people have patiently supported far greater privations than they have been exposed to before these riots.

Also in November 1830 there was a change of government. When defeated on the Civil List Wellington resigned and the Whigs under Lord Grey formed a ministry pledged to a measure of Parliamentary Reform. Let us briefly recall the progress of the Reform Bill and then consider the Conservative arguments against, for these to a certain extent also fashioned their response to the need for re-organization. The new Ministry formed a committee to examine reform proposals and to submit a scheme to Cabinet, the committee was made up of Lords' Russell, Duncannon, Durham and Sir James Graham. On March 1, 1831 Russell laid the ministerial proposals before the House of Commons. They proved to be more drastic than even the most sanguine of Radicals had dared to hope. The first feature of the Bill was the disenfranchisement of sixty boroughs of less than 2000 inhabitants, who returned in total eighty members. The net reduction of the House of Commons was to be 62 seats. Also there was to be a drastic simplification of the voting qualification. In the boroughs there was to be a 10 pounds qualification of rateable value held in property, though existing freemen and members of corporate boroughs were to retain their franchises. In the counties copyholders were added to the old 40 shilling freeholders. The Bill passed its second reading by a majority of one. However, before it was committed, a motion was carried by a majority of eight that there should be no diminution of the total number of representatives for England and Wales. Upon this rebuff the ministry decided upon a immediate appeal to the country; on April 22 Parliament was dissolved by the King, and amid the widest excitement a General Election was held.

The Whigs were returned to power with a majority of 136, and, although the Conservatives and Tories fought the Bill for two months in committee, by the end of September it was sent up to the Lords. In the Lords, after a weeks debate the Bill was unceremoniously kicked out. It was this action which brought the country the closest to open rebellion. There were serious disturbances at Bolton, Manchester, Blackburn and Oldham, and even more serious rioting at Derby, Nottingham, Worcester, Coventry and Bristol.

Parliament re-opened on December 6, one week later Lord John Russell introduced the third Reform Bill, on this occasion with some important alterations. The disenfranchisement clauses were decidedly less vigorous, and were based primarily on the number of inhabited homes in a given town, whilst still retaining the 10 pounds property qualification. But more importantly, the numbers of the House itself were left unchanged from the previous Bill. The Bill passed rapidly through its stages in the Commons, and once again was presented before the House of Lords just before the end of March 1832.

The stalling mechanisms utilized by Lord Lyndhurst in an attempt to frustrate the ministry succeeded in that the Cabinet as a body advised the King to create as many peers as might ensure the success of the Bill in all its essential principles. The King refused to coerce the Lords and the Ministry once again resigned, with the House of Commons expressing its confidence in the retiring ministry by a large majority, and once again the country was thrown into confusion and agitation. The King turned to Lyndhurst, then to Manners-Sutton, and then to Wellington in an attempt to form a ministry. Only the Duke was will to try but everything depended upon Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Conservatives in the House of Commons, but Peel refused. The King recalled Earl Grey with Wellington promising to withdraw his opposition. The battle was won. The opponents and waverers in

the House of Lords withdrew and on June 7 the Bill received the Royal Assent.

Let us briefly state what the main arguments of Conservatives and Tories were to the bill before expanding on the effects it had on then as a party. The most basic argument, and one on which all the others rested, was that the Reform Bill would destroy the political harmony and stability that had existed throughout most of the eighteenth century. For many Conservatives and Tories the Bill that gained the Royal Assent in June 1832 was seen as a great betrayal. To a significant extent, as we shall discover later, this attitude really depended upon certain assumptions about the possible changes the Bill might produce. Thus Peel's main arguments was that despite the protestations of the Whigs that the measure was final and irrevocable, it would be merely the first stage of a series of reforms. It could not be a final settlement, because the precedent had been set: the Tories and Conservatives believed this as did the working class radicals. Many conservatives were willing to go some way towards redressing the anomalies inherent within the old system, especially with regard to the large urban areas. However, many Tories believed they had been betrayed by that aristocratic class of political leaders who had pledged themselves to maintain the fundamental nature of English constitutionalism as laid down by the settlement of 1688. The thing that kept the Conservatives united - for Peel had no liking for the Ultras - was the sheer scope of the Whig Bill. Many Tories blamed the 'base and bloody Whigs', but also the pressure exerted by the rising middle classes in the manufacturing districts. Many, including Peel, saw in the passing of the Bill not only the dismantling of the old constitutional system, but the dawn of a new political era. This would be an era in which it was believed intense political struggles would be manifest; bitter divisions would occur between political parties, between classes and between differing economic and religious interests. These last included the agricultural as opposed to the manufacturing

interest, the urban versus the rural, protestantism versus catholicism. In general terms the Conservatives and Tories argued that the constitution had remained intact even though there had been occasions of political conflict in the eighteenth century primarily because of the placatory and consensual effects of the political settlement of 1688 with each branch of the legislature and executive; Monarch, Lords and Commons, independent and able to check the possible excesses of the others. The Reform Act, they argued, would wreck the old order, and to a significant degree their prognostications were correct. Less committed observers held similar opinions. Writing in 1831, John Stuart Mill, who could never be described as a Conservative said that England was in a 'transitional condition'. He believed that there were no persons to whom "the mass of the uninstructed habitually defer;...they ancient bonds no longer unite, nor do the ancient boundaries confine."¹¹

For the Conservatives and Tories the situation was perceived as being serious indeed, even though in the long-run-in to the first General Election under the terms of the Reform Act, the Tories at least attempted to enter the contest with a certain sense of bravado, as the diarist Greville noted:-

The Tories evidently expect that they shall re-appear in very formidable strength, though in particular places the Tory party is entirely crushed; the sooner it is so altogether the better, for no good can be expected from it, and it would be for the better to erect a Conservative party upon a new and broader basis, than try to bolster up this worn-out, prejudiced, obstinate faction.¹²

However, in order to plot the remarkable recovery of the conservative party after 1832 - because in fact Greville's predictions were well borne out at the elections of December 1832 with the conservatives amassing a mere 150 members - we must attempt to understand the perceptions of those who genuinely believed that England was on the very brink of disaster and indeed

revolution, because of what the tenets of the Reform Act exemplified. As we noted earlier, the Bill was perceived as being merely the first stage in a range of sweeping reforms which would destroy the very foundations of British political stability. These reforms included the gradual eradication of the political privilege which the property qualification exemplified in the old system, and the destruction of the nomination boroughs which the Tories regarded as essential to stable government and also as the breeding ground of future political talent. But most damaging of all was the apparent dismantling of the three planks upon which the British Constitution rested. These were: firstly prescriptive rights of the monarch; secondly the fundamental independence of the House of Lords and Commons; and thirdly the predominance of the Established Church of England. It was the perceived threat of the eradication of these constitutional prerogatives which, after the passing of Reform, served to weld the Conservative party into what was essentially a new and viable political opposition, both inside and outside Parliament. The Tories became part of the Conservative party - though they did retain their identity as we shall discover - not from any great admiration of Peel as a leader (for they regarded his policies with deep suspicion especially after Catholic Emancipation) but because there was nowhere else for them to go. This coupled with a profound hatred and fear of reforming Whiggery forced them to take the Conservative Whip.

It is one of the many paradoxes of British political development that, in seeking above all else to maintain the existing political system, the Tories and Conservatives created a fundamentally new and far reaching political dimension. For it is one of the main contentions of this thesis that the type and effects of the Opposition the Conservatives engaged in after 1832, was a major contributory factor not only in the development of the modern political party, but also in the shaping of Britain's emerging political culture.

III THE CONSERVATIVE'S ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE

When viewed from the perspectives of the political scientist and the political sociologist - which incidentally this period seldom has been - the 1832 Reform Act stands as a watershed in British political development. If, as we contend, the 1830's saw the consolidation of the organized parliamentary party, with its attendant disciplines and controls, also the widespread recognition that political parties could be the vehicles of legitimate political opposition to the Ministry of the Crown, then the period also saw the dramatic growth of political organization in the Localities. For the Conservatives in the regions and in the Localities, as well as at the centre, the actions of the reforming Whig government and the Liberal progressives - the perceived threat to the Constitution - acted as a spur for improved organization in the Localities and saw a heightened sense of party political rivalry in the sphere of Local government. As Derek Fraser, a historian of local politics during this period, has pointed out,¹³ Local politics were used by the major parties as merely a pawn in the wider political game of attracting support and gaining power, as a means to an end in the wider political constituency. However, it should not be forgotten that local politics often provided bitter contests, divided down party lines for the exercise and pursuit of power '...from the 1830's onwards.'¹⁴ But the terms of the Reform Act itself, and indeed, the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, forced the revitalized Conservative party to organize itself on a permanent basis in the localities in a way that had never been necessary in the past. However many local and national political leaders continued to demur as to the disruption, cost and agitation such contests would produce. Also of concern was the ability of the opposing groups to mobilize their forces and take advantage of the annual process

of registering of electors, which meant that a local party caucus had to be operational at all times. Concern was also felt about the Act in a politico-cultural sense, in that political attitudes became hardened and most local institutions, from the Court-Leet, Corporation, Vestry, Improvement or Police Commissions to the election of Church Wardens and Poor Law Officials, became politicized.

However, let us at this stage consider the organization of the Conservative party at the centre in the immediate aftermath of the passing of the Reform Act. As we suggested above, the party at the centre felt it necessary to organize opinion against what they regarded as the dangerous tendencies being displayed by the Radicals and the more extreme Whigs. During the General Elections of 1832, 35 and 1837 the chief constitutional questions of national importance which the Conservative party pressed included the rule of the House of Commons, the preservation of the privileges of the Church of England and of the Monarch, the maintenance of the independence of the House of Lords, law and order and the protection of the rights of property. In order to mobilize opinion in what was in reality a hostile political environment in the innovation-orientated years immediately after Reform, supporters had to be convinced and rallied to the Conservative side. The supporters, drawn from all grades in society and comprising of both electors and non-electors, were needed in order to capture (or re-capture) a newly municipalized borough, or an improvement commission or a Board of Guardians, as a necessary first step to eventual Parliamentary control. In order that this might be achieved, the various types of supporters had to be galvanized into presenting arguments and answers in favour of the central tenets of Conservative thinking. This last point was again significantly new in that for the first time a party was attempting to present its general ideological principles as applicable to not just those in positions of social, or educational or political status, but to the nation as a whole.

This was important in that, if the Conservatives were to survive the post-Reform years, they had to show their opponents as well as those of moderate political opinion that they meant what they said: that Conservatism - unlike Toryism - was representative of the nation as a whole, of all sections and interests of society, and not just of the privileged elites, agriculturalists or the county squirearchy. Thus it was that local editors of the provincial press in the manufacturing districts gave much publicity to the various social groups - especially the working class - who supported the Conservatives: partly to embarrass the so called 'popular' parties of the Liberals and radicals, but also for the reasons outlined above. As the editor of one of the Lancashire papers noted in 1837.

There is no surer sign of the advance of constitutional opinions, than the increase of Conservative societies, and particularly among the operatives. How potent an answer it is to those contemptible charges which are so fondly and fervently directed against us, and how fatal to the assertion that we possess no hold over the affections of the people.¹⁵

In July 1832, after the Act of Reform had received the Royal Assent, Alfred Mallalieu, the editor of the London based Public Ledger and Guardian, suggested to Lord Aberdeen, one of the leaders of the Conservative party, that the new situation created by the Reform Act required the adoption of new tactics and techniques of electioneering.¹⁶ He argued that this was especially important in the boroughs, which, with the concentration of the middle class vote, potentially presented the conservatives with their most serious threat. This was in line with what most leading conservatives believed. Their argument ran that the replacement of the old nomination boroughs by those representative of the interests of manufacturing and commerce would eventually swamp the House of Commons, and render the lower house nothing better than an assembled group of delegates dictated to by the new growing forces of the towns and cities of the Midlands and North. This would benefit the Whig/Liberals, and, in

the words of the Duke of Wellington, keep "their rivals the Tories out of power for ever." (Wellington's emphasis)¹⁷ It was believed (correctly) that the landed interests in the county constituencies would still be predominant in the House of Commons, at least for the first few years after Reform. (Of the 165 seats reallocated under the terms of the Reform Act, only 62 were to be allotted to the new boroughs). However, Mallalieu went on to argue that the landed predominance would in the long-term be challenged by "the superior shrewdness, tact, intelligence and untiring activity of the trading representatives."¹⁸ He argued that: "The slow and easy process of county and former borough electioneering ought not to be applied to these new interests", and suggested that the old type of election agents formally employed to manage the elections in the localities were now virtually useless. What was now needed, argued Mallalieu, were men representative of the interests of the electorate existing in the boroughs, able to match the Attwoods, the Humes, the Bowrings and the Pearson's, and to further the new broader basis of Conservatism and the Conservative party:

Men who by their connexions and well judged combinations would enable the party powerfully to influence the town elections; who by their ultimate acquaintance with the habits, prejudices, opinions and wants of particular places and districts would be able to point out the fitting sort of candidates, willing to undergo the expense and labour requisite, supported as they would be by a skilful arrangement and bringing to bear all the elements of Conservative and aristocratic influence existing in and about the towns, in aid of their own resources among the more independent portion of the community.¹⁹

In the case of Bolton, Blackburn, Bury, Clitheroe, Lancaster, Preston, Rochdale, Warrington, and Wigan this is precisely what happened as we shall subsequently discover.

Mallalieu suggested that a permanent organizing committee be formed comprising of twenty four persons with an ex-cabinet

minister as chairman,²⁰ to manage and superintend the elections from London. Half of the committee was to be made up of Conservative members of Parliament, and half to be representative of the commercial, shipping, distributive and manufacturing interests. He further suggested that:

the committee would of course sub-divide themselves according to the portions of the Empire where each could operate most effectively. Active and extensive correspondence would be opened... Candidates on the spot would be assisted and encouraged. Where these were wanting, candidates possessing the requisite qualifications would be provided from metropolis, in some instances at their own cost entirely, in others with some small aid from the common fund.²¹

The members of the committee argued Mallalieu, should not be treated as people of inferior consequence, remembering that, under the working of the new Act, "The middle and lower classes have acquired so tremendous an accession of power as can only be comprehended and managed by and through parts and portions of themselves. This is the new blood of which I speak."²² The committee members should be given ready and confidential access to the party leadership. He suggested that it was only by drawing together the bonds of common interest between the lower classes, the middle classes and the aristocracy that the Conservative party could perform its duty and recover from the effects of the Reform Bill. This, he argued was especially important in the urban areas not normally associated with Conservative principles. "The most dangerous portion of the new constituency will undoubtedly be that of the towns, it will also be the most difficult to manage."²³

It appears that Mallalieu had been of service to the party in the past, as in 1831 it was on his suggestion to Lord Stuart De Rothesay and the Duke of Wellington that the Carlton Club be formed in order "to invite the Conservative party to reconcile the ultra and liberal sections."²⁴ It was here that the Organizing Committee operated after the disastrous results of the first

elections under the terms of the Reform Act in January 1833. There is not enough evidence to suggest that Mallalieu's advice about the wide social mix of the Committee was acted on completely but his memorandum was remarkable because it detailed the means by which the Conservative party must transform itself if it was to survive. Mallalieu was basically correct in his assessment of the changing nature of Britain's political culture in the aftermath of the Reform Act. He foresaw the need of a large political party able to integrate differing social groups - regardless of their social station and their respective interests - into the party's structure. This was a point which was not lost on Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the party. As he wrote to the earl of Harrowby early in 1833 "...the vast mass of mankind of the highest as well as the lowest station, cannot be disregarded in politics."²⁵

Mallalieu also saw the necessity for the party to be able to direct opinion and to control and influence members and supporters in a new and original way. Mallalieu himself was editor of the party-owned Public Ledger and Guardian, but also acted as leader writer for several newspapers including, United Services Gazette, and the Surrey Standard, whose articles served for Leicester, a Blackburn and a Dover paper also, all under one London managership and proprietorship.²⁶ This tells us much about the party's gradual moves towards centralizing the distribution of information to the localities after 1832, as well as how it began to control the provincial press, an important point we shall return to.

In deference to Professor Gash,²⁷ and other historians, who argue for the continuity of the political order after 1832, we can admit that the system was not eradicated immediately after the Reform Act. The social make-up of the House of Commons remained essentially the same, there still existed nomination boroughs, corrupt candidates and electors. But as we shall argue below, utilizing the terms coined by Tom Nossiter,²⁸ it was "the

politics of opinion" as well as influence and the offering of treats which rapidly gained importance in the urban setting. In many ways the post-Reform political system was still archaic but attitudes were changing, and, in terms of plotting the modernization of the political party, Mallalieu's memorandum to Aberdeen is important because in it we see the beginning, the germ of the modern political party. Indeed, Mallalieu himself believed his work to have been important. Writing some twelve years later to Lord Aberdeen he indulged himself in a piece of unashamed self-advertising:

"And may I be pardoned for telling Sir Robert (Peel) that, when the history of those times comes to be written, the truth will not be told if it be not stated that I was virtually the sole-founder of the party under its present title of Conservative and not Sir Robert as assumed. His was doubtless the greater work of construction on the foundation I laid. Your Lordship did me the honour to approve, and to bear to the Duke of Wellington, my memoir on the necessity of re-constructing and re-uniting the party, still unreconciled from the Emancipation question, with the means and applicancy (sic) suggested to the end, which led to the meeting at the late Lord Rosslyn's at St James's Square and the establishment of the Carlton Club with other measures.²⁹

Let us examine what measures were put into effect immediately after the Reform Act was carried. By 1833 the Organizing Committee of the Conservative party was meeting (usually) weekly at the Carlton Club. The original committee had been formed the previous year. It comprised John Charles Herries, Charles Arbuthnot, William Holmes, Sir Henry Hardinge, Sir John Beckett and Lord Lowther and it met at the house of the former Chief Whip Joseph Planta in Charles Street, hence the somewhat derogatorily name of the 'Charles Street Gang'. By 1833 the Carlton had been formed and the committee had undergone a change of personnel in the wake of the disastrous Conservative results under the terms of the new Act. The chairman of the committee was Lord Granville Somerset and the party's treasurer was Sir Henry Hardinge but the most significant new appointment was that of Francis Robert Bonham

who acted, as Professor Gash has noted, as the first full-time 'political secretary' of the Conservative party.³⁰ Effectively Bonham acted in what we would now term the capacity of national party agent. His primary task was to collect and collate information from all localities, and importantly, keep the national party leadership informed as to the state of party feeling 'out of doors', and also the level of party strength and organization.³¹ Bonham, it must be stressed, did not seek to interfere in local party autonomy - this would have been a profound mistake - but he did send out regular information sheets, points of advice and, on occasions specific directives in the form of gentle prods to the organizers in the localities. There are several examples of the type of information Bonham received and dispensed. The first dates from 1836 when the elections of 1837 were pending. (Bonham to Peel 1836)

Lincoln is in fact I believe to be quite safe, at least for Stott-Ellis, but it will certainly require some money, at most I hear 1000 pounds...Mahon, who is now at Strathfieldsaye would easily ascertain the feelings of the committee at Finsbury which is cheaply organized.³²

(Bonham to Peel 1837)

Sussex seats winnable. At all counts it will require the whole Conservative strength to be organized and put forward with will and energy to ensure success. The whole influence of the court is arrayed to support (the Whig) Dalrymple who is not popular... In fact the previous victory was achieved solely by the good management of the Conservative Association which was formed here two years ago. You will not be surprised that this association is now (Bonham's emphasis) on the wane and requires very extensive support.³³

Or again another example of information being conveyed from the localities to the leadership in London, this time from the Member for Liverpool, Lord Sandon to the chairman of the Organizing committee, Lord Granville Somerset:

I understand that you are collecting information from all parts of the country as to the feelings of the electoral bodies and the chances of the elections, in case such should take place. In Liverpool itself, my opponent Thornley has implied that he will not come forward again, and if no other Conservative candidate were proposed it is clear, that there would be no contest... There is certainly an improved feeling in the town...the vileness of Lord Durham has alarmed men of property; and the squabbles and unsteadyness of the late government has disgusted and alienated men of all parties. Ewart (The Whig) has certainly lost some hardy supporters among the better classes. Francis Egerton is considered quite safe for South Lancashire: if two Tories are not proposed even then the chances would still be in his favour, and two Tories are possible but not likely. Of Warrington and Wigan you will have heard ... (The earl of) Wilton told me again of four (that is eight the balance might be reckoned on in Lancashire in case of a dissolution, and the best information I could gain this estimate is not over-rated.³⁴

Meanwhile, Sir James Graham wrote to Bonham in October 1840 simply to say that: "I have no news for you except that the reports of the Registration in North Lancashire is excellent and makes both (Graham's emphasis) seats quite secure."³⁵ Finally a letter from a Mr Sidney in 1839 gives an illustration of the kind of assistance Bonham and the committee was asked to provide.

Can you tell me the politics of Sir Hy. Maud?, and can he be got at in any way. He has taken the brewing interest of one Thompson...which will give him great influence especially over the public houses in that district, which heretofore have been used against us, and if it could be turned in our favour would make considerable difference in the county election (they say 30 votes) and probably in the town also:- Sir John Reid is Maud's partner, perhaps it might be managed through him.³⁶

Thus we see in the activities of Bonham, Granville-Somerset and the Conservative party Organizing Committee the beginnings of a central organizing body. Admittedly, it was not until 1867/8, and the work of John Gorst that the Central Office was officially created and the various Conservative clubs and associations centralized into the National Union. However, we can see that from 1833 and the formation of the various associations and clubs

(of which more will be outlined in further chapters) and the Organizing Committee at the Carlton, that the Conservative party had embarked upon the first stages of becoming a party in a modern sense.

Another element regarded by political scientists as essential in the organizational structure of the modern political party is a central fund to be used for matters relating to elections and the publicizing the party's position regarding its policies and basic principles. Modern parties - of Government and Official Opposition - receive funds from the state, but this merely covers cost at a General election. For the period between elections these parties rely on subscriptions from the broader membership, but also from key individuals and groups who feel the need to forge a closer affiliation with the party they believe best represents their interests. In the early decades of the nineteenth century - as indeed was the case in the eighteenth century - the financing of elections was usually left to the individual candidates in the various localities. They would either expend the money out of their own pockets, or would be supported, in the case of a nomination borough, by the local patron sympathetic to the principles of the party, or would raise funds by subscriptions donated by the parties local supporters. Similarly, election petitions, brought by the aggrieved losing candidates in a bid to prove electoral misdemeanour, would be financed locally. However, by far the most normal method of finance in the years immediately before and indeed after 1832 was for the candidates to fund themselves. This of course ensured that those with the most property at stake, that is to say the wealthiest, maintained their political interest and representation in the House of Commons.

The actual outlay could be enormous. For example, Lord Francis Egerton, the member for South Lancashire (a seat with its preponderance of manufacturing made it a target seat for both

Whigs and Conservatives) complained to Sir Robert Peel in 1837. "Having spent some 10,000 pounds on two elections and having a majority to show... I should be sorry to see one or two Whigs ship into such a representation from the mere want of candidates on our side."³⁷

One eminent historian of early nineteenth century politics, Arthur Aspinall, suggested³⁸ that no such thing as the party chest existed after 1832. However, we now know that a central fund was available for various political purposes after 1832. In the run-up to the first election held under the terms of the Reform Act, Alfred Mallalieu wrote to Lord Aberdeen of the need to mobilize the press in a campaign to make clear to the public precisely what Conservative principles were as opposed to the intransigence of the Ultras and Old Tories. "The rumours were that two or three millions were subscribed by the Conservative party for the press and the forthcoming elections. I was encouraged by the late Lord Frank to search for money which would be used to begin a newspaper which would press for moderate Conservative principles."³⁹ There were occasions when the party utilized its election fund for singling out prestige constituencies for special effort, if only in order to show their opponents and supporters alike the strength of the party. South Lancashire, as we noted was one such prize, but in this instance - for Egerton was the inheritor of the Bridgewater millions - the party fund was seldom needed. Other places were different, one such prize was Dublin, the headquarters of the Irish repealer, Joseph O'Connell, so too was the traditionally radical Westminster. In 1837, the party's treasurer, Sir Harry Hardinge wrote to Peel that the party had allocated "... 2,400 pounds for Dublin City and 3,300 pounds for Westminster - the Candidates and their committees must do the rest."⁴⁰

After the elections had been concluded (successfully in the case of Westminster) Hardinge sent Peel his personal assessment of the

places which had received special attention and funds. At Westminster, where, in 1837 the former Ultra-Radical, Sir Francis Burdett was standing as a Conservative, Hardinge wrote to Peel:-

I do not think the local committee were well managed on our side - but our young men of the Carlton, about 120 divided into districts, were at their posts before 7 o'clock, urging the voters who had promised to the poll, and before the result could be known, the great mass had voted for Burdett... What a strange situation is politics - Palmerston voting for a Radical - Burdett seated amongst the Tories - and democratic Westminster by its will concurring with Burdett, that the Constitution, Parliament and Church are in danger.⁴¹

Of these targeted seats probably the most expensive, paid entirely out of party funds was the by-election in Dorset during the height of the Reform crisis in early 1832, when, it was estimated 30,000 pounds was spent on getting the opponent of the Reform Bill, Lord Ashley elected.⁴² Although a central fund existed, only very few of the party's leaders knew of its existence. The reasons for the secrecy were two-fold. Firstly it was unwise to allow the opposition the opportunity of casting aspersions about the uses such a fund could be put to, and secondly in reality no party could undertake to assist, still less totally maintain, candidates in every contested constituency. To allow such a fund to be widely known - for it was still the prevailing belief that men of property should pay for their right to sit in the legislature - would have probably provoked disappointments, jealousies, and suspicions that would undoubtedly have injured the party more than money would have assisted.

As we noted above, Sir Henry Hardinge was the treasurer of the party, and it was he who sent out circulars for subscriptions to the party's wealthy elites. The decision on what money's should be spent on which given objects was left to a sub-committee of the Organizing Committee: this might be termed the Finance Committee. It comprised Hardinge, Sir Thomas Freemantle, (the party's chief

Whip) Lord Rosslyn (who looked after Scottish interests), Viscount Stormont (who looked after Irish interests), Lord Redesdale (the chief Whip in the Lords), and Sir George Clerk, the leading Whip in the Commons. However all large withdrawals would need the authorization of the party's two leaders, Wellington and Peel.⁴³ A selection of the subscription lists drawn up by Hardinge are to be found in Appendix One, but a list of the funds subscribers for the 1837 serve to show how much individuals were willing to subscribe. The Duke of Newcastle headed the list with 2,000 pounds: the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lonsdale each subscribed 1,000 pounds; among the others were Lord Brownlow with 300 pounds, Earl Howe 300 pounds, the Earl of Ripon with 100 pounds and Lord Ashley, 10 pounds.⁴⁴ Indeed some contributors appear to have paid their subscriptions or pledges by instalments, in 1833 Sir Benjamin Durban paid a total of 2,400 pounds in such a manner.⁴⁵ So did a Dr J Erik in 1835.⁴⁶ At the election at Windsor in that year, Hardinge wrote the following memorandum which proves that the Carlton committees did have funds available for electoral purposes.

An agreement was made upon honour that Sir J Gully should undertake the contest for Windsor and to incur an expenditure of 500 pounds. Beyond that amount the necessary aid (pecuniary) was to be afforded by the Carlton Club, Sir J G has fulfilled his part of the contract, and more than doubled the personal expenses above stated; and therefore claims the fulfilment of the other part; so must many demands arising out of the election.⁴⁷

The election fund therefore appears to have been used to assist a limited number of candidates who, from their personal circumstances or official position, seemed to deserve exceptional support. In 1837, for example, the Conservatives of Manchester, unable to find a suitable candidate locally, sent a deputation down to the Carlton Club to meet Sir Henry Hardinge and attempt to find a strong candidate, and some finance to break the hold of the Manchester Liberals.⁴⁸ Hardinge advised W E Gladstone, but

Gladstone would only stand 'in absentia' having already agreed to fight Newark for the Duke of Newcastle. However, even with Gladstone not willing to visit Manchester, he still polled well over 2,000 votes, thanks to the liberality of the funds made available both locally and from London.⁴⁹

Part of the money used on elections would be for the bestowing of treats on electors and non-electors; also arranging for travel and the canvass and, of course, the local and national agents. Bonham had his own team of agents who he sent out at periods of electoral activity. In 1837 he wrote to Peel that the West Midlands were being supervised by one Forster.⁵⁰ In the North-West his agent was an unsuccessful barrister named Charles Wilkins,⁵¹ more of whose activities we shall be describing later. In Ireland, Bonham and Hardinge had also a team of agents, Enius McDonnell, David O'Croly and Edward Fitzgerald.⁵² Bonham also had the use of the local agents; Richard Backhouse at Blackburn, Thomas Yates at Preston, Robert Sowler at Manchester and so on. He also liaised with the local agents controlled by other leading members of the Conservative party. A Mr Lawrence, who acted for Lord Ellenborough in North Gloucestershire and Worcestershire;⁵³ in Wiltshire, Joseph Neeld; in West Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire a Mr Wyatt acted for Lord Granville Somerset;⁵⁴ for North Lancashire and the Borders a Mr Lamond who acted for Sir James Graham.⁵⁵ All these were useful in gaining valuable information regarding the state of the register and of political feelings generally. However these men acted as party organizers - before an election, during the course of an election and if required, afterwards with the petition. All this required money, and, in certain circumstances if this was lacking locally, the central fund could be utilized. There were also the various local associations and clubs which existed not just at election times, but permanently, and these too required organizing, and for Bonham they were useful suppliers of information. Also this growth in the support of Conservatism after 1836 required the use of

initiatives covering a range of activities: for example in the sphere of propaganda like the use of pamphlets written in the Conservative interest to enable supporters to rebuff the arguments of the opposition and to induce a sense of camaraderie among the party faithful.

This was another area in which the party's funds were disposed - in the publicizing of the party in various ways through the medium of the written word. Most of the subscription lists drawn up by Hardinge - shown in Appendix One - were moneys to be paid for the writing of propaganda and publicity pamphlets by the party's Irish expert Enius McDonnell. Similarly, another pamphleteer, Edward Fitzgerald itemized the cost of sending out material to Sir Thomas Freemantle, the party's chief whip and member of the finance sub-committee at the Carlton. It was the Anti-Corn Law League who, it was believed first utilized the power of personalized printed message, but the Conservatives were operating in a similar fashion several years previously. For example in 1837 they spent 384 pounds 9s 4d for 46,000 circulars and 10,000 pounds for the Westminster election, and again in 1838 410 pounds 10s 7d for 51,000 circulars and 65,000 lithographed enclosures.⁵⁶

However, by far the most important and urgent area for action by the Conservative leadership if the aftermath of the demoralizing defeat of the Reform Bill, and the torrent of ill-feeling and public indignation which rained down upon them, was to present the Conservative message - both nationally and locally - through the medium of the press. Before 1832, the Liverpool government had utilized part of the Secret Service fund to purchase newspapers in Ireland, this in order to control and direct public opinion in that much troubled nation. But the experiment does not seem to have been attempted on mainland Britain. During the Reform Crisis itself not one single major London newspaper supported the Tories.⁵⁷ Even as late as 1834 Croker was complaining to Peel that the London papers were in the main hostile and asked the new

Prime Minister: "Who is to manage your press (for) managed it must be; and by a Cabinet Minister too. I think Herries is your best man for this."⁵⁸ However, what Croker was probably unaware of was that John Charles Herries, a former Cabinet Minister under Wellington, had attempted to establish Tory/Conservative influence over the London press one year earlier in 1833, through buying the influence of an unscrupulous former editor named McEntagart. This had proved a disaster with the party losing well over 3,000 pounds to silence McEntagart who threatened to take his story of how the Organizing Committee had attempted to buy off editors and reporters⁵⁹ since 1830. Nor was this disastrous attempt the first and only occasion that the party had attempted to control a section of press and laid itself open with dealings with men like McEntagart.⁶⁰ In Herries' words such men had 'hugely inflated power as to the intimate workings of the party.' Writing to Charles Arbothnot (a former Chief Whip) in November 1834 he lamented.

You know the whole story and can judge as well as I can what this scoundrel has it in his power to do...all that this fellow may chose to say, truly and falsely, of the doings of Charles St.⁶¹

However, the Conservatives relations with the press did improve and this was a result of good fortune and hard work, rather than nefarious intrigue. The hard work was undertaken by Peel who, behaving with frankness and candour during his 'Hundred Days' won over many influential journalists. It was also due to the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst - the former a well-known hater of the press, who by late 1834 had recognized the error of their former views. In November 1834 when the Conservatives formed their Ministry, Wellington and Lyndhurst approached the editor of The Times, Thomas Barnes with the object of securing the support of the journal. On 19 November Barnes put on paper the terms on which he would assist the Ministry. The Reform Act was to be allowed to stand unaltered, as were the other measures of reform

passed by the Whigs, and there was to be no change in foreign policy, but Wellington who believed that The Times could not be influenced declined to pledge himself to such a policy, especially in view of the fact that Peel, the new Prime Minister was abroad at the time and unaware of the negotiations.⁶² But even though no treaty was actually entered into, The Times did give its cordial support to the Ministry in the latter's short and somewhat chequered existence. Another factor in swaying The Times over to the side of Peel's moderate conservatism was the secession of Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham from the Whigs over the issue of Irish Church reform. Barnes was a close ally of Stanley's, and when the latter pledged his support for Peel's Ministry without actually joining it - although he and Graham were asked - Barnes followed suit.

In the provinces, as we noted from Mallalieu's memorandum, the Conservatives made major inroads in their attempt to influence moderate opinion. In the North-West there were several Conservative newspapers; two in Manchester; the Courier, and the Chronicle, the Bolton Chronicle, the Blackburn Standard, the Preston Pilot, the Wigan Gazette and the Oldham Chronicle. Most of the newspapers took their editorials direct from London, written by men like Mallalieu, James Fullerton and Enius McDonnell and others, and financed partly out of funds supplied by the Carlton.⁶³ Indeed specific groups, such as the working classes were singled out for special attention. After the Conservative party took office in 1841 negotiations took place between Sir Thomas Fremantle and William Painter, the editor of the Church of England Revue over the issue of a new weekly paper called The Journal of the Working Class, designed to popular taste and expressly designed to counteract radical influence. Fremantle suggested to Peel that if he thought the paper likely to do good, they could give Painter 1,000 pounds or 2,000 pounds to meet initial expenses.⁶⁴

Nevertheless much of the central organization endeavoured to draw together the scattered threads of the party, it should not be forgotten that the main conduct of political affairs in the localities was in the hands of local men. It was, inevitable that this should be so given the very recent nature of political organization after 1832. Local knowledge, local opinion and influence, and local support and subscriptions were, as we shall discover shortly, indispensable for the work of electioneering in the distant counties and boroughs. In their efforts to mobilize the press - especially the local press - the Conservative leadership realized this. One manifestation of this was the way in which the party leadership attempted to address themselves to those of less elevated social position - in effect pandering to popular tastes and emotions. One example was Peel's *Tamworth Manifesto*, which we shall mention shortly, but another, and equally relevant, was his speech at the Merchant Taylors Hall in May 1835. Not only was this a party political speech but also a subtle change can be detected from the overtly aristocratic Tory party of pre-1832, to a more middle class orientated party of post-1832. Peel said:

We deny that we are separated by any line or by separate interests from the middle classes. Why, who are we? If we are not the middle classes ...it is because we owe our elevation to those...principles of moral conduct that we have a right to say that our interests, and theirs are united... Why the very charge brought against myself disproves such an insinuation. What was the charge? That the son of a cotton spinner (great cheering) that the son of a cotton spinner had been sent for to Rome to make him Prime Minister of England.⁶⁵

This view - held by those of the highest status within the party - that conservatism should address itself to those social groups who previously had been known as zealous opponents of the Conservatives and Tories was based on two complimentary factors. Firstly the precarious position of the Parliamentary Conservative Party in the wake of the General Election of 1832/3 necessitated

the broadening of the party's appeal. It had to become more flexible in the presentation of policy arguments to different social groups. It also needed a more expansive organizational structure. Secondly, there was the genuinely perceived fear amongst many Conservatives that the great cities and the manufacturing districts were the seed-beds of extreme radicalism and democracy. In the language of the time this was termed the revolutionary 'movement' - the very objects of which, as we pointed out in chapter two, Conservatism was pledged to oppose. One method of countering the effects of popular radicalism was to attempt a form of popular Conservatism, and, many argued this could best be achieved through the utilization of the press in the localities.

In July 1835, these factors were drawn together in an influential article the Conservative journal Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine entitled 'Conservative Associations', and written by the great Tory historian Sir Archibald Alison.⁶⁶ The article called for the widespread formation of Conservative associations to act as, "a barrier against the forces of anarchy."⁶⁷ But the article went further and called on prominent Conservatives in the industrial areas to embark on a programme of political education amongst the working classes. It demanded to know:

How is this information to be conveyed to these classes? How is the truth or political knowledge to pierce the dense and cloudy atmosphere of our great manufacturing cities... It is here that Conservative Associations might operate efficaciously in aiding the cause of truth. The part they have to perform is to organize the means of sound constitutional journals among men of moderate principles, and thereby confirm those already gained and make converts among the disaffected.⁶⁸

Alison went on to suggest that local Conservatives should purchase the local journals and newspapers, "with a view to their diffusion, at an under-price, among the persons of an inferior grade."⁶⁹ However at the same time it warned the local Conservative leaders not to under estimate the political

sophistication of the working classes:

And, in making the selection, let them avoid the common error of supposing the working classes can understand nothing but works expressly intended for their illumination. There never was a greater mistake; they should be addressed by the same arguments as are deemed fit for their superiors; and, if only they can be got to read them, truth in the end will work its way in the humblest class as well as in the most elevated.⁷⁰

Thus, we see that the Conservatives at the local and national levels were attempting to organize their party and wider public opinion in the years immediately following the Reform Act, and in ways which had never been attempted before.⁷¹ In chapter two we outlined eleven criteria which the political scientist would look for as evidence of a modern political party. We can now see that the Conservatives after 1832 had gone some limited but significant way to fulfilling them. They had for example become aware of the need for recruitment of the local as well as the national political leaders; the party began to play a far larger role in the organizing of elections than had previously been the case. The party's national leadership began to outline policies alternative to those of the Whig government and also, through Peel, began to aim for party support of disparate social groups and individuals than had ever been the case before 1832. They began to disseminate their basic political principles on a far wider scale through the medium of the press than had occurred previously, they also attempted to impose a more disciplined aspect to the marshalling of their supporters and members. Finally - and this in an area we shall be concentrating on in later chapters - they gave a sense of legitimacy to those groups who they attempted to politically integrate into the orbit of Conservatism, as opposed to the politically and socially unacceptable principles and actions of the radicals.

In this chapter we have looked at Conservative party organization at the centre. Let us end by examining what the essential reasons

were which made such activity so vitally important to the Conservative party. Basically there were three reasons; firstly the activities of the Whig reformers and the Liberal progressives, secondly the loose nature of the Conservative party's organizational structure and finally the perceived growth of extreme radicalism among the working classes.

In the mid 1830's there seems to have been a genuinely held fear that the Whig reformers were going too far in their attachment to 'progress'. From 1829 and their defeat over the question of Catholic Emancipation the Tories and Conservatives felt the Whigs and Liberals were not only out to destroy them as a political force but were seriously endangering the Constitution. According to the view of most Conservatives in the 1830's, the Reform Act was a final and irrevocable act of appeasement to the popular clamour for reform - although arguably many Ultra Tories did not believe it was irrevocable. Similarly, it was believed by many Conservatives that any further drastic changes in the political constitution, especially in relation to the independence of the House of Lords and the position of the Established Church should be resisted at all costs. Increasingly throughout the 1830's, Peel and the Conservative front bench opposition sought to gain political advantage, both in Parliament and outside, at the expense of the Whig ministry. In the years 1834, 1835 and 1836 the front line of this attack was in the House of Lords, and it was to Peel's credit that he imposed the discipline of the party on the fiercely independent minded Ultras in the House of Lords. Peel faced real problems here. He had to maintain the central and ideologically binding constitutional principles of Conservatism as they had evolved from the theoretical abstractions of Burke and the conservative Whigs of the early 1800's. But also he had to concede the importance, after 1832, of the second chamber as an independent senate, whilst at the same time promote the rights of an elected House of Commons; for the Commons had the sovereign and prescriptive right to see that its Bills remained in some

semblance to their original form at the end of their passage through the Lords. On some occasions, it appeared to Peel that some of the Tory Lords were guilty of the charges laid at them by the Whigs. Throughout 1835/6 they disrupted Commons business to such an extent that virtually nothing was being sent up to the Lords for fear of being altered beyond recognition or being thrown out altogether.

Peel's problems here were three-fold. Firstly the Peers were beginning to lose the Conservatives the practical political benefits, in terms of the widening basis of support which their organization had built up in the constituencies. The Whig/Liberal charges that the Peers were intransigent was beginning to appear correct. Secondly he feared that the Whigs could be forced by the actions of the Lords to react by creating a host of new Whig peers thus destroying an important element in the Conservatives strategy of opposition, and, into the bargain destroy the independence of the Lords which above all Peel wished to preserve. Finally, as we noted above, he had to maintain and promote the right of an elected House of Commons to legislate on behalf of the nation as a whole. What the improved organization of the Parliamentary party achieved for Peel was that he was able to impose the discipline of the party on the recalcitrant and suspicious Tories not only in the Commons, but eventually in the Lords also.

This brings us to another reason why organizational reform was required for the party. This was that, although the fear of Whig extremism was a very real threat and did indeed serve to weld the conservative forces together, the fact was that in the aftermath of the Reform Act the party was very loosely bound together in a formal structural sense. There were still factions sitting on the conservative side of both the Commons and the Lords. There were as we have noted Ultra Tories, who, by varying degrees opposed all efforts of political innovation. There were more moderate Tories who had a faintly Liberal tinge and looked to the revered memory

of the younger Pitt for solace and guidance. There were radical Tories who wished to formally ally the party to the radical working classes in an effort to halt the 'pushy' middle classes who had gained their wealth from commerce and manufacturing, and of course there were the Conservative Peelites who advocated moderate reform whilst still preserving the tenets of the Constitution. The improved nature of the organization allied to the work of Lord Granville Somerset, Sir Thomas Fremantle and others in the Whip's office plus the fear of Whig reforms held these varying factors together. So too did the apparent success of the organizational changes outside Parliament which seemed to be pulling the party around from facing virtual extinction in 1833, to a party of Government in 1835, and, gaining electoral support in the most unexpected of places, such as the manufacturing districts of the North-West.

The final reason for necessitating a change in the organizational structure was concern on the part of the middle classes, as well as of Conservatives, about the growth of extreme and dangerous radicalism, especially amongst the urban working classes, (though not solely them as the Swing riots of the agricultural labourers in 1831 testified). In our next chapter we shall begin to examine the nature of Conservative party involvement and organization in the localities but let us end this chapter with an extended quote from Sir Robert Peel in a speech he made at the Merchant Taylors Hall in 1838, which in many ways encapsulates what this chapter has sought to explain.

My object for some years past, that which I have most earnestly laboured to accomplish, has been to lay the foundation of a great party (Cheers), which, existing in the House of Commons, and deriving its strength from the popular will, should diminish the risk and deaden the shock of a collision between the two deliberative branches of the legislature - which should enable us to check the too importunate eagerness of well-intentioned men, for hasty and precipitate changes in the constitution and laws of the country, and by which we should be enabled to say, with a

voice of authority, to the restless spirit of revolutionary change, 'Here are thy bounds, and here shall thy vibrations cease.' Gentlemen I was deeply impressed with a conviction of the necessity of forming such a party from the period when a great change was made in the representative system of the country ... Gentlemen, that conviction led me to the conclusion that it was necessary...by assuming a new position, (and) by the rejection of the old tactics of party, suited to other times and adapted to other circumstances--that it was desirable to form a party whose bond of connexion should be the maintenance of that particular measure of reform, but a determination to resist further constitutional changes.... There had lately been exhibited to the empire those events in France, in three short days had trampled to dust an ancient dynasty, and had shown physical power triumphant over constituted authority, and had engaged the sympathies of mankind not in favour of constituted authority, but of those who had resorted to a system of violation of all law and order. Our own party had been reduced by the Reform Act to little more than one hundred members...but I did not despair ... I looked forward ultimately to the formation of a party as now exists. I did believe that the good sense of the country would at length place confidence in a party which did not profess hostility to improvement, but which manifested a determination to abide by the leading principles of the British Constitution. Gentlemen, allow me to say that I did look with confidence to the ultimate formation of that happy union which now exists between us and men to whom we were formally opposed.⁷²

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have examined the nature of Conservative party organizations after 1832. In doing so we attempted to contrast these new developments with the old Tory party of the pre-Reform period. We looked at the impact of the hitherto unrecorded efforts of Alfred Mallalieu, and those of Francis Bonham and Lord Granville Somerset and finally we touched upon the reason for such changes in organizational structure. These were; to combat Whig reforms of the prescriptive constitution; the need to prevent the

break-up of a still loose and disparate party structure, and the fear of extreme radicalism among the lower middle classes and working class. It is this latter aspect on which we now focus our attention as our study moves away from the heady atmosphere of the party's headquarters in London to the more mundane - though no less interesting - environment of the industrial North-West.

1. The Croker Papers, ed. L J Jennings, vol.1 pp.368-72 London 1884.
2. C R Fay, Huskisson and His Age, London 1951 pp.46-7.
3. Quoted in L Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution, London 1950 p.4.
4. See T H B Oldfield. Representative History of Great Britain and Ireland vol.IV. London 1816 pp.285-296.
5. Greville Memoirs, 2/12/1830. vol.II London 1938.
6. See 'Observations on the British Constitution'. (Anonymous Pamphlet 1831) p.112.
7. British Museum, Liverpool papers ADD Ms 38262 ff 323.
8. Quoted in A Aspinall 'English Party Organization in the Early Nineteenth Century' in English Historical Review Vol.XLI 1926 p.404.

9. Ibid, p.405.

10. Greville Memoirs, op.cit. 10/11/1830. Charles Greville was a particularly useful source as his position of Clerk to the Privy Council made him conversant with all shades of political opinion.

11. Quoted in G Himmelfarb, (ed), The Spirit of the Age: Essays in Politics and Culture, New York 1963, p.36.

12. Greville Memoirs op.cit. 25/7/1832. In a similar vein see the letter from Lord Granville Somerset to his father the 6th Duke of Beaufort, in September 1831, Drawer 10/2, The Beaufort Papers, Badminton, Gloucestershire. See also the Memorandum from the leading conservative, and colleague of Peel's dated 15/5/32. "The Tories must withdraw their opposition and by some compromise save the creation of Peers...so long as Peel, and Croker and Goulburn, Herries, Inglis, Dawson et cetera, hold back, it is impossible to do anything in the Commons. We only break up the Conservative party and prolong the inevitable (Hardinge's emphasis) Revolution. Nothing can save us but union..." Hardinge Papers, Hardinge to Londonderry 15/5/32, C2, File 11 McGill University Library, Montreal, Canada.

13. D Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England, Leicester 1976.

14. Ibid. p.10.

15. Blackburn Standard 8/11/1837.

16. Herries Papers, Brit. Mus. Ms 5742H104, Mallalieu to Lord Aberdeen 4/7/1832.

17. Croker papers, Vol Two p.216. Wellington to Croker 30/9/1833.

18. Herries Papers op.cit.

19. Herries, op.cit.

20. He suggested John Charles Herries.

21. Herries papers op.cit.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Aberdeen papers British Museum, ADD Ms 43243, ff 126.

25. ADD Ms. Peel papers 40402 ff.231/33 Peel to Harrowby.

26. Aberdeen papers Brit. Museum ADD Ms 43243 ff 125.

27. See N Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics, Oxford 1965, Chapter One. Or his Politics in the Age of Peel, London 1953, especially his Introduction.

28. T Nossiter, Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England, Brighton 1975.

29. Aberdeen papers ADD Ms 43246, 17/4/1846.
30. N Gash, 'F R Bonham, Conservative Party Secretary' English Heritage Revue, October 1948.
31. Bonham was in daily contact with Peel and weekly contacts with other party leaders, reports to the constituencies went out quarterly except at election times when they were obviously more frequent. See Peel papers ADD Ms 4061516.
32. ADD Ms Peel Papers Bonham to Peel 40422 ff 289.
33. ADD Ms Peel Papers 40424 ff 140
34. Peel papers ADD Ms 40404 ff 318/21. 8/12/1834.
35. Graham to Bonham, Peel Papers ADD Ms 40616 ff 162.
36. Sidney to Bonham 27/11/1839. ADD Ms 40617.
37. Peel papers ADD Ms 40426 Egerton to Peel ff 411 14/5/1839.
38. A Aspinall, English Party Organization in the Early Nineteenth Century, English Historical Revue Vol.XL1, 1926 pp.400-403.
39. Aberdeen Papers 43243 ff 126. Mallalieu to Aberdeen.

40. Peel Papers ADD Ms 40314 ff 177.
41. Peel Papers ADD Ms 40314 ff 178/9 12/5/1837.
42. Aberdeen papers ADD Ms 43243 ff 125. See also Croker papers, Clements Library, Letter book Vol 25. Croker to Lord Hertford, 19/9/1831. "Even Old Eldon I hear has offered 1000 pounds,...they may have all the money in a few days, but in a few days the opportunity may be lost...the only chance I see of stopping the revolution is by success in Dorset."
43. ADD Ms Peel papers, Rosslyn to Peel, 40409 ff 114/15, 146/7.
44. Quoted in Cash Organization of the Conservative Party 1832-1836 Part II in Parliamentary History, London 1983, p.138 or see Hardinge papers C2,2/21, McGill University Library, Montreal, Canada.
45. Ibid Box C2 file 14.
46. Ibid Box C2 File 10 also see C2 File 15 also C2 File 16.
47. Hardinge papers McGill op.cit. C2 file 16 6/2/1836.
48. Manchester Guardian 20/7/1837.
49. Hardinge papers McGill Box 6c File 1.
50. Peel papers ADD Ms 40424 ff 263.

51. Peel papers 40416 ff 328; see also Manchester Guardian 2/6/1841.
52. Hardinge papers McGill C2 file 15 (1835).
53. Gash op.cit. p.140.
54. Somerset papers, Badminton, letter dated 12/2/1836 Somerset to Beaufort.
55. Peel papers ADD Ms 40616 f 109, 10/11/1839.
56. Freemantle Manuscript, Buckinghamshire Record Office, Freemantle to Redesdale MSS 80/5.
57. C S Parker, Sir Robert Peel from his Private Papers, Vol 1 pp 115,116, London 1899.
58. Croker papers, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Vol 27 pp.345/6, Croker to Peel 17/12/1834.
59. The full story of the McEntagart affair can be traced in Herries papers Ms 57371 ff 18 to 22.
60. See Hardinge papers McGill University. Box C, File 9 dealing with a William Jordan of the Morning Herald which, in 1831 had cost the party 1,000 pounds.

61. Herries papers op.cit. f 26, 7/11/1833.
62. For a more detailed account of the relations between political parties and the press see S Koss The Rise and Fall of the Political Press, London 1978.
63. See Aberdeen papers ADD Ms 43243 ff 125. British Library.
64. Peel papers ADD Ms 40476 ff 70-73. British Library.
65. Speech reprinted in Preston Pilot 16/5/1835.
66. Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine, July 1835. For more information on Alison's contribution to Blackwood's see Volume 46 of the Wellesley Index of Victorian Periodicals.
67. Ibid p.9.
68. Blackwoods op.cit. p.8.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. For a full example of the attempts of the Conservatives in London to set up a centralized Institution see Appendix Two pp 508-10 below.

72. Sir Robert Peel's Banquet Speech at the Merchant Taylors Hall, (1838), cited in F O'Gorman, British Conservatism, Harlow 1986.

CHAPTER FIVELOYALIST ASSOCIATIONS, PITT CLUBS AND THE
ADVENT OF CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE
NORTH-WEST.

In the last chapter we looked at some of the main developments in the organizational structure of the Conservative party after 1832. This was confined to changes which occurred to the party at the centre. We looked at how information and intelligence was gathered from all parts of Britain; we examined how the party altered its techniques of electoral organization; we looked at the first stages of party political proselytization through the medium of the written word, and finally we examined the financial structure of the party. However, whilst change was taking place to the party at its centre - there were developments similarly in the localities, and essentially for the same kind of reasons chiefly; the defence of the constitution in church and state, the fear of progressive Liberalism, the hatred of extreme radicalism - and the desperate need to keep the Conservative party afloat in the wake of the rising tide of Reform. In this chapter we intend to look at these organizational attempts to assert the Conservative party and its principles from the viewpoint of the geographical locality of the North-West, an area, because of its advanced industrial structure, not regarded at the time as being a natural constituency for Conservative success. Nevertheless we shall discover, the Conservative party was successful in this area between 1832 and 1870.

However, in order to assess the historical significance of the Conservative Associations after 1832, we must, by way of contrast and comparison look at the earliest form of political societies which, in the 1790's were termed Loyalist Associations. As we noted earlier the political cleavage wrought by the French Revolution served to polarize opinion in Britain into those who initially welcomed the events in France and those who feared that a dangerous precedent had been set in 1789. Those reformers, such as Thomas Paine who proposed improving or perfecting the constitution on theoretical grounds, could be viewed, however mild or moderate their proposed changes, as advocating that the English should embark on the same path as that travelled by the French. If anyone required propaganda to argue against change, the French supplied them daily. Burke for example argued that not only was the government of France mishandled by incompetents allowed into positions of authority allowed into positions of power under a weak constitution, but the very concepts and basic principles of the revolution were themselves endangered by the limitations of governmental authority designed to protect them. The English constitution in contrast served in practice the purposes of government and protected individuals within the state.

In the middle of May 1792 George III issued a Royal Proclamation drawn up by Pitt and the Duke of Portland. This Proclamation called for an end of the circulation of 'seditious' literature. The Home Office issued instructions that the Proclamation be read aloud in all parishes and further that local parochial officials should call meetings for the purpose of drafting addresses of loyalty. Similarly the Proclamation was printed in most of the newspapers of the day, with - in the case of the ministerial papers - an attendant editorial urging the formation of societies and clubs for the purpose of organizing the addresses. This was the beginning of the loyalist movement, and throughout the nation as a whole 71 counties and 315 towns and cities reported

favourably to the Proclamation and the addresses of loyalty. The Proclamation had asked that the subjects of the crown should 'avoid and discourage' tendencies toward social disorder, but in reality every address was a pledge by a section of the local community to the existing constitution. It was almost as if the political community of 1792 was ratifying the constitution by open voting and overwhelmingly endorsing the existing political system and the conservative principles of the Pitt ministry. The focus of this loyalty by the associations was the King, the monarch being the symbol of their patriotic sentiments. The English Loyalists first appeared as the result of the theoretical and conceptual challenge made to the constitution by the radicals, the practical demonstration of the fruits of these theories was the situation as it unfolded in revolutionary France. Their chief significance at this stage was not only the equally abstract response to Paine's sentiments by Burke but that thousands of ordinary citizens gave a vote of confidence in the existing political constitution when it appeared to be under attack, thus displaying their loyalty openly by being prepared to stand up and be counted.

The horror felt by the elites at the 'September Massacres' in Paris and at the subsequent emigration to England of the supporters of the monarchy heightened the tensions between the Ministry and the reformers. Also worrying was the location, number and intended use of privately acquired arms, the links between radicals in Britain and France, but most of all the Proclamation of the General Convention of November 19 which declared the assistance of the French armies to all peoples wishing to follow the example of French republicanism. This was the crux of the crisis of 1792. The English radicals took new inspiration from this second Revolution which served to stimulate an increase in the activities of the various reform societies. The domestic tranquillity created by the May Proclamation vanished, only to be replaced by anxiety that the determined

revolutionary principles operating in France could be exported to Britain. After three months of rising tensions, Pitt and his ministers, backed up seemingly by wider political opinion concluded that a revolution was indeed possible in England and issued a Proclamation for all areas to prepare to form defensive militias:-

And whereas we have received information that in the breach of the laws, and notwithstanding our royal proclamation of the 21st day of May, the utmost industry is still employed by evil-disposed persons within this kingdom, acting in concert with persons in foreign parts, with a view to subvert the laws and established constitution of this realm, and to destroy all order and government therein; and that a spirit of tumult and disorder, thereby existed, has lately shewn itself in riots and insurrections.¹

Domestic subversives, acting in concert with foreigners, were seen as attempting to overthrow the state. Also their efforts were believed to have been at least partially successful. Thus the Loyalist Associations once again were regarded as being essential to the mobilizing of propaganda against all forms of radicalism and the collecting of information on radical activities, but also to the actual defence of the nation. Thus, in such a climate, it should not be surprising that the men such as Colonel Ralph Fletcher of Bolton as we saw in Chapter three, began their fiercely anti-radical campaign.

Thus it was that the spate of Loyalist Associations formed between November 1792 and January 1793, were in the main a response from the overtly patriotic sections of society in support of the nation which they perceived to be under threat by internal revolution and external war. However the impetus for the initiating these associations - estimated incidentally to be some 1,500 in number² - came from central government, albeit covertly. William Greville, the Foreign Secretary in Pitt's Ministry had written to his brother, the Duke of Buckingham in November 1792 about the necessity of mobilizing loyalist support. "The hands of the

government must be strengthened if the country is to be saved; but above all, the work must not be left to the hands of the government, but every man must put his shoulder to it, according to his rank or station in life, or it will not be done."³ Thus Greville, on behalf of the government, perceived that what was needed was more than force or the threat of force against the radicals and reformers: what was needed - as we shall show below - was the seemingly spontaneous demonstration by ordinary Englishmen in support of the existing constitution. The underlying motive however, went beyond simple resistance and was one in which those attempting to cultivate dissatisfaction with the existing state of society and the political order would be shown the hopelessness of their endeavours - though it is doubtful that Greville had any clear notion of how he might arrive at his solution.

The initial impetus for the formation of Loyalist Associations came from the Ultra-Conservative Whig and former Chief Justice of Newfoundland named John Reeves. Towards the end of November he and his associates formed the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers. The first advertisement appeared in the Star, a firm supporter of the Ministry, on November 23. Another Government Newspaper, the Sun, must have been appraised of the developments, for in an editorial on the same morning suggested, "The better order of Britons are at length roused by the boldness of domestic enemies, and are forming themselves into Associations, for the purpose of repressing and defeating the pernicious doctrines now afloat in this country."⁴ Similar advertisements followed in The Times and the Morning Chronicle. However the important link that there was some form of Governmental involvement comes from the fact that Reeves was a close friend of the Under-secretary of State at the Home Office, Evan Nepean, thus if he did not know the precise nature of the plans of the government he would be aware of their general desires and aims. Moreover, Reeves was not a rich man, but he somehow

found the money to finance one and a half columns of space in the most expensive newspapers of the day. There is also the sheer improbability of a man in government service doing exactly what the government wanted without having some sort of nod in the right direction.

Each Loyalist Association performed two important functions. By advertising its existence, it sent a message to all who were discontented that there also existed a group who were dedicated to the preservation of the constitution as it existed. The propaganda value of the literally thousands of groups which were formed to counter the relatively few radical organizations dedicated, as they were to politically opposed ends, may have been decisive in itself in reducing the threat of internal disturbances. The second function was much more practical. The standing committee chosen at the formative meetings of the Associations ranged in terms of numbers from ten to upwards of one hundred. Not including all other associations and counting only those actively involved, at a stroke the peace-keeping capability of the government had been increased by at least 15,000 individuals and probably many more. The important point to note is that this was not motivated from a party political stance, but was one in which the ministry of the day drummed up support to offset political revolution and to maintain constitutional government.

The rapidity with which the Loyal Associations were formed was remarkable, and it affected all regions of the country. Former constitutional societies - as geographically distant as Manchester, Penzance, Rotherham and Birmingham - changed their names to Loyal Associations and Defenders of the Constitution.⁵ Also the religious boundaries were overcome for at least sixteen dissenting congregations made known their loyalty either by advertising in the local paper or by joining as a group.⁶ By far the majority of the lower middle classes and emergent working

class who joined the Loyalist Association were those involved in the various trades or services; the Billingsgate Porters, the Worshipful Company of Butlers of London, the London Bakers; the debtors in York Gaol wrote an address of support.

However in the North West only Manchester, Stockport and Chester sent in addresses of Loyalty, and although in a few towns Associations of Volunteers were formed there is little evidence that the mass of working people flocked to join them. This further suggests that even as early as the 1790's the working class of the North-West were not susceptible to the manipulation of the forces of the state.

There are several possible reasons why the North-West region taken as a whole appears to have been relatively reluctant to join in the rise of government inspired loyalty against the possible war with France. Firstly, if we assume that the impetus to the forming of Loyalist Associations came from the middle ranks of society in the localities, then in Lancashire at least, those men were in the main involved in commerce and industry. The chief industry of the region was cotton textiles which was dependent on overseas trade both for its raw materials and the bulk of the sales of its finished product. A war on the seas therefore would probably result in the curtailing of trade, then the manufacturers of the middling ranks would be initially unwilling to support a potentially long and damaging war, until, that is the government contracts began to fill their order books. Secondly, labourers and skilled workers would be unlikely to support the government - for the reason stated above - or more importantly because these groups were becoming increasingly radical as the independence of workers was gradually being eroded by the factory system. As we noted in Chapter three this tended to make these groups increasingly hostile to the forces of authority. Nevertheless as we saw in Chapter three, as the war with France developed, and the taint of Jacobinism became widespread, men like Hulton and

Fletcher of West Manchester and Bolton did not find it difficult to fan the flames of reaction and draw-in some support from some sections of the emergent working class.

The most usual method employed by the Associations to gain adherents was to place copies of the address at various centres to be signed by those who were unable to attend the initial meeting of the declaration of Loyalty. For Associations representing large areas such as counties, divisions or hundreds, this was the practical and logical step to take. However, some of the Associations took a more direct approach. At Bolton, and in Wakefield, Yorkshire, not only did the leading members solicit every house for a signature or mark of agreement, they also made a list of those who would not sign, with their reasons for not doing so appended and sent to the Home Office.⁷

The Loyalist Association were important because they were the first organized movement of conservative, constitutional bodies which drew upon the support of all grades in society. However, they differed from the Conservative Association of *forty years* later in two important aspects. Firstly they were primarily government inspired, and not party political inasmuch as, though they opposed radicalism or Jacobinism, they did not support a set of political principles and policies inspired by one party and seeking to attract political support at the expense of another. Secondly, and following on from this, they were formed in an atmosphere of high tension, in effect of a war or the immanency of war: thus the main factor which bound them together was not just loyalty to the constitution - although this aspect was to be of lasting significance in some cases as we shall discover - but loyalty to the nation; in short, of overt patriotism. However, it should not be forgotten that the Loyalist Associations were innovative in that they broke all precedents. For here was a genuinely mass movement of those expressing conservative sentiments which did so much to subsequently revitalize the long

dormant principles of Toryism. For the historian it is normally the voices of the disaffected and of those who demand change which catch the attention and are most noticed. But, with the Loyalist Associations, we notice they were composed of people who were proclaiming that they were satisfied with the political situation as it existed and most decidedly did not want dramatic changes of the constitution. This is the important historical precedent for the Conservative Associations of the 1830s and 1840s, for these were people the historian normally never hears.

Undoubtedly the chief activators and organizers of the Loyalist Associations were of the lesser aristocracy or those of middling ranks,⁸ not surprising when one considers that as property holders they had most to lose from the success of revolutionary Jacobinism. As was the case with the Conservative Associations some forty years later, it was 'respectable' individuals who were usually elected to the committees, but the members were expected to spread the message to the lower orders. In the 1790's the Loyalist movement was based, (as was the impetus to form Conservative Associations in the 1830's) upon something broader than mere status or property, although these factors were of course important. It was primarily based upon emotion, a deeply felt relationship between the individual and his nation. In some respects this can be described as romantic conservatism. Patriotic sentiment in the present was reflected in a form of romantic sentiment about the past. This was given legitimacy by Burke in his veneration of history and prescription, but it became an inspirational reality. During this early period of the war the nation's past became a treasure house of inspiration for the present. The adventures of great and patriotic heroes became constant subjects for novels, poems and works of art. Nostalgia for medievalism, for castles and chivalry, knights and ladies, heroism and mystery, honour and armour, gripped the emotions of many sections of society from the 1790's until well into the nineteenth century.

Part of the reason for this creation of a chivalrous utopia was the war and the threat posed for the nation, but part was also concerned with impact of industrialization and urbanization. This was felt most strongly by those who had some direct experience of the forces of modernity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; sections of the impoverished working classes of the rapidly changing industrial north, the agricultural wage labourers whose livelihood was under constant threat by enclosures and agrarian rationalization. These people looked back to a past which appeared idyllic, just and uncomplicated. In this sense the deep attachment to medievalism or the distant past was a direct repudiation of the values of commercial society, a rejection of the economic and social rationalism associated with the proponents of progressive reason, also a yearning for imagination as opposed to reality and for religion over atheism. This idealization of a past society with its stable community and the interlinking harmony of its social groupings remained one of the most compelling political and social visions of the nineteenth century. Tory Radicalism of the 1830's and 40's was strongly imbued with such sentiments and as we shall subsequently discover, attracted widespread support among sections of the working class of the North-West. However, the starting point of such sentiments was the 1790's and formation of the Loyalist Associations. Romantic Toryism began to flourish in an environment in which love of the nation became of greater importance than the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity imported from across the Channel. With such a perception one can begin to understand the inclusion as Loyalists of Friendly Societies, Dissenting Congregations of Methodists or Quakers, liveried Companies, innkeepers and even the inmates of prisons. They were expressing at a time of national stress, the emotions which would prevail in the next century. In several respects, as we outlined above, these emotions knew no class boundaries. These early loyalists were the overt nationalists of England, made up of all ranks of society, whose

political legacy lasted much longer than the living memory of the tumult and eventual war which initially gave them life. The prime motivation which awakened this patriotism was a perception of a threat to the constitution. Whether appraised of the threat by the newspapers, by official proclamations and actions or by their own experiences of radicalism, the loyalists met the threat directly. What was happening was that political attitudes were being cleaved apart - between reformers and radicals of varying levels of intensity, and loyalists and conservatives, again of differing levels of determination; in essence between the extremes of radical republicanism on the one hand and Church and King zealots on the other.

In February 1793, the French declared war on England and the influence of Loyalist Associations were at once lessened. Now Englishmen of all political persuasions focused their attention on the winning of the war, thus the efforts of the Loyalists was merged into the larger stream of activities. This had the effect of broadening the specialized political message of Loyalism; namely that of defending the constitution. Many of the Loyal Associations became the local centres for recruitment and the raising of subscription for the war effort. At Manchester, for example, the Association decided to raise 'a Corps of Marines' and subscribed 5,000 pounds on the spot. By May, the associators were collecting money to assist those unemployed because of the war and had already subscribed 'upwards of 1,000 pounds.'⁹ Collections for this purpose were raised in Manchester churches, where 94 pounds 1s 0d was donated at one meeting. These funds were given to the unemployed upon application in the form of checks which could be exchanged for food. Also the Manchester Association attracted 1,700 enlisted volunteers.¹⁰ Furthermore they had shown that radical reform of the constitution could be halted, and indeed was so for almost forty years.

We saw in Chapter three how working class political aspirations were dealt with in the North-West by men like William Hulton and Ralph Fletcher. This suggests that the environment of intense hostility to reform was indeed continued during the early years of the nineteenth century. However, the Loyalist Associations fell into disuse not long after the war commenced, at least in comparison to the scale which had seen their dramatic introduction in late 1792.

Nevertheless, a form of Loyalist Association was maintained during the early years of the nineteenth century. This chiefly comprised societies formed to honour the memory of William Pitt who died in early 1806. These 'Pitt Clubs', as they were known, were composed mainly of a town's elite, the annual subscription of a figure varying from 2 pounds to 5 pounds ensuring that this was so. Pitt clubs were formed in most of the major urban centres of the North-West; at Stockport, Manchester, Salford, Oldham, Rochdale, Bolton.¹¹ Blackburn and Preston. Some were known simply as 'The Bolton Pitt Club' etc, but others varied their names, thus we have the Liverpool 'True Blue Club' or the Lancaster 'Heart of Oak' club. This was a continuation of the organized loyalist sentiment of the early 1790's, and, although such societies may have assisted the Tory or conservative Whig candidates during elections on an informal basis, there is no evidence that the club or society engaged directly in politics. The main object of these clubs and societies was to dine and eulogize upon some great event in the nations recent history; Trafalgar Day or the acknowledgment of the services of Pitt, 'the pilot who weathered the storm' upon the anniversary of his death.

Thus these societies were little more than annual or bi-ennial gatherings of the towns' elites who shared a similar set of political principles. It was right that this should be the case for, although occasionally a political celebrity may deign to

honour the assembly with his company, the government on the whole discouraged such potential displays of overt partisanship. The Loyalist Associations were justified in the early 1790's because it appeared a possibility that the constitution - and later the nation - could be threatened by an upsurge in radical reformism and a union between the French and English Jacobins. When the war was in its later stages and, at its conclusion when the majority of public opinion was loyalist, such external organizations were not as important. Their usefulness had been served; they had shown that the overwhelming majority of Englishmen were loyal. Even though - as we saw in chapter three - close watches were kept on reformers, radicals and the disaffected working class, local political associations, working outside and beyond the control of political leaders in London, could be a profound embarrassment, and give the opposition opportunities for pointing to ministerial double standards. Also the Liverpool administration claimed to be a broad based coalition of political interests, again such overt display of uncontrolled and unsanctioned partisanship would have been embarrassing.

However, the Pitt Clubs were for the most part maintained throughout the 1820's even though they were little more than middle class based debating and dining societies. The attitude of the Conservative Party's national leadership regarding these harmless (and only marginally useful) gatherings was reflected in a letter from Lord Granville Somerset to his brother the Duke of Beaufort

I received 3 or 4 days back an invitation to belong to a club of gentlemen...and inviting a subscription of 5 pounds per annum: the objects of the said club (so far as the prospectus is concerned) appear limited to dining 4 times yearly at Petty House: how (sic) I shall have the power of dining at Devizes unless I am at Badminton, and when there, I shall much prefer your dinner to the Petty House one. Therefore I have no inclination to pay 5 pounds a year. On the other hand if you wish to support this club and if its funds are to be applied to hustings objects and not to culinary ones, I

shall give you my subscription: but I have no mind to pay 5 pounds for Petty House gastronomists.¹²

This letter was written in the 1830's when, as we shall subsequently discover, the attitudes of the national party leaders had changed regarding political clubs. However, in order to plot this change, we must contrast the situation existing before 1832 with that after this date.

As we have already noted the Liverpool administration was based upon a fairly broad coalition of the conservative sentiments, principles and opinions of Britain's body politic. The attitudes of these conservative Whigs and Tories to the electorate and the wider general public was one of detachment. To be sure the electors were important, and the gentlemen of the counties were to be relied upon to keep the local peace, but the running of the nation and the formulation of policy was the domain of those in positions of power in the cabinet, executive and legislative. Outside interference from political societies - whether loyal or otherwise - was to be discouraged.

However, as we discovered in previous chapters, the growth of working class radicalism - in the North-West and elsewhere was disturbing, and Tory attitudes and perceptions coupled with a recent history of savage hostility to the working class served to widen the gulf between the governed and the governors. We saw earlier how even in the 1790's and at the height of national loyalism, the loyalist Associations were at their weakest in most of the North-West and we saw in chapter three how increasing levels of working class consciousness was manifested in the need to attain some form of working class representation in Parliament in order to redress the grievances of many working people. Throughout the 1820's, this movement continued, and it received

greater encouragement when influential members of the middle classes also began to call for parliamentary reform after 1829. Reform Associations or Political Unions, as they were termed, began to be formed throughout the industrial districts, especially in those areas such as Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and Leeds which had no representation. The year 1829 is important for it was in this year that the then Prime Minister, Wellington, bowed to increasing outside pressure and granted Catholic Emancipation. Much of this outside pressure had been manipulated by Joseph O'Connell's Catholic Association. The Catholic Association was formed in 1815 in order not only to gain Irish Catholics not only legitimate educational and political rights, but ultimately to repeal the Act of Union of 1800. In 1823 O'Connell introduced the Catholic Rent which was a mass subscription of a penny a month and gave the movement the impetus and resources to mount a truly national campaign. This mobilization of the Catholic interest produced in turn a Protestant reaction in the form of Brunswick Clubs and Protestant Associations. These organizations also raised money by subscription but were only intended to be effective in Ireland in opposition to O'Connell. They were also not overtly party political: although many Tories and Conservatives of national standing gave them tacit support, the Brunswick Clubs received no official sanction, and indeed many-Peel included - regarded these groupings (as was the case with the Orange Orders) as extremely unsettling and damaging to moderate opinion. Also of concern was the effect extra-Parliamentary activity and uncontrolled political mobilization might have on the national public peace on all political sides. But the fact remains that the Catholic Association was an extremely successful early form of pressure group and both it and the Protestant Association did show the way forward in terms of organizing a mass of supporters.

Even more dangerous and threatening, however, were the Political Unions who, like the various types of religious/political

associations, operated mainly in secret and outside the pale of 'respectable' and legitimate politics. We have detailed the involvement of the working class of the North-West in the Political Unions in earlier chapters, but from the viewpoint of the Conservatives what made these organizations doubly dangerous was that in many areas they seemed to be not only tightly organized and well-disciplined but also led by many of the respectable middle classes, just the groups who Canning, and later Peel, wished to attract to the socially broader based principles and policies of Conservatism.

Tory and Conservative intransigence over the Reform question, although arguably based on sound political logic had the effect of alienating many groups who, in normal circumstances, could be expected to rally to the party expressing principles on the one hand of traditional political stability, and on the other the will to reform proven abuses and outdated practices.

This point was underscored by the results of the first general election held under the terms of the Reform Act . We saw in the last chapter how the Conservative party at the centre began to reorganize itself after the dreadful defeat of 1832/3. But in the Localities Tory and Conservative middle class activists took the lead in attempting to place their party back on a stable footing. The initial phase of these attempts was to firstly consolidate the existence Conservative support and secondly to woo those naturally inclined conservative middle classes back to the conservative side and away from the radicalism and reformism of the Liberals and progressive Whigs. This was seen as being immediately necessary for two reasons: firstly, in order to halt the disaffection to basic Conservative constitutional principles in the wake of the victory of Reform, this being intended to protect these principles from further assaults by the Liberals which many Conservatives believed would inevitably follow Reform; secondly, because of the structural working and operation of the Reform Act itself,

especially with regard to the registration of electors. To be able to attend to the annual Register of electors it was vital that the local party be organized on a permanent footing. This was one of those essential organizational functions forced upon the political parties after 1832, which indeed came about as a direct result of the Act itself.

In January 1833, as the elections of the first Reform Parliament were becoming known, Conservative Associations and Societies began to be formed. On the 19th of January it became known that, almost spontaneously, associations were formed in Berkshire, Gloucestershire, and societies at Bath and Bristol. The Tory newspaper John Bull reported the formation of the Bath society thus:-

The inhabitants of Bath have followed the example of those of Bristol, and have formed a large and highly respectable Conservative body, the first object of which is to declare that the present members for the city are the men of its choice, but their principles are in direct opposition to the views and feelings of the great majority of the people, and to make arrangements to secure, at the next election men of totally different politics, and who are likely to stand forward in defence of the Constitution - the avowed enemies of innovation and destruction.¹³

Thus, we can see that from their very inception the aims of these associations were primarily political (as opposed to the mainly social functions of the Pitt Clubs) in that their object was to oppose radical reformism. Later in January Conservative Associations were reportedly being formed in the counties of Durham, Essex, Suffolk, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Cumberland, Hampshire, and Sussex.¹⁴ The South Lancashire Conservative Association was also formed in January 1833, at the Bay Horse Inn in the small town of Newton-le-Willows. The prime mover in its formation was the Bolton landowner William Hulton who, in 1837 recalled its beginnings.

When the men of Lancashire were borne down by the unfortunate result of Sir Thomas Hesketh's election, a few dependent individuals sat in the window of a common pot-house in Newton. It occurred to them that it was their duty to call upon every friend of the Monarch and the Church to counteract the machinations of the enemies to both...¹⁵

By August 1833 the South Lancashire Conservative Association had formed itself into branch districts covering the whole of the southern part of the region and the various representatives came together to hold a conference and a celebratory dinner, 200 persons attended, mostly of middle class social backgrounds, but the aristocratic elements of the party's hierarchy were also legitimising the proceedings by their presence. These included the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Balcarres, Lord Kenyon and Lord Skelmersdale. Hulton again spoke, and it is interesting to note that, even by this early date, the middle class conservatives were turning their attentions to the lower orders. He said that the Conservatives,

"wanted that which would make the poor man happy and contented in his cottage, and would teach him a reverence for the laws which every man ought to feel... By disseminating Conservative principles amongst their equals - by kindness to all those who had just claims on their wealth - and by sheltering the poor from oppression they would secure the honour of the King, the prosperity of the country and, he trusted the true faith in which they had been brought up."¹⁶

This passage conveys the central aims of these Associations when they were first formed. Firstly, the middle class conservatives should begin to show a kindly demeanour to the working class in an attempt to steer them away from radical tendencies - a response which was a totally different tactic from the brutality and inveterate hostility these same men had shown during the earlier years of the century. Also law, order, property and the constitution must be preserved from rampant reformism. Furthermore middle class Conservatives must evangelize the principles of moderate Conservatism amongst their social equals.

These feelings were reiterated the following year at the second anniversary dinner when 703 persons attended, among their company the Parliamentary party's chief whip, Sir Thomas Freemantle. The chairman, the earl of Wilton, in his speech revived once again the need to go out and convince the middle classes of the need to promote Conservative principles and point out the danger of radicalism. But, interestingly he couched his speech in the tone of romantic Toryism, that is of the glory and happiness of England's past.

It was his sincere hope, as it was his honest conviction, that by the timely exertion of his friends, and societies such as this, the country might at no distant day be restored to that wholesome state in which it had once been the glory of all English breasts to behold her. They must endeavour to show the people the delusion which it had been the practice to contaminate them with. They must endeavour to convince them of their kindly feelings which the Conservatives held towards them, and to show them that instead of their being what their enemies would wish them to suppose - their oppressors, they were their friends.¹⁷

This call to a romantic and idealized view of the past we have noted earlier in this chapter, but to many social groups it was a powerful psychological tool. The past was painted as being comfortable and secure, the present, progressive, dangerous and insecure. It was a ploy the Conservatives in the Localities were to perfect and use over and over again in the three decades which followed 1832, as we shall subsequently discover.

Also this conference and dinner marked out most strikingly the distinction between the genteel and gentlemanly nature of the dining and debating Pitt Clubs of pre-1832, and the harsh reality of the post-Reform political world. The leader of the Rochdale Conservatives, the banker John Roby, pointed this out to the conference in no uncertain terms.

Their meeting was not assuredly for the purpose of merely eating and drinking and making speeches; no, their objects were to strengthen themselves against the great struggle which was inevitably approaching; in fact to revue their troops before the battle, and to see the extent of the enemies's forces; for sure he was that unless it was the fixed determination of the Conservatives to do their duty, and combat unflinchingly the democratic principles which threaten to overwhelm them like a moral pestilence, their labours were in vain. It was not only as a body, but individually they must work, as each man might do something to combat the Whig ridden monster begotten by French malice on English credulity.¹⁸

There were of course objections made by the opponents of the Conservatives to the latter's new-found zeal to organize themselves. Among the leaders of this reaction was the Liberal Manchester Guardian. As the first Associations began to be formed in early 1833, the Guardian in an editorial pointed out the contradictions of the Conservative position.

This is capital. A parcel of people who have almost made themselves hoarse by declaiming against political unions, are proposing, not only to establish a political union of their own, but to establish one having branch societies, (M.G.'s emphasis) and therefore directly in the teeth of the Delegations Act.¹⁹

However there was also opposition from within Conservative ranks when the North Lancashire Conservative Association was formed in June 1835, one of the Members of Parliament for North Lancashire, the now conservative Lord Stanley, engaged in a lengthy public correspondence with the Association's President, Sir Thomas Hesketh in an effort to dissuade him from pursuing the venture. Again Stanley posed questions as to the necessity of forming societies and associations: "You may say that you are numerous, and strong and united; that your opponents, even if numerous, are disunited among themselves and comparatively unimportant in wealth and station. If it is so, you have little to fear, and little need of an organization to oppose them."²⁰ But Stanley's main criticism was the political breach and possible consequences of

embittered conflict which such political societies might engender, and further, that the role of such societies might even undermine the functions of Parliament itself.

But if extending your views beyond local objects, you seek to form part of a general organization throughout the empire, of country clubs, and local clubs, and District Associations, acting in concert, usurping, in fact the power of government, and combining to carry on the affairs of the country through their instrumentality, I can conceive nothing more dangerous to public liberty, nothing more *injurious* to a stable or rational Administration, than such a state of things. Power vested in clubs acting in concert for national objects, was one of the most dangerous...symptoms of the early stage of the French Revolution. Thank God! I see no cause here to anticipate such scenes as there occurred: but if there be a course calculated first to control the House of Commons, next to call in question and put in jeopardy the House of Lords, the Church and the Throne, and in the progress of the operation to destroy the public peace, private happiness and national confidence...(there would exist) two rival sets of political associations engaged in a deadly struggle with each other for the maintenance of extreme principles - throwing over by joint consent, at the first onset, the incumbrance of all those who would lend themselves to the one, nor to the other, and then entering upon a *protracted* (and even more protracted, the more embittered and irreconcilable) warfare of opinion.²¹

The editor of the Preston Pilot jumped to the defence of the N.L.C.A. and, in an illuminating passage, stated that the cleavage of political opinions had already taken place, and that if the principles of Conservatism were not put before moderate opinion in an organized and systematic fashion 'those of another might',²² meaning of course radicalism.

Hesketh in his own defence replied that '...I believe I speak for the sentiments of all those who were present at the meeting in question, when I say, that they all felt and feel that such associations have been necessarily (his emphasis) and unavoidably forced upon the country; first, by the baneful effects of the Reform Bill, constituted as the elective franchise by that measure... and secondly, by the measures of the present

administration as now proposed, to despoil the rights of property both of Church and State, in addition to those encroachments already effected by that administration, when last in office."²³ The point worth noting here is that, for the first time in the history of Britain, a network of organisations had come into existence to actively promote a political party, not just a wide ranging set of political principles or, as we saw in Chapter One above, the example given by Frank O'Gorman²⁴ of a small faction like the Rockingham Whigs, on whose behalf William Adam worked in the 1780's. What we see in the 1830's is a national party constituted in the Houses of Commons and Lords whose central aim was to increase their numbers in the House of Commons, thereby attaining political power and to be able to put into effect the principles believed in by the rank and file in the country at large.

Hesketh's point about the need of association being forced by the effects of the Reform Bill, refers primarily to the registration clauses, and, although we have noted them earlier, it may be useful to outline them in some detail. Neither the Reform Act of 1832, nor that of 1867 allowed a person qualified to vote under the terms of the Acts to enjoy that right without fulfilling certain registration requirements. In country constituencies the law made the parish overseer the responsible official for the electoral register, and required all persons possessing the required qualification (40 shilling freeholders and 50 pounds tenants at will) to make out and send to him a formal claim to be registered. The annual list of claims, together with the existing list of voters, was required to be exhibited in public and any voter or claimant had the right to challenge any name on the list, whilst it was within the right of the overseer to reject a claim. This tells us, incidentally, something of the political importance of the power of the parish overseer, and, as we shall discover, explains the fierce political battles which occurred in order that one party may secure the election of the overseer of their choice.

The claimant whose claim was disputed could appeal to the revising barristers court, and was entitled to costs (at the barristers discretion) against an objector whose objection was deemed frivolous or who did not appear to support his objection. The objector on his part, was required to give notice of objection both to the overseer and to the person whose qualification he took exception to. The nature of the objections were numerous; failure to give adequate notification of a change of address, failure to pay rates on time, the receiving of parochial relief, or simple ineligibility.

The procedure followed in the boroughs was somewhat different.²⁵ Here, as in the counties the overseer was the official mainly responsible for the register, but the responsibility for the list of freemen voters, whose rights were preserved by both the Acts of 1832 and 1867, devolved upon the Town Clerk. As the Parish overseer and his officials were responsible for the collecting of poor rate, the names of all occupiers of houses, would in theory, be entered in the occupiers' column of the rate book, the overseer simply constructed his list of voters by transcribing the names which appeared in the occupier's column. There was thus no need for persons qualified either as occupiers under the term of the 1832 Act, or as residents under the Act of 1867, to make formal claims. The roll of the Freemen or burgesses as in the possession of the Town Clerk, who made up his list from the existing electoral roll of Freemen. But if, for any reason, the name of the person qualified for the franchise was omitted from these lists, he had the right to send in a claim for registration. Similarly any voter had the right to object to another voter under the terms of borough 10 pounds rateable value qualification.

It is here that the necessity for efficient organization of the local party becomes obvious. If a local party could get more names of their supporters on to the register, or strike more of their opponents supporters, they would win elections. This meant

that in the boroughs especially - the annual registration battles in the courts not only served to force the pace of constituency organizations, but also acted as a stimulus to party feeling and enhanced the self-identification of the supporter to the party; indeed the process helped to sustain such feelings in a way that was not apparent or necessary before 1832.

The differing nature of the various types of registration and qualification, explains in part, the need of the Conservative Associations and Societies to organize themselves according to the locality or district in which they were to function. For, as we have noted, one of their primary functions was to marshall their forces in the battle for the registrations. The North and South Lancashire Conservative Associations were responsible for their respective county divisions: they divided themselves into the branches in accordance with the various parish boundaries but reported directly back to their headquarters in Preston for the Northern division and Newton in the Southern. It was here that the party's registration records were kept and sent forward to Bonham at the Carlton. The various County Associations paid for all the registration expenses of their supporters out of central funds directly subscribed for that purpose.

The borough Associations were more autonomous, being solely in control of their own finances and records. It was right that this was so for each borough was peculiar to itself and only those with direct experience of a locality could be expected to supervise its organization. For the purposes of the registration, each borough was divided into branches or ward districts and branch societies set up in the wards or districts. Even though the registration was due on a yearly basis, the various ward branches appear to have met weekly, thus lending further support to our view that party political organization was operating on a permanent basis.²⁶ The meetings of the full borough Associations were usually four times per year - to exchange information and discuss tactics, and

once again to forward information to Bonham in London.

However, the county Associations acted as an executive body in overall control of all the various affiliated societies in the region as a whole. In the summer, all the Societies sent representatives to the annual county conference and dinner held respectively at Preston or Newton. Thus all the various branches fell ultimately under the influence of the regions two central bodies. Article seven of the general rules of the North Lancashire Association explains the procedure.

That, where any town or local district within the division shall have 30 or more members may (sic) form themselves into a branch or district association, and subject to its rules. That such branch or district association shall have the power...(to) act generally in their own affairs - admit members and hold local meetings; and that such branch and district associations shall from time to time communicate the admission of members, and report their proceedings to the secretaries of the general associations... but that no public proceedings shall act without the sanction of a subsequent general meeting.²⁷

Actual membership figures of the various societies at this early stage of their development are difficult to assess as no documents have survived. However, given the size of the various delegates annual conference and General Meetings - in South Lancashire over 1,000 in 1836,²⁸ and in North Lancashire over 400²⁹ - we can tentatively suggest that the overall membership was substantial. By the end of 1836, Conservative Associations existed at Stockport, Ashton, Manchester, Salford, Rochdale, Middleton, Oldham, Bury, Bolton, Warrington, Wigan, Leigh, Chorley, Liverpool, Preston, Lancaster, Clitheroe, Blackburn and Darwen. In Scotland the Conservatives formed a branch exclusively for women,³⁰ and at Warrington they formed a branch for juveniles.³¹

It must be stressed that the initial impetus for the organization of the conservatives of Lancashire (and elsewhere) came from amongst the professional and manufacturing middle classes, and from the lesser aristocracy and landed gentry of the counties. This reflected a broadening of the political representation of conservatism, and the rising power of the new bourgeoisie in this region. It was realized that the Reform Act was not only a triumph for this class, but that its very operation required a new approach to politics. Many 'respectable' members of the politically moderate middle classes had allied themselves with reform during the years 1830-32: it was vital that the Conservatives make an attempt to woo these sections back to political moderation, and not let them drift into radicalism or progressive Liberalism. This meant the party had to be flexible and approachable. As we noted in Chapter Four, Peel's Merchant Taylor's speech of 1835 recognized this,. But he also realized the need of party organization in the counties and boroughs - both to give the Conservatives a permanent presence and to accommodate the new factor of the register. In 1838 he wrote to the former Treasury Secretary Charles Arbuthnot, on the new state of political affairs. He said.

The Reform Bill has made a change in the position of parties, and the practical working of public affairs, which the authors of it did not anticipate. There is a perfectly new element of political power - namely, the registration of voters, a more powerful one than either the Sovereign or the House of Commons. That party is strongest in point of fact which has the existing registration in its favour. It is a dormant instrument, but a most powerful one in its tacit and preventative operation. What a check it is at this moment upon the efficiency and influence of the existing government, backed as it is by all the favour and private goodwill of the Crown, and by a small majority of the House of Commons. It meets them every day and every hour. Of what use is the prerogative of dissolution to the Crown, with an unfavourable registry, and the fact of its being unfavourable known to all the world. Then it is almost impossible to make any promotion, or vacate any office, for fear of sustaining a defeat. The registration will govern the disposal of offices, and determine the policy of party attacks, the power

of this new element will go on increasing, as its secret strength becomes better known and is more fully developed...substantial power will be in the registry courts, and there the contest will be determined.³²

Thus it was vital that the Conservatives make a vigorous attempt to attract the support of the mainly middle class electorate of the North-West boroughs. We suggest that in organizing the party after 1832, the Conservatives had embarked on a significantly new era of the development of the political party. These middle-class-based Conservatives correspond in form and practice to the type of political organization one noted political scientist has termed the party of 'individual representation'.³³ According to Sigmund Neumann the party of individual representation is characteristic of a society with a restrictive franchise and degree of political participation. Its organization is permanent and its members chief functions are canvassing proselytizing and, importantly, the recruitment of both supporters and political leaders in local and national areas of political activity.

The importance and success of the Conservatives in recruiting new political talent from their North-West associations is most striking in the period after 1832. Here was a party immediately after 1832 which many commentators believed was on the edge of extinction.³⁴ But in the years after 1832, it had remarkable successes amongst that group - the manufacturing middle classes - and in that locality - the industrial North-West - which had been for many decades the most hostile areas for Toryism. Many local middle class manufacturers became Conservative Members of Parliament. At Stockport there was T Marsland, at Blackburn there was a succession of Conservative members from W Feilden, J Hornby and his brother W H Hornby. Indeed this seat returned two Conservative mill owners to Parliament on three occasions, 1841, 1865 and 1868, and from the period from 1832 to 1862 never failed to return at least one member. At Preston there was Robert Townley Parker and at Bolton William Bolling. At Rochdale there

was J Entwistle and later C Royds. At Warrington the local Conservative member for many years was the brewer G Greenall, and at Wigan the mine owner J H Kearsley. All these men were recruited from the ranks of their local Conservative Associations.

Neumann goes on to explain that the party of individual representation allows the supporters much freedom with regard to issues of conscience and policy option, whilst retaining an embryonic form of party discipline. Also, although permanently constituted its members tended to meet less frequently in the periods between elections, reforming at the approach of a contest. For our period, this is only partially true for we have seen that the needs of attending to the register, and later the needs of the annual local governmental elections meant that the organization were on a more permanent basis than Neumann suggests, but importantly they were tailored to the needs of the specific locality.

SUMMARY

Thus the Conservative Associations formed in the North West after 1832 were an important development in the history of the modern political party.³⁵ In this chapter we have attempted to describe the evolution of the organization of local political grouping from the government inspired Loyalist Associations - which, in the early 1790's, did set a precedent of sorts - to the purely party inspired, middle class based Conservative Associations of the early 1830's. The focus of the chapter has been the description of the evolution of Conservative party organization from the 1790's to the immediate post-1832 period. The analysis of the

Loyalist Associations and Pitt Clubs was two fold. Firstly we sought to explain the nature of party organization, suggesting that the wave of loyalism stemming from the wars, may have gone some way in assisting the resurgence of Old Tory principles in a national context. Secondly, we also make the very important point that in the North-West this call to loyalism was muted among the emerging working class. This seems to be constituted with the evidence gleaned from chapter three and the increasingly radical posture adopted by the majority of working people in the North West from 1790 to 1832. We noted that from the early 1830's the Conservatives in the locality began to use the party as a means of possibly altering working class political opinions and allegiances. It is the description of the attempts of the local conservatives to attract working class support in the 1830's to which we now turn our attention.

1. Annual Register for 1792, p.166.

2. See R R Dozier, For King, Constitution and Country, Kentucky U.P. 1983 pp.61/64 or A Booth, Reform, Repression and Revolution: Radicalism and Loyalism in the North West of England, 1789-1803, Unpublished PhD, Lancaster University 1979.

3. William Greville, Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of George the Third, 2 vols. London 1855, p.227/228. Nov. 14 1792.

4. The Sun, 23/11/1792.

5. Add Ms British Library, 16930/31.
6. Add Ms British Library, 16929.
7. Add Ms 16,929. British Library.
8. For the social composition see Dozier op.cit.
9. H.O. 42/28 Lodge to Nepean, also York Courant 4/3/93, 20/5/93, 27/5/93.
10. The Times 28/1/93.
11. List of Members of the Bolton Pitt Club 1813, Lancashire Record Office DDHU 53/82/11.
12. Somerset to Beaufort 28/9/1837. Beaufort Papers, Badminton.
13. Reprinted in the Preston Pilot 19/1/1833.
14. P(reston) P(ilot) 26/1/1833 and 13/4/1833.
15. Bolton Chronicle 15/7/1837.
16. P.P. 13/8/1837.

17. Speech of the Earl of Wilton at the South Lancashire Conservative Association Dinner, held on Thursday 4th of September 1834. P.P.13/9/1834.

18. P.P. 13/9/1834.

19. M(anchester) G(uardian) 23/2/1833.

20. P.P. 13/6/1835.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. 20/6/1835.

23. Ibid.

24. F O'Gorman, The Emergence of the British Two Party System 1760-1832 p.18. London, 1982. See also Chapter One above.

25. For a more detailed account of the registration process see J Alun Thomas, The System of Registration and the Development of Party Organization, 1832-1870. History 1950 pp.81-98.

26. For the importance of this aspect of permanency to political scientists see for example M Duverger, The Basis of Parties in Comparative Government, ed.J Blondel, London 1969, p.100.

27. Resolutions Six and Seven from the General Rules of the North Lancashire Conservative Association, P.Pilot 6/6/1835.

28. 10/9/1836.
29. 22/10/1836.
30. The Times 23/4/1838.
31. P.P. 14/2/1835.
32. Cited in C S Parker, Sir Robert Peel vol.2 p.368, London 1899.
33. S Neumann, Modern Political Parties, Chicago 1967.
34. Greville Memoirs op.cit.
35. For a full reciting of the full text of the National Conservative institution formed in April 1836 see Appendix One, pp.568 below.

CHAPTER SIX OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM I : ITS EARLY DEVELOPMENT,
STRUCTURE, ROLE AND FUNCTION.

In the last chapter we ended by looking at the development of the middle class based political associations. We also began to suggest that the nature of political parties both at the centre and in the localities began to change after 1832 in terms of the features they displayed and the functions they began to perform. We noted how it became important for those members of the classes committed to Conservatism to attempt to attract a wider basis of support (drawn initially from their own grouping middle and lower middle classes) in order to deflect the claims of the progressive reformers that it was they and not the traditionalist wing of British politics who were now in the ascendancy. In the present chapter we intend firstly to maintain this theme by considering the possible reasons why the middle class Conservatives of the North West began to attempt to attract the support of the industrial working class. Secondly we shall examine how Operative Conservatism developed in the North-West, look at the geographic spread of the working class branches, examine their financial basis, and finally look at the functions and roles the local bodies performed.

I THE MIDDLE CLASSES AND OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM

By the middle of the 1830's much middle class support was returning to the conservatives as the Parliamentary election results of 1835 and 1837 bear witness, partly due to the unpopularity of the Whigs, but also due to a greater flexibility within Peelite Conservatism. What was recognised after 1832 was that, in political terms, differing social and economic interests required specifically different approaches in order to placate the various demands emanating from these interests. This was the central theme of Peel's speech at the Merchant Taylors Hall and the Tamworth Manifesto which both appeared in 1835. This was also a primary reason for the local conservatives organizing themselves in the localities. We shall detail more with regard to the operation of interest and pressure groupings in the next chapter, but it should be noted at this stage that it was in the 1830's and 1840's that interest and pressure groups first became associated and assimilated into the existing political parties. Many, but not all, were middle class organizations: some were led by the middle classes but sought to place before a wider audience the plight of a disadvantaged group; others attempted to steer the masses away from profligacy, or drunkenness, or ignorance. All, however, sought public support and attempted to push their demands on the established political parties.

We noted in Chapter three the rising levels in working class consciousness from the 1790's and suggested that this was most concentrated and heightened in the industrial districts of the NorthWest. We also explained that this high level of class consciousness reached its peak and became most alarming in the 1820's and early 1830's, some years after the paranoia and extreme xenophobia of the Napoleonic wars. The crisis of Reform saw the high point of the political consciousness of the working class.

Many middle class Reformers allied themselves to the working classes, using the latter's weight and discontent as potential weapons against the authorities should Reform not be implemented.

Two important points must be reiterated at this stage of the thesis. Firstly, many beleaguered Conservatives dreaded the continued union of the moderate middle class reformers with the mass of the working class. The prospects of not only the party but the existing constitution were perceived as being minimal should such a union be continued after the passing of Reform. The promises and assurances of moderate whigs such as Lord Grey that the constitution would be safe did little to alleviate Conservative fears. In the counties and towns of the South and Midlands this was a primary reason for the formation of Conservative Associations in order to consolidate the middle class traditionalist sentiment against reformist alliances and initiatives.

In the North-West a second factor was important in the formation of the middle class Associations. This was not so much a concern about the possibility of a strong political alliance between the middle class reformers and the working class radicals as the increasingly alarming tendency for the extremely radical lower middle classes and working classes to operate independently of the control and discipline of their natural social and political betters. By the early 1830's industrial Lancashire had a political society which was sharply designated into three broad sectors. Firstly, there was the progressive and economically dynamic Liberals epitomized by Manchester Liberalism. This group was non-conformist in religion and reform orientated in politics and was made up of the majority of the areas manufacturers and men of commerce. Secondly, there were a substantial body of moderate, largely middle class Conservatives. This group, overwhelmingly Anglican in religion, believed in measured reforms of proven abuses, even to the extent of supporting the need of the 1832

Reform Act. They were mainly drawn from the fringes of the borough, but included several Anglican manufacturers. The political principles of one such man, John Fowden Hindle of Woodfold Park, near Darwen exemplify and were typical of this group. As a prospective Parliamentary candidate he wrote, in his election address of 1832:-

Entertaining in common with yourselves, a warm affection for every useful Institution, I am fully sensible of the duty of redressing grievances, and removing abuses, wherever they may exist, and I trust I shall always be found among the advocates of every constitutional Reform, having for its object the happiness of the community, and the extension of our Agricultural and Commercial interests. In particular, I shall be found 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 privilege which cramps the energies and depresses the manufacturing industry of the country.¹

In addition to these two groupings within conventional politics, there were the radicals. This group was made up of small tradesmen and shopkeepers, and, importantly many working class activists. They operated most effectively in the arena of local politics - the Vestry and Select Vestry, the Police and Improvement Commission and, in certain places, like Preston, in municipal politics. Up to 1835, and in certain cases beyond that date, the local politics of Blackburn, Ashton, Oldham, Bolton and Rochdale were under the control of this radical grouping supported, as they were, by those sections of the working class who had some commitment to political activity or opinion. In the main they had little truck with either of the two main political groupings preferring instead their own independent position. To the majority of working people, the progressive Whigs and Liberals were particularly untrustworthy in that it was they as a group who tended to be the most efficient and untractable of masters and in national government appeared to be implementing yet more legislation which demeaned the independence and perilous life

style of ordinary working people.

In this general context the aims of the Conservative Association was two-fold: firstly to influence as many working people as possible against the constitutional dangers of extreme radicalism, and secondly to use the unpopular 'reforms' and general principles of progressive Whiggery and Liberalism to widen the social basis of their support. These were the primary reasons why the North-West Conservative Associations began to form operative or working class based branches of their societies.

The distinction of being the first Operative Conservative Association belonged to the Conservatives of Leeds, who in February 1835 'met together for the purpose of discussing the propriety of forming a society.' In early March they issued an Address as to the reasons of forming a society designed for working people.

As we are jealous of being enslaved by the proud boasters of a mock liberty, we will at all times secure ourselves against the undue exercise (text emphasis) of authority; our liberties which are our glory, as the subjects of King William the Fourth shall be sacredly transmitted to our children, as they were received by ourselves but considerably enlarged. Our design in forming ourselves into a society is to secure these blessings, to resist the machinations and violence of those whose conduct leads, whether designed or not, to anarchy and confusion; and to furnish our minds by means of newspapers and other publications, with correct views on political subjects, and to furnish an antidote to those publications of a dangerous tendency which are everywhere obtruded upon us; and also to unite with our fellow townsmen and fellow-subjects in whatever would advance the national welfare, and to resist and oppose whatever would be detrimental to it. We invite persons of true Conservative principles to unite with us: especially we address this invitation to our Brethren, the Operatives. We ask them to aid us in our efforts to defend the rights of 'THE ALTAR, THE THRONE AND THE COTTAGE.'²

This notion of politically socializing the working classes away

from the dangers of extreme radicalism was thus one of the initial functions of Operative Conservatism and also one of the main reasons of middle class involvement. The role of the written word, as a means of combating the emotive language of radicalism was a point which was actively pursued by the leading national journal of Conservatism, Blackwoods, Edinburgh Magazine in the summer of 1835. In this article, entitled 'Conservative Associations', the distinguished historian, Sir Archibald Alison, outlined the state of the manufacturing districts in no uncertain terms. "It is in vain to conceal that in the present political condition of Great Britain, it is in the highest degree dangerous. The manufacturing class, the natural depository in every age of republican opinions, have more than tripled in the last half century."³ He argued that the Conservatives must waste no time in attempting to come to grips with this political situation, but warned it would be a long-term project: "As the democratic tendency of the great majority of the public press, and almost all that is addressed to the lower orders in the great cities, has thus arisen from ground causes of universal operation, so it is beyond the reach of any direct or immediate remedy." He argued that it was by slow degrees, 'by long and painful efforts, that the poison is to be expelled, from its social body, or an antidote provided for its malignity.' Alison went on to say that it was by the continued exertion of talent of every description, 'in the propagation of truth, that the evils arising from the enormous diffusion of democratic error are chiefly to be prevented.'⁴ Above all the channels for the diffusion of sound constitutional political information had to be extended to the working class. What worried the Conservatives was that the overwhelming majority of the most dynamic group in society might be forever lost to radicalism. Alison provided his readers with some solutions, however:

How is information to be conveyed to these classes? How is truth or political knowledge to pierce the dense and cloudy atmosphere of our great manufacturing cities... Some part of

the funds of every Conservative Association should be devoted to the purchase of the ablest journals and periodicals of the day, with a view to their diffusion, at an under price, among the persons of an inferior grade, whom it is practicable to win over to safe and constitutional principle. By doing so a double object is gained. Talent is encouraged to devote itself to such undertakings, and numbers, who never otherwise would get a glimpse of the truth, have the means of illuminating their minds afforded them.⁵

Thus at the core of Alison's article on Conservative Associations, lay the double purpose of encouraging a wider activism of the educated middle classes and proselytizing sections of the working classes. Of this second group, Alison warned that their intelligence should not be underestimated. "In making their selection, let them avoid the common error of supposing the working classes can understand nothing but works expressly intended for their illumination. There never was a greater mistake. He said that they should be addressed by the same arguments as deemed fit for their superiors, "and if they can only be got to read them, truth will in the end work its way in the humblest class as well as in the most elevated."⁶

In the same year (1835) the national party leadership were informed at the highest level of the need to court the working class - as a letter from the prominent Blackburn mill owner and Conservative member for the town to Sir Robert Peel during his first term as Prime Minister demonstrates

Permit me to state that I do, and must, believe that, if the truly sound portion of the operative classes would be united together, they would form a tower of strength to the present government: they are tired and disgusted with the Whig's professions and oppressions and naturally direct their attentions to their genuine patrons and friends.⁷

Other sections of the party's national leadership were also in favour of attempting to influence the working classes, especially through the written word, as this letter from the Duke of

Wellington's confidant, Charles Arbuthnot, to the former Treasury Secretary, John Charles Herries, reveals. Arbuthnot told Herries that he had informed the Duke what he was doing concerning the press and that the Duke thought his plans 'judicious', suggesting that the party should be doing 'a great deal more' and very quickly. The Duke of Wellington stressed that the party should specifically address itself to the previously neglected regional press, especially in the industrial regions:-

...there are papers at Leeds and Manchester that exercise immense influence in these manufacturing districts and I have thought too we might publish cheap penny pamphlets if we had clever people to write them.... I confess I would try to muzzle Cobbett who I believe is always able to be bought, and is certainly a most able writer...I think the country is (in) so critical a situation, and yet one in which a strong effort might be so successful.⁸

However, Lancashire Conservatives employed other means of political influence as well as the power of the written word. From 1836 the Conservatives employed a bankrupt Manchester barrister named Charles Wilkins as regional organizer and electoral agent. In the former capacity he toured the North-West advising Operative Associations about the latest policy positions adopted by the party in a national sense and suggested that their local grievances would be best remedied by the Conservatives. He also advised them in organizational strategies and matters concerning the registration, and how they might legitimately influence the electors. In Preston in July 1836, where the majority of electors were the working class by virtue of the old Scot and Lot franchise, he advised his audience of Conservative working men to recruit the women of Preston to their cause, brilliant tactic well in advance of its time. He said.

Make the women of Preston your allies in this glorious fight, and take my word for it, victory will be yours... And think you, when your radical neighbours wives see the fruits of

Conservatism so displayed, they will not content themselves till they have forced their husbands into your ranks.⁹

He was also active in his capacity as local or regional electoral organizer, as this letter from a Liverpool Merchant, Joseph Saunders to Sir James Graham illustrates in relation to a forthcoming contest. "I should be glad to confer with Mr Bonham on the question of organization, I am told Wilkins is going there with 12,000 pounds in his pocket."¹⁰

Thus we see that in the mid 1830's the national and regional Conservatives were completely re-thinking and re-defining the nature of their party's organizational structure, and, certain sections of the working class were an important part of their plans. We argued in the opening passages of this thesis that a new political culture was rapidly developing in Britain during the 1830's - one that now embraced all sections of society in the politics of the time. Even the accepted vocabulary and language of party politics underwent a mild revolution. The political and social outlook of the old Tory, compounded in part by complacent optimism, and in part by self-pride and importance, began to give way to a new forthright approach, more dynamic and appealing. The old Tory catchwords indicating the 'Church and King' loyalty of the eighteenth century - the political tags of 'Lord George and the Protestant Succession' - now gave way to phrases and idioms better suited to the times. Indeed, in certain cases, these were directed at specific classes, for example 'the Throne, the Altar and the Cottage', which reinforced the importance of working people maintaining the constitution, or the phrase, 'When bad men combine, good men must unite', which emphasized the need for Conservatives of all classes to join together in defence of their principles against the perceived attack by progressive Whigs, Liberals and Radicals. Also important however, during the mid 1830's, as we shall discover in the next chapter, was the growing trend towards a heightened sense of respectability and political

legitimacy which vitiated against the older forms of influence and corruption and more towards the politics of opinion. Crucial to this development was the use of issues, especially in the local context. We shall discuss more fully the role of issues in Chapter 7 but it may be useful here to briefly outline how they may have been utilized by the Conservative middle classes to capture the support of sections of the working class.

As we have noted, we contend that from the mid-1830's, a significant section of the working class found Conservatism in general, and Operative Conservatism in particular, attractive. We suggest further that two types of working men may have found Conservatism appealing at this time, and did so for reasons which had little to do with social or political deference, but more to do with political and social pragmatism. The first type of working class Conservative was concerned with questions which affected his daily existence, the second with the need to maintain traditional values and customs of the working class and, importantly, with religious questions.

This first type of Operative Conservative seems to have been persuaded that the New Conservatism of Peel, and his followers in the country committed itself to issues which directly affected working people in the manufacturing districts. These included firstly, resistance to the harsher elements within the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Indeed in certain places like Bury, Rochdale and Oldham the Tory Radicals opposed the Act's introduction altogether,¹¹ and it appears did so with the support of the local middle class Conservatives. A second issue which attracted broad working class support was that of the factory reform movement. It is possible that this first type of worker may not have been committed to Conservatism as such, but the issues which Conservatism allied itself in the manufacturing districts, at least in general terms, secured the support of this politically moderate working man, who saw in the rhetoric of Conservatism a

viable alternative to the apparent unfeeling self-righteousness of the progressive Liberalism favoured by so many employers in the North-West.

The second type of working man was firmly committed to Conservatism. He was the socially mobile Anglican or Presbyterian, with natural Conservative or traditionalist proclivities. He saw Operative Conservatism as a respectable way of opposing radicalism and the Liberal progressives, defending his religious convictions and possibly also as a route to social advancement. The majority of the members of the Operative Associations appear to have been literate¹² and politically articulate. Although they were not in possession of the franchise, they did engage in political activities.

In Blackburn, for example, one such member, Henry Kenyon (Junior) was typical. He was originally a power-loom operative, later he became a solicitors clerk and for many years he was Secretary of the Operative Association of his town, eventually becoming its President. He was also an active Vestry member, so too were other members of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Committee: Charles Tiplady, a bookbinder; Thomas Dewhurst, a joiner; Richard Caldwell, an operative spinner; Thomas Bennett, a dyer and cloth finisher. These men were also members of the non-electors committee of the successful Conservative candidate at the Parliamentary election of 1841, the local mill-owner, John Hornby.

An illustration of their social mobility can be seen if we look at those who gained the electoral franchise. Of the members of the 1837 Committee of the Blackburn branch, only the bookbinder Tiplady had the vote in the election of that year. Ten years later, however, although some of the names have changed, of the twenty man committee, fourteen now appeared on the electoral roll.¹³ This would appear to support the notion outlined above that active and loyal membership of the Operative Association

could act as a means of social advancement for some members of the working class. Some political sociologists, like Butler and Stokes, or David Lockwood have suggested that working class political pragmatism has been a feature of their support for Conservatism since 1945. We suggest that it may have a history which stretches back considerably further.¹⁴

Added to these two groups of pragmatic Conservatives were those members of the working class who were overtly deferential to their social and political superiors and to the religious and political offices they held. The Operative Conservatives of Leeds give us an example of this attitude.

reverence (sic) the King and all in authority, we pay due deference to all who are in high stations...because we believe that the different degrees and orders in society are so closely united and interwoven, that while we exalt them, we raise ourselves; as we should depress them, we proportionally lower ourselves. While we maintain their rights, we secure our own, and while we defend their privileges we increase our own.¹⁵

II THE DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE OF OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM

Before enlarging any further on what influences and active roles pursued by the national Conservatives, and the middle classes in the localities, it may be useful to examine how these working class bodies came into existence and to take a brief look at their organizational structure.

Unquestionably the Conservatives of the North-West were influenced by the effect the Political Union had in galvanizing working class opinion between 1830 and 1834. However if we view Operative Conservatism as a simple reaction against radical political unionism, we shall overlook a great deal. It is true that the initial object of middle class Conservatives in attempting to involve a section of the working class in Conservatism was to direct them away from what the middle class perceived as the harmful effects of extreme radicalism. But, in the course of doing this, the process not only changed the working class conservatives, but also the political outlook of the middle class conservatives and the party itself. For, by incorporating sections of the working class into the party, and by accepting working class interests and their limited demands with regard to policy, the party leaders in the regions forged a tenuous, but perceptible link with the working class's political needs and aspirations. This is most notable in the Localities, for in most cases the party's national leadership, most specifically Peel, attempted to remain aloof from sectional interests and demands. But even he, with regard to economic and fiscal policy, agreed with his Home Secretary Graham that 'we must endeavour to redress the wrongs of the labourer.'¹⁶ This growing trust in the fitness of the working class to exercise their legitimate political rights began in the 1830's, and increased noticeably after the decline of Chartism, until, in the mid 1860's the Conservative leadership of Derby and Disraeli conceded the franchise on millions of working men with the removal of the property qualification.

However, let us return to the 1830's and the start of this shift in attitudes of both the middle classes and of sections of the working classes towards the Conservative party and conservatism. As we have seen, from their inception the operative associations were designed to fit into the organizational network of the Conservative party at county and borough level. They may have been intended to be purely working class organizations but, as we

shall discover, they were seldom wholly constituted of working men, and there was never any intention that they were to be solely controlled by working men. Conversely, and the distinction is important, many Political Unions in the North-West after 1832 were controlled by working men for working men. This was the case at Bolton as it was at Blackburn and Oldham.¹⁷ At Bolton and Blackburn the Political Unions were formed in 1830 by the strata of upper working class/lower middle class skilled men, tradesmen and small manufacturers. Both of the local historians of the day in the respective towns, (W Brimlow for Bolton and W Abram for Blackburn)¹⁸ agree that by 1834 in each of the towns the Political Union were radically 'democratic' and firmly in the hands of the 'lower' type of working man. The social, political and economic aims and objectives of Political Union were centred on working class advancement and stressed the separate and premier importance of the working class. The Conservatives (and the reforming Liberals) conversely stressed the inter-connectedness and plurality of society, and it was they who laid down the terms of the established political order. Anyone, or any groups, who did not accept this was not deemed a friend of constitutional politics as seen through Conservative eyes. One of the essential aims therefore of operative political clubs was convincing the members of the fundamental correctness of legitimate constitutional politics.

The language used at this time is an important indicator of the type of working class member the Conservatives were seeking to attract. The subtle slurs on the 'destructive classes' or on the Papist republicans, or the 'unpatriotic' Jacobin radicals, suggest disreputability of a kind typical of the organizations which existed beyond the pale of what was deemed respectable and proper, in the manner of the 'loyal' and 'constitutional' Conservative Association. The words of the editor of one of the region's leading conservative newspapers, William Simpson, himself a future honorary member of an Operative Conservative Association, offer

an illustration of the mood conveyed by the language of the period. It is worthy of extended quotation.

If, in times like these, it is necessary that all constitutional men should combine in order to resist the efforts of the disloyal and destructive, it is impossible that we can too earnestly urge the formation of such societies (Operative Conservative Associations) or too highly applaud their objects and principles. The Report* is fraught with all that is mainly sense and intelligence which is the characteristic of such bodies, and is eminently deserving of our best attentions. There is no surer sign of the advance of constitutional opinions, than the increase of Conservative Societies, and particularly among the operatives. How potent an answer it is to these contemptible charges which are so fondly and fervently directed against us, and how fatal to the assertion that we possess no hold over the affection of the people.¹⁹

From the mid 1830's and 1840's Operative Conservative Associations were designed to appeal to the hard-working, church-attending, self-respecting, usually Protestant working man. He was a man who had little time for organizations disrespectful to rank or wealth like those of the 'seditious' or 'infidel' combinations, that the trades unions, secular Owenites and republicans were often portrayed as being. Even as late as the 1840's Conservatives of the North-West were hanging effigies of Tom Paine and publicly burning his Rights of Man in the streets.²⁰

During this early phase, respect for property and deference to the Anglican Church and education, were constantly pressed as models of respectability which working people should be encouraged to emulate.²¹ However, the Conservatives endeavoured to give the working man far more recreational latitude than some of the progressive Liberals. For example the Conservatives frowned upon

* The Report of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association for 1837.

excessive self-indulgence of any kind, but poured scorn on those groups who would deny to working people their simple pleasures in an attempt to morally improve them. For the most part, they were hostile to the Temperance Movement on this passage from Preston in 1833 reveals.

water worshippers assembled in considerable strength as before; and, as before their arch-enemies and relentless tormentors, the anti-hypocriticals, took up their position in still greater force within fair talking range. Accordingly, on the one side the air was rent with the loud bellowings of the fanatics, and on the other was to be heard the continued shouts of holiday mirth mingled with the incessant sound of escaping corks.²²

This apparent tolerance of the minor indulgences probably was an important reason why some sections of the working class found Conservatism more appealing than the rigidity of progressive Liberalism. However the Operative Conservatives also demanded- whilst concurring exactly with their social superiors about the need to preserve the constitution - that limited reforms be taken up by the Conservative party. In 1835 an Operative Conservative from Manchester (an operative spinner named Longton) told the third South Lancashire Association Conference and dinner that he felt the

sentiments of no ordinary class flowing in my mind. It may be said that you are interested in the spread of conservative associations throughout the Kingdom, I know, gentlemen, you are deeply interested; but is not the poor man deeply interested? Is not the operative deeply interested... We wish you to preserve not destroy - to strengthen, not weaken - the matchless constitution of our country, both in church and state, and what time and circumstances has rendered necessary for reforms, we wish to have reformed in the true sense of reformation, that is in removing the evil and preserving the good.²³

Nevertheless, the operative conservative, whilst suggesting measures for the redressing of working class grievance had-

regardless of which of the types who were attracted to Conservatism we outlined earlier - to remain subservient and obedient to rank and social station. Indeed, as we noticed above had to impress these traits on others, especially his children. An example of this aspect of operative conservatism came in April 1841, when, at a ceremony of presentation to the long-serving Secretary of the Blackburn Operative Association, Henry Kenyon, the then Chairman of the Association, Henry Elgin, asked how Kenyon had originally become a 'Conservative', when, in his own words he was 'surrounded by radicals'. He replied that he, "attributed his not becoming a radical to an early Church of England education, fear of God and honour of the King...and respect of his superiors. He mentioned these matters merely to impress on those gentlemen present who had children of their own, the necessity of giving them, early such an education."²⁴

In the mid 1830's and 1840's, the major difference between the radical associations and the Operative Conservative or Reform Associations, in terms of organization, aims and objectives, was this. In the main the former were controlled by working people themselves and it was they who dictated the political terms of reference. On the other hand, the organizations designed by the two main political parties for working people were never wholly constituted of working people, nor were they ever controlled by them, and, importantly the political terms of reference were dictated by the middle classes.

As we noted above, one of the essential purposes of Operative Conservative Associations was to direct sections of the working class away from the perceived dangers of extreme radicalism. Evidence that the middle class Conservatives were indeed attempting to attract working class support comes from the terms of membership and the subscription fees charged. By early 1835 the Conservatives realized that if they were to attract working men they had to reduce their entry fees and subscriptions. For

example in February 1835 the Blackburn Conservative Association - the parent body of what was soon to become the Operative Association - reduced its annual subscription from one guinea to five shillings, in order, they said "to afford an opportunity for such of the working classes who are disposed to stem the progress of revolutionary doctrines to become members of the association."²⁵ Those working men who did enrol complained that five shillings was still too high a subscription, and when the Operative branch was formed in November 1835, the annual subscription was reduced to two shillings.

Once the opportunities existed for working people to join the Conservative party, the speed at which the operative branches were formed and their geographical spread was truly remarkable. We noted earlier that the distinction of being the first Operative Association belonged to the working men of Leeds, formed as it was in February 1835. Immediately afterwards, Operative Associations were formed at Bradford, Barnsley, Sheffield, Ripon, Wakefield, Huddersfield and on the other side of the county boundary in Salford, and, in July 1835 the Manchester Operative Conservative Association held its inaugural dinner.²⁶ In August the Bolton Operatives formed their Conservative Society; the South Lancashire Conservative Association formed an operative branch based at Wigan in October, and, in November 1835 the Blackburn and Darwen branches were formed. In December, the Liverpool Operative Conservative Association was initiated and in early 1836 branches were formed at Preston, Chorley, Middleton, Ashton, Oldham, Rochdale, Bury, Stockport and Warrington. Throughout 1836 over 100 Operative Conservative Associations were holding their first inaugural dinners nationwide.

By 1837 places as geographically distant as Leicester, Nottingham, Salford and Preston had Operative Conservative Committees in every ward, as well as their central governing bodies.²⁷ The numbers of working people who were attracted to these associations could be

relatively large. For example in 1838, the veteran former radical Sir Francis Burdett - now acclaimed as the 'perfect specimen of an English country gentleman' - attended the third anniversary along with 2,000 others.²⁸ Again in 1838 at Salford a contemporary reported that, "the Operative Conservatives held a tea-party and ball, to which more than 3,000 persons attended, nine-tenths of them ladies."²⁹ These attendances reveal the popularity of Operative Conservatism at this time, as popular as anything the Liberals or radicals could muster, and this on the eve of the Chartist explosion. Indeed on the eve of the Sacred Month of August 1839, the Operative Conservatives of Preston claimed a membership higher than that of the Chartist organization.³⁰ However let us now look at some of the other features of these Operative Associations in the 1830's and 1840's, and consider their links with the central party structure.

III THE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND FINANCIAL BASIS OF OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM.

One operative function of many of these operative associations was the prudential one of sick care and burial. The majority of the local associations copied the example of the existing purely profit-orientated Sick and Burial clubs. These had been in existence for many years in the industrial North-West, and acted as assurance organizations maintaining club funds for the relief of sickness, unemployment and death of their members. The importance of these sick and burial clubs to the vast majority of the working class should not be underestimated. Very often they were the only means by which a working person could obtain medical treatment and subsequently receive a non-pauper Christian burial.

The Conservatives of the North-West utilized this facility and, indeed began to add to the activities of such associations in their own interest. Also by 1836, the Preston branch of the Operative Association ran a building society for the benefit of their members.³¹ It is probable that these benefits were a source of new membership to the associations, but it is also probable - given the proliferation of such clubs - that the dividends realized were regarded as being a useful bonus for those working class members on fairly low incomes or experiencing short time lay-offs.

An ordinary working class member of the sick and burial club run by the Operative Conservatives paid between 2s and 2s 3d per month. This would appear to have been within the budgets of most working people who were in full time work. The average weekly wages of power loom weavers (usually women) were approximately 8s 6d at this time, operative spinners 2s per week, an engineer 15s per week and an overlooker, 40s per week. If an operative was disabled he was allowed 1 guinea per week, if his wife died he received five pounds to bury her, or if he died she received seven pounds. Surpluses, if any were divided equally amongst all the members, and there was usually a subsidised annual dinner.³²

Given that the rates of premium were slightly higher than for other, non-political, societies, and given that these were large differentials in wage rates, it would appear that the Operative Conservative Associations were seeking to attract the better off type of working class members. It is probable that the societies with the larger memberships - Salford, Manchester, Bolton, Wigan, Liverpool etc - would have realized a small profit from these sick and burial clubs and that this would be utilized for the purposes of the clubs, but it is difficult to see how these societies with only moderate membership could realize a profit. It would seem that, in these associations, the venture was operated for the benefit of the Membership, in all probability at a loss.

Most of the money used to operate the working class-based associations came from the middle classes: richer Conservatives and honorary members appear to have contributed significantly to the funds of the operative associations. All the parent bodies held annual balls and the monies raised were given over to the upkeep of the various subsidiary associations. The stocking of the libraries and newsrooms were donations from richer Conservatives. However, all the various Conservative Associations throughout the North-West seem to have been financially autonomous, there is little evidence of any central fund used to bail out a branch who encountered financial difficulties. As well as individual donations of money and gifts, fetes, tea-parties, whist drives, dinner and balls were all organized to provide money as well as entertainment to keep the operative associations afloat. Thus they provided a dual benefit: one of entertainment, amusement and education of the members, and secondly of keeping the various associations financially viable. Throughout the 1830's up until the terrible split of 1846, there is no evidence that any of the Conservative Associations folded through lack of financial support.

As far as the proposition that the party's national funds were used to assist regional Conservative Associations and Operative Associations is concerned, we must hold the verdict in abeyance. There is little evidence, in the periods between elections, that monies were sent from London to assist individual associations in the localities. However, during election periods, certain societies were assisted directly from London secretly and quietly. This secrecy was necessary to ensure that the Carlton was not inundated with requests for help that its funds could not possibly meet. Nor could their opponent cry bribery if such acts of financial assistance were kept secret and selective. But assistance was given as this letter marked 'very private' from Bonham to Peel reveals.

Sussex seats winnable. At all counts it will require the whole conservative strength to be organized and put forward with will and energy to ensure success. The whole influence of the court is arranged to support (the Whig) Dalrymple who is not popular... In fact the previous victory was achieved solely by the good management of the Conservative Association which was formed here two years ago. You will not be surprised that this Association is now (Bonham's emphasis) on the wane and requires our very intensive support.³³

Also we know that the Carlton did keep a special fund for just this purpose - as this piece from The Metropolitan Conservative Journal reveals:

A lamentable mistake in which Conservatives in remote districts fall, is in trusting to the metropolis for candidates and to the Carlton Club for funds. In the first instance, the London appointed members are the very worst, and in the second the Carlton Club rarely subscribes anything from the joint-stock purse but in very peculiar and urgent cases.³⁴

Also it is probable, judging from the general feeling of Conservative politics in the constituencies, that any systematic payment by the Carlton would have been regarded as an unwarranted intrusion in local authority by a London political organization and would have been bitterly resented. In the localities it was still universally believed that local political patronage began at home, and indeed it could have resulted in defeat if made known by ones political opponents that political finance was lacking and that the local party had to be propped up by outside influence. Thus the pattern in the majority of cases was that the local gentry, local industrialists and men of commerce found the money. This is not to say of course that Bonham and the Carlton had no influence. Their work however, was the gathering and the sending out of political information and intelligence and the organizing of elections.

As we have stressed throughout this chapter the influence of the middle classes in the setting up of Operative Conservative Associations was considerable. However by the end of the 1830's the nature of middle class involvement had undergone a subtle change. In 1833/4 when the Conservative Associations were originated it was the committed middle class conservative activists - like William Hulton of Bolton - who were in the forefront of both their organization and the dissemination of party principles. By the later 1830's however, what seems to have developed was that most Conservatives held the view that all the middle classes, not just the activists had a responsibility to influence those of a lower social station, and furthermore, the working class Conservatives should attempt a similar role with their social peers. Thus one of the central objectives of Operative Conservatism was the influence and political containment of the local community. These features are exemplified in a long quote from John Bennett, the headmaster of Blackburn Grammar School and acting President of the Operative Association. Speaking in 1839, on the eve of the Chartist disturbances he said:-

It is my opinion that a great portion of the lower classes are democratic... Now sir if we take into view the constant influx of new population, that from compulsion has been going on with increasing flow in our manufacturing districts for nearly half a century, the breaking up of the old framework of society, the dispersion of domestic circles, everyone left to his own resources, the consequent overflow of operatives, the reduction in wages, the poverty and discontent, the innumerable temptation to improvidence and vice which they are beset, we need seek no further for the present condition of reckless desire for change and for the facility of political excitement presented to every agitator among these classes... Now sir for improving the perilous situation of this class it is the duty of every wealthy Conservative to contribute by his wealth and influence to the diffusion of Conservative principles ... It is the duty of every Operative Conservative to invite and encourage his poorer neighbour to become a member of our Association, to attend out reading room, and thereby learn to be content in that station of life which providence has pleased to call him; he would thereby arm himself against the poisonous principles

which are promulgated by those rabid and fanatical revolutionists who would raise themselves on the ruin of our altars and our houses.³⁵

This statement is the epitome of Conservative principles and it also expresses the fears - very real in 1839 - that the working class, if left uncontrolled, would fall victim to the radical left. It was made when the Blackburn Conservative Association was reaching the height of its influence. As we shall discover subsequently, Blackburn and East Lancashire were peculiar as compared to other parts of the region at this particular time in that physical force Chartism did not become a mass movement, and the town remained relatively quiet throughout the agitated summer of 1839. This was a situation which the local conservatives were quick to take credit for, attributing it to their 'missionary' work amongst the lower orders.³⁶

In the next two years, the Operative Associations throughout the North-West continued to grow and attract members. 1841 was the high point. Nationally Peel was elected with a large working majority and in the county of Lancashire the Conservatives split the seats with the Liberals with each party returning thirteen members to the House of Commons. Local Conservatives applauded themselves that they had done their jobs well, that they had unity over most political questions, certainly over religious matters, and in the majority of boroughs for the first time since 1832 they had a favourable registration. Thus in the space of just ten years the party had undergone a remarkable transformation in terms of organization, both at the centre and in the localities. The threatened flooding of the House of Commons by the extreme Radicals returned by the new boroughs had not transpired, nor even during the height of the Chartist agitation did it look likely. We suggest that Operative Conservatism - the political integration of a key section of the industrial working class - was a small but significant part of this transformation of political attitudes.

Let us conclude this chapter by attempting to assess the significance of Operative Conservatism, particularly from the perspective of political science.

Significantly, Operative Conservatism was the forerunner of what later became in the 1870's the Conservative Working Mens Associations and clubs, and was, we contend, a primitive form of the party of 'social integration'. As we noted earlier this is a term utilized by the modern political scientist Sigmund Neumann to describe what he believed to be a relatively modern type of political party dating ostensibly from the growth of the mass socialist parties, particularly in Europe from the 1880's. It is probable that the middle class dominated county and borough Conservative Associations correspond to Neumann's other type of party, that of individual representation. This form of party, as we noted above, caters for the individual who allies himself to it primarily because it corresponds ideologically, and in terms of policy initiatives, to his personal political credo. This type of party, Neumann tells us is loosely organized for most of the time; coming together only as a potent political machine only at the approach of elections. For the rest of the time the party leaves the members alone. But in the mid to late 1830's the Conservative Party of the North West developed the traits and functions similar to the party of social integration. This type of party seeks to attract a mass membership and to organize the member not just politically, but in a variety of ways which affected directly his day-to-day existence; taking care of his wife and children in case of accident or death; informally educating him; politically socializing him so that he may conform to what the party regarded as legitimate political activities; and performing regular social functions for the members. The prime benefit for the party was that it possessed an army of political activists in the field and was operational at all times.

One historian, John Garrard,³⁷ in a paper investigating Neumann's

thesis tells us that: "None of the literature appears to regard the old middle class parties as capable of producing a party social integration."³⁸ He goes on to present a fairly conclusive case that both of the main political parties operating in Salford after 1867 came very close to being described as parties of social integration in the sense of the term being used by Neumann. We contend that this line of analysis can be taken back to the period before the 1867 Reform Act and the advent of a mass electorate.³⁹ It would seem from our study that Garrard's tentative conclusion regarding the immediate post 1867 period are sound, and in the case of the Conservatives of the North-West they were acting as a party of social integration for a section of the working class as early as 1835/6. The two important ingredients which were lacking at this time from the model used by Neumann were a truly mass membership and the electoral power of a politically organized working class - although with regard to this last point, in the case of Preston with its Scot and Lot franchise the evidence is interesting as we shall subsequently discover. However compared to the post-1867 situation Operative Conservatism never really attracted a truly mass membership in the 1830's and 40's. For example in Preston in 1839 the Operative Conservatives had a membership of over 600,⁴⁰ whilst the Chartist membership on the very eve of the Sacred month was placed at 'about 400'.⁴¹ What is worth noting and we suggest is an important indicator of the changing political culture of the period, is that for the first time a section of the industrial working class were continuously organized politically by a mainstream national political party.

As a matter of fact it is doubtful if the instigators and organized operative conservatism ever really desired a mass membership. They appear to have been seeking to attract a certain type of working class member:- respectable, self-improving religious and a social leader within his class, but without the utterly rigid high moral stance which some Liberal activists were perceived as adopting. For the Conservatives it mattered little

that this member did not have the vote, for the primary aims were political enlightenment, political socialization and to be able to direct working people away from the dangers of extreme radicalism, as well as the ability to canvass and put pressure on those who were electors. The evidence for Lancashire and the North-West suggests that the agitation which the working class had been engaged in from the 1790's to the 1830's had a profound effect on the middle class in terms of their perceptions of an organized radical working class. Operative Conservatism and Operative Reformism - attempts to politically integrate key groups into mainstream moderate legitimized politics - were just one of their responses. Others included the organization of formal education, the control of mechanisms for the relief of poverty, the discipline of the factory and control of other social necessities such as housing. It was crucial to the manufacturers particularly and the propertied middle class generally, that, after the consolidation of industrial capitalism in the 1830's, the overtly political nature of working class consciousness be reduced and nullified. By the 1850's this appeared to have occurred and was probably a source of satisfaction to many of the middle class and the state authorities.

But this process of political sectionalization was by no means complete by the mid-1830's. Nor was it a phenomenon which occurred evenly throughout Lancashire. The working class of East Lancashire for example, appear to have been politically sectionalized relatively early. However, the working class of radical Oldham and Rochdale were politically united well into the 1850's. Eventually, working class consciousness did fragment and political sectionalization was a major factor. Even during the years of Chartist activity there were working class Chartists who supported the Conservatives and Liberals as well as the six points. Operative Conservatism aimed its pitch at the literate, politically articulate, usually skilled working class men who would probably command respect from their peers, and who,

throughout the years of high class consciousness, may have been in positions of trades union or political leadership.⁴²

One of the major themes of this thesis is that working class political sectionalization can be traced back to the middle years of the 1830's. It may be that class solidarity in East Lancashire began to fragment so early because of the success of the middle class manufacturers in producing a network of social controls in a relatively short space of time. It is our contention that Operative Conservatism was an important part of this network of social controls and influences. Whether wittingly or unwittingly the middle class conservatives of Lancashire and the North-West were acting as political conciliators by allowing the working class - sections of it - into their party, a party who, within the living memory of many working people had acted so harshly toward the political aspirations of the working class. As a process, this changed not only those members of the working class who became involved in Conservatism, but the class as a whole - because they became so politically sectionalized. It also changed the middle class Conservatives, because they had to at least pander to working class interests and demands, and the party nationally, because it had to accommodate through policy initiatives to a wide social basis of political support. It may well have been that the high levels of class consciousness displayed by the workers of Oldham and the 'popular' style of Rochdale's politics was retained for longer because the radicals dominated politics in those towns and not the Conservatives who dominated much of East Lancashire or the Liberals who dominated Manchester. Thus the question becomes one of political leadership, which is something we shall discuss fully in a later chapter.

For the members of the operative associations, the personal benefits - as we have seen - were very similar to those described by Garrard in the 1870's and 1880's; trips and picnics; literary

and social facilities; guest speakers; contact with the party's hierarchy; the encouragement of legitimate political involvement and finally the sick and benefit facilities which could, at certain times have been of crucial importance to the very existence of some of the working class members. The members, on the other hand, were required to give up some of their time and to go out and argue the Conservative case and inform others of its benefits.

The chief reason why the national party leaders allowed the localities to set up the various types of Conservative Associations - for it would not be true to suggest that the national leadership were *directly involved in the initial setting up* of such bodies - was that such societies greatly improved party organization in the constituencies. Once the leadership at the Carlton realized that the various types of associations were politically respectable they utilized their benefits to the full, especially with regard to the Registration.

In the case of the local Conservatives, their aim was essentially to guide the more moderate, sober-minded and respectable working man away from the evil effects of extreme radicalism; in this sense their objective was one of attempted control, but in an unforced and open manner. Some working class members were drawn towards Operative Conservatism out of a sense of social deference to the local elites, others out of political deference to the office and officers of power. There were others attracted to Conservatism because of their extreme opinions and their hatred of Catholics or the Irish migrants: as we shall shortly discover there was always a racist and bigoted element within the various associations which some of the local middle class leadership attempted to turn to political advantage. However there were other working class members who were attracted to Conservatism because their opinions on certain key issues of the day coincided with the policies being expounded by the local and national

Conservative party leadership. It is to these questions of traditionalism, deference and, most notably, that of policies and issues within Operative Conservatism and of the wider working class of the North-West that we now turn our attention.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have begun to examine the nature of Operative Conservatism from the standpoint of its inception, structure, role and basic political function within the context of the industrial North-West. We have looked at the changing relationship between the industrial working class and the middle class conservatives and noted the changing features of the political culture of the North-West in the 1830's and 40's. We must now look in more detail at the wider political behaviour of the working class and examine why some working people began to find Operative Conservatism in particular, and Conservatism generally, attractive from the mid-1830's up to the second Reform Act and beyond.

1. The Election Address of J Fowden Hindle, 29/5/1832, Blackburn Reference Library.

2. Paul, W M, Operative Conservative Societies of the United Kingdom, a Brief History, Leeds 1838.

3. Conservative Associations, Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine, July 1835, p.6.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. p.8.

6. Ibid.

7. Peel Papers, British Library 40418 ff 172. Feilden to Peel 26/3/1835.

8. Herries Papers, British Library 57371 ff 98. Arbuthnot to Herries undated.

9. P.P. 16/7/1836.

10. Peel Papers 40616 ff 328. Saunders to Graham 22/1/45.

11. Though it should be noted, not as strongly as some of the Liberal Radicals, especially at Oldham and Rochdale. On the other hand however, throughout the whole of 1837, the Conservatives of Bury, for example, refused to implement the new law. When the Poor Law Commission tried to impose the law, they were advised that no Conservatives would either vote for, or sit on the Board of Guardians, rendering the Act virtually useless. See Manchester Guardian 10/5/1837.

12. "The signatures of the declaration (of intent) show the members to be literate, and by availing themselves of the means the society affords, they must direct their education into a channel that will tend to their own welfare and add to the honour and prosperity of their native country." Second Annual Report of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association. B.J. 2/11/1837.

13. See Blackburn Poll Books for 1837/1847 Blackburn Reference Library. See also Appendix Four.

14. See D Butler and D Stokes, Political Change in Britain, Second Edition, London 1974, or D lockwood, J H Goldthorpe et al, The Industrial Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour, Cambridge 1968.

15. Paul op.cit.p.9.

16. Graham Papers, Bodleian Library Oxford 2/9/18942. Graham to Peel. See also John Foster 'The Declassing of Language' in New Left Revue March/April 1985 p.33.

17. For Oldham see John Foster Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution London 1974 p.101.

18. Brimlow, W, A Parliamentary History of Bolton, Bolton 1880.
Abram, W A, A History of Blackburn, Blackburn 1879.

19. Blackburn Standard 8/11/1837.

20. Ibid 11/11/1840.

21. For examples of this see Preston Pilot 7/10/1837 or Manchester Courier 11/6/1836. In the Blackburn Standard 21/4/1841, see pp ? below, for quote of Harry Kenyon, former secretary of Blackburn Operative Association.

22. Preston Pilot 27/6/1833.
23. Ibid 17/10/1835.
24. Blackburn Standard 21/4/1841.
25. Ibid 8/2/1835.
26. The Times 29/7/1835.
27. The Times 5/1/1837.
28. Ibid 20/4/1838.
29. Ibid.
30. British Library Ad Ms 34245B Walton and Halton to Lovett, July, 1839.
31. Preston Pilot, 26/3/1836.
32. The Times 8/1/1838.
33. Peel Papers, British Library, AD Mss 40424, ff 140. Bonham to Peel 23/9/1837.

34. The Metropolitan Conservative Journal 26/6/1837.

35. Blackburn Standard 27/11/1839.

36. Throughout the months of August and September 1839 the Blackburn Standard devoted the whole of its editorial space to a series of 'Friendly Words Addressed to Working Men'. Also the local Anglican Vicar, Dr Whittaker wrote a pamphlet condemning Chartism which ran into seventeen editions. Sermon Preached to the Chartists on Sunday August 4, 1839. Blackburn 1839.

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

38. Ibid p.146.

39. See T R Gourvish and A O'Day, (Eds.) Later Victorian Britain, Basingstoke 1988, p.145.

40. Preston Pilot 20/7/1839.

41. General Convention of the Industrial Classes 1839. British Library AD Ms 34245B ff 119 Robert Walton and George Halton to William Lovett, August 1839.

42. For evidence of this see the activities of W H Horby below in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER SEVEN OPERATIVE CONSERVATISM II) THE ROLE OF ISSUES AND
THE VARIOUS IDIOMS OF POLITICS.

In the last chapter we began the detailed examination of Operative Conservatism, concentrating on the basic structure and functions of these societies and focusing mainly on the impact they had in the North-West region. In this chapter we aim to continue this process but now with the aim of examining both the expectations of those traditionalistic and conservative members of the working class and, in contrast, what policy initiatives the local and national Conservatives produced in an attempt to placate the interests and demands of the working class whilst at the same time not alienating other sectional political groupings who also included themselves under the banner of Conservatism.

I THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF POLICIES AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.

Early in this thesis we suggested that one of the major functions of a modern political party was the articulation of the wishes and aggregated demands of its members and supporters in the form of policy initiatives. Policies are also important in swaying those

not otherwise committed to a given party. At the beginning of the nineteenth century however things were rather different. Before 1832 ministries were primarily concerned with the maintenance of the defence of the state, internal law and order and of the exchequer. Policies enacted by a Ministry were therefore, mainly reactions to a constantly changing set of 'high political' events. It could be argued that in the eighteenth century Whig ministers were sympathetic to commerce and to religious dissent but if this was their traditional posture it was widely challenged in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. There was the attack of Whig economic policy in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, and in more obvious terms in the fact that no dissenter could send his son to an English university nor any Catholic to Parliament. There were of course great popular movements in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, for example Parliamentary reform, the question of slavery and Catholic emancipation. However the overwhelming view of politicians was that crusades conducted outside Parliament to influence policy should not concern the branches of the legislature. Such stirring of the passions of the masses was regarded as dangerous in the extreme and tantamount to infusing revolutionary feelings. Policy at all costs must be decided in Parliament by members acting independently of pledges given to sectional interests in the constituencies.

The justification for this position was two-fold. Firstly, party leaders believed that the general public, informed as they were by the dubious financial scruples of the public press, could never be adequately appraised as to the ramifications of a given policy as a Minister of State or a member of a Lords or Commons Committee. So on the eve of 1832, the prevailing view was that agitation 'out of doors' was at worst a dangerous and mischievous form of meddling. Thus it was that most policy decisions were made by the Prime Minister in close consultation with his Cabinet colleagues and the Monarch of the day. In the case of the Conservatives, the aloofness of Sir Robert Peel and his propensity for deafness when

addressed by his back-benchers, was for many years notorious.¹ Arguably Peel was merely carrying on a long tradition of leaving policy decisions to those in the highest positions of ministerial office. But even he eventually had to bend to outside pressure, and arguably these feelings of his back-benchers can be interpreted as a sign of the rejection of the old system and a feature of party politics.

The second justification of policies solely being the concern of the legislature was the traditional independence of both of the Houses and of the member. One of the chief fears of the Conservatives about the 1832 Reform Act, and one of the central cornerstones of their opposition to it, was that the House of Commons would become superior in importance to the House of Lords and that the Lower House would be swamped by the radical members of the boroughs brought in by their courting popular measures and pledges. Again, one of the chief reasons for organizing the party, both at the centre and in the localities was to prevent just such an eventuality.

With regard to the independence of the individual members, it was believed that he might ally himself to basic party principles and take the party Whip but only because he, quite voluntarily, had decided that those were the principles he wished to be identified with. In the main before 1832, the average Member of Parliament believed that he had been sent there to use his best judgment regarding the country's affairs and to vote accordingly. He could be a supporter or opponent of a Ministry, but he should have no obligation about how he should speak or vote on a particular occasion, and, although his patron might hold him accountable, the electors could not. The basis for this principle, which is still to some extent present in modern politics, was laid down by Edmund Burke as early as 1774. In a famous speech to the electors of Bristol, Burke said:

...it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union...with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him, their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfaction to theirs, and above all, ever and in all cases, to prefer their interests to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you; to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasures, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable.²

Burke's conception of the duty of electors was that they should choose a good man and let him get on with the job; it would be open to them not to choose him again if he should disappoint their expectations, as, indeed the electors of Bristol did to Burke himself in 1780. Although this guiding principle of the independence of the member of Parliament never really changed as a principle throughout the nineteenth century, in reality the situation after 1832 meant that the candidate of a given political party had to be watchful that in representing the whole of constituency - the electors as well as the non-electors - he should not risk alienating his party's supporters merely by asserting his own independence in Parliament.

Post-reform electorates differed in two main areas from pre-Reform electorates. First, and most obviously, they were usually larger, and secondly, in areas where industrialization and urbanization had taken place the local society was more complex and thus more productive of political pressures. Thus there was an increasing tendency for the more numerous sections of the electorate to seriously argue the merits and demerits of policies and alternative policies. There was, in short, a greater propensity amongst the public to express opinions based on the serious examination of political questions and to express their own sectional interests in the form of political demands.

II THE VARIOUS IDIOMS OF POLITICS.

In a major work published in 1975 entitled Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England, Tom Nossiter³ elaborated an argument on the idioms or expressions of nineteenth century politics between 1832 and 1874. For Nossiter, there were three kinds of political relationship operating at this period. First there were the politics of influence. This rested on an organic notion of society whereby the societal gradations of a community were reflected in the disposal of patronage and political power. This type of political community was a remnant from the eighteenth century type of social organization based primarily on the large estate with each component having its use, duties and reciprocal responsibilities. According to Nossiter, the politics of influence were not purely a rural or market town phenomenon but one which could be "transferred with greater or lesser incongruity to the city or the company town alike."⁴ The point here is that influence was brought to bear not necessarily as a crude form of overt coercion, or of irresistible pressures at periods of elections, but a continuous realization on the part of an elector to take account of his total situation within the network of influences which made up his day to day existence. Thus there is a sense of pragmatism as well as deference to authority in Nossiter's view of the politics of influence, as indeed there is in the work of Frank O'Connor.⁵

Nossiter's second idiom or political variable was that of the politics of the market. Here the vote or political participation was seen as an "economic asset to be bought or sold according to the laws of political supply and demand."⁶ Again Nossiter stresses that this may not have been the crude buying and selling of votes, but often the paying of expenses, or the paying for lost time, or tipping for a service rendered or the giving of treats; food, travel, drinks etc. Nor again was this type of politics to

be found solely during periods of elections. It was expected that an M.P. or local politicians should give generously to local charities and reward local activists either as individuals or collectively through his contribution to the expenses of the annual dinner of the local political association or other gifts and treats. This operation was not considered as being immoral or corrupt but merely what was expected. Thus there was an element of social sanctioning this type of political behaviour which, according to Nossiter, (and here is in agreement with Norman Gash) the Reform Act of 1832 did little to remove.

Finally there was the politics of opinion and interest. Which he suggests was known as 'agitation' immediately after the passing of 1832 Act, and of 'conscience' during the 1850's and 60's and finally in the early 1870's gained expression during the final success in carrying the Secret Ballot in 1872.⁷ According to Nossiter, this was, "a conception of the political order which sought to exclude any other considerations than the political. For short, it might be called the politics of individualism, that individualism which was so evident in the economic and cultural movements of the time."⁸ It was individualistic in the sense that the citizen considered his political options and formed his opinions on the basis of his relationship with questions of policy, principles, his own interests, and the political party - or the individual candidate who represented the party - who could best suit his opinion won his support regardless of class.

Nossiter tells us that few constituencies could be described as fitting exactly to one or other of these three conceptions of nineteenth century politics but he suggests that his model helps to clarify a very confusing pattern of political development. His study is based on research of the North-East of England - a region which Nossiter admits was 'unique' in its especial attachment to Liberal politics.⁹ This points to the problem of Nossiter's three classifications of nineteenth century politics. All regions

were different, indeed areas within regions were different. What might have been common practice in one was different in another. This is something we shall concentrate on later, but it is worth making the point at this stage.

Derek Fraser¹⁰ has pointed out that the North-East region was unique in that, although it contained that mix of agriculture and industry which was typical of Britain during the consolidation of the industrial revolution, in political terms, it was still locked into the single interest type of political orientation typical of pre-Reform Act politics and more akin to the political environment of the eighteenth century than the nineteenth. Fraser points out that, the region as a whole did contain one large city, Newcastle, but the region as a whole did not contain the mixture of interests capable of creating the diversity of opinions found in areas containing large metropolitan conurbations such as London, Birmingham or Manchester and Liverpool in the North-West. In the North-East of the 1830's and 1840's the principle interests were the land, shipping and coal, whilst in Lancashire we find economic interests linked to politics in commerce, various forms of textiles, mining, engineering and other industries undergoing rapid mechanization. The North-East was also, on Nossiter's own evidence largely protestant:¹¹ and although at times the Anglicans and Nonconformists clashed violently, the region did not contain any numbers of that important third element - Roman Catholics - to provide the Conservatives with the opportunity to exploit sectarian hatreds, as they did in parts of the North-West. Thus it was that the North-East could be neatly compartmentalized into Nossiter's three conceptualizations of politics because here elements of the old system were retained longer and emphasis could be given to the politics of influence and the market.¹² As Nossiter himself says.

...The protagonists of individualism (opinion based politics) often found themselves engaged in a rearguard action in face of the influence of landowners in the country, industrialists

in the company towns and trade union leaders in the cities.¹³

Derek Fraser's own work¹⁴ on the large cities of the North and Midlands suggests, (like our own) that it was opinion which, after 1832, was the salient feature of local politics at least in these sorts of urban area. Fraser cites The Times as evidence for his case.

What The Times said of the West Riding to a greater or lesser extent applied to the larger cities: 'with its 30,000 voting men and its unequalled concentration of interests (it) is beyond the reaches of all influences but those which appeal to the conscience of man. No threats, no frowns, no quarter day,... Here if anywhere is a free election.'¹⁵

We suggest that although influence (especially all patronage) and the politics of the market are to be found in the North-West, the increasing trend after 1832 was towards the politics of opinion, based largely upon social groups concerned either with purely political issues or with social, economic and religious questions which became political issues. We agree with Fraser when he asserts that Nossiter's study is based on a conception of nineteenth century politics which is somewhat narrow.¹⁶ For although Nossiter has devised these three conceptualizations of political activity, this activity is itself primarily concerned with the formal participation in politics encapsulated in the act of voting. Thus, for Nossiter, the 1872 Secret Ballot Act attains a huge significance: because the Act made it much harder to influence or buy votes. This because those attempting to influence or corrupt had no longer any guarantee that the client voter had stuck to his bargain or pledge. If one seeks to understand nineteenth century politics purely from the standpoint of the act of registering a vote then this is a plausible argument. However we, in this study, are suggesting that nineteenth century politics must be understood in a far wider context, one that embraces the changing nature of the political

party and the political attitudes of the non-electors as well as the electors. The vote was merely the culmination of a long process of political stance formation in which opinion and bargaining may well have played a part irrespective of whether the outcome is influence or opinion based in an immediate sense. As we shall discover the benefits accruing to the members of the local Operative Conservative Associations (sick and benefit provisions etc) gives support to this point.

Taken individually Nossiter's three categories impinge too exclusively on the separate nature of the explanatory context of the given idiom. It would seem that the various inter-linking factors came into play in different places at different times in the political world of Britain after 1832. Thus it was that certain principles, issues or policies in a given locality over-rode the constraints and limitations inherent within Nossiter's various idioms, especially with regard to the non-electors.

Increasingly after 1832, in the North-West at least, local politicians attempted to gain support and power on the basis of issues which directly affected the working class. On the Conservative side, examples of this can be found as we shall see, in the agitation surrounding the imposition of the New Poor Law after 1836 or the Factory Questions. Increasingly from the 1830's onwards as we shall discover in later chapters it is evident in religious questions linked expressly to Irish migration. Of course there were occasions when local landed or industrial magnates attempted to influence electors and non-electors, but this we suggest was part of a wider network of social controls which the elites operated after 1832. Of course there were occasions of corruption after the first Reform Act, but here too we suggest that the growing tendency towards political respectability, coupled with the increasing size of electorates in the constituencies of the North-West, rendered this idiom of Nossiter's though still of significance, increasingly marginal.

Increasingly, therefore the tendency of parties and politicians at the local and national level was to appeal for support on the basis of principles, policies and issues, and importantly, leadership.

However we suggest that Nossiter's three idioms of political activity must be borne in mind when we come to discuss the regional variation of North-West politics, for, although limiting and at times confusing they do enable us to compare and contrast over time and space the changing political culture of the North-West.

III WORKING CLASS ISSUES, OPERATIVE CONSERVATIVES AND RADICAL TORIES.

As we noted in the last chapter, the initial active membership of the associations of Lancashire Operative Conservatives was the 'respectable' working man. However, there were occasions when the great mass of working people were called upon to support Conservatism. This brings us to the role which actual issues play in the 1830's 1840's and 1850's, and how they were utilized by the local conservatives. So far we have suggested that the role of Operative Conservatism as a political institution was one of political socialization and proselytization, and that the local and national Conservative leaders supported the Conservative Associations as being not only useful organizational bodies but also fulfilling the role of explaining the essential Conservative principle of preserving the existing constitution in Church and State. Also, importantly, in the case of the Operative Associations, of being able to steer sections of the working class away from the dangers of extreme radicalism.

Initially, at a general level, Operative Conservative Associations resembled a form of Conservative Mechanics Institute. They were places where discussions and debates could be held, Conservative newspapers and literature read and absorbed. Two points are important here. Firstly, for the Conservative leadership, this explanatory function was important, for, as we noted above, it steered the operative away from the company and influence of radicals, republicans and the like which he may have encountered in the public house or the place of work, and placed him in an informal educational environment with his like-minded peers. The work-place and the public house were important once the operative was fully committed and conversant with the arguments of Conservatism. Then he could influence and persuade his fellow workers, but the initiation and instruction had to take place in a less disruptive atmosphere. Secondly, the Operative, for his part was displaying to his said superiors that he was at least willing to be improved and wished to be regarded as a respectable and legal member of his party and class. This differed from the political of influence in that this was a voluntary activity on the part of the individual and one based on an appeal made by the political party to gain his support.

The situation worked well for both sides. The Conservative leadership knew precisely whom it could rely on and encouraged the converted to bring more into the fold, so that they too could defend the constitution against the encroachments of the Destructives, the Reformers, the Radicals, the republicans and others who advocated wholesale changes in society. The Operative Conservative on the other hand, was not just a passive member of political society like other non-electors, but an active one in that he campaigned vigorously for the Conservative cause which was firmly within the mainstream of political legitimacy. In time, the working class Conservative might attain the right of holding the franchise by virtue of his gaining better employment

opportunities and a larger rated home. Once he could vote, the Association would take care of his registration. These functions were not, of course peculiar to the Conservatives, the Liberals did the same sort of things, especially with the faggot votes created by the Anti-Corn-Law League in the early 1840's. However, in the 1830's the first aim of the local Conservatives was to instil into a section of the working class the basic Conservative opinions. If Dr Nossiter wishes to call this 'agitation' as he terms opinion based politics, then the local Conservatives of Lancashire gloried in the term as a Mr Cheetham, a local National Schoolmaster told a meeting of Chorley Operatives in November 1836.

At the commencement of the Association our opponents charged us with agitation. It was said that our design was to cause masters to be against their servants, fathers against their sons; but he would say that if to endeavour to instil right views and implement sound constitutional principles in the hearts and minds of the working classes - if to endeavour to create a kind and good feeling amongst our fellow townsmen by showing them the duties they owe to each other, be agitation, then he would say we glory in agitation...¹⁷

However, without doubt, the various types of Conservative Association would be of most practical benefit to the party in organizational terms in a national sense during the periods of Parliamentary elections when committed working class Conservatives would be on hand to canvass electors and argue the Conservative case to their fellow non-electors. Yet not all the members of the various Operative Associations were so committed throughout the whole of our period. The membership was prone to fluctuation. The Preston branch formed in December 1835 began with inaugural membership of 60 persons, by the end of October 1836 this branch had increased its membership to 450.¹⁸ In December 1836, the Warrington Operative Conservative Association claimed a large membership of 500,¹⁹ and in May 1838 they boasted 740 members and, as well as the usual social amenities, an Operative

Conservative Brass Band.²⁰ At Wigan the membership of the Operative Conservative Association was 850 in the summer of 1836,²¹ at Liverpool the membership was said to be in excess of 1,000 with a branch in every ward in the city, in the same in November 1836 the Tradesmen's branch attracted 120 new members in the course of a single meeting.²² By July 1837 the Bolton branch had a membership of 1,500 with an additional 200 female members;²³ in April 1838 the membership of Salford Operative Conservative Association was put 1,700²⁴ and Manchester claimed 900 members for its Operative Association.²⁵ The initial membership of the Blackburn Operative Association was 40 in November 1835, by 1838 it was over 400; the following year the membership fell, not picking up again until 1841, but not increasing anything like as fast as its initial spurt. According to the annual reports of the Blackburn Operative Association the membership for the town - not the parish - never rose higher than 600 in 1844.²⁶ Blackburn therefore ranks as an Association of middling membership compared to those of its larger neighbours at Manchester, Liverpool, Salford and Bolton. But there were also small associations at Rochdale with 400 members,²⁷ or Heywood²⁸ (350 members in 1837) or Chorley (300 in 1836)²⁹ and others with no recorded membership at Burnley or Poulton-le-Fylde or Upholland and many, many more.

The periods, however, when the Operative Associations of the North-West did increase coincided with the periods when the issues linked in some way to regional Conservatism were at their strongest. At periods of high social tension, political issues, strong leadership and organization can act as conduits which bring previously apathetic members of society into the political arena. This appears to have been the case in the North-West between 1832 and the mid 1860's; especially with regard to issues concerning the relief of poverty, the ten hours movement, the Corn Laws, Parliamentary reform and Church reform specifically with regard to the Church rates question and education. Added to these were those which affected working people only indirectly or

spasmodically such as public health, temperance and, of course trades unionism.

In the next chapter we aim to look at the issues themselves in some detail, when we examine Operative Conservatism comparatively. But here it may be of use to explain the actions of many North-West Conservative activists with regard to issues and principles. To do this we must introduce a new ingredient and elemental strand of the Conservative party of the post-Reform period. This group has come to be known, somewhat confusingly by the apparently contradictory term of Tory-Radicals or Radical Tories. The Manchester Guardian, writing in May 1837 attempted to clarify their seemingly incompatible pieces of political terminology. It said:

Tory Radicals are those persons who, by professing the most extreme radical opinions in politics, are yet always ready to play into the hands of the Tory Party. The Radical-Tories are those who, calling themselves Conservatives, and pretending the highest veneration of the constitution, are nevertheless always ready to preach resistance to the law, and to support any incendiary whom they may consider likely to annoy their political opponents.³⁰

Although tinged with the usual sarcasm, which the Manchester Guardian was unable to decline indulging in whenever it addressed itself to the politics of its opponents, there is a grain of truth in these definitions. An example of this can be found in the Reform Crisis itself and the years immediately following. As many have noted there was, in these years an informal union of the Ultra Tories and the Ultra Radicals. Their common bond was an intense hatred of all things industrial and the new bourgeoisie who typified such forms of manufacturing. The Ultra-Tories feared the flooding of the House of Commons with the new men of the individual boroughs; the Ultra-Radicals, that such men were exploiters of labour and once in Parliament would gain the

political power to increase the levels of exploitation. Also both groups shared the type of romantic atavism we noted in Chapter Two.

A detailed analysis of this strange union has been written by the historian D.C. Moore.³¹ He suggests further that in Parliamentary terms both groups found themselves on the same side in their detestation of the Tory/Conservative leader from 1828 to 1833, the Duke of Wellington:³² the Ultra Tories because of his apparent capitulation over the Catholic Question and the Radicals for his hostile attitude towards the labouring classes. The Manchester Guardian continued to maintain throughout the Parliamentary elections of the 1830's and 40's that there was collusion between the Tory section of the Conservative party and sections of the extreme radicals, and, as we shall shortly discover, with some degree of justice. However its distinction between 'Tory-Radicals' and 'Radical Tory' was rather cosmetic and for our purposes confusing - for the terms could at the time be interpreted, and should be interpreted by historians, as interchangeable. We suggest that one of the major factors which drove many radically inclined members of the working classes into the arms of the Conservatives was the salient issues of the day which directly affected the working class as a whole. However before examining these issues in detail we must first outline the basic theoretical stance which both the Tory inclined Conservatives and the radically inclined working class began to share in the political world of the industrial North-West after 1832.

IV PATERNALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS.

We noted above, and in Chapter two, the atavism about, or the yearning for, the perceived romantic picture of a past age,

especially on the part of the remnants of the Old Tory Party and the so called 'Romantic Tories'. Many of the Radicals in the industrial North-West shared this highly effective illusion of the past. The key for both was the natural justice, responsibilities and rights apparently available to all groups in the past. For the Tories this was based on prescriptive property rights and responsibilities relating to paternalism. That is to say that the elites had a responsibility to tend to the needs of the social order below them when those lower orders fell upon times of distress. For the Radicals, it was based on a perceived view of natural rights and justice of a former age. When viewed from this standpoint and the need for security felt by both groups in a period of thrusting entrepreneurs and progressive reformers, an affinity of interest can be seen and the alliance appears less contradictory than it does at first sight.

We shall now suggest that during the 1830's, 40's and 50's many insecure and impoverished members of the working class began to accept the leadership of the local and national conservatives for three basic reasons. Firstly, many Conservatives of the Tory variety and a section of the working class were unwilling to accept the changing nature of society as perceived by the progressive Liberal middle classes, especially with regard to traditional definitions of security and independence. As the devices of social organization, constraint and control - for example the New Poor Law, or changes in the old form of local government - were introduced by the Whig/Liberals as the 1830's developed, so the political conflict increased and non-Liberals attempted to resist their implementation. Secondly, North-West (and indeed very many Yorkshire) Conservatives of the traditional Tory strain began to develop a comprehensive social theory which attempted to guarantee the security, if not the progress of Labour through a reformulation of paternalistic responsibilities and natural rights and justice. Thirdly these Conservatives of the North attempted to give practical effect to their social

philosophy by advocating issues and policies which reflected their concern for the working class, and of course to gain adherents. These issues included advocating factory reform, the opposition to the New Poor Law, non-political trades unionism and, indeed in certain cases in the mid to late 1840's they allied themselves with the rural utopianism which many workers of the North-West associated with independence and security, especially those who were relatively new to the urban situation.

As we have tried to show above and as we shall relate in greater detail in the following three chapters, one important factor which drew sections of industrial workers and traditionally inclined Conservatives together in the North-West was their common resentment of the middle class Liberal progressives.³³ The vast acceleration of daily life and the resultant changes in the centres of political power which industrialization brought to the North-West, left many Conservatives and many (especially the unskilled and semi-skilled) members of the working class feeling bereft of power. The rural Tories and the Conservatives of the market and county towns such as Chester, Clitheroe or Lancaster, as well as the lesser skilled working class took a long time to be convinced that industrialization was an adequate way of life, or that 'laissez-faire' individualism would be a solution to individual and social problems.

The unstable social, and especially economic conditions of the North-West convinced many of the working class that they should reject the theories of linear progress insisted upon by the Liberal middle classes. Many working men found that they were a limited and dispensable part of the industrial process. Instead of the promised long-range progress of the Liberals, many of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers of the North-West demanded an immediate remedy for the iniquities of industrialization. Many of those who migrated to the towns prior to the mass influx of Irish men and women who attempted to escape the famine of the mid

1840's, came from the rural or semi-rural villages and hamlets situated some five to ten miles from an urban area.³⁴ These people preferred the kind of predictable life typical in a rural society because a real lack of economic security and independence made it increasingly difficult to believe that industrial progress - beset as it was from an apparently endless succession of booms and slumps - would include them. It was asking a great deal of this section of the working class that they should accept the unknown direction of 'progress' in which they had only a very partial share. Increasingly these types of workers responded to leaders who promised simple political solutions to the complex problems raised by industrial life.

There were occasions when some of the semi and unskilled workers of the North-West turned to Chartism from 1838, but they did not automatically accept the leadership of skilled working class as had been the case during the Luddite disturbances of the period 1795 to the 1820's, and indeed continued to be the case among the more independently situated workers of Birmingham or London. By far the most popular Chartist leader in the North - including most of Yorkshire - was a 'gentleman', Feargus O'Connor. It can be strongly argued that O'Connor's leadership of Northern Chartism was built upon Radical Tory and Conservative success in persuading workers to rely upon external leadership instead of fully developing a political ideology and tactics which they had begun to do during the 1820's and the Reform crisis. O'Connor was benefiting from the work began for him by the Tory radicals such as Michael Thomas Sadler, Richard Oastler, Parson George Stringer Bull and Joseph Raynor Stephens. Several working class Chartists such as Richard Marsden³⁵ from Preston, Edward Nightingale³⁶ from Manchester and the Bradford Chartist John Jackson,³⁷ argued that, while O'Connor was a Radical, he also shared Tory prejudices and assumptions and further that O'Connor had stepped into the vacuum in the Radical tory leadership left by the arrests of Oastler and Stephens. While O'Connor did pursue the need of political reform,

his ultimate solution to the working man's problems was a return to a simpler life on the land, something which Conservatives had toyed with since 1841.³⁸ O'Connor's radicalism was always supplemented by his pose as a landed gentleman of aristocratic birth.³⁹ One of the reasons why William Lovett and the London Chartists increasingly rejected the tactics of the labourers of the North was that they believed that this group could not be persuaded that they had more in common with the skilled workers than with the gentry.⁴⁰

The paternalism of the Tory radicals and the Conservatives of the North-West reinforced the willingness of a section of the working class to believe that their loss of independence and lack of security was not solely due to loss of political rights - arguably they had never had them at any time before 1832 - but was more to do with the criminal irresponsibility of the Liberal middle class manufacturers and their Whig representatives in Parliament. An often missed element of North-West Chartism was that given to it by the Tory-Radicals which was that, despite its ostensible purpose of political reform a viable explanation for the plight of many workers was the culpability of the 'progressive' Liberal middle classes.⁴¹

Liberal leaders tended to dismiss the willingness of a section of the working class to follow Conservative and Radical Tory leadership as a desperate strategy for attacking the Whigs, especially when they were in government in the years after 1832. The Manchester Guardian in particular was disgusted at the shortsightedness of sections of the working class in allowing their resentment of Whig policy to shape their actions.⁴² However, to many of the semi-and unskilled workers involved in spinning, weaving and labouring the Liberal middle classes were new men attempting to foist a theory of gross exploitation on to the working class, and wantonly destroying the traditional patriarchal relationship between the governed and the governors.

If this type of worker had not come to this conclusion himself there were several channels through which it was conveyed. As early as 1833, Henry Hethrington in the Poor Man's Guardian was writing that: "The middle classes, or profit men are the real tyrants of the country. Disguise it as they may, they are the authors of our slavery for without their connivance and secret support no tyranny could exist. Government is but a tool in their hands to execute their nefarious purpose."⁴³ The worker heard the same kind of argument over and over again at the mass meetings called in support of the Ten Hours Movement or protesting against the New Poor Law as we shall discover when we look in more detail at the impact these issues had at different parts of the reign in the next Chapter.

However, working class distrust of the Whigs and the Liberal manufacturers was nurtured not only by Radical Tory and Conservative rhetoric but by the bitterness of cumulative disappointment. The Reformed Parliament had turned out to be much the same as its predecessor, indeed worse in terms of the attacks made on trades unionism, their lack-lustre performance regarding factory reform and the perceived punitive provisions of the New Poor Law. For many workers of the North-West the indictment that the Whig governments of the 1830's sought only to represent the interests of the middle class Liberals was proved by the severity of the Whigs in dealing with the Dorset labourers in 1837 and the spinners of Glasgow in the same year.

Despite, in a national sense, their traditional roots in the land, many Conservatives felt as insecure as the anonymous working class. As we noted above, the Reform Act, in theory if not immediately in fact, abruptly ended the coalition of Conservative Whiggery and Toryism which had held power more or less continuously since 1784. In addition, theories of political economy questioned the economic function of the Tory element of Conservatism and accused them of being parasitic countrymen or the

'stupid party'. The political economists argued that the nation would benefit if the power centres were shifted from ;and to industry, from the traditional paternalism and parochialism of the local gentry to the individualistic and centralized rule of an efficient, rootless, meritocratic bureaucracy clearing the way for mechanistic progress.

V ISSUES AND POLITICAL RE-ALIGNMENTS.

Old school Tories could not admit that their role as a patriarchal country gentry was superfluous in the changing society nor could they welcome the direction of that change, begun as it was in the reforming Whig ministries of the 1830's. The Whigs and progressive Liberals appeared to be attacking everything the Tory element deemed inviolable; the established Church, the House of Lords, Local Government, and the very social relationship which, the Tories (and many Conservatives) argued, had separated Britain from despotic Europe and republican America. The Conservatives of the North-West developed a defensive social reform ideology partly as an expedient to attack their political opponents, but also because many of them felt a genuine sympathy with the isolation and insecurity of many working people. As we shall see in the next three chapters, the manner in which this was put over to the great mass of working people was through the pursuance of certain issues combined with a sense of the threat posed to working people by Whig/Liberal policies with the central tenets of old style Tory paternalism and Conservatism.

Of course the Conservatives and Tory Radicals were not the only social reformers operating in the North-West between 1832 and the 1860's, and in the next chapter we shall examine these regional

variations in some detail in order to account for the differences in political allegiances among working people in different parts of the North-West. There were many Radicals, Liberals and Whigs pledged to support working class causes. However, it is interesting to view the issues these groups supported in the light of what we know of their ideological traits and their political aims and objectives. As we noted above, the Liberals and progressive Whigs lent heavily on the economic, social and political theorists of the classical school of economics associated with Adam Smith and David Ricardo, and on the social theories of Thomas Malthus and the utilitarianism associated with Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and his son, John Stuart Mill. In the North-West, along with their advocacy of major issues linked primarily to economics and industry - the repeal of the Corn Laws and the freeing of trade, which, they contended, would result in a beneficial improvement in society for all its members - the Liberals and Whigs championed issues such as educational reform, church-rate reform, temperance, and public health, all of which had direct or in-direct relevance to the working class.

There were more leftwardly inclined radicals, moral force Chartists, who adopted the strictly peaceful tactics in pursuit of the Six Points, there were republicans, secularists, primitive socialists and physical force Chartists. These groups pursued the issues which had a direct bearing on working class existence. The best way one can gauge the extremity of their respective positions was not the degree to which they advocated the use of physical force to gain their objectives - most were prepared to contemplate it at one stage or another - but rather their willingness to operate within the existing constitution. We must ask just how revolutionary they were in terms of their complete and total rejection of the existing social and political order? It is the view of this thesis that apart from a very brief period in the early 1830's - at the height of the Reform Crisis and immediately afterwards - the majority of these groups either wished to operate

within the existing constitution, or if they did not, never carried a sufficient level of mass revolutionary class consciousness in a Marxian sense to carry out their objectives at any time up to the 1870's.

However, there seems to have been three distinct approaches to the manner in which the three main groups linked the issues they actively supported to their basic political principles. The Liberal reformers stressed the necessity of moral improvement through direct action on the baser instincts of the late Georgian, early Victorian working man. This meant focusing attention on the pursuit of objectives which would both morally and physically improve him and make him less susceptible to the temptations of the 'residuum'⁴⁴ These 'progressive' reformers rejected the Tory and Conservative premise of paternalism stressing instead the need of the individual to take care of himself rather than relying on the good works of others.

The radicals essential guiding principle was egalitarianism, especially in terms of social and political rights. They affected a high moral tone which concerned itself with specific issues - such as religious, political and social equality - but it was not a fully developed system of political thought in the way that Liberalism or indeed Conservatism was. The basis of early nineteenth century radicalism was what was seen at the abuse of natural justice with many writers focusing on aspects of exploitation. However, although writers such as Thomas Wooler or Bronterre O'Brien pre-date the works of Marx by two or three decades, they did not develop the philosophic rigour which the continental Radicals achieved. Nor, according to Patricia Hollis⁴⁵ and Gareth Stedman-Jones,⁴⁶ did they adequately identify the real enemy of the working class: the capitalist middle classes and the system of production itself. Thus it was that, although at times popular, Radicalism found itself squeezed between the progressive Liberals on the one hand and traditionalistic

Conservatives on the other. As Stedman-Jones suggests that the decline of Chartism was not due to prosperity or economic stabilization or an immature class consciousness, "but to the changing character and policies of the state - the principal enemy upon whose actions the radicals had always found their credibility depended."⁴⁷

As we have noted above, the third main ideological strand which operated in the years after 1832 was that of Conservatism, imbued as it was with the strong Tory paternalistic element. Overall, issues, principles and policies arguments were selected and presented within the framework of these developing ideologies.

VI THE MAIN WORKING CLASS ISSUES.

Let us end this chapter by briefly outlining the main issues which the Radical Tories and Conservatives exploited with regard to the working class of the North-West. As we shall subsequently discover, the relevance and potency of these issues varied from area to area within the region as a whole and, indeed over time, but basically two issues stand out. They were factory reform, and the opposition to the imposition of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Added to these were a series of issues relevant to working people which local Conservatives promoted from time to time. These included trades union recognition, public health questions and education.

Historically, paternalistically orientated Conservatives and Tories had a long association with factory reform throughout the Northern manufacturing districts. The first Sir Robert Peel had placed an Act on the statute book in 1802 which regulated the hours of work of cotton apprentices to twelve hours per day.

However when steam-powered factories employing 'free' children developed in urban areas, the primitive socialist mill owner Robert Owen began a campaign in 1815 to limit child labour to ten and a half hours. Investigations by Committees in the Commons and the Lords under the chairmanship of the sympathetic Lord Kenyon led only to a widening of Peel's Act of 1802 applying to all children employed in cotton mills. In 1825 three Tory manufacturers from Bradford, John Rand, John Wood and Matthew Thompson, unsuccessfully appealed for a voluntary 10 hour day in the worsted industry, whilst a group of Lancashire trades unionists under the leadership of James Turner and John Doherty maintained a campaign in the cotton areas of Lancashire, eventually with Conservative support.⁴⁸

A host of 'experts' from medical men to Anglican priests published information in an effort to influence Parliament. To many Liberals and progressively inclined manufacturers, such tampering with the free operation of labour and wages was, of course, an anathema when the rising fashion of the age was laissez-faire.

It was in the later 1820's that Richard Oastler⁴⁹ and the Radical Tories burst open the scene and gave dramatic life to the issue which, as we discover in subsequent chapters, was to be for the next three decades one of the most important questions of social reform in North-West politics. Also in the mid-1830's came the question of the implementation of the New Poor Law with its centralized commission in London to administer it. Operative Conservatives and Radical Tories as well as many middle class Conservatives asserted the hypocrisy of the Whig/Liberal position and pointed to the fact that Liberals would not interfere with the free market with regard to the hours which workers laboured, but were willing to interfere in matters relating to the dispensing of poor relief.

We suggest that these issues particularly linked working class politics to the paternalistic principles of Conservatism/Toryism. It was the inability of a substantial section of the working class of the North-West to harmoniously adjust to changing industrial and social conditions which played a large part in explaining their receptivity to the paternal theory. But some of them were also attracted to the security of an ordered, if hierarchical social order, and they were repelled by the laissez-faire implications of an industrial society, apparently free but very precarious. It could be argued that such members of the working class who were attracted to Conservatism did so out of a sense of social deference - to rank or those of a superior social station - and indeed some may, but the support given, and given freely, becomes more meaningful when seen in the light of the issues which the Conservatives of the North-West supported. This was not the politics of influence which Nossiter describes in the North-East, but more to do with the politics of the conditioning of opinions emanating from the social and political environment working people actually existed in during the 1830's, 40's and 50's. What appears to have developed in these years was a mutuality of interests between traditionalistic Conservatives and a section of the working class. It was given theoretical justification in a re-working of Tory paternalism and a practical application in the struggle surrounding issues which directly affected working people, and vociferously agitated by the Tory-Radicals such as Oastler and Stephens. Thus it was that the size and the scale of the transformation of the support given to Conservatism in the North-West should not be gauged merely by the functions or membership of the Local Operative Conservative Associations. These were important, but probably only the tip of a support which ran deeply into the working class. We suggest that the Conservative electoral success amongst the working class in the later 1860's and early 1870's in the mill towns of the North-West had a long gestation period, dating back in fact to the devices of political leadership and control which began to be place into

position from the mid-1830's, both practically and theoretically.

The middle class traditionalistic-orientated conservative urged the working class to follow him away from the laissez-faire individualism of middle class Liberalism.⁵⁰ The Conservatives of the North-West rejected liberalism because it appeared to assert unlimited progress and simplified human nature contrary to all religious and historical evidence. To the Tory theorist, (such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge) human nature was not a product of economic self interest. Man was rather a complex ethical social being, dependent on direction on the communal guidance of family, church, society and, in the 1830's the proselytizing efforts of the political party. Progress was limited by the traditions of the past and by providential design. This position was taken up by traditionalistic Conservatives against the extreme Radicals just as forcefully as it was against the progressive Liberals. This was highlighted in a sermon preached by the vicar of Blackburn in 1939 when the physical force faction of the Chartists invaded his church during the disturbances of the summer of that year. He told them,

The doctrine of equal right to property...amounts to nothing less than this:- You are first to covet, next to demand, and then, if your demands be not conceded, you are directed to take by violence your neighbours goods... You have many excuses my friends. I do not, and I cannot believe that doctrines so frantic and outrageously preposterous as these...can have imposed on many of you...no equality of property can exist so long as God endows man unequally with gifts mental and personal? And is it not clear, that, if all were made equal in respect of property at some imaginary point in time, they could not,...remain equal for a single week?⁵¹

The point that those with wealth had a responsibility for those less fortunate was of great significance for the Conservatives of the North-West. As early as 1833, the founder of the South Lancashire Conservative Association, William Holton, exemplified

their position.

Conservatives had a duty to perform on behalf of the poor which they ought never to forget: and no man deserved the epithet of a true conservative who did not to the utmost of his power listen to the wants and relieve the sufferings of the poor. I call for a toast to the operatives of England, and may every conservative show them, that while the upper classes are enriched by their labour, they hold them in the same degree of heartfelt esteem as they entertain for the aristocracy.⁵²

The importance of the issues such as factory reform, poor relief, or public health for the Conservatives of the North-West was that not only did they fit their theories of paternalism, they also revealed that they were not adverse to the reality of change. They argued that change had to be guided by a systematical policy unless this was so change would not be ameliorative. They realized that local action could not meet national problems effectively and insisted that Parliament must intervene to ensure that the stronger did not prosper at the expense of the weaker.⁵³

The rapidly changing conditions of life in the industrial North-West dismayed many Conservatives almost as much as they did the working class. But for the Conservatives they did so because they saw urban life compounding the natural weakness of men; their irrationality, helplessness and dependence. To combat these conditions the Conservative reformers of the North-West became almost like missionaries to the lower classes preaching a millennium rooted in social harmony. This mission was almost evangelical, comprising of both Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists,, whose moral and political code came largely from their religious conscience. Unable to accept a morality glorifying individual success instead of social harmony, they emphasized Burke's dictum that social status and social responsibilities were inseparable. To persuade the working class, these Conservatives and Radical Tories combined Conservatism with

social welfare. Richard Oastler echoed the banner of the Leeds Operative Conservative Association 'The Altar, the Throne and the Cottage' with his own heading above the weekly Fleet Papers of 'Property has its duties as well as its Rights'. He was accepted by many working class people as the 'Factory King', but he denied the need for political change in terms of the political contract. This was similarly unacceptable to many Conservatives in the 1830's and early 1840's, but by the end of the 1840's this position too was changing. Writing in the 1850's Sir James Graham said in Parliament that,

The operation and object of the Bill of 1832 was to transfer power to the middle classes. But it is a mistake to hold that the humbler classes also do not take a real and deep interest in elections... Speaking in a strictly Conservative sense, I am convinced that it is infinitely more prudent to make timely concessions to reasonable demands than obstinately to resist them. The demands of the working class for the franchise are reasonable, and can no longer safely be refused.⁵⁴

We suggest that in the North-West at least the basis of this change of attitude was primarily caused by changes in political culture - of perceived attitudes to political institutions. In this region the politics of opinion in relation to a wide range of issues, political parties, and pressure groupings was the important engine of social and political change. This, we argue fits Nossiter's definition of 'opinion' based politics and more besides. For what was happening in the 1830's and 40's was that sections of the working class began to support Conservatism because that party positioned itself, in the localities particularly, in such a way that working class issues could be presented as meaningful without betraying the fundamental tenets of Conservatism. These were questions which were addressed to working people and made attractive to them in a class sense; that they were beneficial to them as a class. It was this cultivation of working class opinions coupled with a sense of their insecurity

and loss of independence in the industrialized world which began to attract working class support.

SUMMARY

We opened this chapter by outlining the rising importance of questions of issues and party policy in the wake of the 1832 Reform Act. We also summarized the Nossiter thesis - and pointed out that it was too rigid a set of definitions to be meaningfully applied to the North-West. We then introduced new elements into the description of post-1832 Conservatism; those of Radical Toryism and of reformist Conservatism. We looked at the theory of paternalism advocated by such groups and also examined the various issues pursued by other political groups in the light of their ideological principles.

So far we have only looked at the role of issues - not the issues themselves - in the light of the increasing working class support for Conservatism after 1832, and further how they related to the changing political culture of the North-West region. In our next few chapters we intend to examine Operative Conservatism comparatively over several differing parts of the region, looking also at the politics of the elites especially with regard to the questions affecting working class existence.

1. See N Gash, Peel, London 1976 p.141.

2. Burke, E. Speech to the Electors of Bristol at the Conclusion of the Poll, in Worcs, London 1815-1827 Vol 3 pp.19/20.

3. T Nossiter, Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England. Hassocks 1975 p.6.

4. Ibid.

5. F O'Gorman, Electoral Deference in "Unreformed" England, 1760-1832 in Journal of Modern History 56 1984 pp.391-429.

6. See Nossiter op cit p.6.

7. Ibid. p.7.

8. Ibid.

9. Nossiter op cit p.2.

10. D Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England, Leicester 1976 p.185.

11. Nossiter op cit pp.1/2.

12. Ibid. p.194.

13. Ibid.

14. Fraser op.cit, chapters 8 and 9.
15. Ibid p.185.
16. Ibid pp.184/185.
17. Report of Chorley Operative Conservative Association First Annual Dinner, 21/11/1836, in Preston Pilot 26/11/1836.
18. 19/11/1836 Preston Pilot.
19. Preston Pilot 3/12/1836.
20. Manchester Guardian 26/5/1838.
21. Preston Pilot 16/7/1836.
22. Ibid 12/11/1836.
23. Ibid 22/7/1837.
24. Manchester Guardian 18/4/1838.
25. Manchester Courier 21/4/1838.
26. The Annual Reports of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association for 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, 1852, 1853 in Blackburn Standard of those years.

27. P.P.13/8/1838.

28. M.G. 14/1/1837.

29. P.P. 19/11/1836.

30. M.G. 10/5/1837.

31. D C Moore, The Other Face of Reform, Victorian Studies, September 1961.

32. Ibid p.7.

33. Here we are referring to radical Tories and Conservatives and not sections of mainstream radicals who saw the idle classes and aristocrats as the real enemy. Thus our focus is somewhat different from that of historians like G Stedman-Jones, Languages of Class, and Patricia Hollis, Pressure from Without.

34. The standard work on this aspect of social change in the nineteenth century is probably still A Redford, Labour Migration in England, Manchester 1976 ed. p.41.

35. See Blackburn Standard 9/7/1848.

36. Manchester Guardian 6/12/1841.

37. J Jackson, The Demagogue Done Up: An Exposure of the Extreme Inconsistencies of Feargus O'Connor. Bradford 1844.

38. T Carlyle, The Conservative Land Plan, in the Quarterly Review. September 1841.

39. D Read and R Glasgow, Feargus O'Connor, London 1959 p.20, also see J Epstein's view in Lion of Freedom, London 1979 who makes a rather different assessment of O'Connor than the one offered here.

40. See G Stedman-Jones, Languages of Class, Cambridge 1983 pp.98/8.

41. Evidence of the Stockport power-loom weaver and trades unionist William Smith speaking in Blackburn in 1835. Blackburn Standard 15/7/1835 'Tories were the best masters...those who assessed the appellation of 'Liberals'...should look to their own conduct before they talked of reforming others.'

42. Manchester Guardian 10/11/1837.

43. Poor Man's Guardian 2/11/1833.

44. See Chapter 9 below for the example of Joseph Livesey of Preston or the study by A Howe, The Cotton Masters, Oxford 1982.

45. Hollis op.cit.

46. Stedman-Jones op.cit. p.107.

47. Ibid p.178.

48. See Chapter 10 below.

49. Oastler openly admitted his Tory principles. See Manchester Guardian, 24/9/1836, or C Driver, Richard Oastler, Life of a Radical, New York 1948.

50. For example see T M Kemnitz and F Jacques, J R Stephens and the Chartist Movement, International Review of Social History, Vol.19 1974. Or J Seed, Unitarianism, Political Economy and the Anatomies of Liberal Culture in Manchester, 1830-1850, Social History Vol.7 No.1 1982. Or J F Glaser, English Nonconformity and the Decline of Liberalism in American Historical Review, Vol.63 No.2, 1958.

51. Rev T D Whittaker, A sermon preached to the Chartists at the Blackburn Parish Church on Sunday August 4, London 1839 pp.19/20.

52. Preston Pilot 31/8/1833. For more on Tory Paternalism see D Roberts, 'Tory Paternalism and Social Reform in Early Victorian England, The American Historical Revue Vol.63 No.2 1958 or W O Aydolotte, 'The Conservative and Radical Interpretations of Early Victorian Social Legislation.' Victorian Studies December 1967. Or R Kirk, The Conservative Mind, London 1954.

53. See speech by W B Ferrand at Bolton, Bolton Chronicle 23/12/1843.

54. See C S Parker, The Life of Sir James Graham, London 1907, Vol.II p.370.

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 Peelite 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 town's 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

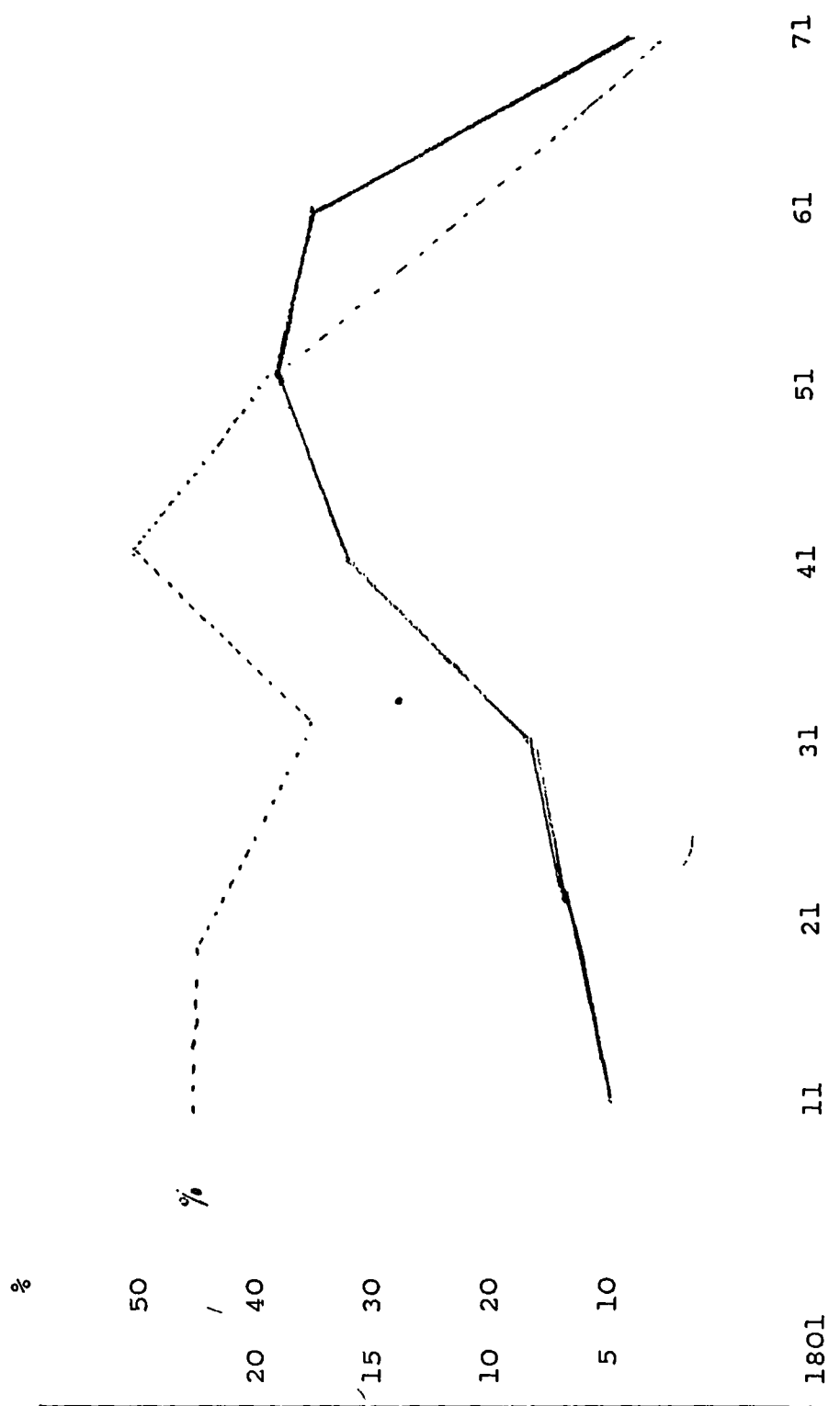
- Although Livesey's list is selective it is indicative of the societal and cultural changes which many of the middle

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.

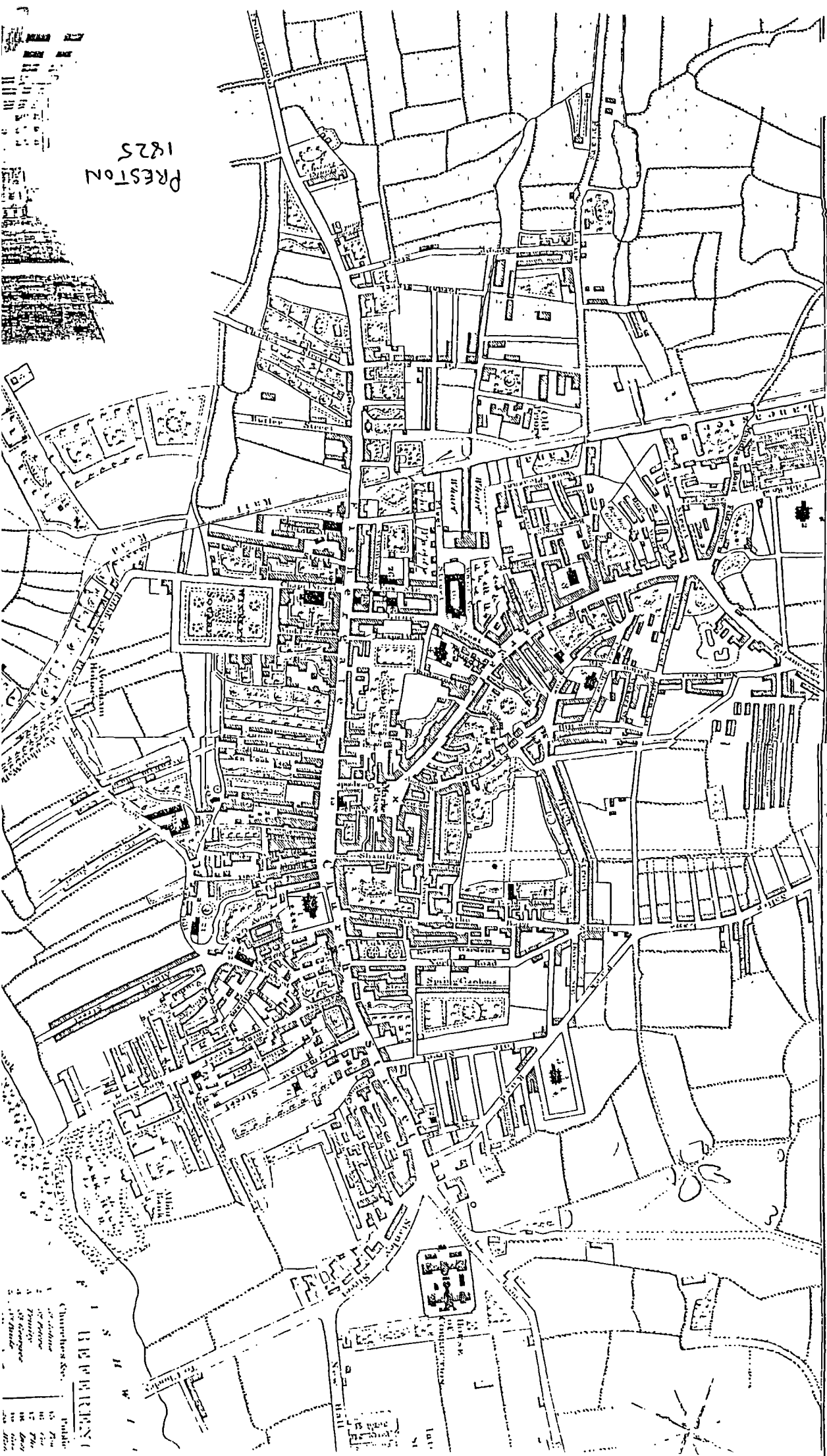
Population density may have also been a factor in political change for it is an important dimension of the local experience of life. Some work has been done on this in the case of Preston by K.M. Spencer³, but there is little comment on how the pattern as a whole affected local society. Briefly, the 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.

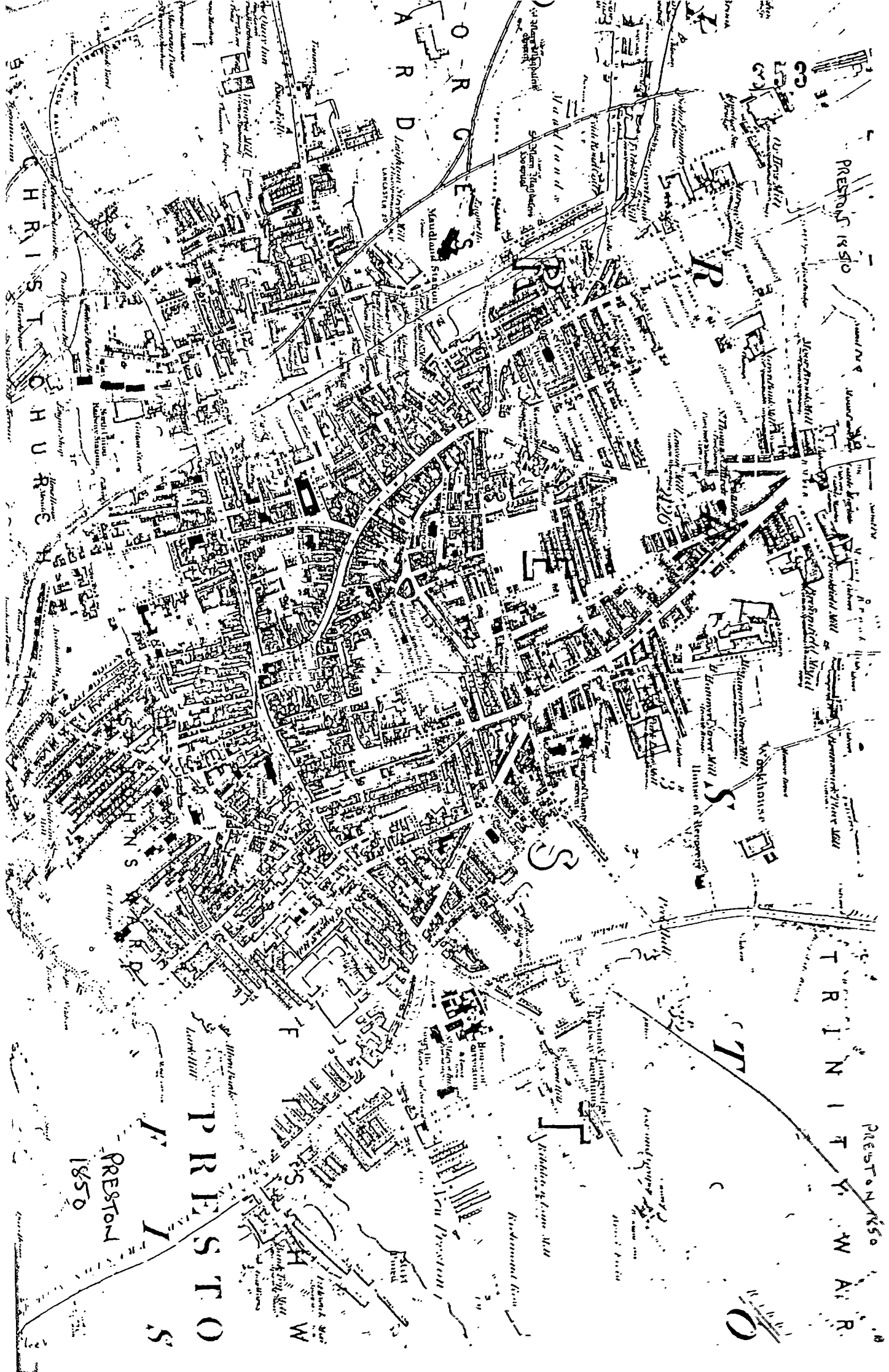
Apart from a number of factories and the few beginnings of streets close to St Pauls and St Ignatius churches along the north east side of Park Lane, there is no sign prior to 1847 of the later huge gridiron of factory districts in the east of the town. A simple graph of population to houses shows how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

PRESTON

PRESTON
1825



LEGEND
Churches &c.
Public
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.



PRESTON 1850

PRESTON 1850

PRESTON 1850

PRESTON

PRESTON

PRESTON

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

32

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.

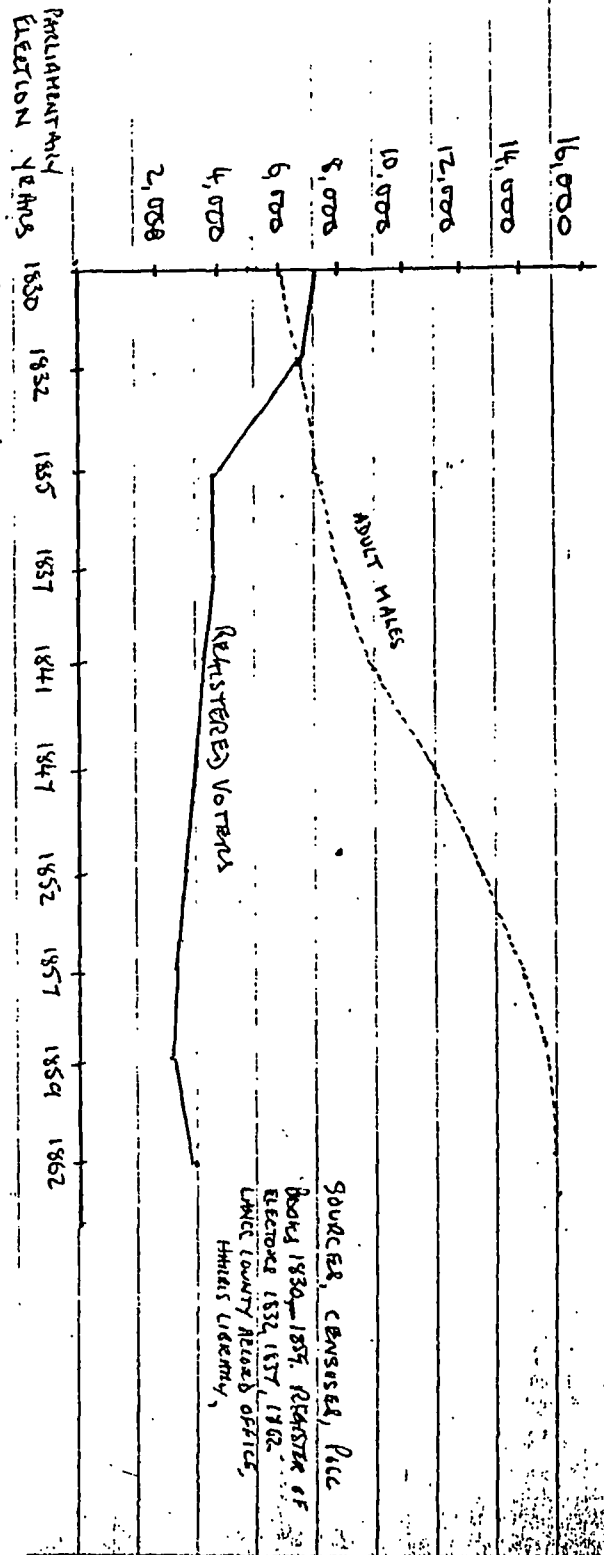
If we now turn to the development of Preston's Parliamentary politics it is worth noting three general points of contrast with the county town of Lancaster. First, at Lancaster local questions were confined to municipal politics and national issues to the constituency, whereas at Preston they often overlapped. 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

377



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 |

43

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 it's 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% |

59

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 jacksonettes, 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-electors 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 anti 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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| Income Mr. Derrnall | | His Debt
amount to
£12.00 | |
|-------------------------|-----|--|-------------------|
| Received | £ | Paid. | |
| D. of W. — | 50 | Lord Remy — | 100 |
| W. Remy — | 100 | D ^r Bill — | 55 |
| D. Reddick — | 10 | Draft to M. W. D. | 150 |
| Col. Mayling — | 20 | D ^r 19 th Dec. — | 100 |
| W. Baker — | 20 | Advanced by H. H. | 30 |
| Sir E. Harrison — | 20 | | 435 |
| D. Lyndhurst — | 20 | | |
| W. Haddington — | 20 | | 30 |
| D. Bonden — | 10 | | 465 |
| W. Southam — | 10 | | 235 |
| D. of St. — | 100 | | 700 |
| | 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 & Sons & Co. — | 25 |
| | | D ^r Bute — | 20 |
| | | A R. W. R. Jones — | 5 |
| | | D ^r Whamcliffe — | 10 p ^d |
| | | Sir C. Denville — | 20 |
| | | Sydney Herbert — | 25 p ^d |
| | | W. Adm ^d — | 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. Cates. Manor Terrace, Chelsea - Rent | 100.0.0 |
| Cash borrowed, & promised to be repaid | 30.0.0 |
| Hay, leather | 71.9.10 |
| J. Gibson, manual outpitter, Gosport | 27.0.0 |
| Wright, & Co, Bankers, Debit & costs | 70.7.10 |
| Sir Francis Macdonnell, Ireland, Debit & costs | 205.0.0 |
| Bacon & Co. 2 Little Street, Dublin, Debit | 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 |
| Labee, 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 |
| Blairford, Chelsea, boot & shoe maker | 13.0.0 |
| Duncan Blair, Bill & L st | 54.0.0 |
| Barker, Fleet Street, house agent | 20.0.0 |
| Alley, Kensington, School | 62.0.0 |
| Cervan, 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 omnipotent, 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 amongst 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.

REPRINTED IN PRESTON PILOT 26/6/1836 .

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. |
| <i>(Death of Cobden)</i> | | | | |
| 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 |
| <i>13) Salford (Two seats from 1868)</i> | | | | |
| 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. |
| <i>(Death of Brotherton)</i> | | | | |
| 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 | Clothier | 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 |